

RANDOLPH, MATTIE & JIM -- TRACT #NR 566

REASON FOR VISIT  
(Biddle)

On December 10 Mr. Ziegler of the Legal Division stated that he had been requested to resort to legal methods, eviction, if necessary, in order to get "Mattie Randolph out." Mrs. Barber and Mr. Wilson requested that I go to see Mrs. Randolph before legal action was taken.

12/11/35  
HOME

This family live in a two-room shack, one room serving as a living and bedroom, et al, which is of logs. A lean-to kitchen put together with planks has evidently been added on. The house is located in a narrow ravine, or hollow, on a steep bank of the Powell River. There are no windows in the dwelling, but a plank placed over a large space between the logs serves the purpose. A stove and three double beds, about four chairs, and a small table are in the one room; a stove and two tables in the kitchen. The house is in very bad condition, cold air coming through large cracks in the walls and holes in the floors. There are many spaces in the roof where the sky can be seen. The cowshed is under the house. There are no toilet facilities, and during the worker's visit, Wanda, the four-year-old, proceeded to use the front porch for this purpose.

FAMILY

Mattie, Jim, and six of their seven children live in this two-room house. Mrs. Randolph, a rather small, stocky, fiery, brown-eyed woman, is very evidently the dominating member of the family. Jim, her husband, is a quiet, easy-going fellow, having little to say on any family problem, even when asked "What do you think?" by his wife. The six children seemed happy, but why or how is the question. They were dirty, needed more warm clothes, they had no play things at all. Wanda, the four-year-old, was quite excited when the worker showed her that chips of kindling could be used for blocks and houses and bridges can be built with them.

This family was accepted on relief April, 1934 and received aid until Mr. Randolph was transferred to ~~WVA~~ <sup>WVPA</sup>, September, 1934. At this time he presented a doctor's certificate showing he had diabetes and heart trouble, so Mrs. Randolph, though pregnant, started working October, 1934, and did sewing on a sewing project through April, 1935. Her baby was born in June, 1935. TERA records give this family a bad recommendation for cooperation, industry, or resourcefulness. They state Mrs. Randolph has always been a bad housekeeper. However, the case worker, in her most recent entry, said that the Randolph home was the cleanest on her last visit that she had ever seen it. It would seem to the worker that Mrs. Randolph has really been "cleaning up" for her visits from the TVA officials and has been enjoying somewhat the notoriety she has gained and the trouble she has caused. Mrs. Randolph has rheumatism and is really not strong, owing to the birth of

FAMILY  
(Continued)

seven children during the past fifteen years. The girl seven is crosseyed and has a skin trouble over her body. The children have gone to school very little and the family belongs to no church. The mother uses snuff or tobacco, as does the thirteen-year-old daughter. The latter is an expert spitter. It is evident that this family has a very low standard of living.

HISTORY

This family, or rather "Mattie, herself", has been called the A-1 bluffer and problem case for the TVA. The family's attitude has, from the beginning of TVA, been one of antagonism. They have never shown any willingness to cooperate with any person connected with TVA. Mrs. Randolph told worker on first visit, "I'll stay here until the water comes up and float down with it when it does." The crux of the problem is the fact that Mattie, who really owns the land, feels the TVA should pay her more than \$530 for her fourteen acres of land. She also felt the appraisers "had taken advantage of her and jim." According to the story she told, the other people around her had bought off the appraisers, but she and Jim didn't say a word to them when they came by their place. The visitor then said, "Well, you really don't feel you were so underpaid for your own land, but that you didn't get what you thought you should in comparison with what other folks got." She answered, "That's it."

RELATIVES

Mrs. Randolph's mother, Nan Wallace, her stepbrother, Clarence Wallace, and her own fifteen-year-old boy, live about two miles from the Randolph home, address Route 3, LaFollette. Another brother, Roscoe, lives in Indiana. Her father, \_\_\_\_\_ Heatherly, is a former reservoir family and moved to Blount County. It is doubtful if any help could be given by these relatives, but they should be contacted. Mr. Randolph has no kinfolk that could aid.

EMPLOYMENT

This family formerly lived at Westbourne and Caryville, both coal mining camps. Mr. Randolph worked at the coal companies in both places. In 1926 they worked on the farm of H. C. Irwin. Here they sharecropped, and according to Mrs. Randolph, she was able to buy "25 to 30 acres" from Mr. Irwin. (Mrs. Randolph still claims Mr. Irwin gave her this amount and that the TVA is paying for only 14 acres). The Randolphs moved to their river front shack in 1930, and evidently from 1930 to 1933 they got along quite well, cultivating about three acres in corn, beans, and potatoes, putting out a few fruit trees, building a fence or two. In 1933 or 1934 Mr. Randolph evidently lost all spirit to work, the domination in his home becoming irritating. He then asked for relief and family has gotten bi-monthly grocery orders until last summer, when unemployables were cut off (Mrs. Randolph having a new-born babe, Mr. Randolph claiming he was too sick to work).

## PROBLEM

The big problem in this family is a psychological one. Mrs. Randolph, as said before, is a very domineering, tyrannous, blustering soul. She has been accused of threatening several TVA men with a shotgun. Her stubborn, obstinate manner has possibly put up a strong wall to any possible successful contacts. Another problem is the fact that neither she nor any of her family have any idea as to the meaning of the TVA, why it came in and broke up her community, why they moved her neighbors away, why they closed the gates of the "darn dam" and backed up the water over her garden just at the time she wanted to pick her beans, but they didn't fool her, as she said with her hands on her hips, for she just took her shoes off, waded down in the water, and picked the beans anyway. In her mind, the TVA had ruined a good farming country, coming in there and upsetting everything. She furthermore stated that the water wouldn't be up for two or three years and she saw no reason for moving now. These facts and beliefs have, to some extent, been mishandled by some folk, for when a positive creature goes in and tells Mrs. Randolph, "You bluffed everybody in the TVA, but you're not going to bluff me," this only increases the antagonism and belligerent attitude. She furthermore claims to have been told that "she was going to be kicked off over two years ago" and then she retorts, with chin in air, "I'm still here." Mrs. Randolph has been "egged on" by some neighbors and others to believe she can get more money from the TVA and she is doing her darndest to get more, but no one has explained to her that she is going about it in the wrong way.

## RESOURCES

This family could draw out \$530 from the bank for their land, but Mrs. Randolph says "If they want to beat me out of it, they might as well take it all. I ain't going to take a cent of it." They have about 25 chickens, two pigs, two cows, one bull, and one calf. Other than material resources, there is a real lack of family capabilities to achieve any progress. They have had very limited experiences, do not want a better place to live, or electric lights, or a bath room, or any other high-falutin thing. Their real needs are great, but their desires have been thwarted.

## PLANS FOR MOVING

This family absolutely refuses to even talk of moving. However, the worker made a friendly, informal contact on first visit and asked Mrs. Randolph to be thinking of any way visitor could be of help in working out her problems, which visitor believed Mrs. Randolph felt keenly. Worker left family, promising to return the next week and help them in any way they might suggest.