

THE JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER LAWRENCE POSEY

January 1 to September 4, 1897

With Introduction and Annotations

By Edward Everett Dale*

INTRODUCTION

Alexander Lawrence Posey, a half-blood Creek Indian, has often been called the most distinguished literary figure ever produced by the Five Civilized Tribes. He was born about one mile north of Vivian, eight miles west of Eufaula, McIntosh County, on August 3, 1873. He met his death by drowning in the swollen waters of the North Canadian River near Eufaula on May 27, 1908.

His father, Lewis H. Posey, was born about 1841 in the Creek Nation, the son of Scotch-Irish parents who had wandered north from Texas and settled in the Creek country. It is possible that one of Lewis Posey's parents had Indian blood, for he asserted that he himself was one-sixteenth Creek. Lewis Posey's parents died when he was a very small boy, and he was reared by a full-blood Creek woman who lived near Fort Gibson.

Lewis Posey was said to be a fun-loving lad, always ready to play a practical joke; but he learned the Creek language so well that it is asserted that he was nearly perfect in the use of that language. He attended a country school; and when he reached manhood he served for a time as deputy U. S. Marshal at Fort Smith. He resigned when he married a full-blood Creek girl, only fifteen years old. She was the daughter of a member of the prominent Harjo family, but her English name was Nancy Phillips.

Her son, Alexander Lawrence Posey, was born when she was in her seventeenth year. Mrs. Posey was a devoted mother, as are most Indian women, who gave her entire time to the comfort of her family. She was a devout member of the Baptist church. She was very proud of her first-born son and saw that he was always neatly dressed and had plenty of good food.

Until he was about twelve years old, Alex spoke only Creek. Like his mother, he could understand English, but he would not trust himself to use it until his father demanded that he repeat

* A recent article on "Edward Everett Dale: A Biography and Bibliography" by Jimmie Hicks, appeared in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XLV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1967).—Ed.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

ALEXANDER LAWRENCE POSEY
"Alex Posey, the Creek Post"

in English something he had said in Creek. From that time on, he spoke English and eventually became very efficient in it.

Young Posey was sent to the Indian University, a Baptist school at Bacone, near Muskogee. This school was founded in 1880 for the training of young Indian men and women for Christian work among the Indians. He went there when he was barely seventeen, a shy and reserved boy; but under the direction of President A. C. Bacone, he soon began to enjoy the life and work of the University. He remained there for five years. He acted as the librarian and learned to set type after school hours for the little paper, "*The Instructor*," which was published by the school. He had his first articles published in that paper. In January, 1895, he published some verse called "Death of a Window Plant," which was apparently the first of his works to attract anything more than school attention.

Upon leaving this school, Posey entered Creek politics; and in September, 1895, was elected a member of the House of Warriors, the lower branch of the Creek legislature. He was sent quite often to councils convened in the Indian Territory to discuss the relations of the Indians to the U.S. Government or in other fields related to the advancement of Indian people.

In 1896, Posey was appointed superintendent of the Creek Orphanage near Okmulgee, the Creek capital. The summer of that year, he was married to Miss Minnie Harris of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Of this marriage was born a son, Yahola, and two or three years later, a daughter, Wynema.

In the summer of 1915, it was my privilege to visit Mrs. Alexander Posey. She was living at Agency Hill House near Muskogee where she had established a little tea-room catering to small parties of guests from the city of Muskogee. Mrs. Posey was given the privilege of living at the former site of the agency of the Five Civilized Tribes free of rent. I received the invitation to visit her home to go through Posey's papers to see what I might find that would be publishable material. I stayed three days and went through a mass of correspondence, including many unpublished manuscripts. Yahola was attending a military school, but was home for vacation, and the daughter was also there because the Muskogee school she was attending had closed for the summer.

Among the papers I found three journals or diaries of the poet. The one given here was kept while he was superintendent of the orphanage. One of the other two was kept when he and one of his friends were working for the Dawes Commission, lo-

cating the so-called "lost" Indians who had failed to come in to receive allotments of land. The third, called his nature journal, dealt briefly with the birds, animals, and plants that he had observed while living in the Creek Nation.

It would be easy to write several pages dealing with the characteristics of Alex Posey: his love of nature, his keen sense of humor, and his affection for his mother, father, and wife. It seems better, however, to let the reader judge all of these things for himself, for they are clearly revealed in his journal.

Some have said that Posey had foreseen the manner of his own death. Accompanied by R. D. Howe, Alex started from Muskogee to Eufaula by train. When they reached the swollen waters of the North Canadian River, however, it was found that the track had washed away; and in attempting to cross the river by boat, it was overturned by the swift stream. Howe succeeded in reaching the shore, and Posey caught the small branch of a tree and clung to it for a long time while the onlookers on the bank were seeking to get a rope long enough to reach him. Before this could be done, however, he was swept away by the strong current of the river and drowned.

Those who have felt that Posey had a premonition of his death refer to this brief poem written some time before his death. It appears in his book of poems collected and arranged by his widow and published in 1910 with a memoir by William E. Connelley:

MY FANCY

*Why do trees along the river
Lean so far out o'er the tide?
Very wise men tell me why, but
I am never satisfied;
And so I keep my fancy still
That trees lean out to save
The drowning from the clutches of
The cold, remorseless wave.*

JOURNAL OF ALEXANDER POSEY

Jan. 1897

Fri. 1. It is midwinter — the first of January — but as I sit down to make this first entry into my diary, a heavy storm is approaching from the west, accompanied by vivid lightning and loud claps of thunder. This is an unusual winter. No snow has fallen sufficient to make tracks in. A heavy frost a few mornings ago is the nearest approach to winter



LEWIS H. POSEY
Father of Alex Posey



ALEX POSEY
At the age of 12



MRS. LEWIS H. POSEY
Mother of Alex Posey, Age 72



ALEX POSEY
At the age of 7

that we have had. There is but one garden spot in the world and it is here in the Indian Territory.

It is a common saying of my father that one wild about will spoil a gang of tame ones. Ben Long, whom I expelled from school for the second time yesterday for bad behavior, coaxed some of the best boys off with him this morning. He was deaf to good counsel, and I am only too glad to know that he is gone and that there are other orphans in the country needing the shelter and the advantages he would not improve.

Brann's "Iconoclast" has wide-spread notoriety so I have been told. If it is true, I cannot see for what reason. I read the December number for two solid hours this afternoon without stumbling onto so much as the slightest suspicion of a new idea or a decent attempt at witicism.¹

Sat. 2

"Cold and dark and dreary;

It rains and the wind is never weary."

I am fond of this kind of weather. There is something in me that responds to the slow beating of the rain from the eaves and the long moan of the wintry wind.

Snip McGirt, one of the boys Ben Long coaxed away yesterday, has returned; wet to the skin, and apparently the most penitent boy in the world. This will do him more good than a year's schooling. I hope it will be the making of him. Experience never intends her lessons to be forgotten. Her precepts come like the white men into the Indian country — to stay.

I have finished the first volume of Plutarch's "Lives." Lycurgus, it appears to me, was more remarkable for short and sententious sayings than for the rigorous laws he gave the Spartans. It is to be lamented that he is not of this age! Plutarch has impressed me that in Greece and Rome one's greatness was determined by banishment.

3 Cold, bitter cold. The fury of the northwest has kept us in doors all day. Miss Lee and Kit returned in the afternoon from Checotah, by special conveyance, and have not thawed out yet.² They say John is on the road, but

¹ Brann was editor of the Texas periodical *The Iconoclast*, i. e. Image Breaker.

² Kit was Kathryn Harris, Alex Pusey's wife's sister. She and Miss Lee were both teachers at the orphanage school, officially known as the Creek Indian Orphanage established by the Creek National Council in 1892. Its site was that of present Oklahoma A. & M. School at the N.E. corner of the City of Okmulgee on U.S. Highway 62.

his arrival is uncertain, and we are threatened with famine.¹ There are not enough necessaries of life in the larder for a scanty breakfast tomorrow, though we have limited ourselves to two meals a day since sending for supplies.

I have spent the best part of the day preparing a poem for publication and puzzling my head over as to what title I shall give it. The title it really ought to have is too long and, I fear, too commonplace; the poem being about a visit to Mr. Hall in Arbeka a year or two since and the story he told me about his courtship with a "witching squaw girl."²

I have undertaken a difficult task -- that of learning to play the violin. But, despite my assiduous application, I am making no perceptible progress. "No excellence without labor," says the old adage; but I believe that I have found an exception to the rule. If I learn to play two tunes I shall be satisfied: viz, "Swanee Ribber" and "Evelena" with variations. Rev.—I don't know his name—preached to the students tonight, but I did not go in to hear him. I rather preferred to be entertained by Plutarch's accounts of the justice and the glorious conduct of Aristides, the Athenian.

4 I peeped into the mirror today by chance and mistook myself for a rebellious Populist! I am very much in need of a clean shave.

John returned with the supplies from Checotah in the early part of the morning, having stopped overnight at the Half Moon Ranch, with one Rev. Brinks. He says he got lost yesterday while trying to come a neerer way known

¹ John was Alex Posey's cousin, and for a time worked at the orphanage school.

² Mr. Hall was George Riley Hall, teacher of the neighborhood school in the Creek community of Arbeka Town, near the Old Hog Ford on the North Canadian River, about 2½ miles southeast of presentoley, in Oklahoma County. A native of Missouri and of southern parentage, George Riley Hall had come to Indian Territory in 1888, and engaged in cotton farming near Eufaula. In 1890, he began his teaching career, first in the Creek neighborhood schools and later in the Creek national academies. He had had about three terms of district schooling but became a self educated man of high degree of culture, a writer of poetry and lover of music. His poem, "Okishonna, fair land of my dreaming," first published through the interest of his close friend, Alex Posey, was widely read. He learned and became thoroughly conversant in the Creek Indian language, a man who was held in high esteem among the Indians of Eastern Oklahoma. In 1902, Mr. Hall married Kit (Kathryn Harris), and soon re-established the *Hesperetta Free Lance*, a Republican newspaper that was remarkable in the Indian Territory and early years of Oklahoma statehood.

as the prairie route, and but for vigorous walking would have frozen to death. The winds swept over those prairies without the opposition of hill or wood for forty miles.

I read Plutarch's Marcus Cato, the frugal Roman of memorable sayings; and "who, by good discipline and wise temperate ordinances reclaimed the Roman commonwealth when it was declining and sinking into vice." Gladstone, at over eighty, espousing the Armenian cause and stirring up sympathy by public speeches, reminds one much of Cato, who, in extreme old age, stirred up the roar which resulted in the overthrow of Carthage.

Maxey Sims, another runaway boy came back this evening and apologized to me before the school for his behavior. He was so manly and frank in saying that he had done wrong and repented of it that I took him back in school.

5 Mr. Hall straggled in afoot this evening — the mere shadow of himself — having been on the road all day without refreshments. He has been spending the holidays in the Senora country with his brother Jeff — hunting, making inroads into Dog Town and having a good time generally. High water is his excuse for being tardy.

One Ed Grison, a galvanized, garrulous Indian farmer, called this afternoon, and, seeing that he could sell me no hogs, proceeded to talk. Among other things he advised me to set out catalpa for shade trees; and said that he had been preaching my ideas on the Indian problem these twenty years! I must confess this stunned me not a little.

Today I have followed Phyrrius in his brilliant campaigns [sic] in Macedonia, Lacedaemon, Italy, and Sicily [sic]. Like Napoleon and Alexander, he was a man of continental desires; one conquest could not satisfy him; and the ambition for a greater empire resulted finally in his ruin. He lacked the patience to secure himself in the conquests he made. He might not have become so famous but he would have been happier if he had devoted his great talent to the upbuilding of his little kingdom of Epirus. Here is a great big moral.

6 Mr. Hall has the most savage looking pistol I have seen in many a day, except the one with which Uncle Will shot off his foot. It appeared to me to be a combination of all models. If he were to go to Cuba with this pistol, the freedom of that island would be assured!

I spent the morning with John out at his room. Knowing him to be fond of jokes and much given to laughter, I tried to split his sides open.

Finished reading the life of Caius Marius.

- Thu. 7 Read the life of Cornelius Sylla, the implacable enemy of Caius Marius, and as great a lover of tyranny as Marius, though an inferior warrior.

Here are some choice morsels I gathered from Puck and Truth. *Persons of many accomplishments often accomplish but little.*—Puck. *The man who is always willing to let well enough alone, mighty seldom secures quarters in that much-talked-of room at the top.*—Puck. *Leisure is spare time in which a man can do some other kind of work*—Puck.

When the unexpected happens it is usually greeted with exclamations of "I told you so!"—Puck.

*Being beautiful, she was courted,
Being a woman, she wished to know all things.
One day, in the tangle of an old garden,
she came upon a skull.*

At first she drew back from it, frightened.

*Then, placing it upon a rose-twined
pedestal, she questioned it.*

*"You who have lived, tell me of life,"
she said.*

*"And having loved, tell me of passion,
And being dead, speak to me of eternity."*

*But the skull only grinned vacantly at her.
Perhaps it had forgotten life—and love.
Perhaps it knew nothing of eternity.*

—Truth.

This is accompanied by a beautiful picture of a woman questioning a skull, and is entitled "The Questioner."

8 I walked down to the capital this afternoon for the first time in a month. When Council is in session, and the flying jenny is in running order, Okmulgee is a pretty wild place. You can walk out almost any morning then and find a man for breakfast. But at other times, Okmulgee is one of the quietest places in the world. So it was this evening, until one young negro called another a "chicken thief."

This application was resented and a vehement altercation ensued, and they stood facing each other with distended nostrils and whites of the eyes exposed like blown cotton bolls. But friends interposed and the town relapsed into tranquillity.

I received a letter from Yaha Tustanugga, who is now at Washington representing the Creeks. He tells me that he and his colleague, McIntosh, have had the most flattering reception by the officials of the departments, but is very skeptical about Congress appropriating the \$400,000.00, which they are instructed to ask for. He thinks, however, there are ways to cross a bridge of this kind, but does not feel sure what the results will be.⁵

While at town this afternoon, I picked up a poor little orphan boy; who has been tossed hither and thither, like a weed on a wide sea, without father or mother to cling to many years. I brought him back with me, and he is the happiest boy this side of paradise. He has a home now and some one to look to for food and raiment.

9 This has been a beautiful day — a piece of spring itself. Such a day as makes one sleep to look at. Miss Lee, Lowena — that's my wife's Indian name — and myself took dinner to the "wood boys" down in Cussetah bottom, and enjoyed a kind of picnic.⁶ Jack built the fire, I made the coffee, while Miss Lee and Lowena spread the dinner; which consisted of pie, cakes and sandwiches [sic]. The jay birds, overhead in the trees wished us well and bade us come again.

To be a successful croquet player is nothing to boast of; but Mr. Hall and I beat Miss Ross and Lowena two games this evening — and "skunked" them one game!

The Indian Journal says Eufaula has an Angel for postmaster. Eufaula must now be in direct communication with Heaven. In the editorial column I find the following: "If ignorance is bliss, some of the Creek politicians ought to be supremely happy." The Journal is unusually bright this week.⁷

Sun. 10 The story I have been reading today, of how Lucullus

⁵ Each of the Five Civilized Tribes sent a delegation to Washington, to look after the tribal interests before the Interior Department and in pending Indian legislation before Congress.

⁶ The "wood boys" were employees of the school.

⁷ The Indian Journal was published in Eufaula. Posey later became its editor.

overcame the Asiatic (sic) kings, is highly interesting. Mithridates and Tigranes, with their innumerable hosts, could not withstand him. He sacked their richest cities with less resistance than a bear robs a bee-tree.

I sent a poem — "An Arbekan Episode" — to the *Indian Journal*.

- Mon. 11 Read the life of Crassus in the forenoon and pruned an oration I wrote on Sequoyah when a student at Indian University. There is not much of it left; but what is left is infinitely more to the purpose.

After dinner I hitched up the team and Lowena and I drove to town. On the way, Maude stumbled and fell flat on the ground and broke — our conversation!

Our number was swelled this evening by the advent of a Uchee boy, who is one-eyed and a dwarf.*

- Tues. 12 Besides reading the life of Pompey, I read the *Iconoclast* for January. Brann is cleanly witty and says some right good things — at least in one or two articles.

Senator Vest, so the papers state, has been re-elected to Congress. This is the man who helped to confer unconstitutional authority on the Dawes Commission and who so grossly misrepresented the facts pertaining to the condition of affairs in this country. This the man who is now making pathetic appeals for the Cubans, but who is destitute of sympathy for a people almost as badly persecuted. He is considered to be a great big brainy man. Is he? In what way has he shown it? He has not the first principle of greatness. Of what stuff is this Free Silver Populist made?

I spent the afternoon in the class rooms listening to recitations.

- Wed. 13 I fell into a very bad habit — among others — while I was at the Indian University — that of sleeping late. Resolving to break myself of it, I flew out, to use a common Creek term, long before daylight this morning; and aroused John and the cook up, I fear, much against their will, as they groaned heavily when I called them and were a long time dressing — especially the cook, whose name is Tompkins. This groaning and slowness at dressing does

* Uchee (or Yuchi) Indians were members of the Uchee Tribe, affiliated with the Creek Tribe.

not augur much for a young man; the probabilities of his making a mark in the world are powerfully uncertain.

The perusal of the life of Alexander — after whom my father was pleased to name me — is responsible for the following:

The Caesars and the Alexanders were but men gone mad; who ran about awhile, upsetting kingdoms in their fierce career, and then were slain like rabid dogs, or died in misery. Assassination awaited Caesar; wild deliriums cut short the glory of Alexander; death was dealt to Phyrrius by a woman's hand; deception cooled the fever Pompey had; Themistocles and Hannibal drank deep of poison in their desolation.

- Thur. 14 I received a note from Isaac Manuel, the royal blooded blacksmith at Okmulgee, who sharpens our tools and shoes our bronchos, praying for a lift into the matrimonial boat in which he is about to embark. I sent him an order by his henchman settling up my account with him in full with congratulations.

Dickey — just simply Dickey — he has no other name that I am aware of — is a dried up little fellow and just a common everyday [*sic*] Indian. He lives in the first hollow east of the Mission. You would not think it to look at him but he is shrewd and cunning withal as a fox. He manages to get along in the world as well as any fullblood you could find in a day's ride. And the reason of his success is simple. He is industrious and self-denying, drops every nickle he gets in the gourd and makes provisions for a rainy day. Frequently I have dealings with him in a small way, and have become familiar with some of his methods of keeping body and soul together and laying by now and then for he generally gets the best of me. For instance, he will come, as he did today, and draw me into a conversation, appear to take much interest in the welfare of my business, perhaps by telling me that he saw my cow or hog away over yonder out of its range, inform seriously that some miscreant made away with the last side of bacon he had in the smoke house, and then get me in the notion to lay my larder under contribution in advance for a little work.

- Fri. 15 John, whose surname is Phillips and who is a cousin of mine, and I went to town after a barrel of salt.

I began reading Buel's "Heroes of the dark Continent," which must be Africa. The title is high sounding but not

less so than the language used by the author. The book is large, very red and profuse with illustrations. Much light is thrown on a dark subject.

- Sat. 16 Continued my perusal of the "Heroes of the Dark Continent" with increasing interest. Capt. Spekes discovery of the Nile's source excited the jealous envy of even Richard Burton; who soiled his own brilliant explorations in his efforts to appropriate that honor to himself.

In my walk this afternoon, I wandered around where Joe and Tom were quarrying rock.⁹ I have offered them a suit of clothes apiece to complete the walk begun last summer. It will be three feet wide, flaged [sic] and in the shape of Mr. Hall's tanning fork, running from the two front doors to the gate, sixty yards distance. They are making admirable progress and doing the work nicely. If it is good honest work that you want apply to Joe and Tom.

- Sun. 17 I did not know that this was Sunday until late this evening. But that is no matter. One day is as holy to me as another.

Kept in doors all day reading.

- Mon. 18 I came in personal contact today with a man who bears a name known in all corners of the earth. It was purely a business matter that brought us together. What else could induce Thomas Carlyle to lift his hat to me at my door and thus expose that Tarpeian brow to one so unworthy to behold it? His visit was a stupendous surprise [sic]; but I recovered sufficiently to buy his axhandles which he valued at one dollar in due bills!

Took Lowena driving in the afternoon. We drove for miles thro' the "dull gray winter woods," to borrow a phrase from my wife, without hearing a single bird sing or a crow caw. The monotony was broken however by a little girl as we were returning. She was in the road ahead of us and seeing us coming turned and fled as if for dear life down the road, disappearing in a deep hollow.

- Tues. 19 Finished reading the "Heroes of the Dark Continent." From a literary standpoint, the book is a failure, and not as complete as it might be as a history. The author seems to be in too great a hurry to be done with it; which gives one the impression that his main object was to put the book on the market and as quickly as possible enjoy the pro-

⁹ Joe and Tom were evidently employees of the school.

ceeds thereof. With the rich material thus so carelessly used, Irving would have built a structure of wondrous beauty.

Heigh ho!

*A snow storm! A snow storm!
See the great white flakes fall!*

Heigh ho!

*The posts have hoods along
The lane and snow-birds sing!*

Heigh ho!

*The snow is ankle-deep
And earth's a desert now!*

Heigh ho!

*Away the prairies sweep
With only ahies for shores!*

Now, by George, where are my boys?

Wed. 20 While I was at the town this afternoon, I dropt [sic] in at Captain Belcher's, the postmaster. I found the Captain and Mr. Smith, the saddler, engaged in spinning yarns, and I joined them. Presently, Mr. Shields, the store keeper, straggled in; and, just as he was about to lay us all in the shade with the story of how he once climed out of an un-walled well into which he had been scared, a tall man with sandy mustache and a tent pole in his nose, poked his head in the office window.

"Is there anything like a letter for me, Captain?"

"No."

"Say, Captain, do you know that there man Airheart?"

"Yes."

"Well, if he calls for my mail, you tell him there aint any. He's not safe. I wouldn't trust (him) any further than I could throw a bull by the tail. Be sure, Captain, because if I have it to do, his name will be Airheart sure 'nough." He give his mustache a twist and disappeared in the direction of the cider stand.

Thur. 21 I read old number magazines and slept a good part of the day. To burn midnight oil is to wear one's self out and be fit for nothing on the morrow. It is as necessary to avoid taxing your mind and body too much as it is to avoid over-drawing your bank account.

Fri. 22 Read the life of Julius Caesar — Plutarch's third

volume. He was a poet, a historian, an orator, a statesman, a warrior, a philosopher, and — Caesar. His versatility seems incredible.

A day or two since I let Dickey have six bushels of corn and a sack of flour, for which he agreed to haul a thousand pounds of flour for me from Checotah. Thinking that he would charge me nothing extra, inasmuch as I had paid him in advance, I added two hundred pounds of beans. Far from it. When he returned from his trip, he came in saying, "Well, I am back, but I had a pretty time of it; stuck up several times on the way. I tell you what two hundred pounds makes a big difference." I took the hint and settled with him for the beans — in clean cash — he would accept nothing else — and he went away greatly pleased.

- Sat. 23 Today I began writing a series of boy hood stories, entitled "Tom and Abe and I," just simply to amuse myself and at the same time preserve in black and white those youthful recollections which I may not always remember.

Mr. Hall shouldered his double-barrelled gun bright and early this morning and went in pursuit of game. Late in the day he returned, as expected, empty handed. To hear him tell it, he came within an ace of bagging a fine, buck, just the other side of that little sandy place in the road between here and the lake.

- Sun. 24 Read the life of Cato the younger, who won greater victories by simply being right than any general Rome ever had.
- Mon. 25 Continued my writing on "Tom and Abe and I," but with poor success. To write well you must be in the mood for it.

Read the life of Demosthenes aloud to my wife. In acquiring, by constant application, what nature was not kind enough to give him, Demosthenes has shown that any man with a well balanced head, if he has but the will, can become a genius in some field of action.

Mr. Hall, though he cannot slide his fingers down the strings and make them shriek like a north wester through a rail fence, can handle the violin with considerable skill. To hear him attempt new pieces of music and strike a celestial note now and then is like looking at the sky on a cloudy night and once in a while seeing a star.

Tues. 26 Read the life of Cicero. "Cicero," says Plutarch, "was the one, above all others, who made the Romans feel how great a charm eloquence lends to what is good, and how invincible justice is, if it be well spoken." If Cicero's pointed sayings, for which he was remarkable, made him offensive, it also made him very famous.

Dickey popt [sic] up at my door today all wrapt up and buttoned up as though about to set out in search of the North Pole. He was a half hour unbuttoning his coats and removing the shawls from his neck; and, like Irving's Ten Trenches, his "drumstick" appendages were encased in divers overalls. When he was thawed out, he said "an infinite deal of nothing."

The papers stated that Mark Twain, after making a lecture tour of the world in the hope of retrieving his fortune, is now penniless in London. Poor Mark! The world has laughed with him; will it weep with him? He is sixty years old, and his courageous but unsuccessful efforts for the recovery of lost fortune is a pathetic story.

Wed. 27 That was a most enjoyable hour I spent with Capt. Belcher this morning at his office. The old Captain is an interesting conversationalist and I found him in capital humor. He is a man of extensive reading and considerable wisdom. He interested me most, however, with his knowledge of Creek history and personal recollections of the men who have helped to make it. He said the Creeks have progressed wonderfully but are for all that much further from the golden age now than they were in the days of open-air councils. For then their laws were simple and their government purer; they were more honest, paid their debts better, did not sell their per capita money to as many parties as would buy it, and in their deliberations legislated for the common good. But with the defusion, he added with emphasis, of missionary spirit and ardent spirits came the evils that threaten a revolution of their affairs.

Thurs. 28 John and I went to town. Had an hour's chat with Shields and Myers. We gave prize fighting down the country and were frank in declaring what we thought about Americans — if they be that — who accumulate fortune by peddling books and rat-traps and cap the climax by allying their families with foreign nobility — when the greatest thing is be simply an American citizen! When this interchange of sentiments was over I went and called on Iparheche who was at his office dispatching executive business right and left.¹⁰

- Fri. 29 Read the life of Mark Antony, whose character in calmities [sic] was better than at any other time — except at Actium, where he abandoned his army and followed Cleopatra in her flight.

Took Lowena and the girls (and Mingo, our black dog) to the pond where I skated to my heart's content, to the great amusement of the girls, this being the first time they ever saw anyone on skates. I am no expert skater but I can sometimes wind my legs up and stand on my head.

- Sat. 30 Mr. Hall went with me to the pond to learn the lick it is done with but succeeded only in putting on the skates.

Read the life of Marcus Brutus. The only good that resulted from his assassination [sic] of Caesar was perhaps his own death and that of Cassius.

- Sun. 31 Read the life of Artaxerxes, the Persian king.

Wrote a page or two (of) short sayings for the Journal, entitled "Shells from Limbo."

February.

- Mon. 1 Read the lives of Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, with whom Plutarch concludes his famous "Lives." Plutarch is certainly a master of his wit. He is as much a philosopher as a biographer.

I must compliment my wife on the sofky she made today — this being her first effort.¹¹ She, by some hook or crook, contrived to give it just the proper flavor. No one but an Indian can make sofky; Lowena can make sofky; therefore Lowena is an Indian!

We saw the sun in eclipse with smoked glasses. Mr. Hall claimed that he saw the nose of the man in the moon.

- Tues. 2 The weather has at least moderated. The larks and crows have rioted all day.

¹⁰ Isparchee was Principal Chief of the Creek Nation from 1895 to 1899. Born in Alabama in 1829, of fullblood Creek parentage, he made his home before the Civil War at Cussetah Town, located about 6 miles southwest of present Okmulgee which was designated the capital of the Creek Nation in 1867. After the Civil War, Isparchee was a leader of the "Loyal Creeks," mostly fullbloods that had served in the Union Army and were opposed to any changes in the Creek government, especially the allotment of lands in severalty in later years. Through the years of turbulent politics, Isparchee held positions of trust in the Creek Nation, the full blood Creeks believing in his judgment and rugged honesty. He died and was buried at his home near Beggs, northwest of Okmulgee in 1902.

¹¹ Sofky was the favorite Creek Indian dish made of hominy corn.

Lowena has been down with the "la grippe" since 3 o'clock this morning. Mr. Hall is confined to his room also.

Last week's issue of "Truth," "Judge" and "Up-to-date" are side splitters. "Up-to-Date" thrusts at high life are sharp enough.

Went to town — that is to Okmulgee — after medicine for the sick.

"Heard" Hall's big geography class. I have acted the parts of doctor, teacher, nurse and errand boy.

Wed. 3 Taught in Mr. Hall's place. I think I missed my calling in not becoming a teacher.

My father, accompanied by Mr. Cowin, who is a renter on my place, came about 4 o'clock and took me by surprise. I entertained them as royally as my means would permit. My father was in an extremely fine humor and treated Mr. Hall and I to a feast of common sense; while, at intervals, if not all the time—Cowin "sawed" vehemently on the fiddle. He is a pretty tolerable good fiddler and a sort of harlequin with it. "The Arkansaw Traveler" is his masterpiece; which he plays in a kind of melodrama fashion—that is to say he saws a while and repeats a dialogue awhile. All this was opportune and highly enjoyable.

(This is Lowena's birthday.)

Thur. 4 Father, Cowin and I went to town — walked. Cowin took in the sights while my father and I called on Capt. Belcher. The Capt. and my father are old time friends — knew each other before the war — and their meeting give rise [sic] to story telling. The "Lawyer Gion" and the "Dr. Brown" stories I intend sometimes to commit to writing.

After dinner my father and Cowin returned to Bald Hill anticipating a rough time in Deep Fork bottom and Tulledega.¹²

Kittie left us this morning for her home in Fayetteville, Ark. after a long stay in the C.O.A. John took her to Checotah via Miss Wilson's who will perhaps take Kit's place.

¹²"Bald Hill" (shown as "Ball Mountain" on U.S. Survey maps), about eight miles northwest of Eufaula, was the site of the large ranch owned by Lewis Posey. Tulledega was the name of the hills southeast of Henryetta, bordering the North Canadian River. George Hilley Hall had a beautiful summer home in these hills after statehood.

Feb. 5 Waited on the sick.

Read "The Arizonian" and "The Last Teaschabue" aloud to Mr. Hall.

6 Miss Wilson came today to assume her duties as assistant matron in Kittle's place.

The sick are improving very slowly. Mr. Hall has a grave-yard look, but is able to puff away at his pipe. Lowena takes a turn about feeling good and feeling bad.

7 Walked down to Mr. Lynch's — found him gone. Came back, ate doughnuts and began reading the "Iliad."

I am restless. I want to get away from this place. I feel that I am not free. I want to go to my farm, and, by the gods, I am going. I will throw me up a shack, buy a couple of Possum Flat razor back sows and a cow and let public life go down the country — and political friends with it.¹³

8 Mr. Morrow and his brother arrived today from Checotah on a business visit. Sat up late and talked on all manner of subjects.¹⁴

9 Mr. Morrow and I go to Wealoka. The day right chilly. Kindly entertained by Mrs. Hoedridge. In the night getting home.

10 Joe and I go to Ieparheche's.

11 Read all day--newspapers.

12 Take a trip to my farm in Possum Flat. Delightful weather. The jay birds — those ever gay dandies who enliven our winter — bow and wish me well in every grove. Summer lingers in the mistletoe and the Tulledegan evergreen. Reach home at four o'clock. Sister Mattie spreads me a wholesome dinner, consisting of pork, beans, corn-bread, eggs, pies and sofky. This latter dish tasted superb. Find Bill sick in bed and Frank complaining of a severe cold — mis-called "La Grippe." John hale and hearty; at home from school on a kind of vacation. Pa and Ma and the rest of the family well. Coney very inquisitive as usual.

¹³ Alex Posey's farm was near his father's ranch at "Bald Hill."

¹⁴ Mr. Morrow was the Reverend J. S. Morrow, the Baptist missionary who lived at Atoka in the Chectaw Nation at this time. He had begun missionary work among the Seminoles in the Indian Territory before the Civil War, and during the War served as Confederate Indian Agent to the tribe. He is known in Oklahoma history as the "Father of Masonry," having reactivated the Masonic lodges in the Indian Territory after the War, beginning with the organization of the Oklahoma Lodge at Boggy Depot in 1869.

He is an interrogation point. Play checkers with Frank after supper and rub a few diamonds off his championship belt.¹⁵

13 Pa and I go to Eufaula. Drive the little black mules. As we pass Richard Grayson's — Uncle Dick's lineal descendant — Pa tells me of Richard's way of avoiding detection after a successful raid on a neighbor's gang of shoats. Rich says "Jes throw de suspishun on someone else by leaving de insides er de head of de shoat right close to 'is house — trow it in 'is yard if yo' can!" Meet many friends in town; among them Abe Kite, the hide dealer, who thinks little, does little and is the happiest mortal this side Gehenna. Take dinner with Thornton. Return home at sunset and make the children happy with candy, apples, and nuts. John having cast his hook in the pond during the day, we enjoyed catfish for supper. Pa goes to bed early. I set up and read, play with the puppy and chat with me and Mat till late.

14 Bid the home folk good bye. The day is lowery and the roads muddy. Come by the old homestead on Limbo. The place is in the last stages of decay; but how familiar and how dear! The scenes call up a thousand pretty memories. I am a boy again, delighting in play and mischief, I am struck by the pretty face of the renter-girl and am not brave enough to meet her with my bouquet of peach blooms. She stands at the kitchen window and begs for it in vain. I am with Tom and Abe in the corn field, in the "old swimming hol'", in the squirrel hunt, in the fox chase, in the hay field. Alas! that a boy grows old and leaves all this behind.

15 Joe goes to father's after a load of sweet potatoes, grown in Possum Flat's generous soil. Read Current Literature. Chat Hall, who is now able to be up. He is tickled at the fine weather and sighs for Tulledega.

16 This month's output of magazines is rubbish — Kipling's, Hall Caine's and others', who write because it pays. It is not the material in the story or the poem the magazines want but the name attached thereto.

John Gast, the chief justice of the Creeks, is my guest. Gast is a clever fellow. He talks a heap, but, unlike some guests I have had, says a heap. His figures [sic] and comparisons are unique. For instance, in speaking of our deplorable condition, financially and otherwise, he said the Creek Nation is like a consumptive and its continuance as

¹⁵ The persons mentioned here were Alex Posey's brothers and sisters.

a separate government only a matter of very short time. He brings interesting news from the country about Holdenville. He says the presence of two lions in the sparsely settled districts has struck terrors into the hearts of the people. This seems incredible but he says they have been seen and chased from the carcasses of cattle and hogs. They are either lions escaped from some circus or what is more likely mountain lions emigrated.

17 Went to town with Judge Gast. John left this morning for — he did not know himself — in search of a job. I was sorry to be compelled to turn him off. But he got too independent, and I cannot put up with independence in a servant even tho he be my relative.

18 Read "Ships that Pass in the Night." A pathetic, a charming and a simple little story. The conclusion of it, however, is disappointing. The story the author introduces of "The Traveler and the Temple of Knowledge" is a rare moral — really the best thing in the book.

Lowena gave the flowers a sunbath.

19 Spent the day with Hall reading Irving's "Tour of the Prairies."

Capt. Callahan arrived this evening from Checotah and is a guest of the C.O.A. He is the Chief's private secretary and is on way to the Capital.¹⁴

¹⁴ Capt. Callahan—Samuel Benton Callahan—was a leading citizen of the Creek Nation for fifty years. Born in Alabama in 1833, he was of Scot and Irish descent, and one-eighth Creek Indian through his mother, Amanda Doyle Callahan. He was a student in McKenzie College at Clarksville, Texas, and was editor of the Sulphur Springs Gazette (Texas) before he established cattle ranching over a wide region of the Creek Nation, with headquarters at Okmulgee in 1858. He served as 1st Lieutenant in the First Creek Mounted Volunteers of the Confederate Army in 1861, and was Captain in the First Creek Regiment in 1863, resigning this position the next year to take up his duties as delegate from the Creek and Seminole nations to the Confederate Congress at Richmond, Virginia. Before his death at Muskogee in 1911, he was famous as the last living member of the Confederate Congress. Though he established ranching and farming near Muskogee after the Civil War, his residence was at Okmulgee for some years where he served in positions of trust in the Creek Nation, including clerk of the House of Kings (Senate), Justice of the Supreme Court and Creek delegate to Washington on many occasions. Thoroughly conversant in the Creek language, he accompanied the Principal Chiefs, Samuel Christie, Roly McIntosh and Isparhebe as executive secretary to Washington in their day. His daughter, S. Alice Callahan, a teacher in the Creek schools, wrote *Wynema, A Child of the Forest* (Chicago, 1901), credited as the first novel written in Oklahoma. (See Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "S. Alice Callahan: Author of *Wynema, A Child of the Forest*," in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXIII-1965.)

20 Drive to town with Capt. Callahan; return a little before noon and the Capt. goes home.

21 Read all day.

22 Read a comment in the Review of Reviews on the arbitration treaty between Great Britain [*sic*] and United States line by line with deep interest. It seems strange that this simple and best way of settling national disputes was not thought of and resorted to long ago. It would have cost nothing and would have saved innumerable [*sic*] blood shed and unfriendly acts between nations. Posterity will have cause to be proud of Cleveland and Olney for one of the greatest diplomatic triumphs — one of the few redeeming features of the administration.¹⁷

23 Went to town with Hall. Found Judge Marshall reading a letter from Byrd Horn's to a group of Indians relative to a country in South America, whither the Indian might go to escape the trespass of the unfaithful white man.

24 Go to Checotah. Met Bill Barns just the side of Cussetah Creek. I have known Bill ever since I was knee high to a duck. He worked for my father when Tom and Abe and I were boys together. We talked of those good old days and wondered how times had changed. Bill is worried, has a half dozen children and is turning gray. Arrive at Checotah about 3 o'clock. Transact business.

25 Go over to my father's. Eat a big dinner. I enjoy eating nowhere as much as at home. Frank and John are "pitching" a crop. Bill just recovering from sickness. Darwin, the boy of cute sayings, is my bed fellow. Coney spins improbable yarns and rides the pasture. Mattie has a lot of fun at his expense, telling how he and the light horse Captain, Barney Green, persuaded [*sic*] and carried fire and sword into some horse thieves.¹⁸

26 Pa and I go to Eufaula, start before daylight. Withdraw suit against Brooheora. Stidham assumes cost and damages. Come home facing a blizzard.

27 Come home. The sun shines brightly [*sic*] but not warmly. The trip long and wearisome.

28 Read. Mr. Ewing is a visitor. He preaches to the children. Lowena and I are happy over the prospect of having a new cook. Joe left on the 26th—Just pulled up and left without ceremony. He was a bird of passage.

¹⁷ Richard Olney was President Cleveland's Secretary of State.

¹⁸ The Creek law enforcement body was known as the "light horse."

March.

Cowan brought my new workhand.

Hall and I go hunting. He takes a double-barreled gun and I a winchester — prepared for all kinds of game. We find some ducks on the pond but succeeded in bagging none. After a long tramp on Okmulgee Creek we find a squirrel. My gun snaps and it runs in a hole. I shake a limb and scare it out and Hall kills it. But when it was dressed and cook [sic] it was so tough that it could not be masticated.

After study hour Hall and I visit the workhand and listen to Cowans Arkansaw breakdowns on the violin.

2 Our new cook is anything but a culinary artist.

I have a dreadful headache. Lowena applies hot cloths and poultices and succeeds in mitigating [sic] the pain somewhat.

I write the first chapter of my new book. Hall has agreed to contribute another tomorrow. Its title has not been decided on.

Joe Young, a French Creole cook, puts in his timely appearance and ends our trials with the new cook.¹⁹

3 Read a sketch of Rudyard Kipling, the story teller and poet novelist. Took Lowena to Mrs. Lynch's and went on to town.

Wrote the second chapter of my new book.

4 Inauguration day. McKinley steps in and Grover steps down and out with a good round sum—nay, a millionaire. There is more than honor in serving one's country.

If the gloomy weather without extends to Washington, the gods must be unfavorable to the pomp and pagentry indulged in by the people of the Capital.

Now that McKinley is a full fledged ruler of these United States, one can confidentially look forward to that golden era of prosperity which he has pledged himself to give us.

5 Read Burns. I find some new pleasure, some new thought, some new beauty heretofore unseen everytime

¹⁹ Joe, referred to earlier, was evidently the ornamental cook.

I read the poems of the "Ayrshire Plowman." His warm heart, his broad and independent mind "glint" like the daisy in the "histic stubble field" in every song he coraled.

Mr. Hall furbished up his gun and pulled out to Senora country on a hunt this afternoon. I am under obligation to pay half the expense of the transportation of the game. I would that all my obligations were so safely made!

Heard Hall's big geography class and took Lowena buggy driving.

6 Tried to write, but couldn't; didn't have the inspiration, nor the gift of writing anyhow like our modern writers.

Boasted the yard cleaning. The boys under my management were not of a very working kind. Played croquet with the ladies. I whitewashed them but it is not good manners to boast of it. Rendered Burns' "To a Mountain Daisy" into as good English as I was able for Hall's benefit. He says he cannot enjoy and appreciate Burns fully on account of his "horrid" dialect. I have undertaken to throw Hall into better love with the poet but, in doing so, I fear I have spoiled the poem; for it is in his dialect that Burns is sweetest.

7 Read "Twa Dogs" and "Holy Fair."

Hall came back as he went—without game. He almost got game, though,—to hear him tell it. He made the water fly up right under a big white duck and can't understand why the duck flew away alive.

8 Read "Othello."

Went to town — walked and went in my shirt sleeves. Fine cloudy weather. Spring is appearing in the meadows.

Hall shot so much lead into a poor mud duck down on the pond that it sank!

9 Wrote a poem entitled "Lines to Hall" — the burden of it being that the subject could not sing in brick walls.

Read a biographical sketch of Burns by Alexander Smith.

10 Read a criticism on Albert Pike's "Every Year" — a poem of much beauty. The writer of the critique is too much like Dr. Hornbook. The way he alings his rhetorical terms about is simply dumbfounding. The most inexcusable thing in a writer is the ostentatious display of acquire-

ments. Some of the finest poems I have met with lately are in this weeks "Arkansas Gazette."

The girls and I paid early Spring a visit this afternoon —walked away down below Dicky's on the creek.

11 Read "Death and Dr. Hornbook." Hall and I take in the sights at Okmulgee. The sights consisted mostly of nigets and sneaking "sofics" of mixed ancestry.

12 All of a sudden I take a notion to go to Eufaula. Take Jessie with me. A cool day. Find Deep Fork up — cross and strike out for Whaley's ferry — a dozen miles out of the way — and meet with greater difficulties. The ferryman absent. Drive in and get extremely wet. More epithets. Get home by dark — cold and hungry. Frank makes me a loan of dry clothes — but has no shoes that I can wear and I borrow mother's overshoes.

13 Bright and early pe and I are off to town. Close the deal with Stidham. Take dinner with Thornton. Very cold coming home.

14 Come home. Weather moderated. Come by way of the Senora country and cross the river at the "Big Shallows." Take dinner here.

15 Read all day. I have a good supply of late magazines. Go to town on "Cricket."

16 Read magazines. The "Singing of the Pines" by Shariot Hall in the Midland is a fine poem. The poems in the Current Literature by Archibald Lempman are sweet and delicate — nothing grand and sweeping in them. The serial stories I pay no attention to — be they Conan Doyle's, Kipling's or others who write because it takes and pays. I have but little use for fiction we are offered by the magazines. I want facts — truth elegantly dressed — interpretations of nature — something to build on and to broaden my views — something to give me a deeper understanding in all that pertains to life.

17 Read the life of Washington Irving by Chas. Dudley Warner — just published. Highly satisfactory so far as I am concerned.

18 Read Emily Dickson's [sic] poems.

19 Began reading the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." Wrote a description of our dinner to Kit. Hall went to town and returned in a gallop with news of the prize fight.

20 Hall and I walk to town for exercise. Gather a bouquet [*sic*] a piece. Hall takes the girls a walking. Lowens and I read poems to Miss Wilson.

21 Was up before daylight and scared the cook into spoiling his breakfast. I got a white sheet and made uncouth noise out side the Kitchen, letting the wind flop the sheet against the window where Joe was preparing his dough. He hollered "Whose dat?" and made distance, dropping lard in all directions. He is not over the effects of this scare yet.

Read Brann aloud to Hall.

Go out and gather Lowens a bouquet of wild flowers.

Hall and I take the girls walking. Hunt wild onions, gather flowers and set the prairie on fire. Anna, Sarah and Til find sport on a grapevine. The plum trees are in bloom, the grass is up.¹⁰

22 Creek Council meets today to receive the report of the delegate regarding the four hundred thousand dollars, and the outlook at Washington. I have not been down to inform myself of the proceedings and shall not go at all, unless I am called there for some other purpose than to find out what is happening. My business is here, not there. I despise to see a man hang around where he has no business.

The Honorable Judge Benjamin W. Wadsworth is again riding a free horse to death at the C.O.A. He has not outraged our toothbrushes and hair brushes as on former occasions for the reason we had by certain mysterious intunations [*sic*] a foreknowledge of his coming. He never misses an occasion to be where he is the least needed, and has come for the express purpose of warning the Creek legislators to be careful and not monkey too much with the Dawes.

Miss Fanny Scott is a guest of the C.O.A. faculty.

23 Began reading Irving's *Life of Columbus*.

Hall has had an inspiration! He has written a poem on last evening's experience in the chapel with the ladies. Music never fails to have its effect on Hall. There are some lines in the poem that bear the stamp of originality — lines not born to be read and "cast as rubbish to the void."

¹⁰ Anna, Sarah, and Til were employees of the orphanage.

24 Sent Dicky to Checotah after supplies. — Continued reading Irving. — I am visited by a little dried up fellow, lame in one leg, calling himself Matt, who tried without success to sell me certain root and herb concoctions possessing marvelous virtues. — Hall and I go walking back of the field. — Misses Wilson and Lee attend the entertainment at Okmulgee, which was not a success on account of a dance.

25 Followed the "mighty minded Genoese" in his voyages of discovery.

26 This is the end of 3rd quarter. Six more weeks and we shall have done. — Lowena and I have a brown duck for dinner, with stuffing and gravy. — Read and take a horse back ride around the farm. Mr. D. N. Clark, or "Uncle Nute," as he is called by Miss Lee, arrived this evening from Arkansas on a visit to the Misses Leas. — Dickey gets back from Checotah.

27 Read. — Mr. Hall and "Uncle Nute" take the ladies a driving to the lake.—John Phillips pays us a visit—particularly Miss Wilson.

28 Read.—Miss Wilson takes a spin. S. B. Callahan takes dinner with us.—Rainy.

29 "Uncle Nute" goes home. I did not find an opportunity to talk with him during his visit but he looked like plenty of experience and accomplishment.

*O what's the reason of my joy?
The advent of a "bran" new boy!*

30 Finished Irving's Columbus.

I am not in a mood yet to tell how it feels to be a father. The baby has cried enough to make me walk the floor at night. I am sorry to have to say that it looks very much like its father. We have not as yet found a handle for him.²¹

31 Begin a chapter in my book of experiences entitled "Callie."

During the storm last night the wind blew a tub thru the hall and dispossessed Hall of his wits.

Hall is planning to write a story, the scene of which is to be laid on Canadian River.

Send Joe to Checotah after Kit.

Hall and I visit town.

²¹ The parents finally decided to name their first born son Yakola.

April.

1 All Fools' Day. I have fooled and been fooled all day. Everybody has laughed today.

Begin reading Ik. Marvel's "Dream Life." In sweetness of fancy and purity of language Marvel cannot be surpassed [sic]. His prose is first class poetry.

Mr. Hall and Miss Lee go to town after supper. Hall goes to hear and see the phonograph and Miss Lee goes to stay all night with Miss Scott.

2 Read.—Joe returns from Checotah.—The cook entertains Hall and me by telling us of his soldier life in the west. He served under Custer in a campaign against the Cheyennes. He describes Custer as a red faced, long haired daring calvary [sic] leader—of many deeds and few words. It was funny to hear him tell of a campaign they once made against a certain tribe of red skins who had abandoned their reservation, and taken refuge in the mountain fortresses near the Mexican line; and how they dialogged and thoughtlessly chased them into Mexico and how they were chased back across the Rio Grande by Mexican troops. "Didn't you have enough men to give the Mexicans a battle?" Hall asked. "Yes; we could have killed every mother's son of them," answered Joe; "but you see we were a way over in Mexico!"

3 Wrote a poem, which Hall criticized favorably. Read. Jeff Hall comes.²¹

4 Chatted with the poet and his brother most of the morning.²² I build air castles. Plan a home in a Bald Hill valley. Remark that if I cannot build the kind of house I want I will content myself with a shack.—Take the girls walking and gather flowers on Cussetah. Bring back a spray of red bud in bloom for Lowena.—The cook returns.

5 Hall and I go fishing. Though unsuccessful we had a fine dinner. Robison begins planting corn.

6 Read. Write a poem entitled "The Two Clouds."

7 Roberson, the work hand, and I start to Checotah. It is cold and rainy. Find Cussetah up and head it as we do the rest of the streams on our way. We go the prairie (road) and go thro' a hundred pastures and more gates—coming to one every five minutes. Roberson looks at (them) like a mad bull at a red cloth but says nothing. An acci-

²¹ Jeff Hall was George Riley Hall's brother.

²² Power, in many places, calls Hall "The Poet."

dent befalls us but fortunately near a house. Roberson drives into a ditch and broke the coupling pole of his wagon. He sums up the situation with "damnation!" and "h-l f-c" thrown in for good measure. We borrow a coupling pole and reach Checotah O. I. [sic]

8 Friday is an unlucky day it is said and I believe it. I start to Eufaula by way of Berry Hill's ferry and lose my team by drowning. Fanny gets scared and pushes Maud off the boat and follows her. I save myself but it is a narrow escape. We save the buggy and harness by dint of hard work. I send one of the ferrymen to Eufaula for a livery team. A storm comes up. I wait. After so long the liveryman comes. Get to town about dark. Eat a huge supper. Misfortune does not effect my appetite. Get a shave and go to the concert with Thornton.

9 Spend the day in Eufaula. Thornton and I take dinner with Whitmore. Pa returns from Checotah on the "Flyer" and Frank takes us home.

10 Frank, Bill, John and I play croquet. Lot of visitors. The carpenters from Checotah come and I show them where I contemplate building.¹⁴

11 Pa and I take a drive around Bald Hill and select a place for a pasture. Take dinner with Jim Price.

12 Pa lets me have a buggy team. Coney and I go to town. From there I go to Checotah, accompanied by W. T. Banks, the lawyer.

13 Come home after nearly a weeks absence. Find the folks just on the point of sending the Poet in search of me.

14 Read and rest all day.

15 The Poet and Anna go to Checotah. The work hand, the cook and I go to town.

16 Read all day—play croquet.

17 Mr. Shields and a young doctor take dinner and chat with the ladies. Shields, they say, cracked jokes at his own expense. Jeff Hall is a visitor. The Poet and Anna return from Checotah.

19 Not well—in bed all day—read Burns. Get up before supper and play croquet. Send a poem to the "Inquirer."

20 Read Burns. Help Lowena water the flowers. Joked the cook.

¹⁴ Frank, Bill, and John were Alex Peery's brothers.

21 The Greek and the unspeakable Turk are at war. The war in Cuba is about-ended. Spain unable to maintain her army on the island owing to her exhausted means. Long live free Cuba! Paul Kruger and John Bull are far from being on intimate terms. A good shaking up would only be for the good of England. It will rot and fall to pieces without something of the kind.

Hall and I take a walk to the pond. Sit on the grass and watch the white caps break. I tell him how nice it is to watch the waves break on the shore of Lake Michigan.

22 Wrote a stanza. Read "Puck" and "Judge." Played croquet with Miss Rose. Lowena has a chill.²³

23 Laid around and read Burns most of the day. What an inactive life I am leading here! I want change of air, of place and habits of life.

24 Lowena has another chill and becomes so sick that I send for the doctor.

25 Such a cool, clear day. Lowena is much better—able to walk to the kitchen for her meals. The Post and I take a long stroll in the hills back of the C. O. H. farm. Find a beautiful glen and a water fall—lay and rest on the mossy rocks; and would sleep here but for the fear of centipedes (on the Post's part). We sit apart—one on one side of the glen and the other on the other side—and repeat the following extemporaneous verses alternately:

*If I were rich, wee mountain stream,
I would not sit by thee and dream,
But loiter on a silken cot
And sigh for pleasures that are not.
The wrens above me in the trees
And thou below me in the glen —
To see thee turn and twist, and then,
To hear the whispering of the breeze,
The mossy rock's the seat of ease.
To have a soul attuned to all
The bird-songs and the water-fall,
The beauties of the earth and air
That charm the senses anywhere,
And satisfy the spirit's need,
Ah, this is to be rich indeed!*²⁴

²³ Miss Rose must have been one of the teachers at the orphanage school.

²⁴ The two poets were extremely clever in finding rhymes.

26 Read—sleep. Take Lowena out driving. Visit the place where the Poet and I wrote the poem yesterday; cross Cumetah, go out on the prairie beyond and return by way of the Porter place. Fresh scenes and fresh air.

27 Write a rattle snake poem. Play croquet. While we are thus engaged a thunder storm approaches and we narrowly escape from being lightning struck. Miss Rose, Amanda and I had our heads shocked while Joe Grayson's ankle was jolted.

28 Just the sort of day I like! Great woolly clouds—signs of coming showers—cool winds—birds singing everywhere—and the fields are fresh and green. I stroll and let fancy have her way.

29 Hall and I aim our humor at a lone prairie schooner with "sails furled and headed Arkansasward."

Bro. Bill arrives on a short visit, accompanied by Kirkpatrick, a former inn keeper at Checotah. They tell, in the way of news, of a cloud burst recently on the North Fork, causing the river to rise 20 feet in less than a half hour and sweeping away the railroad bridge; also of the extinction of the town of Shawnee, in Oklahoma, night before last, by a cyclone.

30 Bill and his companion return. I dive into Burns' songs.

May 1st.

Read Burns and played croquet.

2 Took Lowena buggy driving. Went to Deep Fork. The river is out of its banks and has turned philosopher. The lake is brimfull and "o'er hung with wild woods thick'ning green—a beautiful scene! See a jack rabbit for the first time. When we return has sad news. He is without "Star." We go to town after some and come back well supplied.²⁷

3 Send off two poems to the papers—"Lines to Hall" and "Daisy." The last is a tribute to my little brother, Darwin's, pet dog.

Give the students a lecture.

This is the last week of school and the fact gives me

²⁷ Poesy is referring to "the Poet." "Star" clearly means that brand of chewing tobacco.

no little pleasure. I want to get out of brick walls—out of politics and be a common citizen. No more do I intend to be a government servant, and will not be a servant for any individual.²⁸

4 Finish reading Burns.

5 Dicky gets back from Checotah. Received a bill of books from Kinsley. Poems of Whitman, Shelley and Bret Harte; "Wet Days at Edgewood," "My Farm of Edgewood" by Donald G. Mitchel, "The Marvel," and the "Building of the City Beautiful" by Joaqua[sic] Miller. My idle moments during the summer will be spent with these.

6 Yaboh's is sick all day. Go to town after medicine for him. Hall and I walk down and return with Blackstone in the buggy.

John Phillips comes to witness our entertainment tomorrow night which promises well.

7 Begin reading "My Farm of Edgewood," a book that promises to be entertaining. The first chapter has lifted my face to blue skies, with here and there a white cloud dreamily drifting; has taken me to the mountain top overlooking coey New England hamlets, arms of the sea and glimpses of the lordly Hudson in the distance.

This is the last day of school. Our work is ended and our large family broken up. The entertainment was a roaring success. There was not room sufficient to accommodate visitors. Ellis Grayton and Rufus Marshall took down the house in the "Tooth Carpenter." The impersonation of the "Shepherdess" by Anna Howell was fine; and her recitation, "The Old Woman's Complaint" could not be excelled. Miss Wilson played the "Rose Act" to perfection. The "Bonnet Drill" by sixteen girls—what words shall I use to describe it? The instrumental music by Mr. Hall and Miss Rose Lee, altho' a little "dancy" sometimes, was highly enjoyable. It was all good!

8 The school is closed and the children in a bustle preparing to go home. Play croquet.

²⁸ Posey's desire to be free of service with the government was never fully realized. After his retirement from the orphanage, he was superintendent of the Eufaula school for a brief period and then became editor of the Eufaula "Journal." In this position, he began the publication of the "Fus Fircos Letters" purporting to be the conversation in Indian dialect of four elderly Creeks, politicians and political leaders. These letters were published in various newspapers throughout the U.S. and brought Posey national recognition.



FACULTY AT THE CRIPPLE ORPHAN HOME, 1897

Standing on the porch, left to right: Mrs. Alexander Pease and two of the women teachers, probably Miss Wilson (center) and Miss Lee. Standing front row, left to right: Alexander Pease and George Jeffrey Hall.

(Oskoshum, Minnesota, Society)

9 Go to Muscogee with Brother Bill in response to my father's request.

10 Lay around—or rather stand around the court house waiting for Bill's case to be called. It is not called. Go to

11 Checotah, returning to Muscogee Tuesday morning with Hall. Lay around again all day. Hall takes in the sights—if a mixture of brick and shanty house, unpaved and crooked streets, filled with negroes and hungry business men, with never an "honest Injun" to be seen, can be called sights.—Bill's case is called and dismissed on lack of sufficient evidence.—We all, that is my father, Bill and Hall and I go to a show, which turns out a very cheap and mean affair—if not vulgar.

12 Hall and I come home. Pa and Bill take the train for Eufaula.

13 Sleep all day and dread going back to Muscogee as much as Lowena hates to have me go.

14 Read. After dinner, Ellis Grayson and I start to Checotah.

15 Take the train—I for Muscogee and Ellis for Wagoner, where he goes to spend vacation. I am a witness before the Grand Jury but my case is not called—dispite the fact the prosecuting attorney promises three hundred time(s) to call the case up. A white man never made a promise with an Indian that he kept.²⁹

16 Spend the Sabbath at Mr. Garland's three miles from town—a beautiful place—genuine hospitality and our brimming good cheer. Visit Byrd Horn's and talk about emigrating to South America or Mexico—any where away from Congress and the Dawes Commission.

17 My case before the Grand Jury is called and I testify. Receive a telegram from Lowena about three o'clock saying "Baby very sick. Come at once." The train six hours late. Get to Checotah about 3 o'clock and drive home.

18 Get home before nine. Never so glad or sleepy. Find baby better. Sleep.

19 Sleep and careen Yahola.

²⁹ George Washington is alleged to have once said that he never knew of a controversy between an Indian and a white man in which the white man was not proved to be wrong.

20 Get a nurse for baby.

21 Read "My Farm of Edgewood." Yahola better. Nurse kind and good to him.

We have a pack of young curs. The fattest and, the "cutest" little fellows in the world.

22 Write a stanza. The gist of it being, don't censure the world until you have tried to make it better.—Continued reading Donald Mitchell.—Lowena and I go walking and gather a bouquet of wild flowers apiece.

23 Read "My Farm of Edgewood" and slept like a Dutchman.

24 Did the same over.

25 Finished read[ing] "My Farm of Edgewood." Donald Mitchell, like Irving, never tires me. Can beautiful language, faultless and pure, delightful descriptions of Nature, so true that you hear the rustling of the poplar leaves, and philosophical excursions ever tire?

26 Read—Go to town and pay my debts.

27 Revise a chapter of my new book and read same to my wife and Miss Wilson. They think it readable.¹⁰

28 Over haul another chapter of my new book.—Joe returns from Checotah.

29 Read new magazines. *Cosmopolitan* and *Current Literature* good numbers.

Prof. Hall, accompanied by Mr. Ray, are our guests. Our visitors are both musically inclined and we have a lot of music.

30 Hall and Companion go home and with them two of our girls—Liza and Cindy.—Read and revise another chapter.

31 Read and take care of baby Yahola—the brightest and sweetest young one in the world—while Lowena makes preparations for departure tomorrow for Arkansas by way of Grandpa's and Grandma's at Bald Hill.—Hall is to hold the fort in our absence.

¹⁰ Apparently the book mentioned has never been published.

June.

1 Lowena, Yahola and I depart for Arkansas by the route indicated in the above entry. The drive thro' the Senora and Tulledega countries is highly pleasant. The recent rains have made the streams to look like naughty children after crying—Deep Fork and Wolf Creek in particular. An elm with curled and twisted limbs on the latter stream amuses me by reminding me of a stingy Jew's whiskers. Tie the buggy wheels descending Tulledega — Lowena and baby walk down. Ferry North Fork. Reach my father's place about five o'clock. It rains.

2 Yahola is sick but not serious. Yesterday's trip was too hard for the little fellow. My father and I scare the renters on the farm into fits with false faces. We run them out of the cotton patches and out of their homes and out of their wits. I played the part of the hag and my father that of the devil before day.¹¹

3 Yahola is better. Pa. and I go over to Richman's to see Boone about a claim. Boone has acted the dog in the manger with me. I staked off a claim not long since and he has gone and staked it off for himself. The conference does not result in a settlement. Boone is contentious—a man in the wrong always is.

4 I take three wagons and a half dozen hands and run around Boone's staken. In all [I] stake off about a mile square pasture. I pay Boone back in his own coin and in some of my own. Lowena and I start to Checotah at 12 o'clock.

5 Take the morning train for Fayetteville. Transfer at Wagoner. The Valley route proves rough. Get to Ft. Smith at twelve. Forty-one cabmen contend with each other for our baggage and patronage. I had rather be attacked by a band of outlaws than these men. We put up at a hotel until 4 o'clock when we take the "Cannon Ball" for our destination, arriving at seven. Mountain scenerye many and pretty.

6 Lowena is back at her old home and is satisfied but I am not. Read and stay in doors for the rain is pouring down. Walk out with Mr. Harris and take a look at the Greg farm.¹²

¹¹ Evidently Alex Posey and his father were both fond of practical jokes.

¹² Her old home was Fayetteville, Arkansas, as previously noted. Mr. Harris was Lowena's father.

- 7 Come home despite Lowena's pleading. Come by way of South McAlester.
- 8 At one o'clock I am at the C.O.H. Fresh breezes and contentment.
- 9 Hall goes home. Rest—read.
- 10 Clean up and make a hammock. Am very industrious.
- 11 Get lonesome. Receive a letter from Lowena. More lonesome.

Write a poem. After dinner hitch up Cayenne and Pepper and drive to Checotah.
- 12 Take the train for Fayetteville. Lay over 3 hours at South McAlester. Leave at twelve and arrived at destination at seven. Lowena is expecting me and is not surprised.
- 13 Visit the confederate cemetery with Mr. Harris to see the newly dedicated monument, "A tribute to Southern Women." Visit the mentioned cemetery and drive over town.
- 14 Lowena, Yahola and I come home. Have a pleasant trip.
- 15 Arrive at C. O. H. at half past four.
- 16 Rest—read. Bro. Bill comes on a short visit. Hall goes to Checotah and will return with Kit.
- 17 Laid in my barrel stave hammock and read Joaquin Miller's "Builders of the City Beautiful." Whatever Miller writes is charming and this book is no exception.
- 18 Wrote a stanza "To a Mocking Bird." Hall's criticism of the same is favorable. Read Aesop's Fables.
- 19 Hall and I go to Bald Hill. Take dinner with Mr. Ray. Hall shows me his crop and we predict good results. The drive from here on is rough but pleasant. We reach my father's about sundown—eat a big supper and talk.
- 20 This is the hottest day we have had. Old Sol shines without compunction. The conversation between my father and the Poet is worth hearing. My father whets his wits on "organizations and combinations, political, religious and otherwise."

After dinner, Hall and I went over to Sandy Land to attend "a singing," which we discovered to be a gathering of renter folks; where the young awkward boys and girls sparked most unceremoniously and the old farmers and their wives talked of corn and cotton and their neighbors between "Hark! From the Tomb" and "What a Friend We Have," etc, etc.¹³

21 We return. Reaching North Fork we find the ferryman absent and wait here 3 or 4 hours. In the meantime the Poet strips and wades the river and goes to Burney for tobacco.

22 Rest. The Poet goes back to Ray's to look after his crop.

23 Lay in the hammock and read the "Star."

July.

10 Capt. Callahan, of Checotah, takes dinner with us.

11 Mr. Hall returns to look after his business at Senora. From there he expects to go to San Antonio, Texas, on a visit to his sister. He is to write us a letter sitting on the Alamo.

12 Miss Lee, who has been our guest during the Institute, leaves this morning for her home at Booneville, Ark. She will spend the next six weeks at Eureka.¹⁴

24 Take the excursion fever and go to Galveston. Spend a day and a half there taking in the sights and turning somersaults in the Mexican wave. Stop at the Brock Hotel—an emense [*sic*] place and charges in proportion. Go out on a steamer with two sail boats hitched on the sides. Waves become boisterous and the sail boats jamming against the steamer, water splashing everywhere, on everybody, irrespective of rank and dignity, and cause some excitement. There are two sweethearts on board and [they] make sundry soft remarks. For instance, "Love, if we were away out yonder where we couldn't see a thing, we'd sure see lots of water, wouldn't we?"—The moss woods beyond the Brazos—how beautiful! The maidens this side and beyond—oh!

¹³ Sandy Land must have been a local schoolhouse.

¹⁴ Evidently Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

Aug. 28 Hall returns from Checotah with Miss Wright, our new teacher, who is from "Ole Virginny." We expected them yesterday, but, the Post having some important business to attend to out east of Checotah, delayed their leaving Checotah yesterday.

29 S. B. Callahan pays us a short visit in the morning on his way home from Council.—John throws up his job and goes to Checotah.—The Post and the ladies (Misses Wright and Harris), my wife and myself and the children go to the camp meeting, which is in progress west of town. The Post and Ladies became entangled in the Deep Fork woods and are lost a half a day; while our crowd has vexation with a wagon tire, which, catching our heads turned, would leave the wheel and dash away as if for life.—We have a superb dinner—many dainties—among other things a Chocolate cake made in Virginia—thanks to Miss Wright! Come home as soon as dinner is over.—Dolly and Fay outstrip Cayenne and Pepper in a buggy race—to the great satisfaction of the Post and the Ladies.

30 The Post goes to Senora.

Miss Wright, Cindy Jacobs, Mrs. Posey, Master Yahala and myself go pearl hunting on Deep Fork. Miss Wright rides Cricket and the rest of us go in the buggy. The outing is highly enjoyed and not without success. We gather some live mussels and bring them home and lo and behold Miss Wright finds a pearl in one of them! Joe and I think to fool her with oyster pearls but the joke is turned.

We discover the spring of perennial youth and eight and nine cupsfull respectively. Yahala participated in the sports with equal pleasure.

Returned before 3 o'clock and eat an extremely palatable dinner.

31 Joe and I go pearl hunting—away up Deep Fork in the wildest Joe has ever been in. We find pleasure but no precious stones.

Hall is back from Senora. In extremely good spirit.

Sept. 1 My mother, accompanied by Bill, Frank, Jim and Master Mendum arrived today on a visit. This is the first long trip my mother has taken in years.

2 My mother, Frank and Master Mendum leave early

for Newyoka where they go to visit her aunt, returning after dark.

Miss Rose Lee and Supt. Land of Euchee are here for the night.

Eat watermelons, throw seeds and rinds at each other!

A perfect melee! The Post does not participate for reasons best known to himself.

3 Mother, Frank, Jim and Master Mandum return to Bald Hill. Bill remains and will act as "for me" for the C.O.A.

4 Read. Go horse back riding with Lowena. Johnson Tiger comes to assume his duties as principal.³³

³³ Johnson Tiger was a member of the distinguished Creek family, who had come to assume the position held by George Riley Hall as principal of the Creek Indian Orphanage school.