



Moon-Randolph Homestead. Photo courtesy of Caitlin DeSilvey & Russell Johnston

The Moon-Randolph Homestead consists of 470 acres in Missoula Montana's North Hills. The homestead was purchased by the City of Missoula in 1996 as part of Open Space. Caretakers are employed to maintain, protect, and educate the public while continuing to actively work the homestead. Public trail systems access the property. For further information or to visit the homestead contact: moonrandolph@montana.com

Emma Hansen Randolph (1877-1956)

- **1877-Birth.** Emma was born on March 3, 1877 at Fort Logan Montana. She was the oldest of eight children in an established family in White Sulphur Springs, Montana.
- **1900-Marriage.** Emma married William Randolph in 1900 in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. They set off in a covered wagon to honeymoon in Lewiston Idaho. They had three sons: Keith (1901), Robert (1903), and William Jr. (1911).
- **A dream come true.** She trained as a teacher in the first class of students admitted to the University of Montana. However, her dream was to raise a family on her own farm. The dream came true after seven years of marriage, when the Randolphs bought an old homestead in the North Hills of Missoula Montana and moved there with their two young sons.
- The family kept chickens (several hundred) and cattle, raised fruit and vegetables for Missoula markets, and were extremely generous in hard times. During the Great Depression, the farm Emma always wanted became a place with a reputation for generosity where there was always room and something to eat. For many years, when William would become restless and travel with a new work prospect, Emma and the boys ran the farm all on their own.
- **Daily Accomplishments.** Emma Randolph's accomplishments were mostly everyday duties that contributed to her resourceful character. She helped run the farm business specializing in milk products and eggs. She raised three sons and nannied a generation of grandchildren, including Keith's four daughters.
- **Religion.** A strong-willed Seventh Day Adventist, Emma frowned on alcohol. Husband William was said to occasionally slip away to drink with hobos and Native Americans camped out on the verges of Missoula. She ran her household and her poultry business with brisk efficiency.
- Emma Randolph's life was one of hard work, fresh air, and small rewards easily overlooked. She was an early version of the modern busy Missoula mother, trying to raise a family and do "her own thing" at the same time, all on a modest budget and with a restless, daydreaming husband to boot.
- **1956-Death.** Emma died on January 3, 1956 from heart disease in Missoula Montana.





William Henry Randolph (1872-1956)

- **1872-Birth.** William was born on February 6, 1872 in Holt County Missouri.
- **Early 1890's:** As an adventurous, restless young man, William was instrumental in persuading his entire family to move with him to a brand-new state called Montana. The family made the trip by Missouri river steamboat. They landed in Billings Montana where they ran a stagecoach stop for about a year before settling in White Sulphur Springs Montana. There the Randolph family purchased a hotel that catered to the health-seeking tourists who came to soak in the town's mineral springs.
- **1906:** William was working as a laborer in Missoula Montana. By 1907 he moved Emma and their two sons to Missoula for a fresh start.

They entered into an agreement to purchase over time an 80-acre property in Missoula's North Hills which had first been homesteaded in 1889.

- **Farmer:** By wits and hard work, William Randolph was able to eventually expand his holdings in the Hills and hang on to the family farm through the depths of the Great Depression. He made ends meet by selling mostly homestead products of vegetables, fruit, eggs, and milk from the back of a horse-drawn wagon he drove into town. William also discovered and worked a small coal mine on the property called "Little Phoebe" which kept many hard-hit Missoula families warm over the winter.
- **Inventor:** Though he proved a decent farmer, William dreamt of being an inventor. In 1905, he took a train to Washington, DC to patent his idea for a mowing machine. The concept consisted of five different inventions, needing separate applications.



William never found the money to redraft his plans nor the time to complete the paperwork. However, he kept trying, even well into his later years, to find that golden-ticket invention that would make his fortune.



He never did. His life is a tribute to the everyday hardworking class who dream big but must make do with what they have. He may not have become a famous inventor but William had a good life here. His homestead is now a Missoula treasure that will live in

perpetuity.

- **1956-Death.** William died in his sleep from natural causes on June 26, 1956 in Missoula Montana.

Information provided by current homestead caretakers: Andrew & Joann Smetanka and "Butterflies and Railroad Ties" by Caitlin DeSilvey.