

POLLY COLBERT

Age 83 yrs.

Colbert, Oklahoma

I am now living on de forty-acre farm dat de Government give me and it is just about three miles from my old home on Master Holmes Colbert's plantation where I lived when I was a slave.

Lawsy me, times sure has changed since slavery times! Maybe I notice it more since I been living here all de time, but dere's farms 'round here dat I've seen grown timber cleared off of twice during my lifetime. Dis land was first cleared up and worked by niggers when dey was slaves. After de War nobody worked it and it just naturally grewed up again wid all sorts of trees. Later, white folks cleared it up again and took grown trees off'n it and now dey are still cultivating it but it is most wore out now. Some of it won't even sprout peas. Dis same land used to grow corn without hardly any work but it sure won't do it now.

I reckon it was on account of de rich land dat us niggers dat was owned by Indians didn't have to work so hard as dey did in de old states, but I think dat Indian masters was just naturally kinder any way, leastways mine was.

My mother, Liza, was owned by de Colbert family and my father, Tony, was owned by de Love family. When Master Holmes and Miss Betty Love was married dey fathers give my father and mother to dem for a wedding gift. I was born at Tishomingo and we moved to de farm on Red River soon after dat and I been here ever since. I had a sister and a brother, but I ain't seen dem since dem.

My mother died when I was real small, and about a year after dat my father died. Master Holmes told us children not to cry, dat he and Miss Betsy would take good care of us. Dey did, too. Dey took us in de house wid dem and look after us jest as good as dey could colored children. We slept in a little room close to them and she allus seen dat we was covered up good before she went to bed. I guess she got a sight of satisfaction from taking care of us 'cause she didn't have no babies to care for.

Master Holmes and Miss Betsy was real young folks but dey was purty well fixed. He owned about 100 acres of land dat was cleared and ready for de plow and a lot dat was not in cultivation. He had de woods full of hogs and cows and he owned seven or eight grown slaves and several children. I remember Uncle Shed, Uncle Lige, Aunt Chaney, Aunt Lizzie, and Aunt Susy just as well as if it was yesterday. Master Holmes and Miss Betsy was both half-breed Choctaw Indians. Dey had both been away to school somewhere in de states and was well educated. Dey had two children but dey died when dey was little. Another little girl was born to dem after de War and she lived to be a grown woman.

Dey sure was fine young folks and provided well for us. He allus had a smokehouse full of meat, lard, sausage, dried beans, peas, corn, potatoes, turnips and collards banked up for winter. He had plenty of milk and butter for all of us, too.

Master Holmes allus say, "A hungry man caint work." And he allus saw to it that we had lots to eat.

We cooked all sorts of Indian dishes: Tom-fuller, pashofa, hickory-nut grot, Tom-budha, ash-cakes, and pound cakes besides vegetables and meat dishes. Corn or corn meal was used in all de Indian dishes. We made hominy out'n de whole grains. Tom-fuller was made from beaten corn and tasted sort