

Field Worker: Maurice R. Anderson

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. Jim McCurley
Route 1
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

BORN In 1862 Indian Territory
Near Poteau, Oklahoma

Father: Tom McCurley Mother: Leanore

Mr. Jim McCurley relates, "I lived in a wigwam when I was a small boy. My father built a log house, and we moved into it . This was about 1874. I used to wear long shirts without trousers, and it was about 1875 that I wore my first pants. They were made of seamless sacks, and had a stripe down the legs of them, I sure was proud of them to."

"I have ridden bare-back without a bridle on my pony along with the Indian boys, and my girl, now my wife. She is a fullblood Choctaw, and could ride a pony as good or better than I. My wife and I grew up together. My father died a year after I was married, and was buried at Summerfield. I helped dig my father's grave. I was twenty years old when I was married and we walked 30 miles both of us barefooted.

"I cannot read or write but I speak the English and Choctaw language, and I have interpreted the Indian language for preachers, who came to our settlement to preach. I was deputy sheriff for the Indians, under Judge Holsom, full-blood Choctaw Indian. When an Indian was sentenced to death they would get his coffin, and sit him on it and shoot him. It fell my lot one time to shoot an Indian, that was about 1885, who had been sentenced to death. I refused to kill him as I had been raised with him and it would have been as if I was shooting my own brother.

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The high sheriff had to shoot him.

"I have painted my face, and played ball with the Indians. We would use a stick about three feet long; on one end it was round, large as a saucer with buckskin laced backwards and forwards across it. If you hit the top of the pole it would count one point. The squaws would serve coffee or water to us.

"I don't know when my father and mother came to the Indian territory but both spoke the Choctaw Indian language. I have heard my mother say she was only 10 years old when she married my father."

Mr. McCurley came to Pauls Valley in 1906, and now lives six miles southwest of Pauls Valley.

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