

METHVIN, J. J.

4th INTERVIEW

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Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Lillian CassawayThis report made on (date) Sept 21 19371. Name J. J. Methvin2. Post Office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 709 West Alabama4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 17 Year 18465. Place of birth Jeffersonville, Georgia6. Name of Father John Methvin Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Morning Clover Methvin Place of birth Georgia

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 _____

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Interview with J. J. Methvin
Anadarko, Oklahoma.

MEASLES EPIDEMIC
Medicine men

In the spring of 1892, an epidemic of measles broke out among the Indians camped around the agency. More than three hundred children died before the treatment of the medicine men could be stopped, for their treatment killed more than it cured. The medicine man would make medicine over the patient, grunting like a hog or bellowing like a bull, trying to scare the evil spirits away. Then he would apply suction with his mouth on the child's throat, chest and bowels. He also would place them in a sweat house and when the patient was perspiring profusely he would either pour cold water over them or take them to the river and dip them into the river.

The sweat house was made something like a small arbor, bringing the boughs together at the top, then covering the whole thing with canvas in such a way as to make it almost air tight. Hot stones were placed in a pit in the

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center of the hut and water poured over them making a steam.

Under this treatment hundreds of children died and the wailing of the Indians was heard constantly for two or three months.

The wailing and tom-toms could be heard all night, and at each death the wailing increased. Their self-inflicted punishment was pitiful. The women would strip their bodies to the waist and slash their arms from the shoulder to the wrist, and their bodies and breasts with a sharp knife. **They** smeared the blood over their faces. Many of the women cut the end of their fingers off, and cut their hair.

There was a great deal of property destroyed, and the graveyard had the appearance of a junk yard, with all the broken wagons, chairs and toys.

Early burial of the Dead

In the early days the Indians didn't have regular burial grounds, but buried their dead in very shallow

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graves. They would take the body to some hole in a canyon and dig a very shallow grave, place the body in it and cover it with the dead person's personal property, then half cover the grave with dirt, finishing with brush; leaving the body easy prey for the wolves and coyotes. After the grave was covered, the man's horse was led up close and killed. Sometimes as many as ten horses were killed, owing to the wealth of the deceased.

The son of Chief Stumbling Bear was the last person to be buried in the old graveyard on top of the hill north of Anadarko. The Indians wanted him to have a Christian burial, but they wanted the old way, too, and wanted us to combine the two. I told them no, that it would have to be one or the other. They then told me to go on with Christian burial, then go away. I did, and on looking back I saw them put in all of the boy's things, blankets, bridle, saddle and many other things. The saddle was a new cowboy saddle and the boy had just paid fifty dollars for it. After the grave had been covered they led the

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boy's pony up and cut its throat, and let it bleed to death on the grave. Thus the boy had his horse and saddle in the Happy Hunting ground.

Either that same night or the next some white man dug the saddle up and took it away.

Note: This was the custom of the Kiowas.