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BABBS, I. J.

INTERVIEW.

#9258

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INTERVIEW.

Form A-^{#9258}(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) November 15, 1937.

1. Name I. J. Babbs,

2. Post Office Address Geary, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) West 6th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 1 Year 1855

5. Place of birth Effingham County, Illinois.

6. Name of Father James Madison Babbs Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father Farmer.

7. Name of Mother Mary Elizabeth Babbs Place of birth Indiana.

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 suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached Four.

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Augusta H. Custer,
Investigator.
November 15, 1937.

Interview with I. J. Babbs,
Geary, Oklahoma. West 6th Street.

I loaded my family into a covered wagon the last week in March, 1900. We drove through from Effingham County, Illinois; we were six weeks on the road arriving here in Geary on the 6th of May, 1900. Geary had a few stores and some homes and business houses. /

I came out here with the intention of making a drawing when the Caddo country opened. Every other strip of this state had been opened with a run but the system had been changed. I leased some Indian land from Pat Malloy. I never had any trouble with Indian leases except when I first came. I cut up some of the fallen dry wood on the place and Pat Malloy came along and wanted me to pay him for it. I did not want to as the wood would have lain there and rotted; I did not pay him and he did not say much more about it.

We came out here with the intention of returning to Illinois in a few years but the longer we stayed the

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better we liked this country. We finally gave up the idea of going back to Illinois to live.

On the Indian lease was a one-room box house; we were quite crowded and we had two boys and a girl. We had one bedstead and my wife made beds on the floor each night for the children as long as we lived there, which was two years.

Our nearest neighbors were George Cox and his family, Al and Ed Cooksey and their families.

We were all financially in the same boat and had to make money any way we could to get food to eat but I did not resort to the method of one of my neighbors of trying to counterfeit. This counterfeiting got him a sentence of five years in the penitentiary.

Pete Lough was one of our neighbors also; he called himself a doctor and when anyone was really sick they sent for him but as he had no diploma he was just a "quack" and could not have practised if we had had any

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laws at that time. But one thing he did for me was to cure my rheumatism. I could hardly walk and he gave me some white powder.

I was a carpenter and came into town and helped to build many of the homes that are standing today and some that have been torn down. The money I received from this and from wood that I cut and hauled to Geary for \$1.50 per cord kept us in some of the necessities of life.

I have voted in Geary at every election with the exception of one year when I voted at the High Prairie district. I have never voted anything but the Republican ticket.

Many years ago I helped to organize the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and my wife belonged to the Rebekahs; we had many good times at the social affairs of this order. I helped to initiate many of the oldest members who are in Geary today.

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There were many more sand plums then than now. They have been killed out by the drouth, pasturing the land and by the prairie fires. We were very fond of them and would make preserves and dry them to make pies in the Winter. My wife would take the plums and when they were ripe she would remove the seeds with her hands as we had no utensil for that purpose in those days. The pulp would be thick and rich. She would put it in meat platters and set it in the hot sun to dry. She would put this dried pulp away in clean flour sacks and in Winter she would get a portion of it the night before and let it soak over night and then sweeten and add a small amount of flour and fill pies. This filling is equal to fresh plum pies.

I always went to meeting when I was within reach.

My children went to Richland to school two terms.