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BECKER, A. J. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

10626

357

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

#10626

BECKER, A. J. Mrs.

INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) April 28, 1938

1. Name Mrs. A. J. (Magdeline) Becker

2. Post Office Address Indianoma, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 4 Year 1887

5. Place of birth Hillsboro, Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached? _____

BECKER, A. J. Mrs.

INTERVIEW.

#10626

An Interview with Mrs. A. J. Becker, Indianahoma.

By - Ophelia D. Vestal, Investigator.

April 28, 1938.

In the year 1895, a man and his wife by the name of Kahfield and their family were sent to this mission field. Later on two women, Mary Reiger and Katie Penner, also helped a number of years. All four working very hard among the Indians.

In 1902, my husband and I were sent to help Reverend and Mrs. Kahfield. We assisted them five years. In 1907 the conference decided that Reverend Kahfield should be released as he had worked hard and we should take up his work. We hesitated and only promised to work about six months, until the next conference meeting.

At this time things looked very dark in the mission field and we did not know if we could accomplish anything worth-while among the Indians, but we hoped to reach their hearts, convert many and build a church. There were two things we prayed for, the conversion of souls and an interpreter. It was very hard to get an interpreter, even when we offered to pay them as much as \$2.50 a day.

The first Sunday after the Kahfields left we went to

the church and watched through the windows to see if the Indians were coming. The first young man that came was Herman Asenap, about nineteen years old. He walked in toward Mr. Becker and said, "Anytime you need me I will interpret for you". My husband grabbed him and said, "You are one answer to our prayers." There was much crying and sobbing that first morning. This meant so much to us, having an interpreter ready to help us, although he was not a Christian just then, but ready to assist us in these darkest hours. Now we were ready to go out and work among the Indians. I was glad to go, yet sad, for I hated to leave my three babies. I said to my husband, "Well, what about my babies, I cannot take them to that Tent City". There were 500 Indians camped there and snow all over the ground. We decided it was our duty to go among the Indians and work and that our babies would be cared for at home by a girl we had working for us.

We packed the things we needed, went to the Indian camp and pitched our tent in the middle of the camp, holding meetings every night and during the day. We visited among the Indians, also held sewing meetings among the women. It

was here I learned the Comanche language. The Comanche Indians have no written language, but I soon caught on and could talk with them. Just north of our Gospel tent they had up a tent for gambling, dancing and other amusements, inviting the Indians to all gatherings.

Every night Herman Aesnap came to the meeting on time to interpret for us, but for about two long weary weeks, seemingly without success. One night before services, my heart seemed to break, thinking of my babies, cooking our meal on a campfire in the snow and thinking how the Indians liked their worldly pleasures more than they loved God. I walked out into the timber and knelt down to cry and pray; at once a hand touched my shoulder. An Indian woman had followed me saying, "Why do you cry?" I answered, "Oh, I don't care to suffer myself, but you Indian people need to know my God." Now comes the answer to our prayers. The same woman and six others were converted at this meeting.

After holding meetings at different camps, we moved back home. A daughter was born to us and we called her "Herwanna", which means "Dawn of Day". At dawn its gen-

erally the darkest and when our mission work seemed the darkest, dawn came. So in 1907 our church was organized with six Indian members and now is thirty-one years old. We never missed a year adding new members to our church. We have over two hundred now, a host of young people who love us and help in every way possible.

Also our own children give us much joy. We have five sons and one daughter. All of them teach school except the younger boy, Glen, and he is at Bethel College, Kansas. Mr. Becker and I are still in this field work.

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The above is a kodak picture of Chief Timbo, the first convert to join the Deyo Mission. He joined it when it was first organized in 1895 and is still living.