

MARSHALL, MARY ELIZABETH. INTERVIEW 9871

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

MARSHALL, MARY ELIZABETH.

INTERVIEW.

9871.

Field Worker's name Rehal V. Elder.

This report made on (date) January 11, 193

1. Name Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Marshall.

2. Post Office Address Oscar, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Southeast of Oscar.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 4 Year 1883

5. Place of birth Monticello, Drew County, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Alex Dennis. Place of birth Missouri

7. Name of Mother Honey O'Neill Place of birth Tennessee

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 14.

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Ethel V. Elder.
Investigator,
January 11, 1938.

An Interview with Mary Elizabeth Marshall.
Oscar, Oklahoma.

My father, Alex Dennis, was born in Missouri, died January, 1834, and is buried at Monticello, Arkansas. My mother, Nancy O'Neil, was born in Tennessee, died in 1886 at Sulphur Springs, Texas, and is buried there. My grandfather on my mother's side was John O'Neil, who died at the age of ninety-five years and is buried in the Gastland graveyard in Drew County, Arkansas. My grandmother on my mother's side was Jane O'Neil, who died at the age of ninety-four years and is buried in the Monticello cemetery Arkansas.

My father precepted a farm in Arkansas in the early days of the nineteenth century and it was there I was born, the youngest of five children. My father died when I was past one year of age. My mother kept the farm a few years and with the help of the older children she managed to give us the best education that she could in those days.

I was twelve years old when the stars fell and I shall never forget that night. A big meeting was going on at our church and we were all going. It was the second night of the

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meeting; some of us went in buggies the first night but that night my uncle said I could ride behind him on horseback and the negro slave could drive the buggy for some of the others to go. We had not been at the meeting place very long when the whole heavens looked like they were on fire and the stars all began raining down. It looked like shooting stars or was like the fireworks we have today, and when they hit the ground they exploded. As they all fell it was as light as day almost and the chickens all came down from their roosts and went to picking around just like day; it had been an unusually dark night just before the stars fell. Some people were killed from being hit by the falling stars and I guess some were scared to death, I know I was frightened nearly to death. The elements stayed light until after midnight and we could see by the light how to get home from the meeting but it seemed like people were not in a hurry to get home that night, I guess they were all scared to go home. The next day the people looked around to see how everything looked where the stars had hit and they found embers that looked like clinkers from burning coal.

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My grandfather said at the time that he saw signs of a war in the future and the Civil War did break out soon after that but I don't know what that had to do with it.

That night at the meeting when the preacher called for mourners to come to the mourner's bench, how they did run over each other to get there; one boy named Rub Nichols was sick with the tuberculosis and he had been carried there that night by my uncle, Doctor Jack Cuttler. He got religion that night and the doctor said he was in such a weak condition that he could not be baptized, but he said he knew that he could so when they carried him home he sent for his mother and she had the slaves clean out one of the watering troughs that they used for the stock water and brought it in the house and heated the water and he was baptized in the trough by Brother Henry Crook, the Baptist preacher who held the meeting; Rub died not very long after that.

I was seventeen years old when my mother left Arkansas for Texas. She had two wagons and an old-fashioned hack to which she drove two very fine horses; she and we children rode

in the hack; she had three yoke of oxen hitched to each wagon. Mother was offered \$ 200.00 for one of the horses but would not take it. My mother was not in good health and she thought if she would travel around awhile she would gain her health again.

We stopped in Collins County, Texas, at the home of Tom McDonald for awhile; he was a cousin of my grandfather's and after we had been there some time Mother decided she would buy a farm somewhere in Texas, so Tom McDonald went with her to find a good location and she bought a farm on Denton Creek in Montague County, Texas, consisting of 500 acres. She immediately put all her slaves which she had brought from Arkansas to working the land for her. She had about fifty slaves and they stayed with her until after the Civil War was over. Some still wanted to stay after they were freed and Mother let all who wanted to, stay on the farm.

My oldest brother was in the Civil War and was captured and held prisoner for a long time. He was in such bad health for so long that he could not walk after he was released from prison, so Mother made some of the slaves promise her that they

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would stay with her to help care for my brother as long as he lived.

I met a young man after we came to Texas by the name of Joseph Chatman Marshall and was very much in love with him. He had to go to war, so enlisted in the Confederate army at Fort Elliott, at Hobestie, Texas, under Captain Joe Bounds; he was in the army four years and when stationed in Tennessee he was very sick with the measles and was given an honorable discharge when he was able to leave. He joined the Texas Rangers after he was able to be in active service again and was stationed at Fort Elliott then for one year.

We were engaged for more than four years but I waited for him as I did not love any one else and I have never regretted waiting. My brother wanted me to marry another man but I did not love him so I waited for the one I loved and we were married July 26, 1866, at Denton, Texas, (called Dentontown in the early days.) My mother died shortly after we were married.

We settled in Grayson County at a very small place and rented land from a widow lady named Moore who owned a great

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lot of land which she rented on the halves. We lived there two years then moved to the Uncle Ollie Reynolds place and farmed there for three years, then moved to the Webber farm, rented the land from a man named Dave Bryant who was appointed guardian for the orphan children of the Webbers; we lived there for thirteen years and rented all that time for money rent.

My husband died there at Webber farm about fifty-seven years ago and is buried in Grayson County. After his death I stayed there for one year and hired a man from Tennessee to finish the crop, then ^{went} back to Montague on Denton Creek and moved into a house that my husband had built and we stayed there twelve years, then in 1891 we decided to come to the Territory.

When we crossed Red River we crossed at the old Spanish Fort called the Yellow Bank Crossing; we had two wagons drawn by horses. We brought five or six head of extra stock along with us and when we had them on the ferryboat one of the young two year old mares got so scared she broke loose and jumped over the rails of the ferryboat and swam across the river.

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The Seay crossing on the Red River at Nocena and the Yellow Bank crossing were the ones that could be forded in the early days. Webb Johnson and Bob Morris ran a ferry-boat at old Spanish Fort, a man named Ward ran one at Fleetwood and a man named Owens ran a ferry at Grady.

We settled in the community north of Grady and rented land from a Mr. Roach; stayed there two years after which we bought a lease from John Keck and Bud Haliby and lived there eight years, then rented land from S.J. Busby for two years. We then bought the place where we now live and have lived here for over thirty-five years. The house that we lived in when we first came to the Indian Territory was made of logs and was half-boxed.

When we first came to the Indian Territory there was one store at Ryan, one store and one gin at Grady and one store and one gin at Oscar. The town of Oscar was named for Oscar Seay. W.C. Sappington owned the store at Grady and Joe Brown owned the gin there and he had a man named Ashton to run it for him; Jim Helms, ran a blacksmith shop.

The only deputy United States Marshals that I knew here in the Territory were Will Johnston, Loss Hart and B. Campbell.

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The old Duncan Trail came from the Yellow Bank Crossing on Red River to Grady and on the northwest to Duncan.

Luke Jackson and a man named McGurley owned two race horses, one a sorrel and the other a roan, and everytime they had a race Jackson would win all of McGurley's money. They had a regular horse race track down on Mud Creek that they called Herst Flats.

When we lived at the Roach place the soldiers brought eight or ten families and stopped at our house to get water for them; they would not ask any one if they could get water for the people and all their stock. The soldiers were taking these people over to the Texas side at the Yellow Bank Crossing, putting them out of the Territory. About the time the soldiers would get them over into Texas the Governor of Texas would order them out of Texas, as they were not wanted there either, so back they would come to the Territory.

During the Civil War my husband served under Captain Totty and one day when he was about five miles from the home of my mother, on his way to get help to look for some

Indians, he had a fight with an Indian and killed him. My husband and Alex Frazier, with four or five other men, were trailing some Indians and when they came to the banks of a creek they saw two Indians skinning a beef they ^{had} stolen and two more Indians were sitting on a log to watch for these two who were skinning the beef. My husband and these men with him shot at the Indians before the Indians ever saw them and the Indians jumped up out of the weeds everywhere, there were about thirty of them. They were all killed but one, he was riding a very fast spotted horse, which was very pretty. He had a quarter of beef tied to the horse and was running and cutting at the beef trying to get it loose from the horse so he could run faster and he got away. They were trying to kill him so they could get the horse he was riding, but he was the only one who escaped. My husband had the bows and arrows, pony, saddle and buffalo robe that belonged to an Indian he killed and scalped.

Some Indians had scalped a neighbor and his son a few weeks before that, and the neighbors were all waiting for

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some more Indians to come along again soon as they always came back again before very long after they had killed a white man. While they were waiting for the Indians to return my husband and these men sent for more help and Jim Harvey came up from the other side with reinforcements; about ten Indians came along and they had another battle. The Indians were stringing up their bows, they saw these white men and began shooting as fast as they could and arrows were whizzing everywhere. The Indians started to run, thought they would make a running fight and get away, but were all killed. My brother was in the battle and he has some collection from the dead Indians he killed.

The Indians killed many people on their raids; they were almost as bad in Texas as they were in the Territory in the early days; they stole twelve head of horses from my mother's place one time.

When Cynthia Ann Parker was captured over close to Decatur, Texas, by force of Texas Rangers she had an infant daughter; the man who took her was named Bailor. There were two other white girls named Green whom the Comanches had stolen at the same time they stole Cynthia when they were

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all about nine years old; the Green girls were never found. My mother and I sent some of our clothes over to Cynthia Ann after she was recaptured by the Rangers, as she had only the Indian clothes on made of skins and hides but she would not wear our style of dresses as long as the others could be worn. She had married the great Comanche war chief, Peta Nocona, after she was captured by the Indians and her husband was killed in the raid with the Rangers. She had two sons, one named Quanah who was about eleven years old at the time his mother was captured by the Rangers. I do not know what became of the other boy and the girl. Cynthia Ann loved the Indian customs and never was again happy at home; her own people treated her most kindly and did everything they could to try to make her satisfied with them but she grieved all through the years that she lived with them and finally died years later with a broken heart.

A family lived close to us in Texas named Manasko. The man was going to town one day after some provisions and when he got there he heard that the Indians were coming to this town so he started back home at once as fast as his

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horse could go to tell his wife so they could prepare to protect themselves and their things. The Indians met him and killed him, then went on to his house and captured his wife and children. When Mrs. Manasko heard the Indians coming she got her children all in the house and all who could fire a gun shot through the port holes in the doors and they killed several of the Indians but were captured and all the children were taken along. Mrs. Manasko had a small baby. The Indians cut Mrs. Manasko's hair off and tied her on a horse. They killed her baby and tied it to a horse with a rope around its neck and made her drag it several miles, then cut it loose and let it fall somewhere. The Indians stopped some where to camp that night and Mrs. Manasko got away. All that she had to wear was a buffalo hide wrapped around her. She went to Uncle Dorsett's house close to Gainesville, and slipped in the house; it was bitter cold that night and the snow was deep on the ground and she was almost frozen. The people were sleeping upstairs and she slipped in some-way into one of the rooms downstairs and when they found

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her next morning, all the clothes she had was a buffalo robe around her and she was almost frozen to death.

My son has a bow and arrow that he took off the body of an Indian, also a bone whistle wrapped in blue and white beads. When he shot the Indian, the Indian started to blow this whistle for help, and blew it as long as there was breath in his body.

In the closing days of the Civil War and in the days that followed immediately every one ^{was} visited by the night riders very frequently. A group of these men would ride up to a house, call a man out and shoot him down; this was done for no apparent reason other than perhaps to settle some war grudge. One night the riders came to our house and I heard them so I would not let my husband go to the door, I got there first, feeling sure that they would not shoot a woman, and demanded to know what they wanted. They said they wanted to talk to Mr. Marshall but I told them that he was in bed and sick and would not talk. My husband started to get up and go to the door to meet them, but I was stronger than he was and grabbed him by both wrists and held him in the house. I feel that if I had not been stronger than my husband they would have gotten him.

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During the Civil War we spun cotton and wool; we had about one hundred head of sheep that Mother kept all the time for their wool, for spinning and weaving purposes. The negroes would shear the sheep, pick the wool and wash it clean, then when we ran it through the carding machine it would come out in long rolls so pretty and soft and we spun it into thread. The cloth that we wore was made white, the cloth that the slaves' dresses was made of was white and black and the cloth that we made the comforts of was different colors. Mother and I and one negro woman were all who could handle the machine and thread them up right; the spools of thread were about eight inches long and large size around. In the day time, I threw the shuttle through a loom, weaving jeans cloth to make the soldiers breeches, and at night I plied a knitting needle knitting socks.