

### **Notice of Copyright**

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

### **Citing Resources from the Western History Collections**

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

INDEX CARDS

Oklahoma Territory

Caddo Hotel

Reno City

Fort Reno

El Reno

Living Conditions

Schools

BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Anna R. Barry

This report made on (date) July 22 1937

1. Name Charles Brandley

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 239 North L Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 10 Year 1867

5. Place of birth Bazaar, Kansas

6. Name of Father Albin Brandley Place of birth Switzerland

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Mary Sharp Brandley Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for instructions and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_.

Anna R. Barry,  
Interviewer,  
July 22, 1937.

Interview with Charles Brandley  
239 North L Street  
El Reno, Oklahoma.

I was born at Bazaar, Kansas, February 10, 1867. Here I spent my early life. On July 4, 1889, I arrived in Oklahoma City, coming by rail on the Santa Fe. That evening late, I caught a load of freight coming to El Reno, it was a glorious afternoon. I was very blue and felt much alone, and as we traveled along, the little cabin-like farmhouses that every now and then stood up against the skyline made me feel lonesome, and the jolting of the heavy wagon made me tired and by six o'clock I was so hungry that my ribs ached.

My first work in Canadian County was working for Mrs. Morse, helping to build the old Caddo Hotel in Reno City. The lumber for this hotel was hauled from Oklahoma City. This building was a three story frame building, but before it was completely finished, El Reno began to develop on this side of the North Canadian, and the owners decided that they should cast their lot with the new city. During the winter of 1889-1890, the hotel was started on its journey to the new location. A special bridge was constructed

- 2 -

to move it across the river and the guests resided in the hotel during the entire trip. For some time it sat in the middle of the river, but finally was started moving again and finally, when spring arrived, it safely rested on its new foundation, which was located at the corner of Rock Island and Wade Streets, where the Magnolia Filling Station now is located.

The Caddo Hotel was the home of all types of guests, from Government officials and high collared traveling salesmen (or drummers) to common laborers, also prospectors, not to mention a few of the current run of desperadoes. The Caddo Hotel was operated by a widow, Mrs. Morse, with her brother, a Mr. Mack, assisting. I received one dollar and twenty-five cents per day for my work on this hotel. I then went to work at Fort Reno, at eighteen dollars per month, I hauled about two loads of wood a week from Council Grove (which is near Oklahoma City) to Fort Reno, I also hauled hay to the fort from the prairies about seven miles southeast of El Reno, and during the fall of 1890, I made several trips south to get corn; these corn fields were located about where the town of Chickasha now stands, and the government paid twelve cents per bushel for this corn.

- 3 -

In December, 1890, I went back to Kansas and stayed until February, 1891. During this time I had bought a team, wagon and harness, and with two more fellows started for El Reno. We came by Caldwell, Kansas, to Hennessey then on to Okarche, and on into El Reno. How I enjoyed that trip. The section roads were not opened at that time, and we had to cross the long pastures. This time I went to work for Thomas Jensen, working on his claim which was located near where the General Mills stands, I worked building fences, dug a well, helped break sod, and plant small patches of wheat and for this work I received thirteen dollars per month, room and board. Mr. Jensen had put in a few small patches of wheat which was threshed by William (Bill) Darlington who at this time was an Indian farmer among the Indians. This threshing machine was owned by the Government and was drawn by horses. This wheat made from twelve to sixteen bushels per acre.

On January 1, 1893, I married Miss Martha Sparks. After our marriage we moved onto my wife's claim in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Country. This claim was located four miles south and four miles west of El Reno. Our first little home was a little frame building, eleven by fourteen feet, with two windows and a door. We worked hard the first few

- 4 -

years on our claim; we took great pride in our little home. We were always planning something to make it more comfortable and beautiful. Our furniture consisted of two beds, a little three-legged cook stove, a gallon syrup bucket served as the other leg for this stove. Our little home-made table with the white flour sack table cover, stood over in one corner of the room, spotlessly clean and around this table stood two chairs, and scattered over the room were several boxes which served as chairs. On our white pine floor, laid several oval shaped rag rugs, on the walls you could find several large framed pictures of members of our family. Under the large oak tree which stood in the yard, stood the wash bench with several tubs and a wash board on it, while not far away, sat the black iron kettle, where the clothes were boiled on wash day. About twenty-five feet to the west was our well; this was a dug well, rocked up, over it was a frame from which hung a pulley and rope which made it much easier to draw our water. Over the place stood several little buildings, the little plank barn, the small hen house which was made from scraps of lumber and tin. This may sound like an uncomfortable place to rear

- 5 -

a family, but here I spent the happiest days of my life.

On October 1, 1893, we had a terrible rain and hail storm which did much damage to our crops, killed a number of chickens, and the rain kept pouring in sheets that night, the roof of our house had been damaged until it leaked like a sieve and I had every pan on the place catching water in the house, even to the old big bread pan, and the two wash tubs. As the rain and storm continued, I became more worried, for we were expecting a new addition to the family. At last, the only thing I knew to do was to move one of the beds into the dugout and about three o'clock that morning we were the proud parents of a fine baby girl, now Mrs. Charlie Tye, who resides in El Reno today.

Our first school building in this neighborhood was an old store building which had been moved from Reno City to El Reno. Later, it was moved into this community to serve as a school house. This school house was indeed a community center. It was very seldom that we visited during the week days, but Sunday morning always found every family up early, the mothers up early combing and braiding the girls' hair, the boys always in a hurry to

- 6 -

get their wood in and the calves fed so they could proudly put on their knee pants, white blouses, long black stockings and high top button shoes, to get off to church. They came from every direction for miles around in wagons, on horseback, in buggies and spring wagons and on foot and here at this church we spent many happy hours. We had literaries, singing school, revival meetings and large basket dinners. Our first preacher at this little school was Preacher Brown.

For several years we came to El Reno to get our mail and sometimes if the weather was bad, it would be two weeks and several times it has been a month or six weeks when we had no mail delivery.

During very severe weather, I think it was about 1896, they got up a petition for a rural mail route and today I laugh to think how foolish I was for I did everything I could against getting that mail route. I thought that was the most foolish piece of business I had ever heard tell of, hiring some one to carry the mail to people.

On our claim I farmed like all the other early day settlers, the first year or two breaking out small patches of sod, planting corn and cotton. We always managed to sow a patch of wheat so we could bring it to El Reno, have it ground into flour for our winter's flour. We always

- 7 -

raised lots of turnips, pumpkins and melons.

We took great pride in our home and families. We always helped a neighbor or friend in distress or need, and no one ever came to our homes around meal time that he wasn't asked to sit down to the meal, regardless if he or a friend. was a stranger going through the country. We would also ask him to spend the night. When traveling along, going to town or church, we always stopped to chat with everyone we met.

In later years we built us a nice comfortable home, and other buildings, planted a nice orchard, set out trees and flowers along the walks, and here is where we reared our six children. My children are all married and have families of their own, but we still like to talk over the happy times we had when living on our claim.

My wife died several years ago.