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BREWER, O. H.

INTERVIEW

#4558

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

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#4558

BREWER, O. H. INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ruth Lee Gamblin

This report made on (date) June 23, 1937

1. Name Mr. O. H. Brewer

2. Post Office Address Frederick, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 601 North 7th

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 20 Year 1865

5. Place of birth Kansas

6. Name of Father Holden Brewer Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Martha Brewer Place of birth _____

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 4.



An Interview with Mr. O. H. Brewer, Frederick.
By - Ruth Lee Gamblin, Field Worker.
June 23, 1937.

I was born in Kansas in the year 1865 and lived in this state until 1901, when I came to the Territory with my wife. I tried to get some land but did not succeed so I rented a farm and we tried to "get by" the best way we could. My wife would take care of the farm and I would pick up jobs wherever I could.

It was in digging the first well for Frederick that I almost lost my life. I am the lone local survivor from the municipal well disaster October 28, 1913, which took a toll of five dead and two injured. Mont A. Dean, John Waggoner, John O'Dell, George W. Wells and Robert Willson were killed, and Alvah Dean, now of Los Angeles, and myself were injured. All these were in the well at the time of the sudden cave in. Charles Wages and John Langford were above ground.

I have been more or less a cripple since the accident. I received \$1,000 accident insurance and my hospital expenses were paid until January 1, 1914. I invested the \$1,000 in my home where I now live.

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Mont Dean, his son Alvah, John Waggoner, Odell Wells, Robert Willson and I were at work in the well. Wells, Alvah and I were on the lowest platform. Waggoner was on the east side under the platform and Willson on the left side. We were at work filling up a hole underneath that had fallen out too much by the quicksand being sucked out. Mont Dean had just started out of the well when something drew my attention and I looked north toward the wall. I saw it go down and said to myself, "Goodbye! We are gone!" The next thing I knew I was in the water. It all happened before you could bat an eye. By my right hand I pulled myself up until my head came out of the water. Then I built a platform with loose pieces floating on the water and worked myself on top. Then I looked best I could and I heard Alvah Dean say, "My God, I'm fastened in the timber." I asked him where, and he put his head down under the water where his foot was. A big steel beam had fallen from the top and his foot was between it and two pieces of six by six timber.

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I asked him if he had a saw if he could cut his foot loose and he said "Yes". Then we began yelling. They answered us above. Jack Langford came down on a rope with a saw and I found a place on the north wall where he could poke it in to me. I gave it to Alvah. The water had gone down and Alvah was about to saw the six by six timbers when I said to him, "For God's sake don't!" because these timbers were holding off the weight.

Langford said that Wages had gone to his house to phone and that people would soon be here to help us out. In a little while Mr. Zolinger came on down to us and found a hole close to the west wall where he could see us. He said, "Brewer, you look cute all humped up."

John Steinbock, S. H. Houk, Bill Reed and Dutch Gordon also came down. A rope was placed around my body and Zolinger found a place to pull me out. I was kind of pushed from behind and pulled up a ladder and I also helped myself. I kept my nerve till I got to the top. I never was excited while down in the wall.

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My clothing and body were wringing wet when I was rescued; my left shoulder and left collarbone were broken, my abdomen bruised and most of my body was paralyzed from shock. I still go about by means of a cane.