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Field Worker: Ruth Kerbo
April 19, 1937

Interview with H. C. Dial
303 East Jefferson Street
Mangum, Oklahoma.

Born February 24, 1870
Dialville, Texas.

Parents Father, John J. Dial,
Georgia. Pioneer of Texas
Town named for him.
Mother, Ida M. Jones
Alabama. Buried at Dialville

Mr. H. C. Dial was a renter in Hill County, Texas, near Dialville, and was working at an iron furnace, too. The iron works had to close down and left Mr. Dial without employment.

He decided to come to Greer County to seek a home. Arriving at Quanah on the train, he walked to the Kelsey Ranch and stayed around there with the boys a few days, but went back to Texas. Something impressed him that there was something in Greer County for him, so he gathered his crop, put his money in the bank, except enough to make the trip on, rigged up a wagon with a camping outfit and started to Greer County with his wife and baby.

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Mr. Dial and his wife stopped, in what was called No Man's Land, over on the river near Hobart, and thought they would remain there and make the run for some land. They had not been there but a few days when they received news that smallpox had broken out in the camp. There were numbers of people camping along the river waiting to make the run. When Mr. Dial heard about the smallpox, he told his wife they would leave before they got sick, as they had no relatives or friends to help them in case they needed help. All the campers were strictly for themselves and no one else.

Along about midnight Mr. Dial and his family left the camp and headed for Day County. They came on west and stopped at the Davis ranch to spend the night--Mrs. Dial needed to wash and clean up everything. Mr. Davis had died and everyone at the ranch had gone to the funeral, but the cow-boys were very friendly and asked them to stay for awhile. They gave Mrs. Dial some soap to do her washing, also gave them milk and insisted on them staying several days.

They came through Mangum on their way back to Texas, as they had decided by this time that they had

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better go back. Arriving at Mangum, they camped on the west side of the present site of the court house square where the sidewalk is now located on the west side. There was no court house then, but there was nice grass and the family spent three days there. The wind was blowing hard from the west, and blew the corn shucks out of his feed box and all over the grass. A man came over and said, "You had better not let those shucks scatter like that-- You might get arrested."

Still traveling on their way back to Texas they came upon another ranch house still farther west. Everything looked inviting, so the family stopped there and the boss of the ranch insisted on them staying in the country, offering to let them use his horse and buggy to travel about and find a location.

Locating on a claim three fourths of a mile west of the Jay -Buckle Springs on the river, Mr. Dial set about to renovate the dugout that was already constructed, but in bad state of repair. It was two weeks before he had completed his work about the place. They had no bed and in the night something kept tramping over their covers.

Finally Mr. Dial decided to take the plank floor up, and discovered seven pole cats under it. They had been disturbing them for two weeks.

Mr. Dial started a little cattle business, with three cows and a heifer, and raised feed for them, but in about three years the country was settled up until there was no free grass and the country had passed the herd law bill, and dry weather played a part in spoiling his success as a cattle man. He tried hogs, and did not succeed in the hog business for the same reason.

Most of their supplies were obtained from the Jester store. He had not received his money from Texas, and one day he went to Mr. Jester, explained that he needed some medicine for his wife, but did not have any money-- Mr. Jester told him to get what he needed. The mice and rats had eaten a hole in his best horse collar and they needed some groceries, too. After securing his supplies, he had started home and had almost reached the river, when the thought came to him that Mr. Jester had not asked him his name.

Turning around, Mr. Dial went back to the store and told Mr. Jester that he did not tell him his name

and Mr. Water said, "I don't want to know your name, your face looks good enough to me. I know you will pay me."

Mr. Dial eventually traded for an old house, which he moved to his place, bought some furniture, and a lister and cultivator to farm his land with.

Fuel began to get scarce after the country began to settle up; oftentimes high water in the river would leave drifts of wood that the settlers hauled to their homes. As winter approached the settlers hauled coal from Mangum.

Mr. Dial could not make the trip to Mangum and back in a day with a load. He recalls that the hills and hollows all looked alike to him after dark, and in those days there were no roads or bridges and traveling was difficult.

On one occasion Mr. Dial came to Mangum for a load of coal and darkness came before he had gotten very far from town. He began to wonder where he was and finally gave up that he was lost, but kept on traveling. He heard a dog bark and headed his team in the direction

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from which the sound came. Eventually he reached a dugout and a widow, with her two daughters, who were the older, and a son, lived there alone. Mr. Dial asked the directions, but could get no satisfaction, and finally he asked if the girls could go with him to show him the way home, but the mother refused, then she gave her consent for them to go. They had not gone far until the girls were completely lost. Eventually they came to a gate that marked the trail that led to Mr. Dial's home. He took the girls back to their home the next day and both families were good friends since that day.

Mr. Dial sold his farm to B. Frank Simpson, the man who gave him post and wire to enclose his place, and established a general merchandise store at Reed. Was in that business for nine years, then established a drug store with a postoffice, and acted as postmaster until the republicans made the change.

After nine years in the drug business, he moved to Mangum and still resides there. He has a lovely floral garden and green house, and devotes his time to taking care of his flowers. Has a colorful fish pond and a cactus bed in his yard.

Mr. Dial recalls that he had a pet coon, which would sit on the edge of the slop pail and reach down in the pail for food. He would, also, search the people who came to the store. Someone had taught him to look in their pockets for things he liked to eat, and this became a habit with Mr. Coon. He eventually choked himself to death with his chain.
