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BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs. M. O. Bezanson
Maiden name Thornby
(1/16 Cherokee Indian blood)
2400 Northwest 17th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN Indianapolis, Indiana
1873 (Approximately)

PARENTS Thornby, Virginia (Father)
Father was Cherokee Indian, English & Irish
Mother, born Kentucky, French descent.

I, Mrs. M. O. Bezanson, was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. I am of Virginia and Kentucky back ground where my father and mother were reared. Later my father moved to Indianapolis where he ran a machine factory and shop. He lost all his holdings in the depression of 1873. My father was of Cherokee Indian blood, English and Irish. My mother was French descent.

My parents moved to Kansas after 1873, where they lived until 1889. My father and brother made the run in 1889, and left the family at Kansas. Then returned for us a year later. I finally got a farm later, and that made us three quarter section of land together.

My father and brother drove all day, on the day of the run and camped in a meadow about dark, for the night. Discovering that it had not been taken my father, had my brother chop bark from a tree and write his name and the date, also that he filed on same. So Father got himself a claim the next day. My father and brother improved their homestead, and then came back to Kansas. We rented a car from the Railroad Company and shipped furniture, cows, chickens, horses, farm machinery, and straw berries to Oklahoma. We were not certain whether

I could get a farm at first, but finally secured one after I arrived.

My name was Thornby before I was married. My husband was a physician and of French descent. We lived in Guthrie in early years of our married life. My husband had a sanatorium there. I taught school for a while in Guthrie, Oklahoma and was County Superintendent of schools. Those days in Guthrie were of great social activity. Guthrie was then east and west Guthrie, west was the industrial and the poorer class of people.

There was a young man from the A. & M. College who was my opponent in the race, who was very handsome. I was only 24 years old then. He said to me, "What does a woman want to run for County Superintendent for, she can not ride a horse and get around over this county." But I did not prove to him that I could. I have always said that if he was smart at the time, he would have married me and won the race for the office. As I surely would not have refused him, if he had asked to marry me.

The men in those days carried their guns and arsenal about their belt. The only way you could tell an outlaw from another citizen was, that they usually dressed well, with close fitting garments. Had the best of hats and boots, with good saddles on their horses.

Men never smoked in the presence of women, nor seldom swore. The outlaws as we called them then, were not dangerous. There were horse thieves, bank robbers and train robbers, but never insulted a woman. If they met you on a trail they tipped their hat

bowed and spoke to the ladies, but never insulted them. Men that drank at saloons, and got drunk, would shout and fire their guns into the air, but never with intent to injure any one.

When I first came to Oklahoma and stopped at Muhall, at a small hotel over night. There hotel was lathed but not plastered. The Proprietor's wife asked me if I wanted to go to Church with her that evening, which I did. Church was held in a sort of barrick which must have been used for soldiers. There were about four hundred people there, all were men, mostly cowboys and soldiers. The lady and I, with whom I went, were the only women there. I never heard such beautiful and impressive singing in all my life. I would give any thing to have a record of the voices of that congregation today, with all its earnestness and sincerity of the men of the pioneer type.

Usually the impression is conveyed that the pioneers were, unhappy lot of people. There were not, those were happy days. People came here, to secure a home, and get away from struggles of other states. They had a piece of property that was free of debt. They were in good spirits, they had a hope for future, had good government, a cooperative spirit. Had good schools from beginning, because they had young people out of colleges, with degrees, who came here to take homesteads, and taught while they were improving their property. We had country square dances then and had a fine time.

I went to a political rally at Engles, Oklahoma where they had a fight against out laws a few months before. Supper was served at the hotel there. You could see buildings with bullet holes shot

through walls and ceiling. Two men awaited on table and waited on me. I was the only woman there. These men had their guns strapped on them. But I did not pay any attention at the time as men all looked similar, in dress and custom then. But they were two outlaws that came down from the attic of the hotel, where they were hiding, and said they were going to have the honor of serving the lady at the table. They were very courteous. However, some at the rally knew there were outlaws there, but dared not say any thing, as odds were against them. The outlaws were milling about in the crowd. To say any thing would have caused a serious fight.

We had in those days in Payne county our Bill Doolin, Miller Brothers, and Dunn brothers.

When I went over the county on my school route as County Superintendent, I wore a sailor hat, a mackintosh over my dress and a veil over my face. One time I stopped at a house and tied my horse on the grass beside a cart. I noticed that it seemed strange at this house. It was a log house with out windows in it, and I did not see any one or hear any dogs about the place, which was unusual, as nearly everyone had five or six dogs in those days in the country. At first I thought no one lived there. I walked toward the house, and at the same time was trying to get my veil off my face, and knocked at the door. I did not want to be taken for a U. S. Marshall in disguise.

The door opened and there stood four men, they invited me in and as I went in there were many more men inside. I took dinner with them and went on my way over my route. They were very courteous to me, some then knew me and as I entered the door, called me by name.

They had supported me in the election for County Superintendent. They were out laws, that lived there, which I did not know at the time. When I went over my route later, I inquired about them, of a group of neighbor boys, that lived near, the neighbors would not say anything. They knew they were outlaws and feared to talk. But I wish to repeat, outlaws in those days were honorable men.

The full blooded Indians when they passed one on the trails traveling from one point to another, would nod their head and speak in broken English. The Indian women could be seen washing or working about the Teepee. But would never turn their heads to look at you. They were aristocrats and felt they were better than whites. This is instinctive of all Indians.

We had churchs and clubs immediately after the beginning of Guthrie. I was a member of Excelsor Club. Our Club sent flowers to the legislature in Guthrie.

When the territory became a state there was not inaugural ball at Guthrie, there were a group of young folks had a ball that evening, which some called an inaugural ball.

When the constitution of Oklahoma was written there were two copies made. Bill Murray ex-Governor, consealed himself with the original copy until Proclamation day. Bill Murray then appeared at Guthrie, with the constitution of Oklahoma. This was done to prevent syndicates interests attempting to change clauses in the Oklahoma Constitution. The Territorial Governor Franks got so drunk on that day that he did not appear to turn the state over to the first State Governor Haskell.

My husband and I moved to Oklahoma City, when the State Capitol was moved from Guthrie to Oklahoma City. We moved into a new cottage on west Main street, some of our friends took another cottage next to us, that was in 1908.

Property at that time was very cheap. Professor of Schools at Guthrie purchased a lot where Alexander Drug Store stands for \$200.00 and sold a few months later for \$800.00. Oklahoma City had a metropolitan appearance from the beginning always advertised clothing of a finer grade than Guthrie. Guthrie catered more to farm people. We teachers always came to Oklahoma City to buy our shoes as they were prettier than those in Guthrie.

I have continued to live here since, until 1937 when my husband died. Then I went to California for three years and then returned to the City.
