

SORRELLS, GEORGE W. INTERVIEW

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Etta D. Mason.

Investigator.

November 12, 1937

Interview with George W. Sorrells
Atoka, Oklahoma

I was born in the Choctaw Nation in Gaines County, August 28, 1865. My father was George W. Sorrells, born in Kentucky. My mother was Mary Tucker, born in South Carolina. My father and mother were both white but we lived among the Indians with no white neighbors. I attended the Indian schools and their churches. I played, hunted and fished with them and became very much attached to them. When I married, the girl was part Choctaw and part Cherokee.

There was almost any kind of meat that one could wish for in the Kiamichi River bottoms and in the mountains. If we wanted pork to eat the men and boys in the community would get together and go on a hunt and as many wild hogs as we needed would be killed and divided according to the members in the families.

If we wanted deer or bear meat we did the same thing. We worked together in most of the things we did. We helped build each others' houses and fences, often carrying the rails for the fences on our shoulders.

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After the country settled up with white people, the white people had subscription schools. I attended one taught by a man going by the name of Jim Howard. Jim Howard boarded with my uncle. I was then staying with this uncle so that I could attend school. My uncle was Dr. Eubanks. Jim Howard taught the term out and secured the school for the next term. During the vacation he married a girl in the neighborhood and built a house and moved into it.

Howard began his second term of school, but one morning about three o'clock he got up and told his wife that he had to meet a man on a business deal out that he would be back in an hour or two. He told her that he would lock the door so that nothing would bother her. He did not come back and his wife stayed locked in the house until late that night when someone came to the house hunting for Howard. She went home to her father and several days later she received a letter from Howard. In this letter Howard told her that he was not Jim Howard but that he was Frank James, brother to Jesse James and that he had a wife and two children in

another city. Frank James had received word by some one that Jesse James had been killed and Frank left at once and gave himself up to the law.

I also knew Charlie Wilson, Indian light-horseman. At one time Wilson killed nine Indians who had been caught stealing. He made them all kneel down and shot them one at a time.

I was appointed Deputy United States Sheriff in 1833 and worked around Zafaula, Whitefield and Fort Smith.