

FOLSOM, MARY E. CHURCH. INTERVIEW 9168

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

FOLSON, MARY E. CHURCH. INTERVIEW. 9168.

Field Worker's name Nora Lorrin.

This report made on (date) November 16, 1937. 1937

1. Name Mrs. Mary E. Church Folsom.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Flinder Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 18 Year 1868.

5. Place of birth Porter County, Indiana.

6. Name of Father Elias Church. Place of birth Indiana.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Susie Larue Church. 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 _____.

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Nora Lorrin,
Investigator,
Nov. 16, 1937.

Interview With Mary E. Church Folsom,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Mary E. (Church) Folsom was born in Porter County Indiana, September 18, 1868. Her father's name was Elias Church and he was born in Indiana. He was a Union soldier in the Civil War. Her mother, Susie (Larue) Church, was also born in Indiana. She does not remember the date. Her father died and left her mother with four little children, two girls and two boys. Mary grew up in the country and went to the country schools of Indiana and when she was seventeen she married Mr. Albert F. Folsom, and went with him to a pre-empted homestead in Clark County in southwestern Kansas.

(They farmed there for four years, and never raised a thing. She says, "I could have put all we ever raised on that place in my apron". So when the land opened up in the Oklahoma Territory in 1889, they came to Oklahoma.)

When they came from Clark County in a covered wagon they came through No-Mans-Land. It was outlaw country and

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also Indian country and the Indians were wild. They saw lots of them that had nothing on but a breech clout.

She was very much afraid of them. The Folsoms had camped one evening and Mary was frying chicken over a camp fire and a big Indian buck came up behind her and looked over her shoulder. She looked up and saw him. She made one leap across the fire, turning as she did so facing him with the fire between. He said, "Me" pointing to himself, "Good Indian. Heap Good Indian", and pointing up, he said, "Me go heaven". She says, "I felt like maybe it was me going to go to heaven instead of him".

The Folsoms had thirty head of cattle with them and the same evening a herd of about a thousand head came up about their camp, drawn there by their small herd. They had to keep to their wagons but nothing happened. The cowboys got the herd away after awhile; had those cattle ever stampeded there would have been nothing left of the Folsoms.

They forded the North Fork of the Canadian River above Fort Supply. The outlaws used No-Mans-Land for a hideout because the officers had no jurisdiction in that strip of

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country, and those outlaws were very bad. They would come out and make their raids and head back to No-Mans-Land to safety.

The Folsoms spent their first 4th of July in Reno City and watched the Indians kill their beeves with a bow and arrow. One big steer ran into the crowd with an arrow sticking in its side. It looked awful. An officer rode in by it and shot it to put it out of its misery, and to keep it from hurting someone. She watched them skin the beeves and distribute the meat, or rather the Indians grab it and after she watched them eat it in that unclean way, it was a year before she could eat beef et all.

At first the Indians almost ate them out of house and home; then they got so that they would get up early and cook breakfast before daylight and then let it get good and dark before they got supper, and then when the Indians came they would tell them they were too late.

Her husband homesteaded a claim about twelve miles northeast of El Reno on Uncle John's Creek. This creek run through their place. They lived in their covered wagon until they got their one room sod house built. It was sod

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all over. Sod walls and poles laid over the top and sodded over. It was nice and warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Before they got their sod house built, they had brought along some lumber and they stuck some poles in the ground near their covered wagon and nailed these boards up and down around a sort of enclosure without a roof. They kept some of their things in that place. She sold butter from the wagon and little board shack or stockade. They had to get into the covered wagon when it rained. They lost most of their cattle later with the Texas fever.

There was an Indian scare when her husband was working on the Old Choctaw Railroad, and she was often left alone at the farm with her two little children. That time she was so frightened, she took the children and a blanket or two and hid out in Uncle John's Canyon all one night. They lived on that farm for forty-eight years. They have had three girls and one boy. All are living.

They have no relics as they got about everything burned when their home burned down.