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Field Worker: Hazel B. Green
May 4, 1937

Interview with Frank B. Tucker
Hugo, Okla.

Date of birth-----1877.

Place of birth-----Two miles South of Hugo, Okla

Father-----Shelton Tucker.

Place of birth-----Some place in Indian Territory.

Mother-----Mary Floyd.

Place of birth-----Choctaw Nation Mississippi.

Father was buried at Goodland cemetery, and Mother was
buried at Spring Chapel cemetery, about 1 mile south of Hugo,
Oklahoma, beside her second husband, J. J. Bearden.

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK B. TUCKER.
HUGO, OKLAHOMA.

FIELD WORKER HAZEL B. GREENE.
May 4, 1937

Robert Jones was a half-blood Choctaw Indian, and a graduate of The Old Choctaw Academy, Scott County, Ky. He owned farms all up and down Red river, thousands of acres in each farm, with stores and gins on each farm. It has been said that he was the first operator of "chain stores". He owned about 28 stores in all, and had white men to operate them. The overseers on his farms were usually white men. One farm of about 10,000 acres southwest of Idabel was called Rocy Comfort; another south of Idabel was Shawneetown, 7000 acres; Lake West farm is 9 miles south of Boswell, comprising about 6000 acres; the Hog Wallow farm of about 5000 acres is south of Bennington.

Because these farms were so near the river, his wife could seem to have no good health, so he told her to select a place for a home and he'd build there. She selected a place four miles southeast of the present town of Hugo, Oklahoma. A hill profusely covered with wild roses, and on this hill he built a perfect mansion and named it "Rose Hill".

My mother, Mary Floyd, was housekeeper at Rose Hill for

several years. She probably came with them from Mississippi. She was what was considered an old maid in those days. She was about 30 years old when she met and married my father, Shelton Tucker, who was a machinist and had come to Rose Hill to operate the steam gin on that farm. I understand that some of the gins and grist mills on the other farms were operated by horse power. Oh Yes, there were grist mills on each farm. Solomon Hotema was the minister who married my parents in 1875.

I can see Rose Hill in my mind's eye. It was a large two story frame house, with tall ridged columns supporting the porch, which extended all along the front of the house; and they had the first transoms over the door that I ever saw.

Mother said that some of the material in the house was imported from France. Just what this material was, I do not recall now. We visited there frequently. I remember the house faced the south, a walk of native stone, lined on either side by cedar trees, which are standing today, led the way to the native stone steps. To the south of the house was as fine an orchard as I ever saw. The most delicious fruit, and all from seedling trees.

A wide hall, a room within itself, divided the two large front rooms. At each end of the house were large chimneys of native stone. Immediately back of the hall, extended to the

north, two rooms. A stack chimney of native stone afforded fire places for both rooms above and below stairs, as did also the chimneys at either end of the house.

Once when I was 22 years old I went up in the attic, and saw lots and lots of old records that I wish had been preserved for history's sake. One was a bill of lading for \$3500.00 worth of cotton, that Mr. Jones had shipped to New Orleans.

He owned two steam boats and aside from the large amount of commodities produced on his own farms, he bought all the surplus salt, leather, cotton, hides, etc, from all over the country and shipped it to New Orleans. He had a large store and warehouse down on the river, from which point the steamers started, and no doubt had them all along the river adjoining his farms.

Robert Jones, of Rose Hill farm, owned so many slaves he did not know them all, and did not know how much money he was worth.

He was reputed to be the first fullblood Choctaw Indian millionaire.

It was said that the price of cotton was so low in the time of the Civil War that he saved 4500 bales of it and later sold it for \$1.25 per pound.

One of the provisions of one of the treaties between the Choctaw Indians and the U. S. Government was that they should be paid their annuity payments in gold.

Once when a payment was in progress at Old Mayhew, North of Boswell, they ran out of gold and went down and borrowed \$7000.00 from Robert Jones.

He attributed his success to being able to judge human nature. He said he was never fooled in any man.

He had at least two daughters, I do not recall any more, tho perhaps there were more. One was named Mary Frances, she married a Randell. The other one married a Love, and Harry Love of Idabel is a grandson of hers. One of the reasons I remember Mary Frances' name so well was because Mother talked of her more than any of the others. Perhaps they were nearly of an age. Mother nursed her through smallpox. One of her daddy's steam boats was named for her, the Mary Frances.

There was a rumor of "haunts" at Rose Hill. Mysterious noises were heard, at nights mostly. But one day Mother opened a long unused closet and routed out a family of skunks which had bedded in there for several months, having worked their way up from under the floor.

That exploded the "ghost story".

In the back yard at Rose Hill I remember seeing two immense wash pots, either one would hold 300 gallons. They had been used to make salt in.

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My father and mother were both white. Father was an intermarried citizen by a prior marriage, and thought he had a "right" to land in this country till the Dawes Commission came in and he could not enroll then, because they said he forfeited his right as an intermarried citizen when he married a white woman. So he had to buy the place they had settled and thought they owned. It is what is now known as the old Bearden place, 2 miles southeast of Hugo. Father and mother married in 1875, and after father's death she married J. J. Bearden. Hence the name. I live there now, and have found it very interesting. I have in my possession several spear and arrow heads of flint rock which I have plowed up.

There was evidently an old cemetery on the place, though I saw no sign of it until I plowed up a few bones, some pottery and two tomahawks, one of them in a perfect state of preservation and the other broken. They are of flint rock. I have had some of the relics 25 years. I plowed up two little earthen pots. One is broken now. They would hold about a half gallon.

We have now, and in use, a wash pot that some of the LeFlore Indians brought from Mississippi. The old fashioned kind with bulging sides and ears at the top to insert hooks into.

After leaving Rose Hill and settling on a farm of his own, Father still worked as a machinist when he could, and was engaged in putting up a gin and grist mill for Dr. Miller at Roebuck Lake, when his negro helper killed him. He really never knew why. It is supposed that father went to the negro's home to recover some stolen tools. He is buried at Goodland cemetery. Then in about two years Mother married J. J. Bearden. He died in 1922, and she in 1928. She is buried at Spring Chapel cemetery beside him.

It was about 2 miles from home to Spring Chapel school. It was a district school for white and Indian children. The Indians went free, the whites had to pay something like \$1.00 per month tuition. It was established in about 1883, and served for children for many miles to the north and east, some of them came as far as 7 miles to school. Then we had only about three months of school each year.

Spring Chapel was a two-story frame building and the upper part was used for a Masonic hall for the Doaksville lodge. Why or when it was moved from Doaksville I do not know. But I do remember some of the prominent members at Spring Chapel. Among them were, Levi Spring, William Spring, "Uncle" Bill Oakes, and Ellis Shoat. The first Masonic funeral I ever saw was that of

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Jim Spring. That building burned and was rebuilt about 1898.

The Bearden Springs school was established in about 1889.

Then Edgewood was established and when Edgewood school burned about ten years ago, we tore down the 1898 Spring Chapel building and consolidated the three schools and called it Bearden-Spring School.

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TUCKER, GEORGE. INTERVIEW BY BART W. ...

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WORKS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
Tenn. Power & Light Co. Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Jennie Selfridge,

Report made on (date) February 17, 1947

1. Name George Tucker

2. Job Title Electrician

3. Residence ...

4. I.D. No. ... 954

5. Other info ...

6. Date of Birth ...

7. ...

8. ...

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