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BABB, JAMES SINGLETON.

INTERVIEW

#12704

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
BABB, JAMES SINGLETON INTERVIEW 12704

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Field Worker's name Gomer GowerThis report made on (date) January 19 19381. Name James Singleton Babb2. Post Office Address Poteau, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) Poteau4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 9 Year 18815. Place of birth Riley, Yell County, Arkansas6. Name of Father John P. Babb Place of birth South CarolinaOther information about father Farmer7. Name of Mother Mary Babb, nee Bledsoe Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about mother _____

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 of sheets attached _____

Gomer Gower
Investigator
January 19, 1938

Interview with James Singleton Babb
Poteau, Oklahoma.

James Singleton Babb was born near Riley, in Yell County, Arkansas, on September 9, 1881. His parents were John P. and Mary Babb, nee Bledsoe.

In his boyhood he attended the public schools at Hartford, Arkansas, and later was a student at Ouachita College at Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

On August 13, 1905, he was united in marriage to Vada West and immediately thereafter moved to Boynton, Indian Territory, where he was employed as school superintendent until May, 1906, when he retired from the teaching profession.

In May, 1906, Mr. Babb moved from Boynton to Howe, in LeFlore County, and engaged in the mercantile business in partnership with a brother, in which business he continued until the latter part of 1911, at which time he disposed of his interest.

In the early part of 1912 he announced as a Democratic candidate for the office of Court Clerk of LeFlore

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County, having as his opponent Mr. H. S. Pilgreen.

The election resulted in a tie but upon a recount, it was found that Mr. Babb had won by three votes and he assumed the duties of the office on January 1, 1913, and served two consecutive terms of four years, in the capacity of court clerk.

Mr. Babb's close contact with court matters while he served as court clerk inspired him to take up the study of law, which he did under Mr. T. T. Varner, the dean of the legal fraternity in LeFlore County and upon the expiration of his second term as court clerk, he retired to his farm, which was located three miles west of Heavener and actively engaged in farming, putting in all his spare time in qualifying himself for admission to the bar. He was admitted to entered the bar early in 1919 and upon the practice of his profession and was appointed by D. C. McCurtain, then county attorney, as assistant county attorney and served in that capacity until January, 1923. In the meantime, in the campaign of 1922 he had been the successful

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candidate for the office of county attorney, succeeding D. C. McCurtain. He served for three consecutive terms.

In the campaign of 1928, the last year of his occupancy of the office of county attorney, he was a successful candidate in the race for state representative and was reelected to that office in the campaigns of 1930 and 1932, serving his county as state representative for six consecutive years or until January 1, 1935.

He actively assisted in electing the Democratic candidate for delegate to the Constitutional Convention and was secretary of the county election board which canvassed the first election for state and county officers and the adoption of the State Constitution. He recalls the exceeding joy of the people when President Theodore Roosevelt issued the proclamation which converted the Indian Territory into the State of Oklahoma. The event was celebrated throughout the county by large gatherings of people who congregated to hear the glad

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tidings from the lips of noted orators.

Mr. Babb remembers that the members of the election board had met in the upper story of a stone building at Poteau, which served as the county courthouse at that time, to be in readiness to canvass the returns on the day following the election. The hours were passing and no one appeared with returns from the precinct boxes. Becoming impatient with the delay, the members of the board went to the front of the building to ascertain the cause of the delay. Looking eastward they saw a footman approaching from the top of the hill east of the court house, who had a long hickory pole on his shoulder, to which was suspended a ballot-box. Upon the arrival of this tired footman with his carefully guarded ballot-box, it was found that he was a member of the precinct election board at Monroe, a village about eight miles distant, as the crow flies, and he had walked that distance. He was the first precinct election board to make its returns to the county election board.

Since his retirement as state representative in

December, 1934, Mr. Babb has been actively engaged in the practice of his profession in partnership with his son, Irl, under the firm name of Babb and Babb.

Mr. Babb is now, as he has ever been, a staunch Democrat.