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Grant Foreman, Director
Hibbs, Field Worker
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An interview between Robert Galbreath, 2808 South Cincinnatti street, Tulsa, and Lawrence D. Hibbs, field worker, covering the early day experiences he had in Oklahoma and Indian Territory.

I was born on a farm near Circleville, Pickaway County, Ohio, on December 22, 1863, and lived there with my parents until I was twenty-one years old at which time I started west. This was is 1884. I came to Burnas, Kansas, and then from there I came on to El Dorado and then Augusta, Kansas, on my way to Oklahoma to join the Colony under Payne, but about the time I arrived at Augusta the Government had arrested Payne. This was in July, 1884. Mr. Payne's arrest changed my plans so I returned to Burnas, Kansas, and in the following fall I went back to Ohio. It was Jan. 8 or 9, 1889, I finally reached Oklahoma. I was on the M.K.&T. train going north and just as I crossed the South Canadian river at Eufaula, it was about sun-up and I heard loud

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talk and a great deal of noise so I got up and investigated and to my surprise learned the news of the passing of the bill the day before opening Oklahoma to homesteaders. Although the bill had not been signed, on the 2nd day of the following March President Grover Cleveland did sign this bill which was a great relief to the people. Going on through Muskogee and Vinita on this same trip I was deeply impressed with this country, but as I traveled along through Muskogee and Vinita I could hear the people commenting on the bill that had been passed the day before and the majority of them felt that it would never be signed by the President, but as I stated before it was signed on March the 2nd, 1889. After reaching Ohio and hearing that the President had signed the bill I became very restless and could hardly wait to get back to Oklahoma Territory for the run. While waiting in Ohio I formed a Colony of my own to bring with me back to Oklahoma Territory but due to the newspapers printing and cartooning the conditions out here, my people got scared and backed out of coming except my younger brother and myself. My brother and I left April 16 or 17th, 1889, and came on through and landed at Winfield,

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Kansas, and out-fitted ourselves there for the run into Oklahoma Territory. We left Winfield on about April 20, 1889, enroute to Buffalo Springs, central point on the southern line of the Cherokee strip and northern line of Oklahoma Territory. Later on after the run the Rock Island Railroad Co. built a railroad through Oklahoma Territory crossing at this point and locating a station there, now known as Bison. But at that time it was called Buffalo Springs. On Sunday evening April 21, 1889, the night before the run, we encountered the soldiers who were directing all of those who were to participate in the run the next day who were to start either from Orlando or Buffalo Springs as they would not permit camping on the border except at points. In centralizing the starting points at these two places there were at least 10,000 camped at Buffalo Springs that night before the run making a large sized city for the time, without any buildings. This centralizing was done to keep any one from

taking the advantage of the other fellow. Other starting points surrounding Oklahoma Territory were, intersection of Iowa and Kickapoo Reservation on Deep Fork river, Choctaw City on Pottawatomie Reservation on North Canadian river which was a very rich valley, another was at Purcell in the Chickasaw Nation Indian Territory on South Canadian river, another was at Ft. Reno in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation; also on the North Canadian river; and other starting points.

After arriving at Buffalo Springs Sunday evening and establishing our camp I had the opportunity the next morning to view and learn of some of the most noted frontiersmen of the old west. There were Buffalo hunters, Bronco busters and range riders and U. S. Deputy Marshals and Cow punchers from all up and down the buffalo and cattle ranges from Buffalo Gap, south of Abilene, Texas, to the Minnesota line and the Dakotas and you can term this aggregation of men, if there ever was such, a congress of

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rough riders of the ranges. The reason why I refer thus to these men and others that started from Buffalo Springs the morning of the run is that these men were horse back riders and in making this run they showed real horsemanship,

On the morning of April 22, 1889, about ten or eleven o'clock at Buffalo Springs the soldiers gave the orders to march as we had to go about two miles before reaching the Oklahoma territory and Cherokee strip border where the run was to start from. In the march were many covered wagons and other vehicles, including ox teams, this all in addition to the horse back riders. In the march about one half mile out of the camp site we routed a drove of Jack rabbits, a deer and coyote and a bunch of Grey Hounds that were in the march started chasing them and of course the people got excited and started to run after the dogs and this almost broke up the run. The soldiers had to resort to gun fire in order to get them settled down. If the soldiers had not been real trained men the march would have gotten out of control as it

took them the rest of the march to the border to get the citizens settled down. A few minutes before 12:00 o'clock noon the people were lined up by the soldiers to make the start and at exactly 12:00 noon the signal was given by firing a gun and the boys on horse back were the first to lead off, followed by covered wagons, vehicles and others on foot. My brother and myself got a good start and we held to the old Chisholm trail and held that until we reached what is now Hennessey, (the only land mark to identify this spot was the Mike Hennessey grave.) He had been captured by the Indians and burned at the stake and was buried at this place. Leaving off from the trail at this point we rode southwest to Turkey Creek, a distance of about one and half miles. Crossing over and coming into the Turkey Creek valley I proceeded to stake my claim of a 160 acres of land (my brother was too young to file on any land). Getting off my horse and driving my stake in, when "Lo and behold" a man stuck his head up from the bank of the creek and told me to move on. Seeing that he had a gun in his hand I hesitated for a moment, then spoke up, "how about it". Then another man stepped out from behind a tree with a Winchester rifle and said "pardner, move on!" I said, good naturedly "If there are two of you I had better move on"

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so I got back on my horse and started away, when one of them said, "fellow" and pointed up the valley, "do you see those people up yonder", (which were two men and one woman riding horse back the woman riding in a side saddle and wearing a red riding skirt). I said, "yes and what about it". He said, "they are coming to stake this right there" and pointed to the next claim, "so if you stake it before they get here it will be yours," which I did. The three people came on and inquired their way to Kingfisher and after we directed them they moved on. I pitched my wagon sheet on some poles and made a tent of it as my improvement and stayed there until late afternoon and then went back to camp at Dover which was on the north bank of the Cimarron river; this was a few miles north of the U.S. Land office at Kingfisher. I returned the next morning to my claim and found a man, his wife and family, a team of ponies, a covered wagon and a few chickens occupying my first stake. Due to my claim and the friendship of adjoining neighbors and homesteader I had no trouble in convincing the man that he was not the rightful

owner of the land and he finally admitted that he wasn't and surrendered possession, but before departing he said to me, "I have a wife and three children, ponies, covered wagon and four or five chickens and a little money and I would like to have this claim. What will you take for it?" I said, " friend, I have 160 acres here that I want". He said "I know but you are a young man and can get around. I will give you fifty dollars." So I studied it over for a little while and being pretty hard pressed for cash as I had done considerable traveling the past year and had spent considerable out-fitting myself for this run I decided to sell and told him I would take the fifty dollars. Thus I sold my first stake in the new Country.

This story will have to be continued as it is a long and varied experience that Mr. Galbreath has had in Oklahoma and Indian Territory "runs", but will give you a history of the Pioneer activities in business circles which will include the Pioneering of Oil and Gas production also this will give the Oil youths of Oklahoma a history of wild and wooly "wildcatting".