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CHALLENGER, JIM

INTERVIEW

13805

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BALLENGER, JIM.

INTERVIEW.

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Melvin Stites

This report made on (date) April 25, 1938

1. Name Jim Ballenger

2. Post Office Address Hanna, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 9, Year 1866

5. Place of birth Mt. Vernon, Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

6. Name of Father Joe Ballenger Place of birth Kentucky

7. Name of Mother Mary Marget 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 2

BALLENGER, JIM.

INTERVIEW.

#13805

Investigator,
Melvin Stites,
April 25, 1938

Interview with Jim Ballenger
Hanna, Oklahoma

A PRE-STATEHOOD RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I came from my home in Kentucky, in 1896, to visit my brother-in-law, Jim McGuire. Jim lived about four miles east of the present site of Hanna and he lived near Hillaba Church, Indian Missionary Baptist Church. I mentioned that I had never heard an Indian church service. My brother-in-law suggested that we attend one of their services so we went.

It so happened on this particular day that Jim Possum (Creek Indian) was being ordained a preacher. Unusual religious fervor was in evidence that day. I was a Christian then, as I am now. I couldn't help rejoicing with my red brothers, even though I didn't understand their language and they didn't understand mine. When some of the Indians saw how happy I had become because of their spiritual fervor they came over and shook my hand and patted me on the back and Jim McGuire wanted to know how it was that the Indians and I, speaking different tongues, understood each

other in this religious service. William Barnett, Indian pastor, summed it up for both Jim and me by explaining that the Holy Spirit had interceded and interpreted.

Dinner was eaten off of board tables of extraordinary length. We were invited to eat; the Christian Indian is very hospitable. I watched very closely each thing the Indians did.

When a plate of food was passed around for the first time I noticed each Indian regardless of whether or not his plate was ready for more food piled it on somehow, or certain foods he placed by the side of his plate. I did the same thing. But, Jim McGuire, who had at that time been among the Indians for something like fifteen years, failed to do so. The food wasn't passed around a second time so I divided with Jim. This particular rule at the dinner table may have been made and practiced alone by the Hillaba Church.