

SHIRLEY, LAURA BELLE

INTERVIEW

#12764

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

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Field Worker's name Mary D. Dorward,

This report made on (date) January 21, 1933

- 1. Name Laura Belle Shirley,
- 2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- 3. Residence address (or location) 1114 South Denver.
- 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1882
- 5. Place of birth Johnson County, Missouri.

6. Name of Father James H. Longacre Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Mary Cockrell Longacre 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 Three.

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Mary D. Dorward,  
Investigator.  
January 21, 1937.

Interview with Laura Belle Shirley,  
1114 South Denver, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Laura Belle Longacre was born in Johnson County, Missouri, the daughter of James H. and Mary H. Cockrell Longacre. In July, 1889, she was married to Abraham Lincoln Shirley and came in February, 1890, to Oklahoma Territory with her husband. Shirley had made the run in the opening of Indian lands in 1889 and had secured a claim three miles west of Norman along the South Canadian River, in what was then Oklahoma Territory.

Mrs. Shirley had been reared on a good farm in Missouri in a home of plenty. She came to her new home without much of an idea of what its hardships would be. Instead of a house to live in, as she had been expecting, she had to live in a one-room log cabin without even a window. Its only opening was a door which was not even on hinges but slid back and forth like a barn door. However, like other pioneer

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women she faced hardship with courage, was not afraid of hard work and was far too busy to spend time in regrets.

Mrs. Shirley's husband was a veterinary surgeon and, of course, had to be away from home much of the time. She set herself to make the garden, raise chickens, and make butter much of which, together with eggs, she marketed. The soil was fertile and grew particularly fine tomatoes. She grew her own tomato plants from seed, wading in mud to her shoetops, sometimes, to transplant the young tomato plants. There was never any scarcity of water. It was close enough to the surface of the soil so that it was only necessary to sink a barrel a few feet into the ground and the water would soon seep through and fill the barrel. It was then dipped out. Water was dipped into a trough and then given to the stock.

This barrel of water was the cause of their losing a valuable colt. The Shirleys had left home for a day

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and when they returned found the colt had fallen into the barrel and drowned.

The Shirleys also raised hogs, one of which had a particular liking for Mrs. Shirley's young chickens.

In spite of her busy life Mrs. Shirley found time to participate in other activities. Church and Sunday School services were held in the nearby schoolhouse and Mrs. Shirley served as organist and chorister for Sunday School.

After proving their claim the Shirleys remained on the farm until about 1901 when they removed to Oklahoma City.