

GEORGE, JAMES E. (Prof.) INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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GEORGE, JAMES E.(PROF.)

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Field Worker's name Merrill A. Nelson,This report made on (date) August 24, 1937Head of Enid Business College.

1. Name Professor James E. George,
2. Post Office Address North Grand Avenue, Enid, Oklahoma. ½ block North of Square.
3. Residence address (or location) 1006 West Broadway,
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 11 Year 1880
5. Place of birth Kosciusko, Alcorn County, Mississippi.

6. Name of Father M. C. George, Place of birth Kosciusko, Mississippi.
Other information about father See story.
7. Name of Mother Mary C. Jones, Place of birth Near Kosciusko, Mississippi.
Other information about mother See story.

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 8.

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Merrill A. Nelson,
Interviewer,
August 24, 1937.

An Interview with Professor James E. George,
1006 West Broadway,
Enid, Oklahoma.

My father, M. C. George, was a farmer and sawmill man. He was an operator; consequently the harder work was left to others. Later, he became the Cornith County, Mississippi, Treasurer for one term. After that he went into the mercantile business before retiring. My mother, Mary C. George, nee Jones, was born before the War of slave holding and wealthy parents. I had two brothers and three sisters.

The Institution of which I am the head, was operating five years before I came here. It was known as the Enid Business College and the Acme Railroad University. The school was owned and operated by the founder, W.N. Stephenson. It began in 1899. When I came here there were eighteen pupils in the whole school which occupied some small rooms on the west side of the square, about a third of a block, north from Broadway. Miss Stephenson, sister of the founder of the college, assisted him.

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The school was equipped with ordinary kitchen tables, painted green; there were about twelve rented typewriters, and the other equipment was poor. The students were mostly local.

In January, 1904, I became associated with the school in the capacity of instructor. I had not come out with the idea of teaching in a business college. The reason I located in Enid was because I had heard of the town from some salesmen who were selling town lots in Crescent, Oklahoma.

I took over the management of the school almost immediately and became sole owner in about one year. The previous principal had conducted a fair school for the times, adequate for an early pioneer town such as Enid had been.

It is reported that there was another school here in the early days. Someone may have blown in who tried to run a school of business without a whole lot of experience. I had had experience with the public schools in Mississippi, and had secured a business training from

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Kossuth Academy where I graduated in my home town. As soon as I became manager of the school, I disposed of the rented typewriters and purchased twelve or fifteen new ones.

In 1904 we moved over the Corry Pharmacy on North Independence. In 1906 we moved to the McKenzie building opposite the post office to the west. By this time our enrollment had climbed to one hundred and fifty and our building space had grown to a floor area of fifty by a hundred and twenty-five feet.

I had moved here an entire stranger and the school was pushed forward without a great deal of outside help. Equipment was added as the school developed. On January 1, 1925, I purchased this present building. We moved over here the first of August. There were about two hundred students by the time we moved over here. We used the third floor and rented out the rest of the building. This was a space fifty feet by a hundred and fifty. By the summer of 1928, we had an enrollment of between two and three hundred and fifty. We placed the administration

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offices on the second floor then. By removing partitions and by adding typing departments we increased the space to accommodate the increased enrollment.

Among our early teachers were: P. G. Simon, who was with us from 1915 to 1919. He died with the "flu". He was Principal of the Commercial Department. Mrs. J. R. Hatterton was a principal of the shorthand and typing division of the school. She still lives here on west Cherokee. She was in the school from 1911-1923.

Among our early students who have made good are: Mr. Archie F. Butts, Vice-President of the First National Bank and Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Loomis who are in the furniture business here. Another prominent student was L. A. Cheno-weth, who was a student here in 1912. Still another was George A. Hutchinson, a lawyer and state senator, who was in this school in 1914.

The War increased our enrollment. We could scarcely care for those who came but many of our students left without graduating. We now have about fifty students who take stenotype work. The stenotype company broke up but

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got going again and is now very popular.

Our graduates number 125-180 now. During the depression we reached a low mark in our student body. The lowest was about 50 in the entire student body. Only thirty graduated. In 1935-6, we had 273 pupils. In 1936-7, there was a slight increase.

One of our best teachers is Miss Mayberry who has been with us ten years. She is in charge of employment and is also our secretary-treasurer.

I have a letter from Champlin saying he has about 75 of our students in his entire organization. Eason Oil Co., has about 20. In the local Pillsbury Milling Company, all the stenographic help and accountants are our students. Enid Terminal Elevators use some. In all the banks, practically all the stenographers, bookkeepers, and tellers come from us. In Chenoweth and Green the credit manager, bookkeeper and stenographers are all our students. I think there must be 75 of our students in the civil service in Washington, D. C. Throughout the country, in Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Memphis, and Denver, Chicago and New York, you

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will find our graduates. The manufacturer of fraternity pins in Denver is one. Our increase is slow but solid.



J. E. GEORGE, President
Manager-Instructor