

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Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.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For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.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.

BROWN, R. E.

INTERVIEW

4758

164

BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History - ~~State of Oklahoma~~

BROWN, R. E.

INTERVIEW

4758

Field Worker's name Jasper H. Mead

This report made on (date) July 9, 1937

1. Name R. E. Brown

2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Okla.

3. Residence address (Location) 627 Okla Ave

4. DATE OF BIRTH: at January Day 18 Year 1870

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father William Brown Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Age 45

7. Name of Mother Minerva Stout Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother age 36

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 1

Jasper H. Mead
Interviewer
July 9, 1937

Interview with
R. E. Brown
Chickasha, Okla.

I was born near Denison,, Texas, January 18, 1870. Until I was ten years old my father owned and operated a grocery store, butcher shop and a saloon combined in Dennison.

The Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians were located in the Territory just across Red River, and would cross at the Colbert Ferry and come to father's saloon and some way manage to get some one to buy them whiskey and take it back to the Territory. They also did a great deal of trading hides and other goods such as blankets and beaded moccasins for merchandice such as whiskey, tobacco, flour and other necessities.

When I was ten years old, we moved to Colbert, a small station on the M. K. & T. Railroad. This railroad was built in 1878, the year I was born.

My cousin, Lum Fielding, owned a ranch on the Territory side when the Railroad was built through the Territory. This ranch was called the Bird Ranch, so named because it

- 2 -

was bounded by Red River and shaped a great deal like a bird. Mr. Fielding called it the Duck Ranch.

Colbert was a small place two miles north of Colbert Ferry. It had only one store, one blacksmith shop and one wagon yard.

Our school was a small subscription school built of rough logs with the cracks chinked with clay. It had no floor and only two windows and one door. In one end of the building was a large stone fireplace. During the summer months while there was not much farm work to be done, people of the community cut wood to be burned in the fireplace during school months. The seats were without backs and were made by splitting a log and taking a broad ax and smoothing them up. Our books consisted of a Blue Back Speller and an arithmetic.

There was very little farming near Colbert. It was a good cow country and ranching was about all they did.

There were no fences in this country at this time and it was the finest grazing land in the country. In some places the prairie grass was waist high. It was well watered

- 3 -

by Red River, small lakes and creeks. All the water wells were dug wells, walled with native rock and were fine water.

Large herds of cattle came through here. They crossed the ford on Red River going north to Kansas to market. Sometimes it would take a half day for one of these herds to pass town.

There was lots of wild game at this time; deer, antelope, and plenty of turkey and small game such as quail, prairie chickens, squirrels and fur bearing animals.

The Indians lived almost entirely on wild game and the cattle they stole and those they were given. If a cow got sick or died from some disease all you had to do was notify some of the Indians and they would drag it off, even though it had been dead three days.

I have seen some tough times and I have seen some good ones, but if the younger generation of today had to live and do like we did, they would starve to death.