

McREYNOLDS, MARY K.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Ethel Mae YatesThis report made on (date) July 20 1937

1. Name Mary K. McReynolds
2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) Gen. Del.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 17 Year 1868
5. Place of birth Honey Grove, Texas.

6. Name of Father Thomas Calloway Place of birth ArkansasOther information about father was private in the Civil War.7. Name of Mother Agnes A Calloway 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 8.

Ethel Mae Yates, Interviewer,
July 20, 1937.

Mary K. McReynolds,
Elk City, Oklahoma.

My mother married in Georgia, after the Mexican War. She married a Mexican War veteran, Mr. Halcomb. They came to Bowie, Texas, in Montague County, in a covered wagon. Traveling was almost impossible in those days as there weren't any roads to speak of. People just had to start out across the country and travel the best they could. They got to Bowie in 1859, when there was just twelve white families in the county. They settled there and were doing well as they had a good little house and corn cribs which were built of logs. They owned some very fine stock. They were there just two years when the Civil War broke out, and Mr. Halcomb went away to war, leaving her with two little baby girls and an orphan boy whom they had taken to rear. Her father-in-law came to stay with her and help her manage but they had some terrible times with the Indians, mostly the Comanches. One night away late a runner came and told them that the Indians were coming and were on the war path. He said for them to get to the fort which was three miles away. Mother said the babies were afraid but didn't cry out for fear the Indians would hear them. They would just cry in a whisper. They had a gentle pony so she and the children got

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on it and this dear old grandpa walked and led it the three miles to the fort. The Indians took nearly everything she had and burned her barn and drove off her stock. They murdered lots of the whites and burned their homes, but never did bother one of mother's family. They came many times and pilfered around her place and she has wondered many times why they burned so many homes and let hers stand.

She would ride fourteen miles to church on Crear Creek to hear Brother Parkhill preach. He also preached in the fort. She has crossed Indian trails many times when going to church. The people loved church in those days and faced many dangers to go and help with the Gospel. People wore shawls in those days. One night while at church a hand was thrust through a window and a shawl jerked off of a woman's shoulders. They never did know who it was did it, but they thought it was an Indian. Another time at night my mother was looking out the window and saw an Indian trying to break into the stable. She went slipping over to grandpa's bed and fell over a chair. He got up and was trying to get to the gun and he ran over another chair. When he ran into the chair he began to call for his gun. With all the shouting and the blundering noise the Indian jumped on his pony and made for the timber. The Indians

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never did bother my people after that.

The first year of the war the husband was wounded. He was some where in Arkansas. His sister living there got word about him, and she and her husband went to him but he soon died. They buried him and then they put his belongings in a hack and brought them to my mother. While they were there the two little girls took the diphtheria. They sent for the doctor, Dr. Tisdil, grandfather of the Dr. Tisdil who is here now. He came but didn't have any medicine for diphtheria so they both died just three days apart. The boy then took it and my mother said she prayed that the boy would be spared and that she might in his stead. After giving up her husband and babies she felt as though she didn't have anything to live for; but the boy died. After the boy and babies died, and the Indians had stolen all the stock, her father-in-law and she moved over to the fort. This little fort was on Grandpa McDonald's place, three miles east of Brushy Springs. My mother did nursing here and they also made clothes for the soldiers. Here mother met and married a Mr. Gibbons. They were married in the fort and he moved her to Lamar, Texas. The Indians kept bothering them so badly that he sent her back to Georgia to her people. This is where little J. T. Gibbons, my half brother, was born. This was in the year of 1864. My mother not hearing from her husband took the baby and came back. She learned on her return that her husband had been wounded. He was a Lieutenant in the Southern Army. He and his men had been

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taken north and held prisoner . He wrote he a letter after he got wounded but never got to send it to her. He gave it and his watch and some more things to a friend of his who was also wounded but who got well, although he was minus one leg. After her husband's death, at the first opportunity, this friend brought the news of his death and his things to her. In the letter he wrote that at the first chance he was going to run away and come home, but he died, so the baby never did get to see his father. In the year of 1867 my mother married my father, Mr. Thomas J. Callaway, who also was a soldier. He fought the entire four years and did not get a scratch.

I was born in the year of 1868. My half brother, J. T. Gibbons, proved to be a real brother to me. He was a cowboy, and from the time he was seventeen years old he would roam up and down the Chisholm Trail. He ran the Drummett Cattle Company at Stratford, Texas, for twenty-three years. His father and the father of John Chisholm were cousins.

My mother was on the scene when Arthur Hartkill was murdered by the Indians. I have often heard my mother say she has gone through many dangers, both seen and unseen. I can truly say that my mother was a real pioneer. She was more than a pioneer because she blazed the way for others to follow.

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I came to Indian Territory in the year of 1896. Being a widow at that time I came with my two little girls and my brother J. T. Gibbons and his family. We crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing, and came in covered wagons. It had been raining and the river was up so the people camped there until it looked almost like a town. They were waiting for the river to go down so they could get across. When the river was down low enough my wagon started across. It was the first one in the river so was first one to get across. I was frightened and wanted some one else to go first. My brother told me however the first ones that crossed were safest for the quick sand would soon begin getting soft. They had us women and children to get back in the wagon beds and told us to put match sticks between our teeth to keep our heads from swimming. Off we drove into the river. My team was my little mules that I had raised in Montague County, Texas, and they didn't know anything about water. I wanted to see what they would do. Before they were half way across they had to swim. They stuck their little ears up and looked almost like little rabbits but went right across. By the time we got to the bank there were three or four wagons which had already driven off into the river. Before noon that day quite

a lot of wagons were across the river bogged down in the quick sand.

We were coming to the territory for a home. We came to Rogers Mills County and bought ^a/_relinquishment from Mr. Meddin and filed on a place at Ural. My brother filed on a place adjoining mine. It was where Trig Musick's store is now. It was ten miles south of where Elk City now is but there was no Elk City then. There was a little rock house on my place, covered with sod. I lived there for awhile, but my brother didn't want the babies and me to live alone. He had us to move in the house with them and I rented my house out for a post office. I rented it to a lady by the name of Mrs. Mamie Honeycut. My brother's place was called the Half Way Place, as it was half way between Cheyenne and Mangum. They carried mail by hack; and the mail carrier and other travelers would stop for lodging and food. I brought five head of horses and twenty-five head of cattle with me. We farmed and raised stock. Our crops were mostly corn, maize and millet. Quannah, Texas was our nearest railroad town, and we would take two wagons and go there about twice a year and get supplies. I have driven a team and made the trip many times.

Not long after I came to Rogers Mills County I married Mr. McReynolds, who had a claim adjoining mine on the north.

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We moved there and lived in a half dugout. I then moved the post office over and ran it myself. Mr. McReynolds had lived at Harmon before this and had run a store and delivered goods to the Indians. He had done mission work among the Cheyenne Indians also as he was a Baptist preacher. He was appointed as a mission worker for Roger Mills, Custer, and Kiowa Counties.

He was missionary worker both to the whites and Indians. He went and preached all over the country and has held meetings under trees. He organized the Baptist Church at Ural, and this is where the Beckham County Association was organized. The work was such a strain on him that his health began to break. I begged him to give up the work but he felt like he couldn't do that. He organized a Baptist Church in Clinton with eighteen members. He was pastor at this church half of the time and did missionary work half time. Then there came a call for him to come to Lonewolf as pastor. Feeling that he had to heed the call, we went. Under the strain his health gave away. Just before he died his mother went to him and asked if he wanted to be taken back to Harmon for burial. He told her "No, my people that I love and am willing to give my life for are here at Lonewolf, I want to be laid to rest and left here with them".

My mother and father came to Roger Mills and filed on

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a place adjoining my brother's. Father, mother, and mother's
nother are all dead and are buried at Ural. My brother, J.T.
Gibbons, died two years ago. His funeral was held at the Ural
Church. One side was reserved for the cowboys. The old pioneer
cowboys from all over the state were there. I have been among
cowboys all of my life but never saw anything like that day.