

JAMES, MARY E. nee HUDSON

INTERVIEW #7029

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Nannie Lee Burns
Interviewer
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Interview with
Mrs. Mary E. James, nee Hudson, Cherokee,
Fairland, Oklahoma.
Father-Thomas Joshua Buffington Hudson
Mother-Sarah Hudson, Nee Berry
Born February 23, 1856.

My father, Thomas Joshua Buffington Hudson, was born in Georgia and paid his way, as a boy, to the Indian Territory when he came. My grandfather Hudson was born in England. My mother, Sarah Hudson nee Berry, was also born in Georgia and came over the Trail of Tears with her parents when three years old.

Grandfather Hudson, when he came to the Indian Territory, brought his family and thirty-six negroes. The Hudsons first settled on Beatties Prairie and later moved to their home on Hudson Creek, northeast of what is now Fairland. Hudson Creek was named for my grandfather.

My mother's people settled on Shoal Creek, not far from Galena, Kansas. After the death of her parents and the death of two brothers, my mother went to live in the home of Jim Fields, the husband of her eldest sister. My parents, Joshua Thomas Buffington Hudson and Sarah Berry, were married and

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settled on Hudson Creek, and here I was born February 23, 1856.

Our life was that of the average Cherokee family in this new country, adding little by little each year to our houses, increasing the acreage around us and life each year in the new country becoming more comfortable. We were replacing the oxen with fine horses and good wagons and buggies till the outbreak of the Civil War.

THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD.

We had a big double log house with side rooms and tall chimneys, big barns full of grain, and good stock and other buildings, including the negro quarters.

Our darkies left us and went with the Government train of wagons at the beginning of the war to Fort Scott, Kansas.

The first raid through here the Federals took all of our stock, except one gray horse. They killed mother's chickens and turkeys, I should say between three and four hundred. They raided our smoke house and took our bacon and meat and set the cans of lard out in the yard and greased their guns with the lard and destroyed what was not used.

Stand Watie, our friend, came up through the country and left with us a horse. In some way at that time it was unfit to

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travel. Father hitched this horse with our gray one to a back and loaded his wife and children into this with what few things we could carry and went first to the Sac Agency. We were there a few weeks then went to Lawrence, where Father secured work at a sawmill, and here he worked and we stayed till after the War.

THE RETURN HOME.

When we returned the home had been burned and everything gone or destroyed. My parents had to begin over, with a family and without the darkies that they had always had to work for them. Our first home was a makeshift, everything to be done and nothing to do with, no money, no stock, and no tools to farm with. We came back in the Spring and camped that summer while they built us a house. Fortunately the orchard had escaped and that summer we had so much fruit that this, together with the wild game, helped us to get through the first hard year.

We had no grain to plant and I remember that old Mr. Andrain, Frank's father, went to Granby, Missouri, and bought seed to plant so my father got from him enough to plant some patches. This is all we had that year and these had to be tended with the hoe, as we had neither horse nor cow. I do not

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remember where we got our first dog but I do remember that Mr. Kudrafi went to Neosho, Missouri, to mill and begged from a family there a cat which shortly became the mother of a family. He gave us one of the kittens as well as one to some of his other neighbors.

Life now was harder than when my parents were married about 1850. They settled first near his home on Hudson Creek and here they had had oxen to work, tools to cut and dress the logs for the houses and plenty of stock around them; good horses to ride and drive and good wagons. Mother cooked on the fire and, though grandfather had a stove, we used candles for lights till I was grown.

Mother did not do any spinning or weaving but she did make yarn and knit our stockings and gloves.

There had been eight children but there were left only my sister, Emily Jane, and three brothers; James, Sylvan, and Alfred. Today all are gone except my brother Sylvan who lives in Spring, Ohio, where he owns, and still runs, a large barber shop, and myself.

SCHOOLS.

We had attended school some while living in Lawrence but after our return here we did not have any for some time

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till one was established at Prairie City, now Ogeechee. I was attending school here when an old man by the name of Isaac Hitchcock was teaching. Something came up and Scott Audrain gave him a whipping which broke up the school. Later, we had a school on Hudson Creek, taught by Milly Abbott.

After the War some of the negroes came back. Old Boss, I remember, and another known as Pete, now called Pete Hudson, came back and allotted on Big Creek. Here he had a pretty place of one room with a clapboard roof that he made himself. I have heard him often say that he wished he was back with my people.

Marriage.

May 13, 1875, I married Garrett James, a Creek, the son of Calvin James, Sr. My husband had been born on Shoal Creek. He settled on the river northeast of Fairland where we lived for three years then we moved to the prairie three and one-half miles northeast of here where we had built ourselves a house. Afterwards we were allotted here and continued to live till we moved to Fairland, forty-five years ago. My parents allotted the old place on Hudson Creek where my father died in 1899 and mother there in 1905.

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Life in Fairland.

At that time there were not a great many buildings here. We moved into Dr. Stacy's home, a two-story, white house, and my husband purchased the furniture store located in the Masonic Building from the brother of Emmet Price.

Ben Ritter had built our house and Lee Smith had a store building. Jim Langler ran a hotel where the Yeager Hotel is now. Crockett had a blacksmith shop and John Conally was here in the hardware business.

Prairie City, which had been the first city, having two stores, a hotel, blacksmith shop, a marble shop and a post office in the Audrain-Walker store, besides a few residences, was beginning to shrink with the growing of Fairland.

Here we reared our children. Out of eight only two boys are now living; Irving who still lives near the old farm east of here and my son, Huston, of Tulsa.

My husband ran the furniture store for two years then because of poor health he sold it. He passed away many years ago.

LATER

Since his death I have continued to live at the old home. I still have the farm and some other property and since my son, Price's, death a few years ago, his daughter, Eva LaYera, and I continued to live here.