

GOMEZ, ANNA

INTERVIEW

#9398

398

GOMEZ, ANNA

INTERVIEW

9398

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

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) December 13, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Anna Gomez

2. Post Office Address Indiahoma, Oklahoma R. # 7

3. Residence address (or location) SW of Indiahoma 3 miles

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 30 Year 1884

5. Place of birth Russia

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

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 _____

Ophelia D. Vestal
Investigator
December 13, 1937

Interview with
Mrs. Anna Gomez
Indiahoma, Oklahoma.

I was born in Russia, August 30, 1884. I came to America forty-three years ago, living near Mountain Lake, Minnesota, awhile, then coming on to this country.

I worked for about ten years in the Quanah Parker home. Quanah was a good man, liked by all who knew him. ~~He was a tall man, in good health most all of his life.~~ He passed away February 23rd at the age of fifty-nine. When he died his room was decorated. The iron bed is still there in his room. A large picture of Quanah and a friend of his hangs in his room. I never saw so many people at a funeral, both Indians and white people from many miles away came.

There are thirteen rooms in the Quanah Parker house. It has been said that the lumber for this house was hauled from Vernon, Texas, nearly forty-three years ago. Several of Quanah Parker's wives are living, but none of them live in this home; a daughter lives there. One wife (Topay) lives about one mile east of the home place and one lives one mile north of Apache.

- 2 -

In the early days here, the country was just open pasutres and timber land. There were no good roads, just trails and wagon roads.

After I started working for Mr. and Mrs. Becker, I would take them to the little trading post west of Cache, and go get them when the meetings were over. This trading post and agency was called "The Little Red Store." The Government was to make payments twice each month. The Government would notify the agency the paying would be on a certain date, then the agents notified the Indians. When the Indians received this word, they would leave their homes immediately and go to the agency, camping there for as long as three weeks almost. During these camp meetings Mr. and Mrs. Becker (Missionaries) would go and camp with the Indians, holding revivals. Mrs. Becker was Field Matron, too. While Mr. and Mrs. Becker were away, I stayed in their home caring for their children, holding services and preaching the Indian funerals. When anyone needed help and I was alone, I'd do all I could and care for the sick, too.

- 3 -

Once, I took Mr. and Mrs. Becker over to the agency to hold their meeting and on my way back I got lost. I drove for miles and miles, in circles I suppose. Mr. Becker's big dog always followed the buggy, it was coming home with me as usual, but I never thought of the dog for a good-while; when I noticed it, it was running ahead of me, then meeting me barking very loud, then the thought came to me to follow the dog. I let it lead the way and soon we were home safely.

West of Cache there is a Nazarene Church called the Indianoma Nazarene Church for Indians being built this Spring. It is located in what is known as the Indian Reservation.

I have missed but very few Sundays being at the Mission since I have been here during twenty-eight years. My husband is a Mexican. I have five children, two boys and three girls. I live three miles southwest of Indianoma. I drive over to the mission to help every Sunday and help Mrs. Becker work in her home during the week in busy times. I act as interpreter, too.

- 4 -

Many years ago we couldn't get the Indians to come to church. We started our driving over the country telling them of the services; sometimes we found the Indians in gambling games down on the creek; sometimes they would be holding a peyote meeting.

Speaking of peyote meetings, when I worked at the Parker home, the Indians used to bring their real sick Indians there to hold medicine meetings. The patient would be put into bed in a room away from anyone else; the other Indians would go outside and hold their meetings all night long for this sick person. If the sick person got all right, all was well but if the person died, he or she was wrapped in several blankets and placed across a horse, then taken to the mountains for burial. In the days before missionaries were here the Indians knew nothing but to bury their dead in this way. When the missionaries came, they taught them to bury their dead in cemeteries.

The Indians are very peculiar; if an Indian died in a house, they used to want to have the house burned, put the clothing and belongings in the graves, or burn

- 5 -

them and would want their horses killed. Since the missionaries came they taught them to remember their dead instead of trying to forget.

It was such a proposition to get the Indians near the church. Sometimes beeves were given to them if they came to church. I have seen some services held when only about six or eight were there.

Sometimes an Indian man would come in, wrap himself in a blanket and lie stretched out in a seat, talking whenever he wanted to speak, if it was in the middle of the sermon, interrupting the minister.

Many times in the early days, the Indians have brought their relatives here to Post Oak Mission for burial, when they wouldn't be dead. I cannot say how many times we have given the supposedly dead Indians some warm food and drink and kept their bodies warm by our fires; then they sometimes lived a little longer and sometimes completely recovered.