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Form A-(S-149)

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 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) September 13, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Caroline Edwards

2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) North Pine Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 6 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Ben Archer Place of birth Tennessee
 Other information about father Deceased

7. Name of Mother Ann Bukles Place of birth Tennessee
 Other information about mother Deceased

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number sheets attached .

Maurice R. Anderson
Interviewer
September 13, 1937.

Interview with Caroline Edwards
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

Mrs. Caroline Edwards was born 1873, in Missouri. I came to the Indian Territory with my father and mother. We came from Arkansas in a wagon, and arrived near Leon, in the Chickasaw Nation, in the Fall. There was lots of cotton raised that year, which was in 1883. My father got a job picking cotton but there wasn't much money in those days. After the cotton was ginned at Leon the farmers would have to haul their cotton to Gainesville, Texas, to sell it. There was a gin, blacksmith shop and a store at this little place called Leon. Cotton was five cents a pound in the lint.

My father bought a lease from G. N. Young about six miles west of Leon and we lived in a tent until my father got the log house finished. People didn't have furniture then as they do now. We had a home-made bedstead, a table and a few chairs, which were all home-made. Mother had to cook out in the yard over a fire and had a frying pan with an iron lid to put over it. This was what she baked our

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bread in, and it is called the old Dutch oven. It was several years later before she got a cookstove and we all were proud of the stove. My mother did all our dress-making and making shirts and pants for father and my brothers with her hands, as she had no sewing machine. There were lots of peddlers who came through the country, and they carried their store on wheels. They would have everything to sell from dress material to groceries. We had lots of chickens, and eggs were cheap. I have seen my mother trade eggs for calico to make our dresses. She would trade one dozen eggs for a yard of calico. Eggs were then about five cents a dozen.

We always had plenty of fresh meat to eat. In the winter my father would go up in the mountains west of Leon and kill wild hogs. He would be gone two or three days sometimes and when he came home he would have a wagon load of hogs. This way we would have plenty of hog meat to last until the next winter. Of course, there was lots of deer, turkey and the creeks were full of fish. My father had to pay a five dollar permit to live in the Chickasaw Nation. There was a collector in every district.

We children had to go five miles to school and it was

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a subscription school, and was only taught six months each year. My father would have to pay one dollar and fifty cents for each child he sent. He used the Blue-back Speller. I must say it was very little schooling we children received in the early days.

I can remember that we would have to drive about ten miles to church, and a wagon and team was our means of travel. My father and mother would load us children in the old wagon on Sunday mornings and go to church just as regularly as the Sundays came, if it wasn't raining. My mother would always have a big box of good things to eat fixed up so it was more like a picnic to us children. There were lots of horse and cattle thieves around that part of the country. There was a place between Leon and Gainesville, Texas, called Black Hollow. I have heard my father say a band of outlaws and horse thieves stayed there. When the farmers would take their cotton to Gainesville and sell it, they would have to come back through Black Hollow. He said there were lots of the farmers who had lost their whole years work by robbery. It got so bad that the farmers would all go to market their cotton together. Sometimes

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thirty or forty of them would haul their cotton to Gainesville, and in this way the outlaws were afraid to attack them, as there were too many of the farmers.

Ardmore then had one or two stores. In the early days if someone put up a gin or sawmill, then in a short time there would be a little town spring up. I remember my father getting his first suit of clothes from a peddler. My father traded the peddler a bale of cotton for the suit of clothes.

People didn't pay money very often for anything, they would trade something for what they wanted. We had free range in that day and time, and in the fall when the big cattle men started their round-up, we would have to keep our milch cows penned up until the round-up was over to keep them from being driven off. There were lots of Indians living in that part of the country and they lived about like the white people did except some of them would cook things differently. The full-bloods only raised small patches of corn called Tom Fuller patches. This corn was white, and nearly as hard as flint. They would have a block with a burnt out place in it and they would put about a half a gallon of corn in this at a time, then they had a wooden

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maul and they would beat the corn up. Then they would put it in a big pot and cook it, without any salt being put into it. I have eaten with them and I must say it was very good. The Indians living in that part of the country were very friendly and were good neighbors. They would come and borrow things from my father and he would go to them and borrow when he needed anything that they had. I now live at my home on North Pine Street in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.