

George Washington and Dora (Thompson) Anderson

By *Lula Rachel (Anderson) Johnson*

George Washington Anderson was born December 14, 1866 in Decatur, Illinois, to James Harvey and Rachel Anderson. He was married March 19, 1890 in Torrance, Kansas to Dora Olive (Thompson), who was born November 18, 1866 in Seneca, Missouri, the daughter of Peter and Melissa (Lankford) Thompson. Dora Olive had been attending school at Burden, a short distance from Winfield when they met. Their first son, Virgil, was born December 22, 1890 in Torrance, Kansas.

Leaving his wife and child behind in Kansas, George Washington and his father made the run into Oklahoma Territory on September 22, 1891. George was on horseback as he staked his claim five miles north of Chandler, near Union School, then known as Hardscrabble. George's land joined his father's claim. Father and son each built a one-room log cabin to serve as their home until they could clear some land and break the soil for the planting of their first crops. He built a large two-story log house before bringing his family to the homestead. Lula Rachel Anderson was born August 20, 1894.

George W. named his work horses Buck and Prince. He started out very good at first, planting fruit trees, grain, and cane. The cane was taken to mills to be made into sorghum. I, Lula, remember watching them grind the cane, then going after it when it was "boiled down" and ready to eat. We would have two big barrels of sorghum to take home.

Another son, George Van Anderson, was born January 15, 1897. He only lived a short time. He died May 29, 1897 and was buried in the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery.

My dad's land was not as productive as my grandfather's, so he became discouraged with farm life, as his fruit trees died one by one. His real desire, which was never realized, was to become a doctor. Laura Esther Anderson was born October 27, 1898. Laura was about three years old when Dad sold the farm and bought a saw-mill. It was set up on a place in the Oak Grove District. While we were living there, my mother, sister Laura and I made a trip to Seneca, Missouri, to visit mother's parents. They were Peter and Melissa (Lankford) Thompson. They lived on the Lankford estate after Melissa's parents died, to care for her brother Frank Lankford, crippled with polio. Our grandfather, Peter Thompson, came from England. His family was in the stained glass business in England. He lived in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, then worked as a surveyor in Missouri, where he met and married Melissa Lankford. They later moved to Santa Ana, California in 1906, where they played an active part in the early development of Santa Ana.

Later, we returned to the farm, where we lived in a house on Grandpa's place north of Chandler. Winston Anderson was born June 12, 1903. We were in the process of moving to Chandler the day Vena Dora Anderson was born March 28, 1905. I remember the big rush to get the bed set up for

her birth.

Dad kept the saw-mill and drove back and forth for a year or two to operate it, before he sold it and went into public work. He got a job with the Spiker Company paving Chandler Main Street. My brother, Virgil, about 21 years old by then, helped him run the machine with a big roller attached. Virgil went to Seattle, Washington after that, to go into the shipbuilding industry.

Dad's next job was Chandler Water Superintendent. The water plant was at that time, located on Bell Cow Creek on Highway 66. An ice plant was built just across the creek west of the water plant. Later, the Water Works were relocated farther north in the Tilghman Park. When Chandler had need of more water wells, my dad did the "water-witching" for them, and they found good water supplies. He held the job of Water Superintendent until a year before his death. He trained men for jobs with the department.

Laura had a beautiful, unusual voice. She took lessons from Veva Holloway who encouraged her to go on to fame and fortune, but financially she couldn't afford to. She worked as receptionist for Dr. John Adams and a Jacob's Store, where she met Bob Harris, whom she later married.

I, Lula, married Roy Johnson; Vena Dora married Louis Cunningham; and Winston married Flo (Keller).

Our parents were active members of Chandler's Methodist Church. Mother was a marvelous cook and she was called on to cook the meat dishes when the church ladies were serving dinners for local organizations. One of the favorite dishes made was "Veal Birds."

George Washington Anderson died June 7, 1945.

Dora Olive (Thompson) Anderson died January 28, 1947.

Both are buried in Pleasant Ridge Cemetery, with their children Winston, Winifred, and Baby Van. (Known then as Keller Cemetery.)