

COGILL, ELIZABETH KING.

CZARINA COLBERT CONLAN.

#1418

COGILL, ELIZABETH KING—CZARINA COLBERT CONLAN . 1417

J. S. Clark,
Director,
January 4, 1938.

Interview with Elizabeth King Cogill,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Czarina Colbert Conlan.

Mrs. Czarina Colbert Conlan is one of the most prominent women of Oklahoma, as she was of the Indian Territory before Statehood. From the standpoint of lineage also of personal accomplishments, her name is closely connected with Oklahoma history throughout its development.

She is one-quarter Chickasaw and one quarter Choctaw. Her father, James Allen Colbert, was a member of the Chickasaw Tribe, and prominent in tribal affairs. His father, Martin Colbert, was named on the committee of seven delegates by his people to meet with a committee sent out by the United States Government to investigate the lands west of the Mississippi River before signing the treaty for the removal of Chickasaws and Choctaws.

The father of Martin, Levi Colbert, great grandfather of Mrs. Conlan, was the standard bearer at the Battle of New Jackson Orleans under Andrew in 1815. He was awarded a medal for his bravery on this occasion in 1815, by President John

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Quincy Adams. The Colbert family is listed among the noble families of France and England.

As Curator of the Museum of the Oklahoma State Historical Society, Mrs. Conlan is following in the footsteps of this noted ancestor, and has become the "Standard Bearer" of her people in her devotion to her work in collecting, placing, and arranging the valuable collection, secured from not only her people but all others as well who have helped to build this great commonwealth.

The youngest daughter of a large family Czarina Colbert was born near Colbert, in the old Chickasaw Nation. Her mother, Athenius Folsom, was born in the Choctaw Nation at Eagletown, in 1835, daughter of Rev. Israel Folsom, who was one quarter Choctaw, a descendant from the well known Folsom family of New England.

Israel Folsom served as a missionary to his people for many years, translating several books of the Bible into their language, and was the first one to translate the Lord's prayer into the Choctaw language.

As a child Czarina's education was directed by her mother but later she attended a small neighborhood Chickasaw school.

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For two terms she attended a convent in Denison, Texas. Later, she attended Mary Baldwin College, in Stanton, Virginia. Returning to Indian Territory in her later teens, she was married to Michael Conlan, a native of Wisconsin, in 1894. To them one daughter was born, Lottie, who teaches art in Oklahoma City schools.

Mrs. Conlan has traveled extensively with her husband and daughter throughout the United States and Europe. She has been active in club, church, and fraternal organizations of her city and state. Some idea of her varied interests may be gleaned from the number of times she has "blazed the trail" not only for herself but for womankind. She was the first woman in Oklahoma elected a member of a school board, serving two years in Lindsay, a decade before woman suffrage. In 1896 in her home in Atoka Mrs. Conlan helped organize the first study club in the Indian Territory, the Pioneer, and later became the first President of Women's Federated Clubs of Indian Territory.

In 1932 the Oklahoma Federation of Women's Clubs elected Mrs. Conlan as their Director which placed her on the National Board of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. For twelve

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years she has served the State Federation as Chairman of Indian Welfare, and is now on the Advisory Committee of the National committee, one of three women in the United States on that important work. Mrs. Conlan has served as President of the Oklahoma Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

At a mass meeting of Chickasaws and Choctaws at Ardmore in 1928 to select a delegation to urge the importance of certain legislation upon Congress, she was chosen as the only woman on a Committee of Five to represent the Choctaws. At this meeting, all tribal precedent was broken when a woman, Mrs. Conlan, was unanimously elected to preside over the deliberations.

The last significant honor that has been given to Mrs. Conlan, is the Oklahoma Memorial Association conferred upon her honorary membership in the Association, "In recognition and appreciation of the great and good public service which she has rendered in years past to humanity and the State of Oklahoma for which all Oklahomans are grateful" November 16th, 1935. The certificate of membership was signed by the Secretary and President of the Association and the Secretary of

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State of Oklahoma and by Governor E. W. Mariand.

In 1926 at a reunion of the "Folsom Family Association", of which Mrs. Conlan is a member, that met in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, she was introduced as the first Indian and member of that branch of the family residing west of the Mississippi, ever to attend their reunion. She read a sketch of her great uncle, David Folsom, the most outstanding man of the Folsom name, the following year at their family reunion in Boston, Massachusetts.

On November 23rd, 1923, a tree was planted in honor of Czarina C. Conlan on the highway north of the State Capitol. By a vote of the people of Oklahoma seventy persons have been so honored for their outstanding achievements. This tree-planting was sponsored by J. A. Whitehurst, President of the Board of Agriculture. Mrs. Conlan's name is given in the 1926-27 book of "Who's Who". On January 28, 1937, Mrs. Conlan presented her eighteen annual report of her work to the Board of the Oklahoma Historical Society. This report showed that more than \$100,000.00 worth of articles had been added to the museum. This splendid record of continuous important service speaks for itself.