

McDANIEL, JAMES T., Jr.

INTERVIEW. 13837

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma #13837

McDANIEL, JAMES T, Jr. INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Kenneth C. Black

This report made on (date) May 5, 1938

1. Name James T. McDaniel, Jr.

2. Post Office Address Heavener, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Heavener, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 29 Year 1861

5. Place of birth Chattanooga, Tennessee.

6. Name of Father James McDaniel Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Raised with the Indians

7. Name of Mother Jane McDaniel Place of birth North Carolina

Other information about mother Dutch descent.

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 _____.

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An Interview with James T. McDaniel, Heavener.
By - Kenneth C. Black, Investigator.
May 5, 1938

I was born in 1861, between Chattanooga and Knoxville, Meigs County, Tennessee. I came to the Indian Territory 65 years ago. My brother settled at Gibson, Arkansas, which is on the line between Indian Territory and Arkansas. I hauled freight between Bates, Arkansas, and Fort Smith. Everything that was raised or made in this Territory I hauled to Fort Smith and traded for supplies. My route ran through what is now Heavener. There wasn't a house anywhere in the vicinity of Heavener for miles around. I have seen on my route to Fort Smith dead men lying by the roadside. This was a very common occurrence. I hauled hay from the very place where Heavener is now built.

This prairie had a great number of wild hogs, horses and cattle running loose. The hogs were used for meat and the cattle for meat and milking purposes after they were broke or tamed. Cowboys were real cowboys; they really had to know their business.

I have attended Indian Cries. On certain days the whole tribe of Choctaw Indians gathered around their burial place and wept. This was their way of mourning for

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their dead. The Indians were always peaceable with brother and me. We were always their friend. I have had them come to my camp at night and stay for hours. The only times I was afraid of them was when they were drunk. Everyone was an enemy then.

I have also attended many Indian camp meetings. They held these in brush arbors or large tents. The seats were of logs or rocks and were placed so that they could squat on them in a circle, while listening to the preacher. The preacher at some of these camp meetings was Elam McCurtain; now deceased. They remained at these meetings for days and white people were always welcome. They cooked the food at these meetings over camp fires, and as room around the fire was available the preacher came into the tent, pointed at you and then toward the campfire meaning for you to go eat.

Indian elections were also very interesting. What is now LaFlore County was Sugar Loaf County. At one election I remember Elam McCurtain, a Choctaw In-

dian, was elected judge. One of the Courthouses was located at Summerville, and another at Chullehaha, meaning "Higher Springs". This is where Cameron, Oklahoma, is now situated. The election was held by a meeting of the majority of the tribesmen, and voting was in person instead of by ballot, as is the custom now in Oklahoma and other states.

The officials elected at this election were Judge and Sheriff. The United States Marshal was also an official but I am not sure whether he was elected by the Indians or whether he was appointed.

Horse thieves were plentiful in this country. Officials from all parts of the Indian Territory came to hunt these thieves. I had moved to Hontubby at this time so they made my home their lodging place. They had many a merry chase. The hide-out for these thieves was at Asher, near Seminole. When the thieves got the horses in this place, the officers surely had a time recovering them. Most of the time a gun battle was necessary. Lots of times lives were lost.