

SPANIARD, JAMES

THIRD INTERVIEW

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Interview with James Spaniard
Wetumka, Oklahoma

Investigator - Nettie Cain
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
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James Spaniard, whose Indian name is
Testustina Harjo, Creek Indian, Wetumka, was born
in the Creek Nation at Tullamusnee, now Lamar,
in 1856.

His father was Sparnie Harjo and he was a
Creek; his place of birth was unknown. His
mother, Millie, came from Alabama when she was a
very small girl.

James was a small boy when the Civil War broke
out. His mother took him and went South and
stayed three years. They did not see his father
during the three years and did not know whether he
was living or dead. After the close of the war
they returned to their home and the father returned
also.

While they were in the South, the Indians were
in large camps and they had an epidemic of smallpox.
James was vaccinated and never had the smallpox but

many of the Indians died at this time from the smallpox. They also had an epidemic of chicken-pox which left scars on their faces besides causing lots of sickness among them and several deaths.

Food was scarce and sometimes the Indians got very hungry.

The cause of the Isparhechar War was that Isparhechar, an Indian leader, wanted to continue under the Indian laws and not under the new constitution laws.

General Porter and Captain McIntosh were under the Government orders. They sent Henna

Chupco and some other Indian Lighthorsemen from Okmulgee, down to a meeting which they were having at the Bick house to talk to Isparhechar about the new constitution and why he refused to obey

orders. Isparhechar went to the Sac-Fox country

but some Government soldiers were sent after him.

He was brought back and put in jail and was told

he would be punished if he did not agree to abide

by the new constitution and he promised to do so. Some time after this he got his friends together and was elected chief of the Creek Nation, over two other men, serving four years. He did not make a very good chief.

James served as Lighthorseman under George Long Chutke. A Seminole Indian was sentenced to 100 lashes for stealing and James helped to give the lashes. One prisoner, a negro boy, had been sentenced to death for stealing. James had to take him home with him and keep him until he was to be put to death. The judge set the day but when the time came he gave the negro boy another chance and set him free. When a prisoner was given the punishment of whipping, the captain of the Lighthorsemen would count the licks while one of the Lighthorsemen would give them.

James was with the other Lighthorsemen when two men were killed near the old Wetumka Mission. One man was a Seminole Indian and the other was

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a negro man, named California, who refused to let them arrest him; he had been stealing.

James served one year a member of the House of Warriors. His duties were to see that the widows and orphans and old people were cared for, and to see that the new constitution was enforced. There were forty-four Indian towns and six districts in the Creek Nation.