

THOMPkins, I. J. (MRS.) INTERVIEW #4489

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Eunice M. Meyer.

This report made on (date) June 14, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. L. J. Thompkins

2. Post Office Address Granite

3. Residence address (or location) Broadie's Twin Lakes

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 24 Year 1854  
 6 miles northeast of Granite

5. Place of birth Dallas County, Texas

6. Name of Father William Ming Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Fannie Rhodes Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

1. Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed: Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_

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Mrs. I. J. Thompkins, a resident of Greer County since 1886, lives at roadie's Twin Lakes, six miles northeast of Granite.

She used to secure clothing and shoes for her five children by trading quilts to the Kiowa Indians for clothes that had been issued to the Indians by the United States Government.

The Indians did not seem to like the clothes and shoes which the Government gave them but they admired the quilts she had made, especially the ones with red in them.

In addition to the quilts, the Indians were glad to get beef in exchange for the clothes and shoes.

Her husband traded an old cow to Chief Gotebo for two loads of corn. The deal was made at the Thompkins' home and Gotebo talked to Mr. Thompkins in the Kiowa sign language in negotiating the deal. He explained by gestures that the corn was sound and that the ears were large and that

Mr. Thompkins could shuck the corn and tramp it down in the wagon.

After closing the deal, Gotebo made signs indicating that after one moon and when the sun was at a certain height he would return to escort Mr. Thompkins to the place where he could get the corn.

Gotebo came to get Mr. Thompkins at the time promised and escorted him to his corn field on Rainy Mountains Creek. The corn proved to be just mubbins and there was not enough to make two wagon loads.

Gotebo was an honest old Indian. When the corn did not prove satisfactory and there was not enough of it to pay for the cow, he threw a lot of clothes, a shawl, and a lot of soap on top of the corn. The Indians did not like the clothes the Government gave them and they liked the soap even less.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompkins came to Greer County in October of 1886 from Stephens County, Texas. They had five children at the time.

They first located between the Navajo and Quartz Mountains, spending one winter there. They then moved to a location near Little Mountain, now known as the Reformatory Mountain,

but found that the land on which they settled was school land and moved east near the North Fork of Red River. They lived there for eleven years and in 1890 they moved down the river to a location five miles southeast of Granite where they lived until 1904, when they moved to Granite to send their children to school.

There were only about a half dozen families in the entire northeast portion of Greer County when the Thompkins family located there.

Mr. Thompkins, who was a well educated man, a talented musician, a splendid singer and a good conversationalist, was interested in various things, including mining.

He walked all over the mountains of Greer County in search of indications of gold, but was unable to find any signs of gold.

With his brother-in-law, Hugh Tucker, of Dallas, he prospected for several years in the mountains near Otter Creek, in the vicinity of the present towns of Snyder and Mountain Park.

Mr. Thompkins, Mr. Tucker and various associates sank a shaft eighty-five feet into the mountain. They found

enough gold for the bucket to make rings for his daughters and the enterprise did not prove a commercial success.

Mr. Thompson broke out sod on his claim northeast of Granite and engaged in farming, being one of the county's best farmers. He was a horse fancier and always kept a string of thoroughbreds, including some race horses that became famous on the race tracks of that section.

Mr. Thompson could not keep his horses out of the Iowa Indian country but the Indians never attempted to steal them. Some of the Indians, especially Little Bow, sub-chief, would always tell Mr. Thompson where he could find his horses when they were missing.

Mr. Thompson would give the Indians a beef every winter and a spring near the Thompson home was a favorite camping ground of the Indians when they traveled to Langue which they called "Sweet."

Mrs. Thompson and her daughters were frightened upon one occasion by Big Bow, Iowa sub-chief and father of Little Bow.

Big Bow was gesturing wildly as he approached the Thompsons home and his gestures appeared to Mrs. Thompson and

her daughters to threaten to kill and scalp them. Soon Little Bow appeared and took his father away, saying "Big Bow heep crazy."

... F. Ming, father of Mrs. Thompkins, gave an old pipe to Big Bow on one occasion and the Indian became very sick after smoking it.

The Indians were not without a sense of humor. One time Little Bow came to the home when Mr. Thompkins was away and asked for corn to feed his ponies. There were about sixty Indians in the party and Mrs. Thompkins did not want to give them corn to feed all their ponies.

"Thompkins is not here and I can't give you corn," she told the chief. "I am afraid Mr. Thompkins wouldn't like it." Little Bow laughed aloud and slapped his thighs, "You no 'fraid Tonky," he said.

Mrs. Thompkins' eldest son, Elmer, who now lives at McAlester, was arrested by an Indian one time and considerable diplomacy was necessary to secure his release.

The Thompkins children had been given permission to go to the east side of the North Fork of Red River to gather plums. Elmer Thompkins was starting home, a big sack of plums

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tied behind his saddle when a party of Indians suddenly surrounded him. He was roughly jerked from his horse and thrown on another horse behind an Indian. It developed that he had been arrested by the Indian police for trespassing into the Indian country and he was handcuffed and taken to the camp of Chief Lone Wolf, who refused to talk to him.

The sisters of the captive boy hurried home badly scared and told their mother what had happened. A party of cowboys were quickly assembled and they went to Lone Wolf's camp.

Jack Laughlin, spokesman of the group, told the Kiowa Chief that the militia would come quickly and kill him and all his men if he did not turn the white boy loose. The boy was released without further delay.

During the excitement caused by the threatened Indian uprising following the killing of Poline, a Kiowa sub-chief, by Jake Looher, a young cowboy, Mr. Thompkins hurried home from the southwest portion of Greer County where he was working with a thresher.

Two Indians were seen approaching the Thompkins home in a warlike attitude. Mr. Thompkins met them with his long-range rifle.



The Indians rode up to Mr. Thompson and dismounted quickly. "Poline no good," was their greeting, indicating that they were not mad because of the death of the sub-chief.

Mr. Thompson died at Granite, April 21, 1909, from injuries received when a team ran away and the wagon ran over him.