

INTERVIEW WITH OLIN THOMPSON  
Lives at old site of Pomme de Terre village  
Interviewed by George Shervey, Curator  
Grant County Historical Society

(195--0 minutes)

Q. Today is February 13, 1972. My name is George Shervey. I am about to interview Mr. Olin Thompson. Mr. Thompson lives on the old site of the Village of Pomme de Terre. When were you born?

I was born May 1, 1888.

Q. Where were you born and what was the name of your parents?

I was born west of Elbow Lake and my father's name was Michael Thompson and my mother's name was Carylena Thompson Johnson. Johnson before she was married.

Q. When did your parents come to Minnesota or to Grant County?

Well, the only thing I know is they come here before the railroad in Elbow Lake. Of course they came to Ashby both of 'em. There was a railroad there first, you know.

Q. Where did you dad farm and was he in business?

Well, he farmed out at the, as I say, Carl Malcan place west of Elbow Lake, and then he moved to Elbow Lake and I know he was in the livery business a while there and then he, ah, he made a deal with John Solbie who owned the place up north here that we bot you see. He traded his house and stuff he had in Elbow Lake in on the farm you see. That is 1891.

Q. What church did you belong to?

The Erdahl church.

Q. Are you a member of any organization now?

Well, I am a member of the American Legion and the VFW. I am a member of the Fireman's Association, Dalton, Minnesota.

Who did you marry?

I married Elaine Brown, the daughter of Charlie Brown.

Q. Where?

Well, I've lived right across the river you know, right here in the village of Pomme de Terre here.

Q. Do you remember who your attendents were?

Yes. It was Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brown.

Q. How much schooling did you have?

Schooling?

Q. Yes.

That was very little.

Q. What was the name of your first teacher?

Martha Michaelson, you got that ain't you?

Q. Do you remember playing any tricks in school or any of the boys playing tricks on the teacher?

No. I remember one occasion. There was a fellow named Louis Hagen, Him and I together bought, he wrote a love letter to me, see. And it fell on the floor so then another girl picked it up and thought it was for here. So she took it home to her dad and showed it, he couldn't read any English so he thought it was to her too so he come and showed the letter to the teacher. That was really, the girl thought it was tooher.

What do you remember of the old Fort of Pomme deT Terre?

Well, the only thing I remember is, I remember the past there where the fort used to be and then it was a barn there. Then the, way up in the peak of the barn it was sawed out 1871. The road went up there at that time close to the fort. Now it is way south there along the section line, you see.

Q. What can you tell me, that you remember of the Village of Pomme deTerre?

Well I remember , I remember when I used to go down across, skate across the lake here and down across the river after the mail, especially on saturday because I got there early then. And I remember the store and I remember the blacksmith shop, two blacksmith shops and I remember the mill.

Q. About what years would this be?

About the year 1900 and before that, you know.

Q. Did you remember any stagecoach?

(253--5 minutes)

I remember a stage coach used to go, used to come from I think it was Herman to Ashby and I don't know for sure, but I think Gener was the only took care, run the stagecoach. But I wouldn't say that for sure.

Q. Do you remember any of the buildings or any of the businessplaces after you were old enough to remember?

Yes, I remember the store buildings well enough and then I remember other resident buildings along the south side of the road there. It was kind of a main street, the road was and down towards the millery was the, was

the ah, post office and then a fellow lived by the name of Evanston, had a blacksmith shop and a fellow lived on the place I got here now. His name was Olafson and he had a blacksmith shop too, at that time. And I remember the mill, down there and I know I went down a lot of times when it was grinding.

Q. Do you remember the names of any of the other businessmen here in the village of Pomme de Terre?

I remember the Post Master, Henry Johnson, course Lydia Heel, she, that's his wife, she worked tentatively at the post office mostly and then old Timothy Heel, he run the hotel on the west side of the river and I think a livery barn too.

Q. Who operated the mill?

Who here? Well Howard Berg did once.

Q. Who operated the flour mill?

A fellow named August Schaeffer.

Q. And who did you say operated the hotel?

Well, it must've been Timothy Heel because he was the first one here, Timothy Heel, I found a record of the first meeting in Pomme de Terre in the school house over here and it said there that Timothy Heel, he got five hundred dollars to build a bridge across the river and it said there that it was in 1871 or '73. And it said there about all the constables and clerks and everything like that and old Briggs up here, he was supposed to furnish the timber for that bridge and I can remember the bridge. It was awfully close to the water. It wasn't very high up and of couse later...

Q. And that is the end of this interview.

(294--8 1/2 minutes)