

American Indian Sign Language, 1891-1938
1891-1938
Mss.Film.1226

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Rumsey, Jane
Title	American Indian Sign Language, 1891-1938
Date [inclusive]	1891-1938
Call number	Mss.Film.1226
Extent	1.0 Microfilm reel(s)
Extent	1 microfilm reel
Location	LH-RR-Media Rm-4
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	The collection of materials on microfilm, copied from materials of Miss Jean Rumsey, contains seven published works, miscellaneous clippings, photographs, and correspondence of the Crawford sisters. The published works include the history of the Idaho mission, sign language translations by Mr. Levi W. Jonas, native superintendent of the Kamiah church, and In-go-nom-pa-shi.

Background note

The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America sent missionaries to over seventeen different Native American tribes. As members of this missionary group in 1836, Rev. Henry H. Spaulding and his wife, Eliza, established a church in Idaho to serve the Nez Perce Indians. Spaulding developed a written script for the Nez Perce language and translated parts of the Bible for his congregation. The McBeth sisters, Sue and Kate, continued this mission work in Kamiah, Mt. Idaho, and Lapwai from 1873-1915. At that time, Sue McBeth developed a Nez Perce-English dictionary. The sisters were joined by their nieces, Mary and Elizabeth Crawford, and continued ministering to the Nez Perce until the mission closed in 1932.

Scope & content

Native American Images note : Over 1,500 sign language hand symbols of the Nez Perce language with thirty portraits of missionaries and Nez Perce Indians of Idaho from 1891-1938. Illustrations from different published works such as Gospel hymns in the Nez Perce language (1897); The Indian sign language and the invention of Mr. Lewis F. Hadley (Chicago, 1891); and Indian sign talk by In-gonom-pa-shi. Also, clippings from various Presbyterian publications. Referenced in Freeman's Guide to manuscripts relating to the American Indian (#4588).

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Negatives
- Sign language

Personal Name(s)

- Crawford, Mary
- In-go-nom-pa-shi
- Jonas, Levi W.
- Rumsey, Minnie M.

Subject(s)

- Indians of North America--Idaho
- Missionaries.
- Nez Percé Indians
- Nez Percé language
- Plateau Indians
- Presbyterian Church -- Missions.