

GASSAWAY, LILLIAN

TOMAS, COLANCHE CAPTIVE

#9573

GASSAWAY, LILLIAN. - 8 - TOMASA, COMANCHE CAPTIVE 9557.
FORM # (S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Lillian Gassaway

Report made on (date) December 31, 1937

Name Lillian Gassaway

Post Office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) 516 West Virginia Street

DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 25 Year 1888

Place of birth Anadarko, Oklahoma

Name of Father J. J. Methvin Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Emma Beall Methvin Place of birth Georgia

Other information about mother _____

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 copies attached 4.

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Tomasa, A Comanche Captive.

Tomasa was supposed to have been of the Carissa tribe and it is not known where she was captured, for she and her sister were captured by the Comanche Indians when they were very small, but it was either in Old or New Mexico. She was with the Comanches at the Brazos Agency. There an effort was made to find her people but with no success. She was turned over to some Mexicans near Santa Rosa. She was only ten years old and these people were very cruel to her. She and a little boy of about the same age determined to return to the Indians. One night they made their escape on a horse that belonged to the Mexicans. They traveled mostly at night so as not to be seen.

Soon their food gave out and they killed the horse to eat. Their feet became sore and they tore up the clothing they wore to wrap them in.

One night they felt that the end had come and they would have to give up all hope of finding the

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Indians. They went to sleep and Tomasa had a dream. In the dream someone told her the way to go to the Indian village; that it wasn't very far. It was so plain that she felt she must follow the directions given her in the dream. So the next morning she and the boy started on, following the dream as nearly as possible, and sure enough they soon found the Comanche village.

She was happy with the Comanches. While she was still a young girl, an old Indian man laid claim to her and it was understood that she would some day be his wife. To everyone's surprise when he came after her she refused to go with him, saying that she would rather die than to go with him. Joseph Chandler, who was a witness to the scene, interposed and asked the old man how much he would take for his interest in the girl. He said that he would take two dollars and a chicken. Chandler paid the Indian and Tomasa was

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free. She was still very young so Chandler placed her under proper care for several years. In 1859 she and Chandler were married.

They established a home on Chandler Creek, about ten miles north of Fort Sill. Later they moved to Pauls Valley. Tomasa and her husband had great influence over the Indians, and the Government, knowing this, persuaded them to move back to near Fort Sill where they gave Mr. Chandler employment.

Mr. Chandler died in 1872, leaving his widow and four children: Lotsee, Solomon, Boone, and George.

Mrs. Chandler married George Conover in 1875. He had been for a few years manager of her farm and ranch. To this union there was born three boys: Andy, Willie, and Johnnie.

In 1900 Mrs. Conover passed away. She was laid to rest in a little private cemetery down on the Little Washita, beside her first husband.

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Not long before she died she had Mr. J. J. Methvin make her will. After she had disposed of everything, she told Mr. Methvin that there was just one more thing she wanted. In that last item she provided for the old horse that she had so many years. She said that he was to be free for the rest of his days and not compelled to work any more.