

METHVIN, J. J.

INTERVIEW

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FIELD WORKER LILLIAN GASSAWAY
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
September 20, 1937.

INTERVIEW WITH J. J. METHVIN
709 West Alabama St.
Anadarko, Oklahoma.
Born, Jeffersonville, Georgia,
December 17, 1846.

Father's name-John Methvin
Born in Georgia.
Mother's name-Mouning Glover Methvin.
Born in Georgia.

MESSIAH CRAZE

In the spring of 1890 there was a great wave of excitement among the Siowas, caused by the report that there was another prophet-this time it was the Messiah. He claimed that he had power to destroy all white people and all unbelieving Indians. He invented a dance that the Indians must indulge in constantly lest they be destroyed, too. There was a wave of earth to come that would cover all white men and unbelieving Indians. The Indians would be restored to their former prestige. The buffalo would roam the prairies again. This report came from the Arapahoes. Sitting Bull said he had seen and talked to him. He had been given power to teach the Indians this dance.

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The Kiowas wanted to be convinced that this report was true, so they made up enough money to pay all expenses for a man to investigate. Ah-pe-ah-tone was chosen to go. They didn't know where this Messiah was, but had been told that he was either a Sioux or Piute, and was way out west somewhere. Ah-pe-ah-tone first went to the Sioux tribe, but they told him that he wasn't there, then he went to Ft. Washakie. There he met the Northern Arapahoes thinking that he might be among them, but they directed him to the mountains in Nevada. He went to the Pyramid Lake in Nevada and found him in a tepee way back in the mountains. There were certain ceremonies that must be gone through before he was admitted into the prophet's tepee. This caused a delay of a day or so. On entering the tepee he found a Piute Indian lying on the floor. After a short interview he left, disappointed and disgusted. He had found the Messiah to be just a common Indian and a very common one at that. Ah-pe-ah-tone soon left for home.

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On his way home he stopped at Bannock Agency and wrote a letter to his sister, Laura Dunmoe (now Mrs. Pedrick), and told her that the prophet was a fraud. She read the letter to the Indians but they refused to believe it until they could see Ah-pe-ah-tone in person.

After Ah-pe-ah-tone had gone Sitting Bull came down among the Kiowas and began to teach them the new dance that they must know. He was paid for this service in ponies. He got about three hundred.

After a long perilous journey of several months. Ah-pe-ah-tone got back about the middle of February, 1891. A great council was called soon after his return. All the Indians from the Red River on the south to the North Canadian on the north were here. The council was to meet at Anadarko. Agent Adams with a number of other Government officials and the missionaries, S. V. Felt and J. J. Methvin, met with the Indians. Sitting Bull who was camped on Elk Creek teaching the Indians the dance, was sent for. He came with some of Arapahoe attaches.

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When the meeting was called to order by the Agent, Ah-pe-ah-tone got up and shook hands with all of the chief persons, as was the Indian custom, then made his report. He stated that after making proper investigation he found that the prophet was an imposter. He was living in a tepee way back in the mountains of Nevada. He was just a common Piute Indian, a very common and ignorant one at that.

Sitting Bull tried to vindicate his claim but he had lost all prestige.

Ah-pe-ah-tone again got up and said to him:
"Sitting Bull, before I went away I came to you and asked you about the prophet; You said that it was true, and that you had talked to him and he had given you power to teach the new dance. You lied to me and my people. I went to Nevada on this long, hard journey to see for myself. I found just a common, ignorant Indian who had been deceiving my people. You lied to me, Sitting Bull, and you have been deceiving my people and have gathered many ponies from them."

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~~Sitting Bull~~ gave the sign that he had lied and that the Indians could have their ponies back. He got up and left the council room, followed by his attaches.

This ended the Messiah craze. It was the last hope of ever going back to the old days.