

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A Letter from Wyandotte Mission, postmarked
Grand River, Indian Territory, 1888

This letter from Mary Hubbard, to Catherine Carmen in Mechlenburg, New York, reveals the loving heart of the simple yet rugged life in the Friends Mission far away in the Indian Territory.¹ The mission of the Friends Society or Quakers was begun in 1869, with the erection of a log church house for work among the Indian tribes settled in the northeastern corner of the Indian Territory after the Civil War, including remnants of the Wyandot, Shawnee, and Seneca tribes, and later the Modoc from California and Oregon. The Friends Society stressed the matter of a school in the mission work and organized the Seneca Boarding School here in 1871, with recognition and some government support through the Quapaw Indian Agency. Improvements were made as time passed, and Seneca Boarding School, as it was known officially, became a well known school in the area though it was always best known and referred to as Wyandotte Mission in the country around the post office, Grand River in Indian Territory.² Mrs. Hubbard's husband, Jeremiah Hubbard was superintendent of Seneca School in 1872 to 1873, and continued to serve in the Mission of the Friends Society for many years.

—The Editor

Cathrine Carmen

Dear Friend

Thy letter and package of mittens come safely to hand and were very acceptable. The fine yarn ones just fit our little girl (Edna) 3 yrs. old and the other red pair fit me the brown ones were too large but I will give them to Lucy Winney our clerk of the monthly an Indian woman a very nice woman thee may of seen her name in the Friends review and husbands book. Husband said thee could not of sent him anything that would of been of more use to him as it is hard to get good yarn out here and they are so handy having a thumb and finger we never saw anything like them before and my time is so fully taken up in

¹ It is through the kindness of Mr. George H. Shirk that Mary Hubbard's letter is published here in *The Chronicles*, from the original letter in Mr. Shirk's fine philatelic collection of early Indian Territory covers. The post office of Grand River is now called Wyandotte in Ottawa County, Oklahoma—see reference, George H. Shirk, "First Post Offices within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVI (Summer, 1948).

² For a history of Wyandotte Mission or Seneca Boarding School see Dr. A. M. Gibson, "Wyandotte Mission: The Early Years, 1871-1900," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXVI (Summer, 1948).

house work and my sewing that I don't get time to knit and the yarn so poor that it does not pay to knit it. I bought yarn last fall for our little boy Harry 5 years old and the first time I washed it after he wore it it all pulled to pieces it was shoddy and flysey [?]. My husbands Mother has been here on a visit for 6 weeks she is 77 years old and very active for one so old she helped me piece a bed quilt and knit Jeremiah a pair of socks. She lives 50 miles from here in Missouri with another son. I do not think thy questions any trouble and anything thee feels like asking it will be a pleasure to answer for I think a great deal of thy letters and love to get them. Next 7th day is our monthly meeting and I will give Sallie Modoc her handkerchief. In this tribe where we live there are white renters and most Indians where they have 25 to 40 acres of land in cultivation have two houses and are allowed a white renter as many of them don't have teems or [are] widows and many of them are shiftless and don't know how to manage. While others are energetic farmers raise wheat, corn oats and have large herds of cattle but there are many that only raise corn and a garden and barely live. There is a government school a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from our house, where the children of 3 tribes over 6 years old can go and are fed clothed and schooled and taught farming and house work. The Shawnees do not like to send to school as they are a very ignorant and superstitious tribe. They don't like white man's ways. There has 5 or 6 of their tribe died in the last 2 weeks with Pneumonia. They won't take medicine just have their feasts and dances to invoke the great spirit to cure them. There is not many of our older women that can read only those that have been sent to school. I fear my letter will not be very interesting as we have had so much sickness in the last 5 weeks that I am nearly tired out. We were sent for to go to our little girl 50 miles from here (Edna) 5 weeks ago. She had the Erisypalis in her head and face, and our son-in-law had the Plurisy and pneumonia. We staid until he was out of danger and then brought her home. She is better and will go back the 1st of next month. And 2 weeks ago Harry our little boy took the measles and a young woman that has lived with me over 2 years took the Typhoid fever, she is just able to set up for the first time today. Harry is better but I feel so tired I cannot write or think. So I will send thee a few pictures to make up what my letter lacks. The meeting picture was taken of Sycamore meeting all Indians that compose the meeting. It was taken when B. C. Hobbs of Indiana one of the executive Committee was out here to visit our work. Thee saw his report in the Friends Review. He had meeting there and we all took our dinners and after meeting a friend of ours took the meeting picture. Some of them would not come out. B.C.H. has a high silk hat on and Jerrimiah and I and Harry are standing together at the right of the picture. The sun shone in my eyes and I could not look up. It is not a good picture but will give thee a

little pleasure in knowing how we look. Excuse this paper it is all I had. Our little girl has to go away from home to school. Well I will close for this time. Hoping it will be worth an answer when thee has time, lovingly thy friend

Mary G. Hubbard
Grand River
Ind Ter

Many thanks for our mittens.

A LETTER WRITTEN FROM
COYLE, OKLAHOMA TERRITORY IN 1900

In the following letter to a Mr. Blackman in Maryville, Missouri, the Reverend John T. Owens writes on June 21, 1900, about the progress made in the new town of Coyle, Oklahoma Territory, in seven months time. He mentions his three sons, George, Guy and Jesse, all of whom were residents of Oklahoma City many years later. Mr. Owens mentions several boarders in his home at Coyle, among whom was Edwin Trapp, the Governor of Oklahoma more than twenty-five years later, who lived with the Owens family while he taught school in Coyle. These notes were sent by Mary Ann Wright to the Oklahoma Historical Society, along with a copy of her grandfather's letter written from Coyle.

The Letter from John T. Owen

Coyle, O. T.
June 21st 1900.

Dear Bro. Blackman:

Your favor of Dec. 18-1899 came duly to hand, & I shall begin this letter by apologizing for not answering it sooner. I can hardly realize that it has been so long since I received your letter, but you know how time flies when we are kept busy, & I never was kept so busy in my life as I have been since coming to Oklahoma. And now the first thing I want to do is to thank you for attending so promptly to the little business matters I left in your hands. So far as my church dues are concerned I have never learned yet whether, or not, I left enough with you to settle them. Bro Kelly sold the fork & sent me the money, & I have instructed Bro. Hasmer to sell the baby carriage for whatever he can get. You know that I went into the grocery business. Well, I did very well for a while, but large general stores soon came in & commanded all the trade, & I found that I was unable to compete with them. There is no money in groceries alone in this country, & then my building was too small for a large stock of goods, had I been able to put in one. So, meeting with a good chance I sold the house, & disposed of most of my little stock of groceries, I kept quite a lot, however, as we have boarders, &

could use them, the goods I mean, to an advantage at home. We have 8 or 10 regular boarders all the time, besides transients. I have built me a very nice residence. It is a two story, seven room house, with two halls, & four closets. The lots & building together cost me about \$1200.00. Now I am having a good stone store room put up on my business lot, 24 x 60 feet, & 12 feet high. I have rented it to a clothing firm who expects to take possession in about 3 weeks.

There is a stone Bank adjoining me on the West, & Mr. Lee is putting up a stone building on the East to be used for a furniture store. We have 3 general stores here now; the building for a fourth is nearly completed & others are in sight. Then we have 3 drug stores, two exclusive grocery stores: one of the drug stores carries groceries, & all the general stores do. Then besides Lee & Son's big Hardware & Harness store, there is another implement firm; two Blacksmith shops; Two cotton Gins; Two Real Estate Offices; Two Restaurants. One Livery Barn; One Barber shop; One Printing office (I send you a paper today); One Butcher shop; One Millinery store; One Gent's Furnishing store; One Confectionery stand; One Lumber Yard; A Fine Depot; Large Steel Tank; Stock yards; Material is being brought for an Elevator; A Hotel nearly completed; How is that for business in a seven month's old town; When I came here last November there was not anything but the framework of Lee's building started in the field. I secured two church lots myself, & the store is on the ground for the foundation, but the stone masons are so crowded with work that the church has to wait. And Sanders cant get carpenters to put up houses as fast as they are wanted.

I am writing some insurance, & I have sold a few lots, but I have not had any success selling farms yet, although I have several good ones listed. There have been but very few land buyers in this section since I came here, & I have just lately ascertained the reason. There are many people coming from the East & North to Oklahoma to secure homes. But as they come down the main lines of railway they are caught at the different points on those lines by real estate agents who succeed in selling them farms before they get very far away. Coyle is on a branch line 22 miles (by rail) East of Guthrie. Trains on our road make no connection at all with trains running through Guthrie. Parties who come from the North have to stop over all night in Guthrie, & cannot get a train until 8 o'clock next morning to come out here. The consequence is the Guthrie real estate men rope them in every time. And they are selling land to these northern people at a high price for this country, though it seems cheap to them as they have come from where land sells so high. Now, I heard today, that a fellow paid \$8000.00 for a claim in the neighborhood of Guthrie, while I have better claims that can be bought for half that.

I have a dozen good claims in my hands that can be bought at from \$1200.00 to \$3000.00. And in a few years time this land will be worth double that amount of money. Cant you send me some buyers? I wish you would come down here & go in with me. I have rented my store room for \$25.00 per month & reserved space enough for my office business. I have one of the best locations in the town. It is now rented for one year, But I would like to occupy it myself, after that if I could get some good man to go in partnership with me in some good line of business. George has a position in one of the best general stores here. Guy is carpentering at present, Jesse is our rustler. Besides buying his own clothes, he has bought a good pony, saddle & bridle & paid for them himself.

Well, cant you sell that place of mine in Maryville? From what the papers say Maryville is improving right along, & it does seem to me that that half a block of mine, with such improvements as I have on it, ought to be worth \$2000.00. Now I have written about all the news I can think of, I want you to pardon me for waiting so long to write this letter. One reason why I delayed was because there was so much I wanted to say to you, & I had so little time to write, I kept putting it off. I want you to let me hear from you soon & let us try & work up some land sales to No. folks coming this way.

Truly & fraternally,
John T. Owens.

You will notice that the name of our town is changed to Coyle, & we now have a P.O.

1870—A CENTURY OF WEATHER SERVICE—1970
Oklahoma Crop Weather Bulletin

U. S. Department of Agriculture	U. S. Department of Commerce
Statistical Reporting Service	Weather Bureau
Oklahoma Extension Service	Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture

For Week Ending May 4, 1970

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Released at 3 P.M. Monday

“CROPS: Topsoil moisture now is at least adequate (and *surplus* in many areas) over virtually all of the State following last week's rains, according to the Oklahoma Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Extension Service, and ESSA Weather Bureau . . .

“The heavy mid-week rains stopped seedbed preparation for row-crop plantings in most localities. Planting of the State's relatively small acreage of *corn* is nearing the mid-point, slightly behind last year's progress . . .

“RANGE AND LIVESTOCK: Range grasses have made excellent

progress during the past week with 89 percent of the native pastures rated as good to excellent at the close of the period . . .

“WEATHER: Moderate to heavy rains fell across most of Oklahoma this past week in advance of a slow eastward moving cold front. Some of the heavier rainfall totals include 5.48 inches at Vinita, 5.35 inches at Oklahoma City, and 2.30 inches at Hobart. The rains skipped over most of the panhandle, although Kenton did receive .41 inch of rain. Light snow also fell in the Kenton area Wednesday.

“Temperatures averaged near normal, except in the northeast, where they averaged 4 degrees above normal. The extremes were 95 degrees at Mangum Monday afternoon and 27 degrees at Boise City Friday morning.

“The most newsworthy weather for the week was the tornado activity in the Oklahoma City area early Thursday morning. Property damage was extensive, around 38 persons received injuries, but miraculously there were no deaths.”