

BIOGRAPHY FORM

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

RANDOLPH, MARY CATHERINE: INTERVIEW. 13857

Field Worker's name Mary D. Dorward

This report made on (date) May 6, 1938 1938

1. Name Mrs. D. J. Randolph

2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 105 South Xanthus

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1863

5. Place of birth Mackinaw, Illinois

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 _____

RANDOLPH, MARY CATHERINE. INTERVIEW.

13857

Investigator, Mary D. Dorward,
May 6, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. D. J. Randolph,
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Mary Catherine Lance Randolph, better known as Dolly, was born in Mackinaw, Illinois, in 1863 and came to Indian Territory in 1935, living in the Osage country twelve miles south of Sedan, Kansas. Until her marriage she lived with her father in the old commissary building which had been used for dispensing supplies to the Osage Indians.

After her marriage to D. J. Randolph their post-office became Chautauque Springs, Kansas, just over the line from their home. Mr. Randolph had been a cattleman in Kansas, but had lost almost all of his cattle through foot fever, and had come to Indian Territory and started a mill, which was situated on the Caney River at its confluence with Bird Creek. The Randolphs lived here among the Osages, with almost no white neighbors, none within several miles and their closest neighbors were cattle thieves.

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The mill was not much of a success and the young Randolphs were not able to make a living at it. They were almost "dead broke," but Mr. Randolph had traded around until he had a team of horses and a set of harness. Then he sold the burrs from the mill which had started out as a grist mill but became a saw mill for \$35.00 in cash and the same amount in groceries and with this tiny stake the Randolphs started out to make the Run into old Oklahoma in April, '89.

Before they reached the new country they had done more trading until they now had two ponies and a colt to worry with. Enroute they passed through Tulsa and camped all night on the Tulsa side of the Arkansas River, then continued on to Sapulpa, the trip to Sapulpa taking them two days. They went on into the Kickerpoo country where thousands were encamped on the line ready to make the dash on the next day. They were encamped in a canyon which had a most peculiar odor and they found next day that the peculiar odor came from a den of rattlesnakes not a hundred and fifty yards from where they were encamped.

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When the gun was fired next day Mr. Randolph rode one of his horses and staked a claim in the nine-mile bottom eighteen miles north of Oklahoma City, then went back to get Mrs. Randolph. Soon after their arrival on the claim a man walked up and asked, "where did you file?" Conversation developed the fact that the two men had filed on the same claim but the stranger claimed to have filed earlier than Randolph, that is, he had "Soonered" the claim. The Randolphs by that time had just \$11.00 in cash, with two children, themselves and their horses to feed. With no money to fight the illegal claim there was nothing to be done but to give up and let the man have it.

Not long after that a man came up to the Randolphs who had brought a lot of cattle with him from Kansas and whose claim had been "Soonered" just as the Randolphs had been. He offered to trade for the Randolphs' mare and colt. The mare and colt were the property of Mrs. Randolph so she asked the man what he had to trade. He said he would give her two cows and calves for her ~~mare and colt.~~ The Randolphs were so hard up that the

two cows looked pretty good to them even though the cows were a little thin. The grass was already beginning to grow and the cattle would assure them of at least a milk supply.

Soon after this the Randolphs heard of a claim on Soldier Creek that had not been taken so they went over there and established themselves. Mr. Randolph had a little breaking plow and with this he plowed gardens and got a little cash which helped out greatly. Then he found that people were wanting to fence in their claims, so one day he bought a crosscut saw and with the help of Mrs. Randolph he began making fence posts. They cut down trees, sawed them into short lengths, and sold them for 5 cents apiece. He would take the posts to Guthrie, starting from home in the late afternoon, camping all night on the way and arriving in Guthrie the next day.

All this time they were living without a house. They had put up poles and stretched a wagon cloth over them and lived under that. Each day, however, they would saw a few logs for a house. The crops were planted by Mr. Randolph's breaking out the ground with a plow, while

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his wife followed after him and planted the seed. They had a good garden with the usual garden crops and with an especially nice bed of turnips.

There had been a group of men from the Randolphs' old home in Kansas who had come to the new country without their wives. The men had expected to file on claims, but were unused to roughing it, didn't know how to make the best of things and were in a bad way generally. The only way they knew of to make any money was to kill deer and try to sell the venison. Mrs. Randolph was good to these men, giving them produce from her garden, milk, to use, doing their laundry for them and trying in every way to be a good neighbor. Well, these men were just about starved out, when someone gave them a great herd of Texas cattle to watch, giving them the milk from the cows in return for watching them. One day they let those cattle out and let them go down and eat up the Randolphs' turnips.

By this time it was Fall and the Randolphs were in their little cabin. They went out one day to saw posts, taking the children in the wagon, into which they put all

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their bed clothing to keep the children warm. Mr. and Mrs. Randolph built a big fire to keep the children warm, then went off to saw posts. Pretty soon one of the children came running, saying there was a big fire. The fire had spread to the wagon and had burned the wagon, bed clothing and all except the children and the horses. They had no other bed clothing and had loaned their other wagon cover to some neighbors. Mr. Randolph said, "I'll go on to Guthrie, and sell the posts, and buy some comforts. Then on the way back I'll stop and get the other wagon sheet." But when he went for the wagon sheet the man to whom he had loaned it said, "We had a fire and your sheet got burned up."

By this time Mrs. Randolph had figured out a way to get some bed clothing. A neighbor had been a boarding house keeper and had a great deal of bed clothing. Mrs. Randolph had some very fine chickens, and some time previously this neighbor had wanted to trade some bed clothes for chickens. At the time Mrs. Randolph was not interested and said no more about it. Mrs. Randolph also had some earbobs, fashionable at the time, which the neighbor admired very much. But, after losing all her

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bed clothes Mrs. Randolph at once sent word to the neighbor that she would trade earbobs and chickens for bed clothes and the deal was made.

The Randolphs were annoyed many times by wild cats and panthers, which would attack their chickens and even their horses. After breaking out much of the land on the claim the Randolphs lost the claim after all. They had not enough money to file on it as the filing cost \$15.00 and they had been saving up all summer to get enough money to file. Finally when they had saved the required amount Mr. Randolph went to file and found that a negro preacher had filed just three days before. The Randolphs succeeded in getting \$100.00 for the improvements they had made, then had to leave.

They filed once more on a claim in the Kickapoo country, but it was undesirable for some reason and they did not hold it. From there they went to Chandler and gave up trying to get free land. Mrs. Randolph's son, Judge William N. Randolph, was one of the two first graduates from the Chandler high school. He was also one of the first class of graduates in law from Oklahoma University.

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The boys in the first law class went before the Legislature and persuaded them to start a law school. They were told that it could be done if the boys were willing to go to school in the basement of the Carnegie Library. The boys were willing and so the first law school started. The Law building, when erected, was dedicated to the boys of that first class.

INDEX CARDS.

Ingalls
Cross
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Outlaws