

SMITH, JAMES MESSER. INTERVIEW #8126 125

SMITH, JAMES MESSER. INTERVIEW. Form A-(S-149) #8126

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma.

126

Field Worker's name Ethel E. Palmer

This report made on (date) July 29, 1937

1. Name James Messer Smith

2. Post Office Address Putnam, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Lives in Putnam

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 4 Year 1861

5. Place of birth Columbia City, Indiana

6. Name of Father Ephragm Smith Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Lydia Smith Place of birth Indiana

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 3

Interview with James Messer Smith  
Putnam, Oklahoma

Field Worker - Ethel E. Palmer  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
July 29, 1937

I came from Illinois to Oklahoma, in 1894, locating in Canadian County, at Okarche. I came in here on a freight train. I had 25 cents in money. I began working soon for \$10.00 a month. I worked at first one thing then another. I farmed some.

By this time this country was pretty well settled up and there was a man on every quarter of land.

Most of the homes were dugouts but there were a few sod houses.

Our principal crops were corn, kaffir, wheat and there was some maize.

Okarche was our closest railroad town, trading post and post office; this was about seven miles from where I worked.

At this time there were no roads. All we had were wagons and some people had buggies to travel in.

Sugar sold for \$3.50 to \$4.00 per hundred pounds, and fifty pounds of flour cost 75 and 80 cents. We would get good overalls and good work shirts for 50 cents and shoes

2

sold for \$1.50 to \$2.00 a pair and were good ones.

There were a good many Indians in there, but they were nice and of course they were civilized. I have seen them bury their dead in trees. They would wrap them in blankets and lay them across big limbs in the trees.