

LYONS, MARGARITE.

INTERVIEW

9458

359

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

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9458

Field Worker's name Anna R. Barry

This report made on (date) December 14, 1937

1. Name Margarite Lyons

2. Post Office Address 318 South Rock Island Ave

3. Residence address (or location) El Reno, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 25 Year 1856

5. Place of birth Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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Anna R. Barry.  
Journalist,  
December 14, 1937.

An Interview with Margarite Lyons.  
318 South Rock Island.  
El Reno, Oklahoma.  
Michael L. Lyons.

Sergeant Lyons for thirty years was a member of the United States Army, and attained to the rank of Ordnance Sergeant. He gained wide experience in connection with military operations at the various military posts of the west and southwest; took part in a number of engagements with hostile Indians; was with the reinforcements of General Custer and his gallant soldiers within two days after that disastrous engagement and otherwise grew familiar with life on the frontier.

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His service extended into the original Indian Territory and while still in the Army he was one of the pioneers in entering claim on land within the borders of Oklahoma Territory when it was thrown open to settlement, more than forty years ago. He was also a successful agriculturist and stock raiser long before his retirement from the military service that so long engrossed his attention and in which he won distinction as a faithful, efficient and valiant soldier and

LYONS, MARGARITE.

INTERVIEW.

9458.

-2-

officer. Sergeant Lyons was an honored and influential citizen of El Reno, the judicial center of Canadian County, and through his distinctive business enterprises he accumulated hosts of friends who still remember him; his lines were indeed "cast in pleasant places".

Michael H. Lyons was born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on December 25, 1856, son of Patrick and Elizabeth Hicky Lyons, both natives of Ireland. The Sergeant passed the period of his childhood and early youth at Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, where he acquired his education in public schools, and was fifteen years old at the time of the family removal to the city of Philadelphia where he continued to reside until he had attained to adult age.

In 1876, in Philadelphia, which city was then a point of national interest by reason of being the stage of the great Centennial Exposition, Sergeant Lyons as a youth of twenty years, enlisted as a private in the United States Army. After a service of about two years he was promoted to the rank of corporal, later to the rank of Sergeant. In 1885 he was advanced to the rank of First

LYONS, MARGARITE.

INTERVIEW.

9458.

-3-

Sergeant, an office in which he continued to serve eleven years, after which he held the office of Ordnance Sergeant until the date of his retirement from the Army in January, 1907.

The initial military service of Sergeant Lyons was in Dakota Territory, and thence he proceeded with his command into Wyoming, where these forces arrived on the Custer Battlefield the second day after the historic massacre. Thereafter he was with his command in Texas and his final service was in what is now the State of Oklahoma. He participated in a number of spirited engagements with hostile Indians and concerning his admirable record as a member of Troop K. Fifth United States Cavalry the following statements are self-explanatory and significant, the same having been written as a testimonial at the time when he was appointed Ordnance Sergeant in 1894. The <sup>letter</sup> author of the commendatory <sup>letter</sup> was A.E. Woodson, who later rose to the rank of Brigadier General. In recommending Sergeant Lyons for promotion Captain Woodson wrote as follows; " He was at all times, in the garrison and in the field, an excellent soldier, ever ready

-4-

when called, quick to respond, a leader of men, cheerful in disposition and an exemplar of the men of his command."

Though a stickler for discipline and always found at the post of duty, the buoyant and genial gesture of Sergeant Lyons won him the high regard of his comrades and superior officers, and today he has many friends of high standing in the United States Army, in public life and in business circles who still remember him. In fact, it may consistently be said that his circle of friends was limited only by that of his acquaintances. Though he had no ambition to enter the circle, practical politics and had no desire for public office, the sergeant gave loyal support to the cause of the Republican party and aided in the election of its candidates both National and local. Both he and I were members of the Catholic Church.

In 1885 Sergeant Lyons came with his cavalry command for the first time to old Fort Reno, a military post near the present thriving city of El Reno, and while here stationed was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant. Later he was with his troop in Texas, where they were stationed in turn at Fort Brown and Fort San Antonio. In 1896 he was

LYONS, MARGARITE.

INTERVIEW.

9458.

-5-

sent back to Fort Reno, as Ordnance Sergeant at this Post and continued until the expiration of his service in the Army.

After his retirement he maintained his residence principally in the city of El Reno. While at Fort Reno he was sent by the commander of that garrison to lay off the grounds for the railway station of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad at Oklahoma City, and this duty he discharged with great efficiency.

Within a short time after Oklahoma Territory had been opened for settlement Sergeant Lyons filed claim to a homestead of one hundred sixty acres in Canadian County, and this property he developed into a fine ranch during a period of twenty-five years. While still in active service a portion of the period in the Army, he here devoted attention to the breeding and raising of registered Shorthorn cattle, and in this field of enterprise he had met with gratifying success long before he disposed of his interests in the ranch.

In 1885, I Margarite Cambric, who was born in the city of Toledo, was married to Sergeant Lyons. We had no children.

LYONS, MARGARITE.

INTERVIEW.

9458.

-6-

Several years ago Mr. Lyons passed away and today I reside in the Lyons Apartment Building, a modern building which we erected and which I own. I also own other valuable city real estate in El Reno.