

SHANKS, THOMAS OLIN

INTERVIEW

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Launcey O. Moore, Supervisor  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

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Frank J. Still  
field worker

Interview: Thomas Olin Shanks

Thomas Olin Shanks, son of Rev. George Shanks and Mary Ann Shanks, was born in Clark County, Mississippi, seven miles east of Shubuta, on November 1, 1867. He comes of a long line of preachers. His father was a local Methodist preacher. His paternal grandfather, James Shanks, was a traveling preacher in the Alabama Conference for many years. Rev. James Shanks' father was a Methodist preacher as was his father, who was converted under the ministry of John Wesley or his workers in Ireland, having been born in Dublin. The subject of this sketch was converted at the age of nine. He moved with his parents to Dixie, four miles north of Whitesboro, Texas and lived in that community for two years. Then his family moved to Cooke County, thirteen miles southeast of Gainesville and four miles west of Collinsville where Thomas Olin lived for about ten years. While in Mississippi, he had no educational advantages, except in his home, as there were no public schools in his community at Dixie in Texas. He attended the schools in his community in Cooke County for several years. Early in life he felt the call to service in the church and under the preaching of Rev. J. . . Shanks, his brother, he committed himself to God for the work of the ministry. He secured further education at Collinsville Academy, Whitesboro Normal School and later at Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas

He was pastor when twenty-one years of age, 1888-89, on Tahlequah Circuit serving Blue Springs, Bald Hill, Crittenden, Eureka and Grand River churches.

In 1890 at the conference at Muskogee, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix and admitted on trial in the Indian Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He served two years on the

Angtown Circuit. Then he was sent to the Cameron charge. Just after receiving this appointment, he was happily married to Miss Alice L. Hightower Tahlequah, the date being November 24, 1892. The marriage was solemnized at the then new brick Methodist Church by Rev. J. J. Lovett, the pastor, who was the step-father of the bride.

At Cameron a parsonage was secured, a church built, and a revival was held resulting in conversions in each of the five appointments. The next conference being held, Thomas Olin was sent to Webber's Falls Station. Here he had charge of a church school, Webber's Falls Academy. His work was very hard and successful here. Then to Duncan where he built a parsonage and a church which received ninety-two members. Next to Checotah where he paid a church debt, then the church was blown down and it was re-built. Then to Marietta where he finished a church building; then to Sawnee where he improved a parsonage and secured lots on which the magnificent church now stands. Then to Holdenville where he paid a church debt and erected a fine five-roomed parsonage. Then to Spiro where he was the instrument in saving souls. The next year he was in Tishomingo where he repaired a parsonage and assisted in a revival. The next charge was Lexington, Oklahoma where a fine revival was held in which three Roman Catholics were converted and joined the Methodist Church.

At the close of the second year, T. O. transferred to the St. Louis Conference and spent two successful years in Malden Station where he overhauled the parsonage and had a revival; at the end of the year he transferred to his next conference and was stationed at Afton. Thence he went to Mill Creek, Stone-  
 1, Westville, Leota, Boynton, Vian (3 years), Kiowa (3 years), Allen (2 yrs.)  
 at Lawson Bennington, from whence he moved in 1923 to Tahlequah and has lived there since, except two years at Braggs.

Rev. and Mrs. T. C. Shanks have five sons, all of whom have secured part of their education at Tahlequah. L. E. took the course at the Normal, O., Jr. attended, James L., William and John C. took their A. B. here. For James and William took their Master degree at Peabody and John his at Swater, Okla., each has work on his Doctor's degree. James and John at Columbia, New York, and William at Peabody.

Rev. T. C. Shanks took his Bachelor's degree, Bachelor of Sacred Literature, from the Eugene Bible University, Eugene Oregon.