

EDWARDS, ELSIE

SECOND INTERVIEW

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Billie Byrd,  
Field Worker.  
August 25, 1937.

Interview with Elsie Edwards  
Weleetka, Oklahoma

I am a freedman of Ke-cho-ba-da-gee town (tulwa) and am 84 years old. I was born three miles south of what is now Crowder City in McIntosh County. My father was called Tustanuggee Jimboy but his real name was Tustanuggee Emarthla and because he was mixed blood Indian and negro he did not serve as a slave. His father was named Jim Topler and there were other children whose names were Bob, Joshua and Phebe.

I have a pot that I cooks my meal in it, yes sah, the same pot my grandmother used to cook her meals in the old country (ta lo fa chule, meaning back in the country of Alabama). That there pot has been shown at almost all the state fairs of the state pretty near every year. Let me tell you something about that pot:

My father, Tustanuggee, has said his mother told that when they was coming to this country, they were coming up in a ship on the Mississippi River when another ship busted into and wrecked the ship they were on. When it couldn't be controlled, it started sinking and floating down in the current.

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My grandmother took that pot, busted out the window of the room and tied her two children, Matilda and Sam, on each side of her and placed the pot on her head. By crawling through the window she swam to shore. She said that every once in a while, she'd be hit by a body floating down stream with the current.

There are children of our family who are buried up around Fort Gibson or on the banks of the Arkansas River and some are buried close to Okmulgee.

My father was a Baptist and a member of the Fountain Baptist Church but later on he became a member of the Alabama Baptist Church. (This Indian Church is one mile northwest of the present Weleetka, Oklahoma.) It is in this same locality that the grave of Tustanuggee Jimboy is located in what is the burying grounds of the Canard and Scott families.