

METHVIN, J. J.

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Field Worker, Lillian Gassaway

July 23, 1937

Interview with J. J. Methvin,  
Anadarko, Oklahoma,  
709 West Alabama St.

Born December 17, 1846,  
Jeffersonville, Georgia.

Father John Methvin, Georgia.

Mother Mourning Glover, Georgia.

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In the fall of 1887, under the appointment of Bishop Galloway of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Reverend Mr. J. J. Methvin was sent to begin missionary work among what was known as the "Wild Tribes or blanket Indians."

Mr. Methvin located at Anadarko as headquarters. From this point he prepared to carry on missionary operations. The Indians at that time had no settled homes but lived in tepees that were moved to different locations from time to time, and missionary work was carried on by visiting in the tepees.

After two years, in 1889, the need of a Christian school was seen. There were two Government schools doing good work but a school for special training was needed.

So in 1889 Mr. Methvin and Mr. A. M. Clark, in the name of the Missionary Board at Nashville, sent a petition to the Government for a land grant upon which to build a school. The petition was granted and the selection for the school was made. The NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec 22 7-10 was selected with the sanction of the Government and of the Indians. W. D. Myers was the agent at that time. This land now is a large part of the residence district of Anadarko.

The Mission Board made an appropriation for the first building and the lumber was hauled from Pauls Valley, which was nearly one hundred miles distant. The school opened for operation early in 1890, with thirty pupils. This number increased until there were about one hundred.

Before the opening of the school Mr. Methvin applied to the Commissioner of Indian affairs for a contract for supplies as had been the custom of past years. The commissioner replied that the Government had changed its policy and would make no more contracts with Church Schools and would get rid of those it had as fast as the service would permit.

Mr. Methvin then wrote that under the Medicine Lodge Treaty the Government was issuing certain supplies

to the Indians as they ran wild over the Reservation, and he suggested that if the proportion of these supplies that rightfully belonged to the children who were in school would be given to them the Church schools would amply supplement them.

Seeing the reasonableness of this, the Commissioner issued an order covering all churches not under contract with the Government.

Soon after this the school was turned over to the Woman's Mission Board by the General Board. When the Foreign Missionary Society of the same church took over the school they named it The Methvin Institute, and insisted that Mr. Methvin take charge of it. For nearly twenty years the school went on doing most effective work in the uplift of Indian boys and girls who in after life, under Christian training, have become some of the most prominent men and women in their tribes.

When the country was opened for white settlement in 1901 the Board asked Congress for a grant to the land in fee simple, where they had only had a temporary grant before. The Government granted this and it was supposed

and promised that the school would go on and enlarge; but the school property being along the side of New Anadarko it had the prospects of great value, and the eye of publicity was upon it and a syndicate of what was supposed to be friends of the church persuaded the Woman's Board to retire from the school and to sell the property.

The sales committee appointed by the Board was called to meet at Muscogee, two hundred miles away from the scene of action. All unsuspected by the committee, a secret and sinister committee had been at work and had sold the land to the syndicate for \$45,000, of which only a small portion was ever paid. The Woman's Board took a blanket mortgage on the land and got back part of the land. This board has some of this land in the Southern part of the city of Anadarko.

Thus passed away Methvin Institute under a clouded transaction. This school had for nearly twenty years been a blessing to the Indian race and a credit to the Church.

The only relic left of Methvin Institute is the lone cedar tree that stands on the north side of the street on Kentucky Street about half way between 3rd and 4th streets on the property owned by Amos Stovall, 307 West Kentucky St. This cedar was planted there in 1890; it was brought from the Methvin Canyon, a few miles south of Anadarko.