

INDEX CARDS

Dances--Choctaw  
Marriage--Choctaw  
Law enforcement--Choctaw  
Schools--Choctaw Nation

JAMES, JESSE HENRY. INTERVIEW

Field Worker: Maurice R. Anderson  
March 25, 1937

1139  
292

BIOGRAPHY OF: Mr. Jesse Henry James  
(Full-blood Choctaw Indian)  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

BORN: December 23, 1888 at Shady  
Point, Indian Territory

PARENTS: Father: Adam James born in  
the Choctaw Nation, now de-  
ceased.

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I am a full-blood Choctaw Indian. I lived with my father and mother at Shady Point in the Choctaw Nation. When I was a small boy I have gone to several Stomp Dances, given by my tribe, but my father told me that they weren't as good as they used to be. He has told me a lot of the things the Indians believed in. He said that, when an illicit intimacy between a man and a woman of blood relationship was discovered, the Indians subjected the offenders to the loss of both ears. My father said that he had known some who had got their ears cut off. To hide the tell-tale evidence of their sin, they would let their hair grow out long. I remember a lot of things that he told me like that.

The first day I went to school, when I was six years old, my father took me. It was a little country school, with only one large room and the name of it was Brazil. It was located several miles from Shady Point. A white man was my teacher. I don't remember his name. I could not speak English then, I could only understand Choctaw language. I just went to the second grade, but I learned

all the letters of the alphabet and all the numbers and <sup>293</sup>  
how to read and write and spell.

My father farmed on his place, he raised corn and dealt in hogs and cattle; not to any large extent, but he did sell quite a number. There were lots of opossum and skunks. I have caught lots of them in my steel traps. My father bought me a horse and saddle, when I was fifteen I then began going to the white people's dances and I was always welcome. My father and mother had six children, four boys and two girls. My brother, Isaac, and I are the only living members of our family. Isaac lives in the eastern part of Oklahoma. And I live on my homestead five miles southwest of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. I was married in 1906 at Shady Point, Oklahoma. I married a full-blood Choctaw woman. I don't know anything to tell, except that times were hard then just like they are now. I didn't have to work until after I married and we moved to Pauls Valley on my homestead. Nearly anyone living around Pauls Valley knows about this country since 1907.

THE END