

CARNES, JAMES

INTERVIEW

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INTERVIEW WITH JAMES CARNES
Jumbo, Oklahoma.
Born June 12, 1874, Adel, Oklahoma.

FATHER'S NAME-HARRIS CARNES
Born Adel, Oklahoma
MOTHER'S NAME-EDALINE CARNES
Born Adel, Oklahoma

I was born near Adel, Oklahoma, which was then
Jackfork County, Indian Territory, on June 12, 1874.

My father's name was Harris Carnes and my mother's
name was Edaline Carnes. They both lived at my birth
place until their death. My grandparents came from
Mississippi, I have been told. I never saw them as
they both died before I was born. My father was not
in the Civil War I guess for he never did say anything
about it to us nor tell us anything about the war. Of
course, we heard lots about the war from other Indians
but not from my father.

Adel, where I was born, was in a valley between two
big mountains and a small creek ran down this valley
called Jackfork Creek. When I was a boy this part of
the country was wild; there were no farms nor anything
there; the Indians had small patches which they raised a
few things to eat, but it was not over five or six acres
in cultivation. They did not need much of a farm anyway.

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for the grass and other stuff such as acorns and cane was plenty in the bottoms and on the ridges, so we did not have to feed our stock corn at all. They stayed fat all the year around. So what corn we raised was for our bread.

There were not many Indians in this part of the country. A few families were living in this valley at the time my father and mother lived there. There are no Indians in there now, all have left there, most of them have died, very few have moved away from there alive.

In this valley there were lots of cattle, hogs and ponies everywhere, without being molested by any one. In the fall the Indians would get together and round up the stock. Each one would brand his stock and turn them loose to roam the prairie until they got ready to brand again. At that time there were no markets for stock of any kind, so the stock just ran out and went wild. Of course they would kill a beef once in a while for meat, but not often, and they would kill hogs but they never killed many of them, just enough to make lard for their use. There was plenty of wild game in the woods that

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they could kill for meat. In this valley there were lots of deer, turkey, and squirrel and there were lots of fish in the creeks, and some bear in the mountains. These bears would come to the house sometimes and get a good size hog and carry them away. And talk about wolves! The country was full of them; in fact, the country was full of every kind of wild game.

My mother had a spinning wheel and a weaver. We raised some cotton for this purpose and she would get us kids to pick the seed out with our hands; then she would card it in rows and then she would put it in this wheel and make a big ball of thread; then she would put it in the weaver and make cloth. I don't know just how she would get the thread in the weaver, I used to watch her but I have forgotten how it was done. It has been a long time since this was done. She made our socks and breeches and mittens for the winter, and sold some of them. She would make them for other Indians, when they wanted them made, and she would dye them but I don't remember what she used for dye.

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Mother did not make any pottery but I used to see an old woman make it out of red clay mixed with some other kind of mud. She would make pieces as large as those that are bought in the stores of today. She would make them and put them in the sun and let bake for several days. When it got hard she would smooth it up and lay it aside for a few days before she would put it away. She would make pipes out of clay, some fancy ones that she sold to the men.

I don't know where my father traded before the railroad came through Atoka. After it came through we did most of our trading at Atoka, and some times at Many Springs, where there was a little store that had been put up by an old white man named Fisher. It was called Fisher's Old Stand. We traded at the store there for a long time. It changed hands several times but it was always known as Fisher's Old Stand. It is now called Daisy, Oklahoma. This white man, who put up the first store there, has been dead for a long time. He was the first white man in the country at that time that I know of and he was a good white man.

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My mother made meal out of corn by beating in a block just as other Indian women did. It was not easy to make the meal out of corn like they used to make it. She would make hominy and bread and shuck bread and several other things out of corn, We did not have much flour those days, and what flour we got we had to be saving with, so it would last a little longer, for it was too far to go after flour every time we got out.

Our District Court was between the Boggys. I served on the jury there several times, and I was also the clerk of the court. While I was serving as court clerk I saw a negro get whipped for stealing a hog. He got fifty lashes on his bare back. He was the only one I saw get a whipping while I was there. There had been several Indians got whippings for stealing small things. They sure would not get things that were worth over twenty-five dollars for it was 100 lashes on bare back for such offenses. All under that was only 30 to 50 lashes on the bare back.

Our County Court was at Many Springs which was named after some springs there at the foot of the hills. That

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court was to examine those who was arrested for committing crimes and the Judge of the County court would set the bond at so much; then some Indians would go thrs bond to appear at the next district court, when a trial would be had. A good many of them would go home without any bond. They just told him to appear at the next district court, which was held in August each year, and they would be there without fail and stand trial for the crime, whatever it might be.

I played Indian Ball some, not much, I remember that we had a game with Coal County, Tobaksi County and Jackfork County in which I played. Men and women bet on the game, and we sure did have a hard game. There were a few fights in that game, and we won the game, and then we had a few fights after the game, but it was not much for there no one killed in the fight.

I did not attend school much. I went to the Academy but did not learn much. I can speak a little English and read and write a little, but I don't understand all of it, that is to get up and make a speech or anything of the kind but can speak enough to make trades with a white man. I can speak and write in my own language pretty well. I did

not go to school very long at that time; we had to get the consent from the County Judge as to how long we could go; so I, being up in years, did not get but a term or two, and that is all the schooling I got.

I am an Indian, not a full blood, about three quarters I guess; but I sure can speak the Choctaw language fluently. I have lived here always, and have attended the Indian meetings and also the cries. We used to have some good meetings at that time for there were lots of Indians in the country then, but now all but a few of them are gone- very few full-blood Indians here now. I live about 20 miles northeast from Antlers, Oklahoma, I don't know what clan I belong to. I never did know because it was not told to me in the past when my father was living.

NOTE: Johnson Hampton's interviews are typically Indian and no changes are made in the editing.

Editor.