

Merrimon L. Thompson 1823-1899

Merrimon (also written as Merryman, Merriman, and more commonly Marion) Thompson was born Feb 23, 1823 in Warren County Kentucky.¹ He was the son of Richard Thompson and Sarah Cleton McGuire, both supposedly natives of Kentucky. Not much is known about Merriman's youth, but he grew up in both Warren County Kentucky and possibly also Warren County Tennessee. The Thompson family was a large family in Warren County, Kentucky that moved to Warrick County Indiana in 1836.

Merriman possibly moved to Warren County Tennessee, or that general area, probably around 1830 with other members of the Thompson family. However, he most likely migrated to Warrick County, Indiana in 1836, when a large group of Thompson's moved into Warrick County and surrounding counties. In the 1876 Atlas for Warrick County, Marion stated that his nativity was Warren County, Kentucky, and that he first came to Warrick County in 1836. Through other research, a large branch of the Thompson family from Warren County Kentucky came to Warrick County Indiana at this time, following a earlier, possible brother of Richard Thompson who had already settled before this time

HART TOWNSHIP.—[CONTINUED.]					OH	
NAME.	POST-OFFICE.	OCCUPATION.	NATIVITY.	Date of Settlement.	NAME.	POST-OFFICE.
Ricketts, Jas. M. . .	Lynnville	Farmer	Warrick Co. . . .	1843	Tilman, J. R. . . .	Newburg
Simpson, John T. . .	"	"	Todd Co., Ky. . .	1826	Townsend, Nath. . .	"
Thompson, Marion . .	"	Cabinetmaker & Undrtrk	Warren Co. Ky. . .	1836	Taylor, A. J. . . .	"
Tyner, S. L.	"	Physician	Indiana	1852	Vann, H. C.	"
Wiesman, J. H. & Bro.	"	Boot and Shoemakers .	Dubois Co.	1857	Vann, John A. . . .	"
Young, Charles . . .	Eby	Farmer	Warrick Co. . . .	1857	Walden, S. H. . . .	"
Zimmerman, D. C. .	Lynnville	Attorney and N. P. . .	"	1851	Weis, Joseph	"
LYNN TOWNSHIP						

The exact history and travels of Merriman is lacking in sufficient detail. But since he apparently arrived in Warrick Co in 1836, he probably resided in Greer Township near some of the other earlier Thompson arrivals. The town of Lynnville was laid out by John Lynn in 1839, shortly after the Thompson family arrived. By the early 1880's, there existed in Lynnville village one Methodist church, one Baptist church, one school, three dry goods stores, two groceries, two saloons, one hotel, an I.O.O.F and a Masonic Hall (Of which Merriman, his brother Daniel G and brother Seth were all members of this Masonic Hall, which still resides there in Lynnville to this day), one steam mill, three physicians, two blacksmith shops and had a population of 350 people.

From the published biography of his brother, Captain Daniel Greenberry Thompson, [As published in History of Warrick County, 1885) who fought in the civil war, we learned that their parents both probably died around 1838, leaving the children to "take on life's battles on their own responsibility". The deaths probably occurred in Warrick County or surrounding area, but no proof has been found. Sarah's death happened in 1834, so this may have been in Warren Co KY or even in Tennessee. The published biography reads:

sixty acres, and an enterprising and respected citizen.

CAPT. DANIEL G. THOMPSON (deceased) was born May 13, 1830, in Warren County, Tenn., a son of Richard and Sarah (McGuire) Thompson, who were natives of Kentucky, from whence they moved to Indiana in 1835, locating in Greer Township, Warrick County. At the age of eight years our subject began life's battle on his own responsibility as a farm boy, but in 1843 went to Rockport to learn the saddler's trade. Three years he continued at that, then farmed three years, and from that time until the war broke out worked at carpentering. He enlisted in September, 1862, and on the organization of Company K, Forty-second Indiana Regiment, was elected Captain of his company, a position he retained until his discharge, in December, 1863, by reason of ill-health. He engaged in farming and merchandising until his death, in August, 1882, an event of sad remembrance to the citizens of Lynnville and vicinity. He was married October 27, 1852, to America Clinton, by whom he became the father of nine children, the following named yet living: Sarah Belle, Mrs. W. E. Willis; George E., who married Mattie Ferguson; Gertie and Hattie.

REES YOUNG, a prominent citizen of Hart Township, was born

Merriman married his first wife, Mary Black, of Scottish Ancestry, on March 10, 1845 in neighboring Mt. Vernon in Posey County, Indiana. They had the following two children (out of a total of 10 children for Merriman):

1. Daniel W Thompson – born Mar 6, 1848 IN and died 1931 – a carpenter. It is this branch of the Merriman Thompson family that many family members still reside in and around the Lynnville area today. Married first Eliza Jones, then Rebecca Selby.
2. Sarah A. born Jan. 22, 1853, died 1881, buried in Lynnville cemetery. Sarah did not marry.

Merriman and Mary returned to Graves County, Kentucky, south and across the Ohio river from Warrick Co, residing in 1850 next to the same Merriman Lafayette McGuire, whom our Merriman Thompson seems to be named after. From a discussion with some of the Lynnville Thompson's, Mary Thompson apparently died on travels from Graves County to their next destination and was buried along the way. Merriman then married on July 16, 1856 Eliza Ann Williams according to the Obion County Tennessee Register.

Merriman Thompson
to
Eliza Williams

July 15th 1856

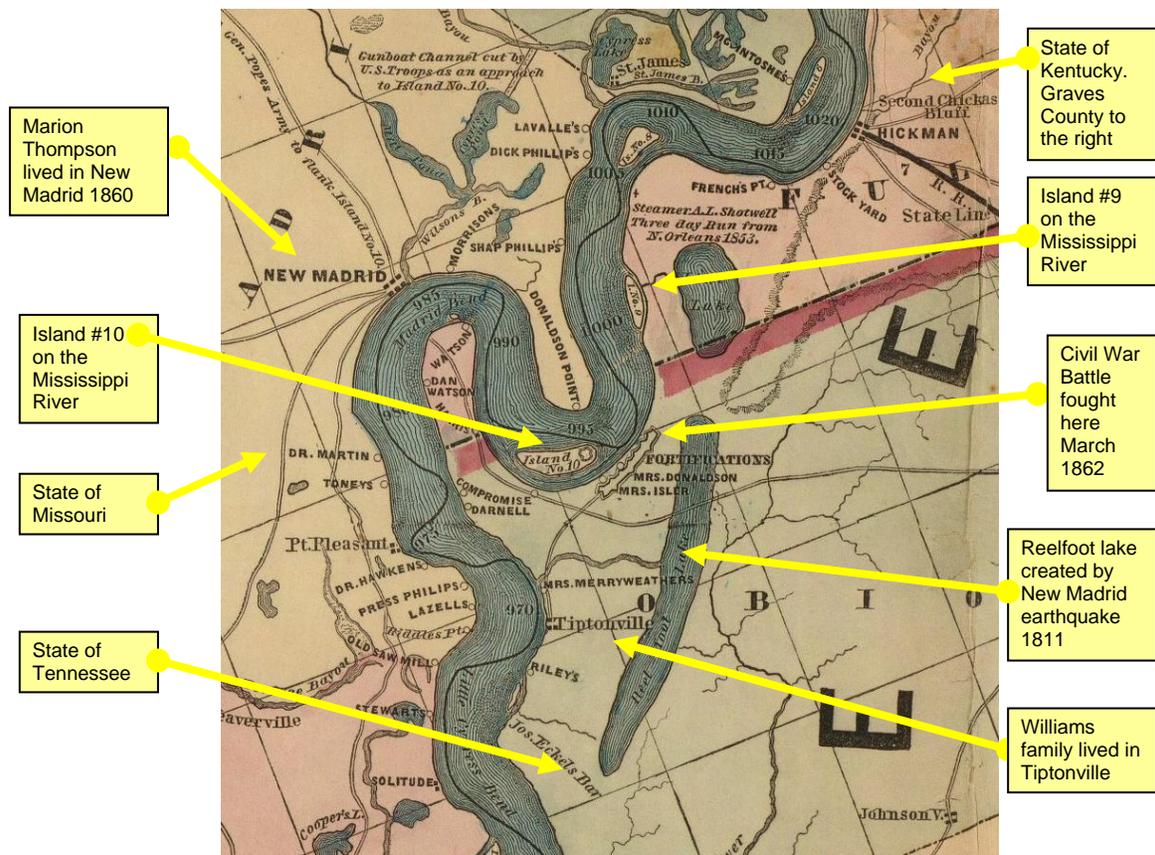
Thomas Parker

Eliza Ann Williams was born August 6, 1837 either in Tennessee or Virginia, the daughter of **John Williams** and **Hettie Moppins**. John Williams was born in 1800 probably in Tennessee or North Carolina. He lived in Obion Tennessee. From a family

history paper written about the Williams and Thompson family, from an unknown source, the following is worth quoting:

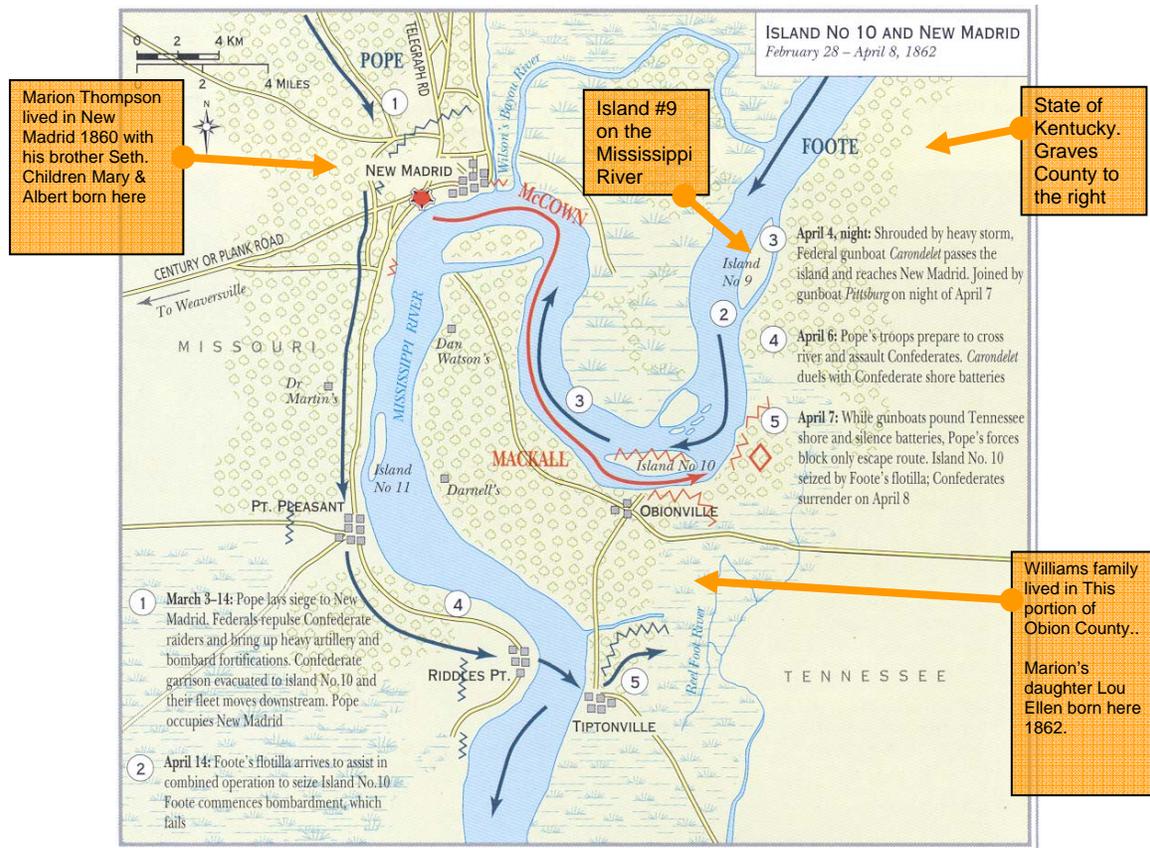
“About twenty five miles due west from Hickman, Kentucky, across the Mississippi River is the town of New Madrid, Missouri. Established by the Spanish during the period before the Louisiana Purchase, its only claim to fame is as the center of the earthquake that bears its name. On 16 December 1811 the worst earthquake ever recorded in central North America occurred, the Epicenter near New Madrid. The Massive upheaval of the earth (ground levels changed as much as thirty five feet in some areas) caused by the quake caused the Mississippi River to flow backward as far north as the Ohio River. When the earth had subsided and the Mississippi resumed its normal flow to the south, the river bed had moved some five to ten miles to the west, creating Reelfoot Lake and adding several square miles to the east bank of the river. The added area became Tax District #4 of Obion County, subsequently becoming Lake County. John Williams paid personal property taxes in District #4 until his death in 1855.”

Included in this thumb of Obion County, Tennessee is the infamous “Island No. 9” on the Mississippi River. Marion was living in New Madrid with his other brother Seth in 1860. It appears that Eliza Ann Williams quite possibly was born on Island No. 9, which resides in what is now Lake County, Tennessee. A map from 1862ⁱⁱ clearly shows these features:



From a story on Marion Thompson published in Lynnville in 1891, we learn that “Mr. Thompson came to this country with his family from west Tennessee, during the dark days of the

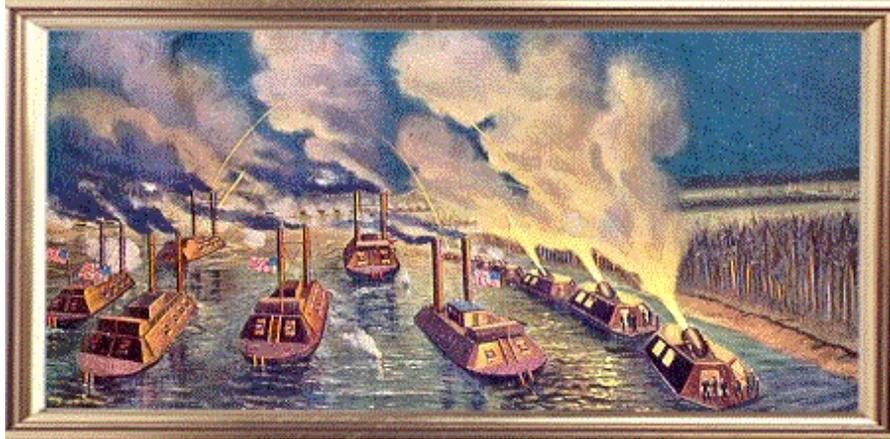
rebellion, and prevented being forced into the enemys service.” We can only surmise from this small insight that Marion avoided service in the Civil War on the confederate side. Given that daughter Louella was born in 1862 in Tennessee, probably at Obion County, Marion and family may well have left New Madrid, Missouri in 1860 and went back to Obion, Tennessee, across the Mississippi River, where Eliza was from, and family members still resided. As both Confederate and Union troops built their forts and encampments in the area of New Madrid, Island #10, and that general vicinity, Marion may have been forced to flee the area as the Battle of New Madrid took place in March of 1862, and the desire of the confederates to secure ‘all available hands’ to take on the incoming Union forces.



A good description of this decisive Union victory that included a significant gunboat battle between the Union and Confederate forces at Island No 10 can be found at: <http://www.civilwarhome.com/newmadriddescrip.htm> .

A good review in Harpers Weekly including sketches of the forts and surrounding area: <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war/1862/april/point-pleasant-new-madrid.htm> .

A great sketch of the river taken from Island no 9 shows the lineup of the Confederate and Union gunboats. <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war/1862/april/island-number-ten.htm>



The Williams and Thompson story continues, albeit with dates slightly inconsistent

"After John Williams's death in 1855, Eliza Ann's sister married a Billie Moore. Billie, the Williams and Marion Thompson all left Obion. "The decision to move from Tennessee was due to the 'bushwhackers' that were running wild there at that time. These 'bushwhackers' patrolled the countryside looking for loot and likely real estate to confiscate. One day in 1865, they came to the Williams home and Billie ran them off by shooting their leader. According to the family they made quite a racket riding away through the cane breaks. However they reported the incident to the "law" and when the law enforcement officials came to investigate, Billie escaped by swimming the river and staying with his "sister" for a while. Later the 'bushwhackers' came back and this time they accomplished their aim. Billie and his family along with the Williams family barely escaped with their lives. The only belongings that they were able to salvage were those that they could carry with them in their dash to safety. All other valuables were hastily thrown down the well or just simply abandoned. "

It is clear from land records that this group of people left Obion Co, and New Madrid, seeking safer ground in Lynnville, Warrick County, which was pro-Union, and represented a good location to raise his family – an area that Marion would be near his brother Daniel G, brother Seth, and possibly even Aunts, Uncles and other Thompson family members who had settled there in 1836.

On September 20, 1861, Captain Daniel G. Thompson (brother of Merrimon) entered his service for the Union, and was Captain of Company K, 42nd Indiana Volunteers. This unit went from Camp Vanderburgh (near Warrick Co, Indiana) to Henderson, KY, then to Calhoun, then to South Carrollton, and returned to Calhoun, then to Owensboro, then to Nashville, Tennessee and onwards to Huntsville, Alabama. A battle ensued at Wartrace, TN, and then onwards to Huntsville. In August, 1862, the notorious retreat of Buell to Louisville KY caused Company K to pursuit this rebel army under Bragg, to the battle of Perryville. In November, 1862, Capt. Daniel G Thompson resigned his commission and returned to Lynnville.

It was on February 14, 1865 that **Edward Clarence Thompson** was born, in Lynnville. While no birth records were kept at this time, it is clear that his father Marion and his wife Eliza were busy trading properties in Lynnville both before and after, so it seems logical Edward was born there. This birth was just a few months before the end of the civil war, and the following assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. In an interesting side note, the Abraham Lincoln Heritage Trail – which highlights his travels as he moved from Kentucky through Indiana and into Illinois - passed through Lynnville area in 1831. According to testimony given by many individuals, it was noted that “Lincoln traveled through Boonville, then along the old Petersburg road (through what would later become Lynnville)...He stopped at the farm of Arthur Thompson in Pike County, for water. Mr. Thompson, a Baptist, laid off the town of Arthur on part of his farm.”

It is not known if this Arthur Thompson is any exact relation to our Thompson's, but it is quite curious that Arthur was born in Kentucky, lived just North of Lynnville, and named one of his sons Marion, born in 1843. Two of his other sons were named Levi and James, again names commonly found in this Thompson family. In addition, the suspected 'matriarch' of this Thompson family, Nancy Thompson described below, was a devout Baptist, as was Mr. Lincoln. Abe preferred to travel routes where he knew he would be welcome at the next church. As will be shown later on, our Merriman became associated with the Methodist church, but quite possibly through his wife who was devout Methodist at an early age.

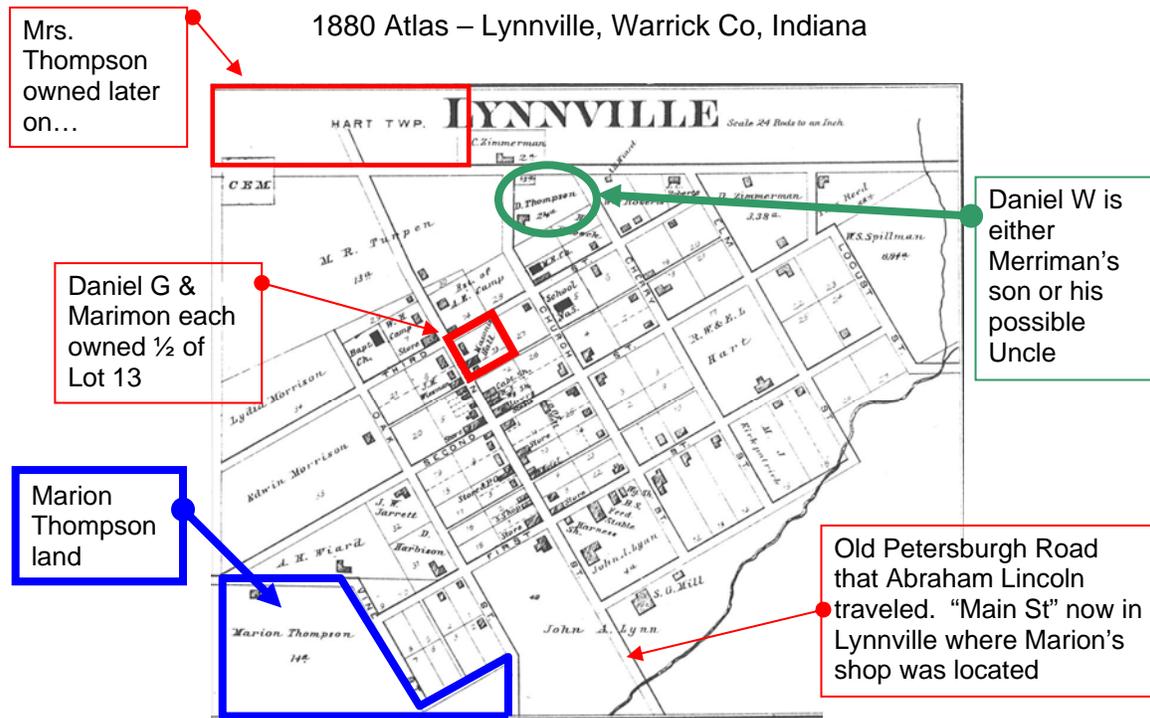
The Thompson's settled down after the war in Lynnville. From the 1875 Warrick Co Atlas which D. G. Thompson was a patron, he was living near Lynnville:



In 1880, Marion advertised his business in the Lake & Co Atlas of which he was a patron:

MARION THOMPSON. Cabinet and Undertaker, and Dealer in Bedsteads, Bureaus, Tables, Chairs, Wardrobes, Cupboards, Spring Mattresses, and in fact everything needed in the Cabinet line. I don't propose to be undersold. Am receiving daily handsome Burial Cases of every description which I sell lower than was ever offered before in Warrick Co. I have a fine Hearse, and attend funerals on short notice. Give me a call; remember my motto is I will not be undersold. Shop on Main St. N. B.—I have a full stock of Shrouding at low prices.

During Daniel G's service in the Civil War, Marion and his wife bought and traded several properties in the town that Marion and Daniel may have jointly owned. From the Lake & Co 1880 Atlas, Marion's land in Lynnville can clearly be seen in the lower left, land that was probably 'the shop on Main St listed in the advertisement' and also a future parcel of land owned by 'Mrs. Thompson'. Also shown is a parcel of land owned by D W Thompson, either Daniel W, son of Marion, or possibly Daniel W, a possible cousin of Marion:



Marion and Eliza Ann (Williams) Thompson had the following children together (numbered starting with 3 according to birth from Marion – 2 children from his first marriage to Mary Black):

3. Mary E o1857 in Missouri, probably New Madrid. Married John McWilliams April 9, 1879 in Lynnville. This family primarily stayed in Lynnville. Mary died in 1924 in Lynnville.
4. Albert o Nov 6, 1859 in New Madrid, Missouri. Married Carrie Moore in Gibson Co, IN in 1881. Albert lived in Indianapolis in 1910, Calumet OK in 1920, but returned to Gibson Co, IN where he died in 1937. He was a schoolteacher, insurance salesman.

5. Louella o1862 Tennessee. Married Felix Lester. They went to Indianapolis and then ultimately went to Muskogee, OK in the 1940's.
6. Edward Clarence o Feb 14, 1865 (a few records say 1866 and his tombstone states 1863) in Indiana. Married Eve Elizabeth Keneipp and moved to Calumet Oklahoma around the turn of the century, residing there until the 1920's where they resided in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Descendants from this family reside today in Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, Colorado and California.
7. Nancy o Dec 1869 Indiana. Married Charles French. They went sometime to Indianapolis.
8. Grant o Jan 26, 1872 Indiana. Married Estella Ashby May 29, 1892 and died Sept 16 1892 of Typhoid Fever in Lynnville. He was a butcher.
9. Clifford Edward o Feb 18, 1876 Indiana. Married Fannie who was from Kansas probably 1903. Traveled with Edward to Calumet, Oklahoma.
10. Dayton o Aug 25, 1878 Indiana. Married Cleva Hall, Mar 25, 1899. Died Nov 29, 1940 in Lynnville.

Merriman had 2 children previously discussed with his first wife Mary Black, plus these 8 children with his second wife Eliza Williams for a total of 10 children living. There is a Margaret Thompson, born 1841 (4 years before the marriage to Mary Black) living with Merriman in 1850 in Graves Co, KY, but this relationship is unknown. Margaret supposedly married a Fowler, and lived in Princeton, Indiana.

A newspaper article talking about Marion celebrating his 70th birthday in 1891 reads: [This probably was not his 70th birthday, but something close to this.]

Marion Thompson was 70 years old last Sunday. For many years his friends and relatives have honored his birthday. There were present his children, Albert Thompson & wife, of Summerville, Mrs. Rev. T. A. Lester, of New Lebanon, Mrs. Mary McWilliams of Pleasantville, Mrs. Minnie French and nephews Jas. Morrow and Curt DeForest, of Newburgh, and others. Mr. Thompson came to this country with his family from west Tennessee, during the dark days of the rebellion, and prevented being forced into the enemys service. He is a Methodist, Mason and Republican, and has always been a good citizen.

Marion died on July 29, 1899 in Lynnville, with the following Obituary published in Boonville Enquirer Aug 4, 1899

Lynnville News: Merriman Thompson died at his home north of town, Saturday morning, July 29th, after a long and severe illness. A wife, five sons, three daughters, a number of grandchildren, and other relatives survive him. The funeral was conducted, Sunday, by Rev. J. L. Sims. Internment at the Lynnville cemetery.

The church that Merriman's funeral was conducted at – the Mt. Zion Methodist Church, still stands about 3 ¼ miles south of Lynnville. The church had just constructed their third church in 1898. The building has survived a giant tree falling on it, a stolen car damaging the bell tower, and numerous repairs over its 100+ year life, and still stands

today near Lynnville. A picture and further story on this church is available at: <http://us-gen.org/in/warrick/cemeteries/mtzionchurch.htm>.

Sometime around this date, the following picture was taken of daughter Mary, Eliza Ann (Williams) Thompson, and daughter Louella.



Mrs. Eliza A. Thompson was born August 6, 1837, died June 12, 1904, being 66 years, 10 months and 6 days old. She was married to Marion Thompson in July, 1856, to this union was born 10 children, 7 boys, 3 girls; 7 are still living as follows: Mrs. Mary McWilliams and Dayton Thompson, of this place; Mrs. Lou Lester, Mrs. Nannie French and Albert Thompson, of Indianapolis; Clifford and Edward Thompson, of Oklahoma. Her husband preceded her in death about 5 years ago. She became a member of the M. E. church when 16 years of age. She had been a constant sufferer for some time. On May 23d she went to Indianapolis to visit her children at that place. She was suddenly taken worse and by a stroke of paralysis went to her reward. The last days were mostly spent in praising the Lord. The Rev. Albert Hurlstone conducted a funeral service at East Park Church, Indianapolis, Monday night. She was brought to the home of her daughter, Mrs. John McWilliams at this place Tuesday and on Wednesday afternoon the funeral services were conducted by Rev. Shields at the M. E. Church. The remains were laid to rest in the Lynnville cemetery by the side of her husband. All of the children were present except one. The bereaved family have the sympathy of all their friends in the loss of their dear mother.

Eliza Ann (Williams) Thompson died in 1904, and this obituary was published in Boonville Enquirer June 24, 1904.

From this obituary, we clearly see both Clifford and Edward referenced as living in Oklahoma.

Eliza's mother, Hettie (Moppins) Williams also resided in Lynnville, with her death October 15, 1876. Not much information is known from her time in Warrick Co, having only lived there approximately 10 years. Her tombstone, also in Lynnville cemetery, Lynnville, Warrick Co, Indiana states that her birthdate was June 16, 1806. From census records, she apparently was born in Virginia. Attempts to trace her family have not delivered any results. However one possibility has emerged:

The witness at the wedding of Marion Thompson and Eliza Williams, excerpt listed on the bottom of page 12, is a Thomas Parker. This Thomas Parker also resides with the Williams family for multiple years, in the 1850 and 1860 for certain in Obion Co, TN, and also shows

up in Lynnville, IN 1870, living with Hettie Williams, and then in 1880 living with his sister Nancy. His tombstone lists no dates, but is a military marker suggesting he served in the Civil War (from census records, he was born approximately 1828 in Tennessee.) Co D Inf.

Future versions of this summary will expand and included the related Thompson families as researched. Since Thompson was a fairly common name in this time period, researching this family can be problematic. Hopefully this document can be expanded and include these related families for ease in ‘navigating those difficult Thompsons’.

ⁱ Sources: Merrymon Lafayette Jackson Bible entry (states Mar 23, 1823, which is either in error, or is possibly the date of his baptism, which was common in that time period.), Death Certificate for Marion Thompson, Tombstone photo for Marion Thompson.

ⁱⁱ Source: 1862 J.T. Lloyd Map of The Lower Mississippi River – section taken of New Madrid loop. Source file located at the Donald Rumsey Map Collection (www.donaldrumsey.com).