

# The John Hayes Randolph Family

## By Kim Haswell

Placer County has a very rich agricultural history. It started with humble beginnings, but quickly was supplying citrus to communities all over California and beyond. Today, we have 3 year-round and 5 seasonal farmers markets throughout Placer County. For information on dates/times and locations visit, <https://getplacergrown.com/farmers-markets/>



One of the early pioneers in the Placer County fruit packing and shipping industry was the Earl Fruit Company. According to Wikipedia, "the Earl Fruit Company was founded by Edwin T. Earl. He started his career in the shipping of fruits. By 1886, he was President of the Earl Fruit Company. In 1890, he invented the refrigerator car to transport fruits to the East Coast of the United States. He established the Continental Fruit Express and invested US\$2,000,000 in refrigerator cars. In 1901, he sold his refrigerator cars to Armour and Company of Chicago and became a millionaire."



*John Hayes Randolph (1871-1931)*

John Hayes Randolph was the Placer County field manager for Earl Fruit Company in Penryn at the time of his death in 1931. John Hayes Randolph was born in 1871 in Virginia and by 1896, John was living in Placer County, CA. John started his successful agriculture career as a teamster hauling hops and selling hay and "Yucca Palm" plants for aiding in preventing rodents and insects from damaging fruit trees. John married young Byrd May Bensley in 1905 in Placer County.

Byrd Bensley Randolph (1886-1943) was born in 1886 in Miles City, Montana. By 1900, Byrd's mother Lavinia, now a widow, was living in Penryn, CA with Byrd and her 3 siblings. She taught school in Penryn for many years, starting in approximately 1915.

John was doing business in the Sacramento area and spending a lot of time in the El Dorado County area where his daughter, Virginia Randolph was born in 1906. By 1909, Byrd and John Hayes had another child, Albert Randolph and were living in Placerville on Coloma Street, where John was the local manager of Fruit Producers Company in Placerville.



***Byrd May Bensley Randolph (1886-1943)***

County. Virginia hosted an engagement party for Blair Birdsall and her fiancé from her first marriage to Doman J. Dobbas in 1929.

John held leadership positions within the fruit growing industry, such as committee positions on the El Dorado County Fruit Growers Association and the Board of Trade. He is noted as being instrumental in promoting standardization and infrastructure in the fruit growing industry to ensure quality. During John's time in Placerville, he was also admitted as a member to the Placerville Fraternal Order of Eagles.

In 1914, their 3rd child, Evelyn, was born. By 1915, the Randolph family made their way back to Placer County where John was promoted to District Manager for Producers Fruit Company in Loomis, CA. Byrd worked as a teacher in Newcastle/Penryn.

John and Byrd's oldest daughter, Virginia (1906-1954), was also active in the community and Placer County social circles. Virginia Randolph Fox Cuneo was close friends with Blair Birdsall Dobbas Cranston. (1905 – 1980) Blair Birdsall was daughter of former State Senator Earnest Birdsall and Mabel Blair Birdsall, both descendants of prominent Placer and El Dorado County logging, agriculture, and water families.

Virginia and Blair both attended high school in Placer



Virginia attended the "Chico Normal School" in the 1920s. She was on the entertainment committee for the infamous Pioneer Days which started in 1915. Virginia followed her mother, Byrd and became a teacher in Penryn.

Byrd May Bensley Randolph passed away 14 years after her husband, John in 1943. Byrd Bensley Randolph, her husband John Hayes Randolph (1871-1931), their daughter Virginia Lee Randolph Fox Cuneo (1906-1954) and their granddaughter Marilyn Fox Eichelberger Picket (1927-2014) are all four buried in the Newcastle, CA cemetery. 5th generation descendants of JH and Byrd Randolph are still living locally in El Dorado County to this day.

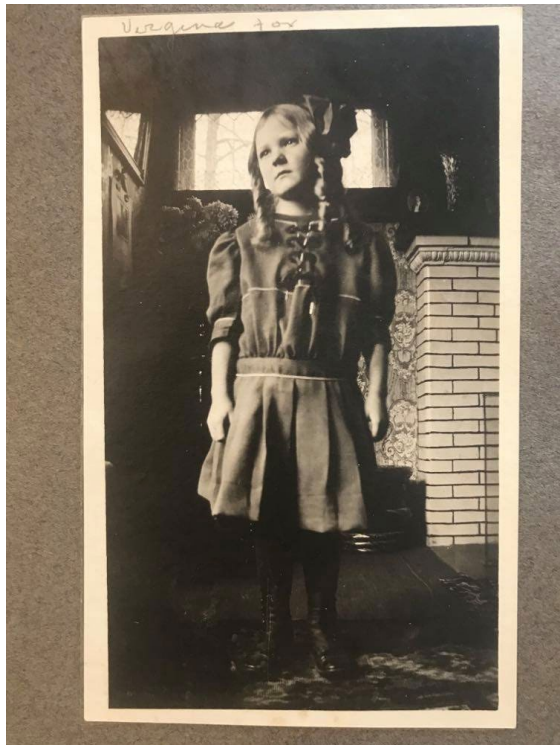
***Byrd Bensley Randolph with her first-born daughter, Virginia Randolph (1906-1954)***



*Virginia Randolph (1906-1954)*



*Virginia Randolph (1906-1954)*



*Virginia Randolph (1906-1954)*

### **Death of J. H. Randolph**

John Hayes Randolph, well known fruit man, died suddenly at his home in Newcastle last Tuesday morning. He was a native of Richmond, Va., aged 59 years.

Deceased came to California and settled in Newcastle 35 years ago. For many years he was the manager of the Producers Fruit Co., and at the time of his death was the Placer County field manager for the Earl Fruit Co.

John Randolph was a very fine man, highly respected in the community, and well thought of by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Byrd May Randolph, two daughters and one son, Mrs. Virginia Fox, Miss Evelyn Randolph and Albert Randolph.

Funeral services were held from the Newcastle M. E. Church Thursday afternoon, the Rev. Tamblyn officiating. Interment in Newcastle cemetery.

The following acted as pallbearers: L. A. Taylor, Wm. Howiler, Joe Kister, Chas. Allen, Chas. Silva and Al Laing.

*John Hays Randolph Obituary (1871-1931)*