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Allotment

Marvin G. Bowley  
Field Worker  
May 27, 1937.

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Interview with Izora James  
Poteau, Oklahoma.  
Born January 25, 1868.  
Father-Martin V. James  
Mother-Julia Merriman.

My name is Izora James, born 1868, about one mile east of what is now called Oak Lodge, Oklahoma. It used to be called then Skullyville, I. T. I started to school in 1876 at a School-house called Union School, located about one mile due east of Rock Island, Oklahoma, my teacher being Miss Vec Pratt, a white woman. This was an Indian school for the Choctaw children. The teacher was paid out of the Indian fund the sum of two dollars for each child. The school house was made out of square hewed logs, the ends of the logs notched and fitted together. There were cracks about one and one half inches wide between the logs and these were "chinked and daubed" with mud or clay. We sat on heavy plank benches with out any backs for them. We used slates for our figuring of numbers. We were not taught to write in this school. We studied the Blue-back Speller and the school was not subdivided into different grades like it is now. Some white children went to this school, and they paid the teacher but I don't remember just how much,

We moved close to Kullychaha next and I went to school at what was then known as the Hall, about two and one half miles from Kullychaha, I. T. It was a two-story frame building. The Mosho-Lattubee Masonic lodge No. 13 built the building. They held Lodge upstairs and school down-stairs. Church for the whites was held down stairs also. This school was not graded either. I went here in 1878 and 1879. I still have one of the old copies of the old Blue Back Speller yet. They did not teach penmanship in this school either. We learned to write whenever someone would come around and solicit subscriptions for a ten or twelve day writing school. This cost one dollar per student. We learned to write with pen and ink.

About 1881 we left Kullychaha, I. T., and moved close to the place where the Fairview school now stands, about three miles northeast of Poteau, Oklahoma, and I went to the Wapanucka school in the Chickasaw Nation, which was called also Rock Academy. If a person went to school here long enough they could go to school in the States. This was a mixed school for boys and girls both. I attended in 1884 and 1885. Nance Rivers and

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his wife were teachers here. This school was not graded and we had old books that were clear out of date. They would be worth a fortune if they were still there. I remember one time the Music Teacher asked me, where do peanuts grow and when I told her they grew on trees, she did not know any different, because she had never seen any growing. Nance Rivers and wife were from Georgia. This school was supported out of the Indian funds and by the Methodist Church.

My father was Martin James. He was a Methodist Circuit Rider and District Attorney of the Mosho-Lattubee District. This was composed of five counties, Skullyville, Sugar Loaf, Gains, San Bois, and Tobucksy. He used to ride a buckskin pony from the Skullyville County Courthouse on down to the Sugar Loaf County Courthouse. It caused his death from exposure, resulting in pneumonia. He was the District Attorney in the following years I think, 1878 and 1879. He was about one sixteenth white, the rest was a mixture of Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian.

Martin James was a charter member in the Mosho-Lattubee Masonic lodge No.13 at Kullychaha, I. T. He died Sept. 22, 1881, and was buried at the Hall cemetery at the location of the lodge building.

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My mother was Julia Merriman and she was born at the old Merriman Homestead. This was the same place I was born. It was an old double log house with an open hallway through it, it was made of square hewed logs and was "chinked and daubed". The roof was covered with "clapboards". These were made of straight-grain post oak. The boards were two feet long and four or five inches wide, made with a "froe and maul." This house is still standing; it is weatherboarded now though.

My father spoke both the Choctaw and Chickasaw languages. I do not speak very much of either as my father said, the time will come when the whites will be plentiful and I want my children raised as whites are raised so it will not be so hard for them to mix up with them. It would be a blessing if more of the old time Indians would have seen this coming in time, as it puts Indians at a great disadvantage to be raised up as an Indian and not know any thing about the white man's ways.

I married Dixon Hill April, 1886, a Scotch-Irishman. We married by tribal custom, at a Presbyterian Church for whites close to Hill, Oklahoma, A place called Bethlehem.

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The license cost twenty-five dollars. My husband shared in the allotment the same as I did. The license was issued by Noel Holson, a full-blood Choctaw Indian, out in the country close to Summerfield, I. T., at his home. He was the Sugar Loaf County Clerk. Indian Court. Sugar Loaf County Court-house was between Howe and Wister, Oklahoma, on the road to Glendale, Oklahoma. It has since been torn down. I never did see it. The Skullyville County Court-house was on Buck Creek Prairie, about four miles northwest of Panama, Oklahoma. It burned several years ago and burned all the records that were in the Court-house.

When we registered before allotment, we registered in our mother's name. It was customary on the account of unlawful children in some of the Indian families as they would be maybe one half Indian and the rest of the children full-blood Indian, so the policy of registering under the mother's amount of Indian blood came into effect. I am registered as one-thirty-second while I am a little better than a one-half Indian.

My brothers and sisters were as follows:

Izora Ann James-----Born----Jan. 23, 1868.  
William Wesley-----Born----Jan. 30, 1870.  
John Bunyan-----Born----March 10, 1873.  
Hiram L.-----Born----May 20, 1876/  
Izadora-----Born----July 7, 1878.  
Bellemont-----Born----July 1, 1880.