

THOMPSON, LINDY (MRS.)

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Interview with Mrs. Andy Thompson
1609 Dorchester, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

I was born in Dallas County near Dallas, Texas, February 5, 1877, am of white descent and came by train over the M.K.&T. Railroad to Atoka, Indian Territory in 1888, along with my mother and one brother. My father died soon after my birth in 1877 and with the help of her brother Mother had to earn the living for the three of us.

The reason we three came to the Indian Territory was because Mother and Brother were influenced by friends as well as by reading in the papers that a movement was on foot in Congress to open certain lands in the Oklahoma Territory to settlers; so we made arrangements to be near when the time came.

We had to live until the opening was made so Brother secured a permit from the Choctaw Government as we were in the Choctaw Nation to start farming and began to farm, although surveyors were busy surveying out the section lines of the Oklahoma country that belonged to the Creeks and Seminoles. In March 1889, President Harrison issued a proclamation that the land would be opened to settlers on April 22, 1889, at noon. ~~Mother~~ Mother was sick at this time and was unable to investigate or make the race and Brother was only nineteen years of age and could not take a claim for the law required one to be twenty-one

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years of age, or head of a family. No one in this run was to receive more than one hundred and sixty acres of land. The homestead laws of the United States provided that the first man who came upon a quarter section of land and began improving it would have the first claim except certain sections in each township reserved from settlement. People came by rail, foot, horseback and in wagons from every place it seemed to make this race. All one could hear was talk about the opening of the Oklahoma Lands. None of us participated in this run but we continued to farm doing the best we could to live under many hardships until 1891. And by the time we had acquired some stock, Brother had become twenty-one years old, Mother was well and then another opening was to be made in the Sac-Fox and Shawnee-Pottawatomie country.

The lands to be opened at this time could be identified today as Pottawatomie and Lincoln Counties and part of Cleveland, Oklahoma and Logan Counties. A run was to be made similar to that of the run of 1889, but on a smaller scale.

Bill, my brother, filed and did make the run. Much of these lands were hilly and covered with timber but some of it was good fertile land. After we saw and knew we were to make the run, we moved by covered wagon to the south bank of the Canadian River near the present town of Enism and struck camp. The day of the opening was September 22, 1891. Mother and I stayed in camp and Brother took our

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best horse early that morning and rode up to the line and we saw nothing more of him until late the next evening. He returned much elated and so were we, he had staked a claim.

We broke camp, loaded all our belongings into the wagon and started for the claim. The claim was near the present town of Asher and only a short way north of the Canadian River. Once on the claim we struck camp as before the days of the run, sleeping in the wagon at nights for the weather was cold and rains set in. We soon felled trees, cut logs and built a log cabin, with stick fire place, dug a well and were prepared for the winter. During the winter we hunted and trapped and about every month we took the hides to the trading post which is now Oklahoma City and sold and traded them for provisions. The first spring on the claim we planted a little garden, some corn and melons. We were really havin' a hard time barely ekeing out an existence but we stuck to it for two years and became acquainted around the country and in the fall of 1893, Brother and Mother met up with a fellow named McIntosh from McAlester who bantered them for a trade of some town property in McAlester for the claim. The deal was consummated and we moved to McAlester, late that fall. From the time we left Texas in 1888 until the fall of 1893, I never attended school for there were no schools near, but Brother that winter got a job on the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf railroad and the next spring, 1894, I started to a

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subscription school and had to pay \$2.00 a month. I attended this school for six months and that was the extent of my schooling.

The Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf railroad is now the Rock Island railroad and was built through McAlester about the year 1890. Andy Thompson, as he was known, was twenty one years old and worked for the C. O. & G. Railroad along with my brother and in this way I met Andy and we were married. Mother died a few years after I married and is buried at McAlester and my brother Lill (Bill Pratt) lived with us after mother's death. In 1906, Mr. Thompson secured employment with the Midland Valley railroad at Muskogee and we moved to Muskogee and I have lived here ever since. Mr. Thompson was killed in a railroad accident on a bridge of the Midland Valley while on line duty some fifteen miles from Tulsa, near the present town of Leonard, the home of Pleas Porter who was principal Chief of the Creek Nation.