Form A-(S-141) 207

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

RANDELS, EMERSON L. INTERVIEW 9797

Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan,

This report made on (date) January 11, 1938

1. Name Emerson L. Randels,

2. Post Office Address Pond Creek, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 11 West, 2 South.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June, Day 5, Year 1873.

5. Place of birth Salem, Columbiana County, Ohio.

6. Name of Father William Randels. Place of birth Salem, Ohio.

Other information about father Farmer.

7. Name of Mother Amanda Yates, Place of birth Salem, Ohio.

Other information about mother Housekeeper.

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 5.

RANDELS, EMERSON L. INTERVIEW 9797

Elizabeth L. Duncan,
Journalist,
January 11, 1938.

Interview with Emerson L. Randels,
Pond Creek, Oklahoma.

My grandparents were William and Elizabeth Randels and my parents were William and Amanda Yates Randels. I was born in Salem, Columbiana County, Ohio, June 5, 1873; four miles south of Salem on a little farm; this was also the birthplace of my father.

I was one of eight children, seven boys and one girl and all the schoolin we had was to the eighth grade. When I was sixteen I was sent to preparatory school at Damascus for two years.

When I was thirteen my father died, leaving me and the six other children with our mother to care for us, and being the third of these children I was in charge to help to take care of the younger children as well as a grandmother who was livin with us.

Four of the boys finally left home, goin to Anthony, Kansas, and homesteading land, then when the news spread around that the Cherokee Strip was to be opened to homesteaders, they wrote me to come down and drive the chuck

wagon for them. I came to Anthony and never had seen such barren prairies. When I arrived, there was a hustle and a bustle to get things together so we could come down to register, but I was not old enough to register, so I drove the chuck wagon while the rest of them rode horses. On September 14, 1893, my brothers finally registered at Cameron and then went two and one-half miles east to await the day.

On September 16, 1893, the people gathered, each very eager to get to the front so he could have a head start, each also determined to have a home for himself. At twelve o'clock, noon, the signal was given and the mob of people were on their way, some were away ahead of others, in all kinds of conveyances, also, some even went in on foot to make the Run.

I tried to go as near due south as I could but there were no roads or trails to follow close by and it was very exciting while we were on the way. Some of the people fell back, others passing some in front of them. After an hour and fifteen minutes run, Horace, the brother I was

staying with, finally stopped his horse and dug a little of the earth up and stuck his flag in the mound and we began to look for the corner stones; some of the corners were easily found and the others were buried pretty deep. The map showed it was the SW 32-27-7. The place was occupied by the Lynch brothers before the strip was opened up. All four of my brothers staked claims.

After Horace and I finished locating the corner stones, we began to spade up some of the sod and also measure out where the fields were to be and the forty acres for pasture and housing lot. There were 160 acres in each farm. That night we put the feed outside of the wagon so we could make our bed in the wagon and in the night I heard a noise which had frightened the horses. I thought perhaps it was a coyote or wolf so I slipped out just in time to see a man driving away and called out to him to stop but he did not stop. Not thinking that anything had been taken I went back to bed. The following morning when Horace got up he called to me to hurry up and get up for someone had stolen all of our horse feed and grub.

When we got things straightened up we began to hunt a neighbor to see if we could get some bacon and coffee, which we finally did. Then after breakfast we started out for Enid to file.

That night about seven we arrived in Enid very hungry but quickly found a place to eat and then went to the filing office or rather the place where we filed as the office was closed and it was four days later before we filed, after which we returned to our homesteads and later we all went back up to Anthony, Kansas.

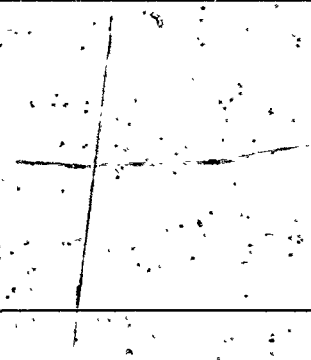
I received a letter from Mother asking me to come home so I went back to Salem, Ohio. In October, Mother died and, of course, I had to stay until the property settlement was made then I came back down to Anthony, Kansas, to live with my brother, Horace. With what little money I received I started out to see if I could buy a relinquishment from someone and in December, 1894, bought a relinquishment for $50.00, it being theNE 5-26-7.

The first thing I did was to dig a well, then I built out a place up against a bank half in the ground, the other

half being sod. The only thing that I had brought with me was one horse so I started out helping my brothers in order to receive help in return. That way I broke out ten acres.

In 1894 when school was started I helped to build the schoolhouse, 12 X 14, at which the teachers received $25.00 a month. The first teacher was Ezra Hoops, who taught for two years, three months out of each school term.

In 1895, I finally got enough money ahead to buy a walking plow. I then broke out twenty acres more sod and planted wheat on the thirty acres. The following year the wheat was very good as we had a little moisture which was a great help. The following year I broke out more sod and planted wheat again and that winter I helped kill out prairie dogs.

In the spring of 1897, I went with three other fellows back to Antony, Kansas, to buy five old houses and brought them back and built houses. I built a seven-room house, which stands today.

That summer wheat had a greater yield than in 1896 and