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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Name---James Robert Barnes

South Front Street, Poteau, Oklahoma

A biographic Sketch

From personal interviews with the subject,

Date of birth-----May 14, 1849.

Place of birth-----Hartfort, Arkansas

Father-----Joseph Barnes.

Place of birth-----State of Missouri.

Mother----- Nancy Gofourth.

Place of birth-----State of Missouri.

Marvin G. Rowley, Field Worker.

Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

April 15, 1937.

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I, James Robert Barnes was born at or near the place now Hartford, Arkansas, May 14, 1849. My father's name was Joseph Barnes, a farmer and a Baptist preacher; my mother's name was Nancy Goforth. They both were born in the State of Missouri, but I do not know the name of the place where they were born.

There was one full sister named Mary Jane Barnes, born Dec. 10th, 1851, and a full brother, William T. Barnes, born September 30, 1854, My mother died and my father married again. Nancy Goforth, my mother, died when I was about four or five years old. She is buried East of Old Hartford, about one mile.

My father married again two or three years after my mother died. The name of his second wife was Sarah Elizabeth-Tucker. She died in 1915 and is buried at Summerfield, Oklahoma.

I first went to school in 1855. The school building was a hued log house; there was no window glass in the windows, just wooden shutters. This was where Old Hartford was. It was a subscription School, One Dellar a month, and the term lasted three months. The teacher's name was Columbus Godard.

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We had to move, in the latter part of 1862 on the account of Indian raids taking all the stock and grain, even the blankets out of the house. These Indians were Choctaws from the Indian Territory. We left Old Hartford and went about twenty-five miles North-West of Springfield Mo. to a place called Turn-back Creek.

My Father belonged to the Federal Army as Private, 2nd Arkansas Calvary, Co. C.

We traded at Springfield. We lived at Turnback Creek until 1866 when the War was over, then we got ready to come back home to Old Hartford. While in Missouri, we made a crop with steers, 10 acres of corn. After the corn got up pretty well, I plowed it with just one steer, as the yoke broke it down. When we got ready to leave, we had two wagons, one loaded with shelled corn, about 20 bushel, and they pulled this with the steers. The other had in it what few belongings we had. We had a team of horses hooked to this. It took two or three weeks to make trip to Hartford.

My Father said, "Now we have got to go to work, clear up some land and make a crop." We cleared about 12 acres and planted it in corn. We ran out of anything to make bread

of about the time the corn was up and was able to cultivate it, so Dad hooked up the team of horses and went back some place in Missouri and got another load of corn, about twenty bushel. That lasted us until the corn we had planted could be used. Dad said, "Well we need a cow, and I have two six shooters to trade." He went down to this side of Red River into an Indian Settlement and traded his two six shooters for five cows. This was in 1866. We lived in Mississippi Township, Sebastian County, and Greenwood was the County-seat. We lived here at Old Hartford until we moved to Salt Lake Prairie close to Kullychaha.

We leased land from Bill Page, a full-blood Choctaw Indian. We agreed to build a house, clear the land, dig a well, and fence with a rail fence for payment of the fee for the lease.

In the early Spring a person could go out and see the deer eating the tender grass on the edge of the prairie, also lots of turkey. If a person wanted a Squirrel just take the gun and go out in the timber and stand around a little bit and shoot one and take it up to the house and have it fixed for breakfast. We lived easy then. When we lived here at Salt

Lake Prairie, we traded at Ft. Smith. I traded with Uncle Ed McPenney, General Merchandise, and also with Boko & Rutzel, General Merchandise, (Not sure of spelling of names), We drove oxen 35 miles to Ft. Smith, it took us one and one-half days to get there. We bought supplies for two or three months at a time. Green coffee cost .07¢ or a .08¢ a lb. We would get 26 or 30 lbs. at a time. There was no such thing as white sugar then. Brown sugar was all we had—it was very cheap, but I don't remember the price of it. You bought your supplies at a General Merchandise store not at a Grocery Store, because the only thing sold in Grocery stores then was Whiskey and some Lager Beer. For the best brand of Whiskey was \$1.00, Wild Cat Whiskey .50¢ a gallon.

I married Fanny Anderson in 1870. She lived one-half mile East of Pleasant Valley Cemetery, North of Sugar Loaf Mt.

We had eleven children whose names are as follows,

James T. Barnes	Dead	Born 10Mi.Hartfort,Ark.
Nancy Ellen "	"	" Salt Lake Prairie.
Dora B "	"	" " " "
Della Wilson "	Living	" " " "
J. A. "	Living in Poteau,	Born in Gilmore.

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Joseph Milburn Barnes	Living	Born in Gilmore.
Suse Barnes	Dead	" " "
Mary "	"	" " "
Ida "	"	" " "
Ada "	"	" " "
Pear Vest	"	Living in Poteau, " "

The mother of my children, Fanny Anderson, was born in Missouri in 1853, and came to a farm south of Hasket City in 1863. She went to her first school at Pleasant Valley in 1865. Her first teacher was a Choctaw Indian woman, and the next was John Clark. The school house was a log cabin type. It had split log seats with the round part turned down, holes bored in it and legs drove in the holes. We also wrote with slate pencils and slates. We had Websters Blue-back Spelling Book.

MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR

There were four leaders whom I remember, Chili McIntosh, maybe a Cherokee Indian, Jack McCurtain, Choctaw, Stanwatie and Cooper a White man, all Rebel leaders. I think the Chief Commander over the army of the territory was named Barnes.

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When Father lived in Sugar Loaf Valley, he lived close to a fellow named Gunningham Crawford, who ran a steam saw mill about one and one-half miles North of Old Hartford, Arkansas. He also had negro slaves. The Federals were coming one day, so a bunch of Rebels got their Cap and Ball Muzzle Loaders and met them at Oak Hill. They defeated the Federals, then in about two weeks the southerners came back home. Crawford was creased in the middle of the forehead about the hairline; he got well though. After that Crawford changed his tune and decided to go North, so he left. "They shot him into the Union."

Six hundred Federals were camped on Hazard Prairie about 14 miles south of Ft. Smith. I was about 14 or 15 years old and small for my age. I was to see my Uncle John Barnes, who lived there. My Uncle John and some more fellows whose names I remember were The Johnson, Jonathan Glenn, I just don't remember any of their other names, but anyway, they were hiding out in the timber and hills from the Rebels, and would slip into the house to get something to eat. One morning, they slipped into the house and

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my aunt Polly Barnes fixed them some breakfast-this was just about daylight. They told me to go out on the porch and watch and see if I could see any one, and if I seen anyone, to come in and tell them. While they were eating breakfast, I saw a string of Rebels coming down the hill on the North side of the field. I ran to my Uncle and said, "I see a bunch of Rebels coming yonder." The men made a break for the brush. Jonathan Glenn ran up the road to the West to cut into the brush and, as he did not see some of the Rebels, they got him. The others got away. They brought him on down to the house, then went on down to Flem Johnson's house about 200 yards from Uncle John's house. Flem had the Pneumonia and was expected by everyone to die. Rebels carried Flem out of his bed in the house and set him up against a tree and shot him to death. This was a part of Jack McCurtain 's Choctaw Army (Rebels), about 1500 in number.

Jack McCurtain was a brother to Greene and Ed McCurtain. The Rebels came to where the Federals were camped, at about daylight. I heard a shot, while I stood on the front porch,

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then a steady fire. The Federals were in bed, they came out in their night clothes, with their guns. The Rebels killed lots of Federals. I do not know how many and lots of Rebels were killed, too. There was about 45 minutes of fighting there. Across the Prairie there were more Federals camped, they had the Artillery. They heard the firing and just as soon as they could get their big guns hooked up, came running. The Rebels had all gone but had to leave in such a hurry that they had to leave their dead at the Federal camp.

I went down there after the battle was over. Some of the Federal with the Artillery came while I was there at the scene of the battle. Some of the Federals with the artillery were Cherokee Indians, the white soldiers called the Cherokees, "Pin Indians," I do not know why they called them that, though. The "Pin" Indian cut a patch of scalp about the size of the palm of their hand off of the top of the dead Rebels head, taking the scalp with them.

After scalping the Rebels, the Federals dug a ditch wide enough to hold a man and about three feet deep and made ready to bury the Rebels. They took the Federal dead somewhere back

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North to bury them. The Rebels had home made wool felt hats. The Federals took these hats and dipped them in the water and put them on a post or stake and stretched the crowns to three or four feet in height, then they took the hats and placed them over the dead Rebels' faces that were lined up in the ditch and filled the ditch up with dirt. The tips of the crowns of the hats could be seen after the ditch was filled. The object of the hats was to keep the dirt out of their faces. The bodies were wrapt in blankets. This was at "Hazard Prairie." The Federals went back to Ft. Smith a short time later to blockade the town to keep the Rebels out. The General's name was, I think, Thayer, of the Federal Army at Ft. Smith.

I remember Federal Judge Parker, he was in charge of crimes committed in the Indian Territory, between Indians and Whites. By this I mean, if an Indian killed a White or a White killed an Indian it came up before Judge Parker, but if one Indian killed another Indian it was up to the Tribal law. Every one dreaded to be brought up before this old Judge Parker, because he was very severe with offenders.

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The old Iron Posts on the Arkansas and Indian Territory line were put in to settle an argument over how far East the I.T. land went.

West of Old Hartford was a Grocery store (Grog Store), this Store was about 2 or 3 miles from Old Hartford and the Arkansas, and I. T. Line ran about 20 feet on the west side of the building.

An old man owned it, named George Foster. One night in 1861, a bunch of Choctaws from Indian Territory, came over to this Grocery Store and got drunk and got to fighting. One Indian, whose name was Pack Sweeney cut another Indian's throat and killed him. (his name was Cumby). The bunch, after the throat cutting, left to go back to the Indian Territory. They left the dead Cumby with his jugular vein cut, on the front porch of the Grocery store. I saw him the next morning when I went down there. The I.T. law could not bother Sweeney because he killed this other Indian in Arkansas and not in the I. T. after the killing. So the Ark. Officers just waited till Sweeney came back into Arkansas. Not long after the killing Sweeney came across the line into Arkansas and they got him.

They brought him past our house, when they got him. They were taking him to Greenwood, as this was the countyseat. There they sentenced him to the penitentiary. He was turned loose later to join the Rebel Army.

I, James Robert Barnes, and my Father, Joseph Barnes, were Charter Members of the Masonic Lodge, called Mashulatubby Lodge No. 13, about one and one-half miles north-west of Kullychabe. Martin James, a Choctaw, was also a charter member.

Joseph Barnes Father	Born	1828
Sarah Elizabeth	Barnes (second Wife)	born, 1839
Joseph Barnes Father	Died	" Sept. 13, 1895.
(Joseph Barnes' children by Nancy Gofourth.)		
James R. V Barnes	born	May 14, 1849
Mary Jane Barnes	"	Dec. 10, 1851
William T. Barnes	"	Sept. 30, 1854
(Joseph Barnes' children by Sarah Elizebeth Tucker.)		
Nancy E. Barnes	Born	May 22, 1861
Josephine Barnes	"	Jul 6 21, 1863
Patience Barnes	"	Dec. 25, 1865
Edward Z. Barnes	"	May 23, 1869
John C. Barnes	"	Nov. 25, 1870
Lewis M. Barnes	"	Jan. 18, 1872

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Daniel N. Barnes	Born	July 1, 1876
(Sons of James Robert Barnes by Fanny Anderson)		
John A. Barnes	Born	June 8, 1898
James T. Barnes	"	Oct. 28, 1870

This record I, Marvin Rowley, Copied out of an old Bible. The Bible belonged to Joseph Barnes when he used to preach. The name of it is "The Peerless Edition of the Parallel Bible." It was by the Historical Publishing Co., St. Louis Missouri, Philidelphis Pa., San Francisco Cal. Cost \$25.00 with reduction to Preachers.

I, James Robert Barnes stayed about four or five years at Salt Lake Prairie after moving from Old Hartford, then moved on Nail creek buying a lease on a place from a man named Dobbs. Stayed there about two years, and sold the lease to Isaac Napair. Moved to a place one mile NW of Gilmore, on Gap creek, and bought a lease for \$300.00, from John Mills. This land was partly improved when I got it. It belonged to John Durant, a full-blood Choctaw Indian. I then sold the lease to Bill Page, a Choctaw Indian. I stayed here till Statehood.

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About 1909, I was Postmaster at Gilmore, Okla. I held this job and ran a Grocery store together for about 12 years. Went out of business and stayed there a little while and in 1932 came to Poteau and have lived here since.

I, Mrs. James R. Barnes, used to spin and wove jeans, counter-panes, coverlids for beds, lintsey, cotton cloth, cloth to make underclothes, knit gloves, stockings, socks, and suspenders.

We always cooked on a Fireplace, as we had no stove. We cooked with skillet and lids and pots made of potmetal. We dried beef on scaffold or by a fire. We also dried peaches, apples, grapes, black-berries, and jerked venison.

DYE

Take the inner bark of Blackjack tree, boil up about four or five gallons, take out bark when boiled good. Put in two or three table spoonfuls of Copper as while hot, boil for a few minutes and then put in clothes. Makes a dark Purple color.

Walnut bark used as above makes a brown color. Red Oak used as above makes a purple. Indigo weeds boil and put madder about 10 tablespoons full in four or five gallons of solution. Dye when hot, makes a Pale Blue color.

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Polecat weeds boiled and set with copperas as in using Blackjack bark, make a Purple color.

Log Wood, buy at store, pulverize about 1 ounce, boil in about four gallons of water, put in 1 table--
spoon full of table salt, then dye. Makes the color of
black.