Form A-(S-149)

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

ld Worker's name Ruth Kerbo

s report made on (date) August 24 193 7

Name Mr. R. L. Thompson

Post Office Address Mangum, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) 301 West Tyler

DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 7 Year 1863

Place of birth Villa Ridge, Arkansas

Name of Father W. B. Thompson Place of birth

Other information about father

Name of Mother Susan Thompson Place of birth

Other information about mother

es or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and stor the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions tinue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number ets attached _____.

THOMPSON, R. L. INTERVIEW. 8385

Interview with
R. L. Thompson, Mangum, Oklahoma

R. L. Thompson of Mangum planted a cotton crop on his farm west of Jester in 1894, and he declares that it was the first cotton he ever saw in this section. He also planted the first alfalfa he ever saw in Greer County and grew an early crop of kaffir corn at Jester in [illegible].

In 1892, Mr. Thompson arrived in Greer County and settled on a claim sixteen miles northwest of Mangum near Jester.

In 1894, Mr. Thompson stopped at a dugout [illegible] west of Vinson, on his return from Childress, [illegible] a trading point.

The tenant of the dugout was away from home and Mr. Thompson sat up to await his return. He waited and fed his horse but still the owner failed to appear. The next morning Mr. Thompson took his leave and left some money in the dugout to pay for his accommodations.

Several days later he saw the owner of the dugout in Mangum and the man was almost insulted that Mr. Thompson had left money to pay for the accommodations.

The custom of the early days in this section was

to receive all visitors whether strangers or friends.

Mr. Thompson lived at Jester for three years and left to establish a salt manufacturing plant at Salton in Harmon County.

The plant, known as the Kizer salt works, formerly supplied salt to government troops at Fort Elliott, Texas. Brine was obtained from a salt spring and was evaporated in vats. Cattle and sheep sometimes died after drinking from the salt springs, such was the high saline content of the water. Stockmen bought the product for 25 cents per 100 pounds.

After two years, Mr. Thompson sold his interest in the plant and located on a farm at Vinson for the next six years. He came to Mangum in 1907, where he was connected with a cotton warehouse and engaged in the bond business.

Later, he moved to Jackson County and engaged in farming for six years.

In 1893, Mr. Thompson and his brother, W. Thompson were riding on horseback to El Reno when arriving at Dopey, they saw a barricaded log house filled with armed settlers. A quarrel between Indians and white

settlers had developed in the community and an Indian had been killed. A white resident had been wounded in an exchange of fire. The two travellers from Greer County decided not to continue their journey.

Mr. Thompson recalls that religious services were held in a half dugout at Plainview in 1890. About forty persons attended the services and Mr. Thompson was made deacon at that time. Rev. J. W. Solomon held the services.

Mr. Thompson helped build the ranch home of Frank Simpson near Manum. The owner decided to move in before the dwelling was completely finished, and spent the first night in the home on an improvised bed consisting of two twelve inch planks covered with a blanket.

Mr. Thompson was county commissioner from 1900 to 1904.

In an effort to find good water on his claim near Elm River, Mr. Thompson drilled a well to a depth of eight feet but struck dry sand. One day a cyclone threatened to descend on the neighborhood.

Mr. Thompson covered the cistern with lumber and took refuge in the well with his family. They learned

later that cyclone had visited the county, having killed Doctor Ford at Turkey Creek.

Mr. Thompson had heard his father say that watermelons grew well in a cotton patch so he planted each fifth row in his cotton patch in melon seed. After continuing this planting scheme for three acres, he planted each seventh row in melons for a distance of two acres.

He had a bumper crop of melons but very little cotton. ~~The neighbors for miles around came in for free~~ melons but Mr. Thompson gathered little cotton.

Cotton and its cultivation was little understood by the early settlers.

~~Mrs. Thompson was in great fear of Indians when she came to Greer County and expected some redskin to waylay~~ them at any hour. However, it was twelve years before she saw any Indians here.

Mr. Thompson recalls seeing beavers on Grape Creek northwest of Vinson and remembers large flocks of prairie chickens around the O. M. Ranch west of Hollis.