

THOMPSON, MAMA

INTERVIEW

#10015

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INDUSTRIAL WORK PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Division of the Dept. of the Interior
Oklahoma

THOMPSON, EMMA (MRS)

INTERVIEW.

10015.

Field Worker's name Anna R. Barry.

Date of interview (date) February 15, 1938. 193

1. Name Mrs. Emma Thompson.

2. Present address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 212 North Macomb Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 2 Year 1868.

5. Place of birth Cumberland County, Illinois.

6. Name of Father Henry Heatley. Place of birth New York.

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Catherine Ackinson Heatley. Place of birth Pennsylvania.

Other information about mother _____

Additional comments by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Report should be made for subjects and questions. Contents of this form should be kept confidential and attached firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 8

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Anna R. Barry,
Journalist,
Feb. 15, 1939.

An Interview With Mrs. Emma Thompson,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Emma (Heatley) Thompson was born near the little village of Greenu, Cumberland County, Illinois on August 23, 1869. She is daughter of Henry Heatley and Catherine Atkinson Heatley. Her parents were among the early settlers of that part of the state. On her parents' old home in Illinois, Emma grew to womanhood, attending a small rural school located two and one-half miles from her home. She married at an early age as she was only fifteen years of age when she married, Andrew N. Thompson on January 10, 1883. Soon after their marriage this young couple left the state of Illinois and located on a farm in Western Kansas.

Some weeks before the opening of Oklahoma in 1889, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Thompson decided to come to Oklahoma to seek a home and many days before the start for the new home, this couple made preparations for the trip. In addition to flour, bacon, beans, salt and other groceries they also loaded their one wagon with a few utensils for

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housekeeping, as well as bedding, clothing and the faithful family dog, which was a pet of their two small sons. Due to their horses becoming foot sore this family landed in Kingfisher some three or four days after the "Run" was made on April 28, 1889. Soon after their arrival in Kingfisher, Mr. Thompson obtained two lots and built a little one room frame shack, meanwhile the family lived in their covered wagon. Mr. Thompson found plenty of carpenter work, and in later years went to work at the Kingfisher mill.

In Kingfisher was located one of the land offices in 1889 and this caused the streets, lanes and by-ways to be filled with a multitude of covered wagons, rigs and people on horseback. Soon after the "Run" almost everybody who could muster a vehicle went into the freighting business

and as a rule made a good profit. The business of freighting was carried on in vehicles which ranged from a one mule cart or one team of oxen and a wagon carrying a few hundred pounds, to a string of monster wagons drawn by ten yoke of oxen or from four to six span of mules driven by one line. The town presented a busy scene with its rumbling

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wagons, bellowing oxen, braying mules, cracking whips and busy men. The shouting, yelling and cursing of the teamsters, filled the air. Men rushed up and down the streets in utter forgetfulness of everything except hurry and bustle. On every hand there was to be seen evidence of the booming prosperity of the frontier.

Saloons, gambling houses, dance halls, and all manner of rough amusements flourished, taking the money of the incoming emigrants. A few months after settlement, everyone seemed to get adjusted to this new way of living and row after row of one and two room shacks were erected. In this town a few carpets were to be found such as Brussels rugs with showy flowers. These were carefully rolled up each fall and striped rag rugs over a layer of prairie hay were put down in place of the carpets.

Most every woman could be seen around her little shack in a full sweeping calico dress, and everytime women stepped out of doors they always remembered to put on their sunbonnets. A few ladies dressed in silks and tasty woolens, the skirts full and reaching to the ground. Shawls were worn summer and winter. A few men wore tall silk

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stove-pipe hats. This fancy dress however was confined to a few people and more often both men and women dressed very plainly. Now and then a piano was to be found and quite a number of people owned organs. Conversation turned most often to the advantages of a settler's old home and its comforts in comparison with the rude surroundings and disadvantages of the new. But the new country with its healthfulness, brilliant future and opportunity, drowned despair.

Many people who lived in the towns owned their own horses and saddles or carriages. Others hired the livery rig which was available in every town. The young people took moonlight rides over the prairies. In the earlier times the young men and their lady friends rode poles since there were few rigs. Later on, there were more rigs for hire. During these early years, horse racing was a favorite diversion. The natural prairie grass served as a track for both running and trotting races. These races were usually announced in advance in the newspapers and were the main topic of conversation for days before the affair. Ordinarily there were only two horses in the

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contest. The backers would put up \$25.00 to 100.00 on each side and nearly as much or staked on side bets by outsiders. If the horses were from different towns or communities a strong spirit of community loyalty was shown by citizens and their money was put up on one side or the other. In addition to the horse races were held from time to time in which ladies displayed their horsemanship, riding horses and side saddle. Tying horseshoes was another sport which the men enjoyed. Ball was played in a circle and was popular among young people.

With the young men in the community, a week hardly passed when there was not a dance. The fiddler usually secured the music and was provided for his expenses with the money he collected. He looked about on his fiddle and he played it well. The instrument sounded like a fiddle. This was a signal for the gentlemen to select partners. Sometimes it was difficult to secure music and for lack of a fiddler, dances were sometimes held with only a man of a harp for music.

THOMPSON, FRANK (1911)

1911

1911

There were many camp meetings in the early days these were usually held in a large tent or some other or grove of trees. Vehicles of every possible kind came from the most widely scattered points in the country in the grove. These camp meetings were usually held for one or two weeks. Generally the tent was set up with services at three o'clock in the afternoon and services in the evening. The order of the day was first the tin horn hanging in the preacher's stand position of sunrise when it was expected all persons would see. Half an hour later it was blown again for family worship. They broke fast was prepared and eaten. At eight or nine o'clock the horn sounded for prayer meeting held in the tent. At ten the blast announced the preaching services. At three and again in the evening, the congregation convened in the assembly place. On Sunday morning occurred the testimony meeting. At the close of the services invitations were offered for those convicted of sin to come to the mourner's bench, or, as it was sometimes said, to come forward for prayers. A few benches immediately in front of the preacher's stand were designated the altar or mourners' bench.

THOMPSON, JOHN (1896)

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The success of the ministrations of the meeting were measured by the number of penitents who were gathered. The penitents sat on these benches and under the congregation a number of invitations were given as "Come Ye Sinners" and many of these were talked and prayed with. The number of conversions effected at these meetings. Sunday school attendance of the whole session, baptisms, marriages were married at these meetings. The success of a meeting, of course, was measured by the number of converts, backsliders reclaimed, and no members left the church.

As the meeting drew on to a close, baptisms were taken place in the nearby stream. At the close of the meeting the campers filed out in line around the circle of tents, the ministers leading the way. The company broke ranks and everybody shook hands. It was a sad occasion, for hearts had been knit together in Christian fellowship and never again would the same group be present at a like gathering.

In December, 1896, the Thompson family moved to El Reno and located on North Choctaw Street and soon after

THOMPSON, WOOD (1885) ... 1881

their arrival here Mr. Thompson reported that the

Okeechobee Railroad Company, which had been built

island, and worked about three months for the

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson received the ...

and two boys in Oklahoma, ...

Thompson passed away and is buried in the

cemetery.