

## TWO NOTABLE WOMEN OF THE CREEK NATION

*By Carolyn Thomas Foreman*

### MARY LEWIS HERROD

It is well known that among the Five Civilized Tribes there were some women chiefs, also that there were certain women in each tribe who were well informed on national affairs and who wielded great influence. In that field, may be mentioned Mary Lewis Herrod of the Creek Nation. A daughter of John and Louisa Kernels Lewis, she was born in the early 1840's in a small Indian village between the Grand and Verdigris rivers in the present Wagoner County, Oklahoma. This village, first called "Rex" was known in later years by several other names and is now called "Okay."

Mary's parents belonged to the Wind Clan and the "Thlekatka" or "Broken Arrow Town" of the Creek Nation. When she reached school age Mary was sent to Tallahassee Mission, and placed under the care of the Reverend W. S. Robertson and his wife, the scholarly Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson. Miss Nancy Thompson was the matron of the school at that time, and Pleasant Porter, the later celebrated Principal Chief of the Creek Nation, was a pupil there.

After finishing the course of studies at Tallahassee, Miss Lewis was employed as one of the faculty; later she taught at Wewogufkee Town. It was said that "the people of that town, as the little communities were designated, were of the highest type of citizenship; none ever having been brought to court for any offense. Mary was the first woman to teach in the Creek National Schools and the first to teach English to the Indian children." This was a hard task but she solved it by using object lessons, connecting a word with a picture so that the children soon learned to read. She next became a teacher among the Euchees, and that was equally difficult as she did not speak their language.

Miss Lewis reported to Creek Agent William H. Garrett on August 15, 1853, that she had commenced teaching at Old Agency School on March 15, and closed for vacation July 13. She later wrote about her work:

As to numbers, I had on my list twenty-two different names, but only nineteen who were at all regular in attendance. As far as I may be permitted to judge, they have improved all that could be reasonably expected. When school commenced in March, three only of the scholars could read. At the close of the school in July, all could read in easy sentences or syllables except five, and they learned the alphabet. <sup>1</sup>

The report from Old Agency School August 28, 1855 was signed by Miss Lewis, in which she said that the term commenced with seven students in September, and continued until December 23rd, with five to ten attending. Six were reading in the New Testament, Kay's Third Reader, and arithmetic as far as multiplication — the remaining four could spell in words of two syllables. Owing to the small attendance at Old Agency, the school was transferred to Euchee Town. There was a delay in finishing the school there so that term did not commence until March 26, but it opened with twenty-seven children, only one of whom knew a letter, or could speak a word of English. Miss Lewis wrote that "the school would have been larger had it not been from the scarcity of food. The people seem to be highly interested in the school, and the chiefs did all in their power to assist me." <sup>2</sup>

In the late 1850's, Mary taught at North Fork Town and it was there that she married Goliath Herrod, a full blood Creek who had attended school in Kentucky and was graduated from a Baptist College in Danville, Kentucky. <sup>3</sup> On his return to Indian Territory he acted as interpreter for the Reverend Henry Frieland Buckner, a prominent Baptist missionary. Herrod sent a report from North Fork, September 8, 1858 to Agent Garrett. At that time he was Superintendent of the public schools in the Arkansas District of the Creek Nation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report, Commissioner Indian Affairs*, 1853, p.151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1855, pp. 147-48.

<sup>3</sup> Goliath Herrod was entered in the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky in 1828 when he was only eight years old. His name was incorrectly spelled "Goliath Harward." In the list of students in 1834 his name was properly spelled; his age was fourteen; he was in Class 4 and he was described as having a good mind. In 1836 he was the oldest of fifteen Creek students in the Academy, and he was still in attendance in 1938 when there were only six other Creeks—Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Choctaw Academy," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (December 1931) p. 385; *ibid.*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March, 1932). pp. 84, 98.

Mr. Herrod described conditions in that area in sanguine terms saying, <sup>4</sup>

The past year has been one of improvement in many respects, particularly though in regularity of attendance of the scholars. Teachers have heretofore always complained that the scholars were so irregular in their attendance, parents permitting their children to attend or not as they chose . . . . . The teachers employed have been as efficient as could be procured, and have proven to be faithful and diligent in the discharge of their duties.

Mr. and Mrs. Herrod built a new house and had just moved into it when the Civil War started. When they heard cannon firing at the Battle of Honey Creek, they realized that they must leave home and they prepared to take refuge in the Choctaw Nation when the Confederates lost the fight.

They packed all the goods their wagons would hold and buried their fine china dishes under a tree. One of their Negro women decided to remain, and she was sitting on the porch in a rocking chair when the Federal soldiers arrived. When she told them that she owned the property, they said that she was lying and proceeded to set fire to the house. Some of the officers tied their horses to the tree under which the china was buried. The horses pawed the soil and since the dishes were not very deep they were soon exposed and broken to pieces. Mrs. Herrod had a large flock of yellow turkeys and people later told her that the soldiers caught the birds and rode along picking them so the countryside was sprinkled with yellow feathers.

While serving in the Confederate forces under General Stand Watie, Mr. Herrod was present when a steamboat, loaded with supplies for the Federal army, was steaming up the Arkansas River and captured by the Southern soldiers. Among the supplies on the boat was a quantity of calico, and this furnished needed dresses for the wives and daughters of the Confederates.

At the end of the war the Herrods settled at North Fork Town. The Creek records in the Oklahoma Historical Society show that Captain Herrod was paid \$50.00 for services as prosecuting attorney for North Fork District, and on October 14,

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<sup>4</sup> *Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1858, p. 147.*

1869 he received \$100.00 for acting in the same capacity in that district.<sup>5</sup>

When she was left a widow Mrs. Herrod resumed teaching. She became matron at Asbury Mission, a Methodist school near Eufaula, then under the supervision of the Reverend Young Ewing. Later she served as matron at Wealaka Mission.

According to the Creek Neighborhood School records, Mrs. Herrod taught at "Owekofker" School in March, 1871; at Hillabee School, November, 1874; at Arbeka School in September, 1875; at Okmulgee School in September, 1881; and at Coweta School in March, 1888.

Among Mrs. Herrod's papers are eight school certificates valid from 1876 to 1888. The first one dated August 15, 1876, Eufaula, Indian Territory reads:

"This certifies that, after due examination the bearer, Mrs. Mary L. Herrod, is hereby pronounced competent to fill the position of Teacher in the Public Schools in the Creek Nation . . ." The paper was signed by Sam Grayson, Charles S. Smith and (Joseph) M. Perryman.

The next certificate was written on paper from Grayson Brothers, Dealers in General Merchandise, and dated Eufaula August 2, 1877. It was signed by G. W. Grayson and Sam Grayson. The third certificate, dated Okmulgee, July 14, 1880, certified that Mary L. Herrod "has been examined in English Grammar, English Composition, U. S. History, Penmanship, Geography, Arithmetic, Theory and practice of teaching, and such other branches as are usually taught in the neighborhood schools of the Nation; and is competent to teach in any of said schools." The certificate was good for one year after being signed by John McIntosh, C. C. Belcher, John Island, Nath. Wright, Board of Examination.

On April 20, 1881, McIntosh wrote: "In compliance with the requirements of the Teachers Institute, I respectfully assign as the subject of your essay 'My Opinion of Public

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<sup>5</sup> Creek Courts, North Fork, Indian Archives #27962; *idem.*, #27968.

Schools. To be delivered at the next Institute which meets at this place (Muskogee) on Tuesday, the 5th day of July next."

In 1881, Mrs. Herrod was sent to the school at Okmulgee, known as the Okmulgee School. At the Teachers Institute in session in Okmulgee in July, 1881, the public was notified that Mrs. Herrod had been examined in all branches taught in the public schools and had been found competent to fill any position in the schools of the Muskogee Nation. Again the Educational Department, Muskogee Nation, July 10, 1885, issued a statement by L. G. McIntosh, P. Porter, and S. B. Callahan that Mrs. Herrod had been found competent to teach after an examination.

James Colbert, superintendent of public instruction issued Mrs. Herrod a certificate of competency and assigned her as instructor in the Okmulgee school, where the term was to begin September 1, 1886. After her next examination, the veteran teacher was given a certificate which expired June 28, 1889 according to L. G. McIntosh.

On retiring from school work Mrs. Herrod located at Eufaula where she owned the Herrod Hotel, well known among travelers for many years because of the warm hospitality of the hostess and the good food she served. On the retirement of Mrs. Herrod the following account appeared in an Indian Territory newspaper:

Mrs. M. L. Herrod is probably the oldest teacher in continuous service in Oklahoma and Indian Territory, if not in the entire West. She has been a teacher among the Creek Indians for the last fifty years, and has only lately resigned from the work on account of old age, being now over 70 years old.

She is among the very first who tried to teach English to the Indians and her experiences along that line are interesting. She early discovered that it was hard to impart lasting information to the Creek Indians. The most successful way she says is to associate words with subjects when teaching him. Her experience had been though that after he had acquired a lesson perfectly in this way that as soon as he got home, where nothing is spoken only in the Indian way, the pupil would forget all that he had learned at school and the lesson would have to be repeated the next day. Mrs. Herrod taught her first school at Tallahassee in 1850.

The welfare of the Creek people was always close to Mrs. Herrod's heart and her greatest ambition was to be of service to them. On one occasion when a company of Creeks became

restless and dissatisfied they contemplated leaving Indian Territory and settling in Mexico; she met with them and admonished them to remain in their own country—a united people, She addressed her tribesmen as follows: <sup>6</sup>

I earnestly hope and pray you will not be rash or hasty in deciding, but deliberate and weigh the matter well.

Will it not be best to look at both sides of the question and remember, that while it is hard for us here, it might be much worse there. There we would be strangers in a strange land among a people whose language, laws and climate are far different and we would perhaps have more trouble of various kinds, and greater disappointments than we have here. After all we might make ourselves happy here. It is never so bad but it might be worse; therefore would it not be well for us to be very cautious and prudent so that nothing would be done that would be a regret to ourselves and our children . . . . Let us ask wisdom and guidance of the Lord in this most important matter.

I write this because I want my nation to study well before they leave their native land, and do what they might regret . . . .

Mrs. George W. Harrison in writing of her great aunt, Mrs. Herrod, stated that she had a remarkable memory regarding the citizens of Indian Territory and their relationships. "She really was a very wonderful person but a most peculiar one." She was only eighteen when she taught among the Eucheas near the present site of Sapulpa. On receiving her salary she bought a handsome gold watch which she wound with a key. It was stolen from her room in Muskogee a few years before she died.

Because of her unusual intellect some of the missionaries had wished to send Mary to school at Mount Holyoke, and she had almost decided to go when she heard from former students in that college that the girls were obliged to do work which was performed by Negroes at home. That settled the question for the Creek young lady. <sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Herrod had occasion to prove her bravery when she and her husband were living in Old Town. Mr. Herrod prose-

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<sup>6</sup> Clipping from Mrs. Herrod's scrapbook. Unfortunately the name of the paper and date were not preserved.

<sup>7</sup> Mount Holyoke College was established by Mary Lyon who made it a rule that the students must devote part of the day to their books and the remainder to household tasks. This fact did not deter a number of Cherokee girls belonging to the first families from attending the college and they became useful teachers in the schools of their nation.

cuted some members of the Sam and Washington Grayson families, and he was notified that they planned to kill him. The Herrods were living in a house of one large room with a loft above and a separate kitchen. Mrs. Herrod hid her husband in the loft, and when the men arrived she said her husband was not there. John Tiger, an Indian boy, was living with the Herrods and Mrs. Herrod managed to slip him out so he could go to Hotiche Herrods for help. After young Tiger got a short distance from the house he gave a series of war whoops which frightened the raiders away as they thought assistance was near. In later life John Tiger was convicted of murdering a man, and Mrs. Herrod, remembering his help in time of great danger, tried in every way to save his life.

Mary Herrod devoted much of her time and strength to helping young people, in educating young Indian girls whom she had living in her home, and after the girls married and had families she never lost interest in them and their children.

Mrs. Herrod was teaching in the Council House at Okmulgee at the time Timmie Jack was executed. Her school was in session and Mrs. Herrod lowered the window shades so her pupils could not see the gruesome Creek punishment for murder.

Like many southern women who were reared with slaves to perform the household tasks Mrs. Herrod had never cooked a meal although she knew how to instruct other women to do so. She always refused to tell her age, and when some one called her "Grandmother" she was furious and declared: "I've never been a mother so how can I be a grandmother?"

Mrs Harrison has two bills of sale for Negroes bought by Goliath Herrod on February 13, 1860. One is for a Negro boy fifteen months old bought from Motey Kenard and witnessed by Allen Lucas, Kizziah Lewis, Hotiche Herrod and W. O. Buckner. The second bill of sale was for two Negro girls; one was about eight or nine and the other four or five years old. They were bought from Nicholas Marshall and the sale was witnessed by R. Cook and Melinty. This bill was dated April 7, 1850.

By a second marriage, Mary's sister, Kizzie Shaw, became

the wife of Moty Tiger, a full-blood Creek Indian who was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt Principal Chief upon the death of Chief Pleasant Porter. Tiger was about sixty-five years old and for twenty years had been a member of the National Council: <sup>8</sup>

He is an intelligent broadminded, deep thinking man and a fluent talker, he wears a black beard and has an eye as peering as an eagle.

In the Green Peach war he established a fighting record, in joining the Porter forces against Ispargecher and demanding an immediate and decisive settlement at arms with the Ispargecher Clans . . . . Since that time he has become a Methodist preacher, and now no Indian camp meeting is complete without Moty Tiger preaching at least one sermon.

His home is six miles west of Okmulgee on the Deep Fork . . . . his first wife was a full blood who bore him three children . . . . his second wife is a mixed blood . . . . .

Miss Lucile Walrond of Muskogee, daughter of Major and Mrs. Z. T. Walrond, recalls that her mother and Mrs. Herrod were friends and she told the writer of an incident which showed Mrs. Herrod's shrewdness. After the Herrod Hotel burned in Eufaula insurance adjustors came from Kansas City to settle for damages. Mrs. Herrod decided to speak no English and she insisted that the white men provide interpreters before she would listen to a settlement. All of the discussions were carried on in Creek until the adjustor asked, "Mrs. Herrod which will you accept—a check or cash?" She replied in perfect English, "I will take cash." Her reason for this pretence was that she wished to hear any remarks the men made when they thought she would not understand them. <sup>9</sup>

Mrs. Herrod attended meetings of the Creek council at Okmulgee and kept informed on all business coming before that body. She was bitterly opposed to statehood in any form and she particularly disliked being joined to Oklahoma Territory. She not only wrote to the newspapers but she had printed at her own expense and sent to her tribesmen the following letter:

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<sup>8</sup> Newspaper article from Mrs. Herrod's scrapbook.

<sup>9</sup> Many years later the same trick was played on a young Chicago college man who was writing his thesis on the Natchez Indians at Braggs, Oklahoma. Although those red men spoke English they forced the Illinois man to hire an interpreter for several months.

—Authority Miss Winifred Clark, teacher at Braggs.

As Friday, the 15th of November, will be the last day of the Indian Territory and after that we will be no longer a nation, some of us feel that it is a very solemn and important crisis in the history of the Indians. And we want you to join with the other women of your neighborhood and spend this last day in fasting and prayer to Almighty God. Let us appeal to him to grant us his blessing and implore Him to be our ruler now that we no longer have our tribal government.

Let us meet at the church, school-house or in the women's prayer meeting and implore our Heavenly Father to guide and direct us in all that we do so that we may do what is right and what is best for ourselves and those of our people who will come after us and will be here when we are dead and gone.

And especially let us beg Him to direct us in our plans for caring for the poor, defenseless orphans who may soon be turned out of the Orphan School to grow up without an education. May God pity those poor children, and grant that some way be provided that they might grow up to be good Christian men and women . . . .

Hoping that this may receive your prompt attention and that God will have mercy upon all the Creek Nation, I am, Yours truly.

Mrs. Mary L. Herrod.

One of the Okmulgee newspapers in November, 1907, published an appeal written by Mrs. Herrod, saying:

We reproduce above an appeal addressed by a venerable old Creek lady to her friends. This old person bordering on four score, stands with the dignity of a true queen to remind us of the piety, the fortitude, the patriotism of her gentle epistle that the completion of our plan marks the final extinction of another. It makes the end of the national existence of another.

Those lines breathe a pathos no heart can resist. If there is a suggestion of distrust and a trace of accusation in them, there is yet no injustice, no want of charity. They are the language of pride—a noble pride.

And while this old person acknowledges the ascendancy she denies the superiority of the new regime. "I shall never write another letter," She said yesterday. I cannot date my letter "Indian Territory" and I shall not write. I was raised four miles from Muskogee. I can remember as a little girl hearing my people tell of their trip from Alabama. I can remember hearing them tell of their wrongs and how the white people induced them to come west and made such great promises.

I can remember how some of the wiser ones used to predict that in the end all our power would be taken from us. Since I have grown up I have witnessed the sly little encroachments, step by step, until now I've lived to see the last step taken and the Indian does not count any more even in his own territory.

I tell you our people would not have come out here if they had not been given great promises. They did not want to come. And we had a good government. Our chiefs governed well, I tell you. Our laws were enforced. We had order. We had none of this bootlegging until your people came among us. We had honesty in our little dealings. Our chiefs and our judges were good men, nearly all. I knew them all and I tell you they were good men.

Having no children of her own she regarded her sister's daughter, Kate Shaw, as her child, and she helped in her rearing and education. "As long as her health permitted Mrs. Herrod was engaged in work that tended toward the upbuilding and betterment of her people. With an intellect far above the average and a consecrated heart, she was able to do much for the Indians."

Mrs. Herrod was a member of the Presbyterian Church, following in her training at Tallahassee under the Robertson family. She was a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and an active member of the Eastern Star. When her health failed her niece, Kate Shaw Ahrens, took her to her own home in Wagoner where she died in 1917. The Eastern Star conducted its ceremonial service at her funeral. "No citizen of the Creek Nation ever exerted a finer influence or was more greatly missed than was Mrs. Mary Herrod."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, *Indian Pioneer History*, Foreman Collections, Indian Archives Division, Vol. 12, pp. 132-36. Much of the matter contained herein was obtained from reminiscences of the late Mrs. F. H. A. Ahrens, Wagoner, Oklahoma, for notes from which the writer is grateful to Mrs. Rella Looney, Archivist of the Historical Society. Grateful acknowledgement is given Mrs. George W. Harrison, Sand Springs, Oklahoma for the loan of Mrs. Herrod's scrapbook as well as many interesting facts concerning Mr. and Mrs. Herrod. Miss Mottie Belle Ahrens, Muskogee, kindly furnished the writer with transportation for visits to relatives of the family.

## KATE SHAW AHRENS

Among the early day teachers in the Indian Territory none had a more interesting and useful life than Kate Ellen Shaw. Born at Boggy Depot in the Choctaw Nation on March 25, 1864, she survived until the age of ninety one and in that long and eventful life she never lost interest in people and world affairs. To the last her bright eyes kept their sparkle and her keen sense of humor added to her charm.

Kate Shaw was the daughter of William Shaw and Kiz-ziah Lewis Shaw. These young people went to the Choctaw Nation during the Civil War, and Mr. Shaw died in Fort Smith while on a business trip.

After the war the family returned to Eufaula, and Mrs. Ahrens earliest recollections were of living in an old house on the banks of the North Canadian River at "Old Town," across the creek from the Stidham and Scales store. To reach the town they crossed the creek where William Nero ran a store.<sup>11</sup>

The house occupied by the Shaws was a two room frame building consisting of one large room, a side room and a loft. There was a kitchen a short distance from the main house. Mrs. Shaw and Kate lived there with her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Goliath Herrod, various other kin and her grand father, John Lewis who was there most of the time. Several of their former slaves stayed with them and "Aunt Mahaley," who had belonged to Mrs. Herrod, remained as cook.

In 1869 or 1870, the family returned to a small farm they owned nearer to Eufaula. They built a hewed log house with a large chimney and puncheon floor. A hole was dug under the floor near the fire place, and it was packed with straw and served as a storage place for sweet potatoes. The winter evenings were made pleasant by roasting the potatoes in the fire place while the children warmed the cotton and picked out the seeds, thus making it ready to be carded for use in quilts.

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<sup>11</sup> William Nero died September 12, 1872 (Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "North Fork Town," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring, 1951) p. 91 and note 32.

Mr. Herrod died at this home, after suffering a long time with tuberculosis. Mrs. Shaw helped with the living expenses by sewing for the family of Judge G. W. Stidham of Eufaula. After her husband's death Mrs. Herrod went to Asbury Mission as matron.<sup>12</sup> This Methodist Mission was then under the supervision of the Reverend D. P. Holmes. Mrs. Shaw was teaching a day school at West Eufaula, and since she could not have Kate with her, the young girl was sent to Asbury Mission with her aunt.

Kate Shaw had previously attended a school at North Fork Town, taught by Mrs. Elizabeth Stidham Ross (later Mrs. Ingram).<sup>13</sup> Kate's outfit consisted of two linsey (part wool and part cotton) dresses and several calico aprons. Other pupils at that school were Tookah, Manley, Bob and Sarah Butler,<sup>14</sup> and the children of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph McDonald Coodey. At one time Kate attended a school taught by one

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<sup>12</sup> Asbury Mission located near North Fork Town in 1847, was named for a Methodist mission in the East. This school, belonging to the Southern Methodists, was closed during the Civil War, but was left in the custody of a missionary. After the war money was appropriated to restore that school and the one at Tullahassee, and both were reopened by 1868 or 1869. These schools accommodated about eighty students and Asbury cost \$5,600 to maintain. Asbury was burned in 1888 and was not rebuilt. A Creek boarding school was later established in nearby Eufaula, and is still in operation (1957). Asbury Mission School was visited by Bishop George F. Pierce who wrote a vivid description of the three story brick building before the Civil War. The Reverend Thomas B. Ruble, superintendent of Asbury for several years, reported that "The girls as a general thing are more industrious than the boys; but, in a moral point of view, not more reliable." Asbury was badly damaged during the War. Everything movable was carried away, but work was resumed in 1869 and the Creeks appropriated \$10,000 to restore the school. While still in use as a mission, it was burned in September, 1881.—Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman, 1941,) pp. 120, 147, 181, 186, 204, 310, 352; Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934), pp. 197, 209, 212; Grant Foreman, *A History of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1942,) p. 149; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "North Fork Town," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring, 1951), p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Stidham Ingram, a sister of Judge George W. Stidham, was born near Choska, Creek Nation, in April, 1832. After her death on June 18, 1891, the Reverend R. M. Loughridge contributed an obituary of her to a local paper. She was a pupil at Coweta and Tullahassee missions in the Creek Nation. She was engaged in supervision of the girls at the latter mission where she proved of great value. Later in life she taught in one of the Creek National Schools.

<sup>14</sup> Children of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Butler.—*Ibid.*, p. 90 and note 28.

of the Perrymans.

While living at Asbury Mission, Kate learned to speak Creek and this acquirement proved to be valuable in her career. The supper at Asbury Mission consisted of yellow corn bread, molasses and water. The hungry children would fill their plates with molasses and often they were not able to eat all of the food so Mrs. Herrod made a rule that the students must return and finish all of the food they had left.

When about eleven or twelve years of age Kate was enrolled in a convent in Parsons, Kansas for one year.

Dwight Moody who became the greatest evangelist of the Nineteenth Century, founded Northfield Seminary for young women in Massachusetts. In 1880 he sent the principal of his school, Miss Harriet Tuttle, to the Indian Territory to interview young women of the Five Civilized Tribes as prospective students in the seminary. She made her headquarters at the Eufaula House in the Creek Town. This hotel was owned by Mrs. Mary Lewis Herrod, and her niece, Kate Shaw, was making her home there at the time.

A group of Indian girls met at the hotel and sixteen were chosen to go east to the Northfield school. From the Creek Nation: Jennie and Rose Yargee, Mary Colbert and Lonie Stidham.<sup>15</sup> From the Choctaw Nation: Anna Balentine

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<sup>15</sup> Lonie Stidham was a daughter of the distinguished Creek leader, George W. Stidham by his second wife. In the autumn of 1884 she was married to Dr. Leo E. Bennett at Eufaula. They became the parents of three children—Lonie, Gertrude and Leo E. Bennett, Jr.

Wright <sup>16</sup> of Boggy Depot and Hatty Ward <sup>17</sup> of Stringtown. From the Cherokee Nation: Mamie Ross <sup>18</sup> of Fort Gibson, Lydia and Fanny Keys, <sup>19</sup> Kate Timberlake, Ida Stephens, Jessie West, <sup>20</sup> and Ida Beaty, all of Vinita. From the

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<sup>16</sup>Anna Balentine Wright, the daughter of the Reverend Allen and Harriet (nee Mitchell) Wright, was born at the home of her parents in Boggy Depot, Choctaw Nation in September, 1865. She was the namesake of Anna Hoyt Balentine, a friend of her mother at Wapanucka Academy and the wife of the Reverend Hamilton Balentine superintendent of the Academy.

After one year in the school at Northfield, Massachusetts, Anna Wright attended Miss Carnes' Seminary, Kirkwood, Missouri until her graduation in 1886. She served as a teacher in the schools at Lehigh and at Tushkahomma Academy before her marriage on November 22, 1893, to Edwin Ludlow, Superintendent of Mines at Hartshorne and Gowen for the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company. Mr. Ludlow was a native of New York (Ludlow and Nicoll families of Oakdale, Long Island), and a graduate of Columbia University, School of Mines. He died at Muskogee in 1924.

Anna Wright Ludlow died in San Antonio, Texas, July 9, 1955, and was buried by the side of her parents in Old Boggy Depot Cemetery. She had made her home in McAlester after Mr. Ludlow's death but in her last illness was in a hospital in San Antonio where her sister, Mrs. Clara Wright Richards, resides.

Mrs. Ludlow had an interesting life as her husband and she traveled widely in America and abroad. Mr. Ludlow was a successful mining engineer for many years making their home in Mexico where he was with the Guggenheim mining interests. In his last years, he was a consulting mining engineer in New York City and Muskogee. Mrs. Ludlow remained staunch in her faith in the Presbyterian Church, and was known for her philanthropies especially to American Indian missions and church work. (Miss Muriel H. Wright furnished this interesting account of her charming aunt, Mrs. Ludlow.)

<sup>17</sup>Hattie Ward was probably one of the four daughters of William G. Ward, a Choctaw, and Eliza Beck Ward a Cherokee.

<sup>18</sup>Mamie Ross of Fort Gibson, a daughter of William P. and Mary Jane Ross, was a sister of Hubbard Ross, postmaster of Fort Gibson for many years and custodian of the Fort Gibson Stockade after it was rebuilt in 1937.

<sup>19</sup>Lydia Emma and Fannie Keys, daughters of Monroe Calvin and Lucy Lowrey Hoyt Keys. Lydia married Charles J. Taylor and Fannie became the wife of James A. Leforce. Her first husband was William Balentine. Muriel H. Wright, *Springplace Moravian Mission and the Ward Family*, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 1940, p. 84; Emmet Starr, *History of the Cherokee Indians*, Oklahoma City, 1921, p. 233.

<sup>20</sup>Jessie West, a daughter of Hester Ironsides West and the wife of Captain McDonald, Military Department, A and M College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, for many years. This information was furnished the writer by Mrs. James Davenport of Oklahoma City. Mrs. McDonald, now ninety years of age, is living in a nursing home in Stillwater. The writer wishes to express her gratitude to Mrs. Vera Jones Chauncey of Stillwater and Mrs. Davenport for supplying facts.

Chickasaw Nation a Miss Stewart was selected. <sup>21</sup>

In September, 1880, all of the girls who lived south of Muskogee met in that town where a Pullman coach had been dispatched by Jay Gould, <sup>22</sup> the famous railroad man of New York, to transport them to Northfield. The other pupils joined the party at Vinita.

In an old scrapbook that had belonged to Mrs. Herrod is a faded letter dated "Northfield, Massachusetts, July 25, 1880":

"Miss Shaw

"Your letter received and contents noted. The school will open about the middle of September. There will be a car to bring the girls from Indian Territory, without charge and free of expense. We shall expect to receive you as one of our scholars.

"Yours truly  
"D. L. Moody,"<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> No one living is able to supply the name of the sixteenth student.

<sup>22</sup> Jay Gould (1836-1893) in early life engaged in surveying. Entered the brokerage business in 1857 and made an immense fortune through railroad speculation. "He was said to control nearly one-eighth of the railroad mileage in the United States." (J. Franklin Jameson, *Dictionary of United States History*, Boston, 1897, p. 271.) "Gould . . . had the patience of Job. and if he could not acquire control of the Katy today, why there was always tomorrow, he saw it as a feeder for the Gould system; and eventually it became just that, a feeder—to be fed upon and bled almost white before it managed to shake off the coils of the system."—V. V. Masterson, *The Katy Railroad and the Last Frontier*, (Norman, 1952,) pp. 206, 214.

<sup>23</sup> Dwight Lyman Moody was born in Northfield, Massachusetts, February 5, 1837. He lived on a farm until seventeen when he started as a clerk in a shoe store in Boston. In 1856 he went to Chicago where he engaged in business, at the same time carrying on missionary work. He soon built up a Sunday school of over a thousand members. He became associated with Ira D. Sankey a well known singer and they held religious services in Great Britain and the United States. "In both countries he had a wonderful success and exerted a powerful influence for good in different classes."

In addition to his church and school in Chicago, Moody established two schools at Northfield and he published "Arrows and Anecdotes," (1877) "Heaven" (1880), "Secret Power," (1881). He died in 1899. (Joseph Thomas, *Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography*, (Philadelphia, 1888,) p. 1759; *Who Was Who in America*, Chicago, 1943, p. 857) Northfield was a post-village in Franklin County, Massachusetts on the east bank of the Connecticut River, twenty-three miles north of Amherst.

Moody had little formal education so "it is . . . rather fine and strik-

The Indian girls traveled on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad owned by Jay Gould. He was known at that time as the most ruthless financier in this country. It was said that "Jay Gould, the purest of mercenary adventurers, acquired the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Lines merely as a great feeder line . . ."

It would be interesting to know what influence Moody brought to bear on Gould that induced him to send a Pullman car to Indian Territory for the Indian girls. Was it a bit of advertising to show him as a philanthropist interested in the welfare and advancement of some of the citizens of the section of the country where he was operating a railroad? Or was it the sympathy of his good wife who influenced him?

Dining cars were not included in the trip of the young ladies, and they were advised to bring baskets of food to sustain them from Monday to Thursday on the long journey.

Miss Shaw wore a calico frock and a leghorn hat for the journey. At many of the stations in the East crowds had gathered to gaze at the Indians. Mr. Moody met them on their arrival at Northfield in Massachusetts, and they were housed in his home until a brick dormitory was completed.

Board and tuition in the school cost \$100.00 a year and several wealthy citizens of Boston sponsored some of the students for four years. During the first summer the girls spent in Northfield a meeting was held at the school attended by religious leaders from all over the world. During this gathering the Indian students waited upon the tables and no doubt

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ing indicative of largeness of spirit that he should have made it one of the chief efforts of his life to propogate in others what had been so emphatically omitted in himself." He organized his school on the lines of Mount Holyoek. Mary Lyon the celebrated founder of that school, " . . . . was an educator, she was not a scholar any more than Moody was . . . . she did not want her girls to be scholars only . . . Her ideal, she said, was that her girls 'should live for God and do something.' Moody would have been perfectly content to inscribe that motto over the doors of his schools . . . ." Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody A Worker in Souls* (New York, 1927,) pp. 259, 262.

they added greatly to the interest of the affair. <sup>24</sup>

During the autumn the girls were permitted to go on hunts for chestnuts. They carried lunches and greatly enjoyed the picnics in the beautiful woods. The student body of young women was made up of girls from all parts of the country, but the meals served to them were strictly New England. Sunday breakfast was baked beans, brown bread and coffee. The southern Indian girls were amazed when Negro delegates were seated among the whites at religious meetings. The Negro Jubilee Singers' visits to Northfield College added interest to the life there. In addition to their literary studies the pupils were taught all sorts of home arts and an hour a day each student devoted to housekeeping, cooking, serving meals and laundry work. They were given credit for such duties. Miss Shaw spent the second summer in Canada in the home of a schoolmate. The third vacation was passed in Brookline, Massachusetts with a friend from the school. Of the sixteen Indian girls who attended the school Kate Shaw, Kate Timberlake, Lydia and Fanny Keys were the only ones who finished the four year course.

Many customs in the East were interesting to the Indian girls. One was when Kate Shaw saw the women in the town carrying huge loaves of bread to be cooked at the municipal bakery. On one occasion she was invited by her hostess to accompany her to the market to buy meat and seeing the

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<sup>24</sup> The story of "Northfield Seminary Life" was written by Mrs. A. W. Yale, "One of the Girls." In this narrative is related that Moody got his idea for a girl's school when he saw a group of young women "engaged in the monotonous occupation of making baskets. It was by no means an unusual sight, especially in New England . . . and the thought at once flashed into his mind, "Those girls have as much right to an education as anyone else, but how can they get it?"

Gradually the minister interested wealthy people in his school and handsome buildings were erected so that 300 girls were accepted as students. Music was a hobby of Mr. Moody and the singing at Northfield gave him great pride. He frequently suggested the hymns to be sung at chapel and one morning he chose "We'll all be ready when the bridegroom comes." The first time the hymn was sung through perfect gravity ensued, but when repeated time after time it proved too amusing for the girls and a ripple ran over the assembly. "I guess we'll try another," said the smiling Mr. Moody.—Lawrence M. Colfelt, *Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody*, (Philadelphia, and Chicago, 1900), pp. 209-232; *The New York Times Magazine*, December 2, 1956, pp. 145-46.

astonishment of the Indian she inquired "Where do you get your meat?" Kate replied, "From the smoke house, of course."<sup>25</sup>

While Kate was at school in the East, her mother was married to Motey Tiger, a prominent Creek who was later elected the chief of his nation. After her return to the Territory, Kate worked in the office of Dr. Leo E. Bennett, publisher of the *Indian Journal* in Muskogee. During the summer she attended the Teachers' Institute at Okmulgee and took examinations for a teacher's certificate, after which she applied for a school at West Eufaula where she taught during 1884-1885. This was a country school where the teacher built the fires, and at the end of the week she rode back to Eufaula on a wagon loaded with cotton. In the autumn of 1885, Miss Shaw entered the Baptist Female College at Lexington, Missouri.<sup>26</sup> When she was graduated in June, 1887, she was awarded gold medals for art and good deportment. During the summer vacation, she again assisted Dr. Bennett in work on the *Indian Journal* at Eufaula. In the autumn Miss Alice M. Robertson offered Miss Shaw a position on the faculty of the Presbyterian Mission school she had started in Muskogee. She taught there a year but continued to work for Dr. Bennett in all of her spare time.

Because of her ability to speak Creek Miss Shaw was tendered a position on the faculty of Nuyaka Mission, but she accepted a place in Muskogee in the private school of Mrs. Burke to teach the primary class. Other teachers in this school were Miss Cora Archer and Miss Addie Willey, both Cherokees.

After a few months, Indian Agent Dew M. Wisdom secured a position for Miss Shaw as primary teacher at the Ponca Indian Agency. The Ponca Agent on November 30, 1888 wrote to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John H. Oberly: "I have the honor to submit herewith the nomination of Miss

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<sup>25</sup> Authority Miss Ella M. Robinson, Muskogee, Oklahoma

<sup>26</sup> Lexington, county seat of Lafayette County, Missouri, situated on the south bank of the Missouri River, about 84 miles below Kansas City, in 1880 the town had a population of 3,996. *Lippincott's Gazeteer of the World* (Philadelphia, 1888), p. 1232.

Kate E. Shaw, of Eufaula, Ind. Ter. to be teacher at the Ponca school. Carrie C. Shults, transferred to the Pawnee School." After telling of Miss Shaw's schooling the agent continued: "Miss Shaw is an accomplished musician and artist, a disciplinarian and teacher and I congratulate this school upon having secured her services. She is highly recommended by Miss A. M. Robertson of the Presbyterian Mission and Hon. R. L. Owen of Muskogee, I. T." The following year the agent wrote: "I will further add that, since the employment of Miss Shaw she has proven herself to be perfectly satisfactory." In 1892, Miss Shaw was described as an excellent teacher by D. J. M. Wood of the Ponca Agency when he recommended teachers for the Brice School.<sup>27</sup>

The Ponca School was housed in a large brick building and one hundred pupils were accommodated. Miss Shaw was paid \$50.00 per month, and she paid her own expenses. In the summer, the Indians lived in little houses built for them by the government, but they camped on North Fork River during the winter. There was a strict rule prohibiting the Indian children from being taken away from the school.<sup>28</sup>

Miss Shaw was married on December 9, 1891, to Albert J. W. Ahrens whom she met while attending college in Lexington. An account of their wedding has recently been found in a newspaper clipping preserved in an old scrapbook made by Mrs. Mary Herrod:

Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 o'clock Mr. A. J. W. Ahrens and Miss Kate E. Shaw were married by Rev. R. C. McGee in the parlor of the Eufaula House, in the presence of a few friends. The bride is one of the most intelligent, accomplished and refined Creek ladies . . . Mr. Ahrens is a prominent salesman in St. Louis, and during his few days stop here favorably impressed those who met him. After the ceremony the guests were seated to a magnificent lunch in the dining hall of the hotel.

The bridal pair left on the 5:45 train for Lexington, Mo., the home of the groom's parents, and where the bride attended college and has a large circle of friends. After February 1st, they will be at home, 2656 Lucas Avenue, St. Louis, to their friends.

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<sup>27</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, Ponca Schools, Vol. 10, p. 431.

<sup>28</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, Vol. 12, pp. 136, 141. Miss Shaw remained in this position from the autumn of 1888 to the same time in 1891, when she returned to Eufaula.

Mr. and Mrs. Ahrens made their home in St. Louis for four years after which they returned to Eufaula where Mr. Ahrens was engaged in the mercantile business. In 1898 they moved to the east side of Wagoner where Mrs. Ahrens had taken her 160 acre allotment. With them they took their two children, Juliet (Mrs. George W. Harrison, Sand Springs, Oklahoma) and Henry Shaw Ahrens.<sup>29</sup>

Life on the prairie farm was primitive as there were no modern improvements, and not even a tree or fence, and Mrs. Ahrens was kept busy with such work as she had never done before in her whole life. Mr. Ahrens first built a small frame house. Later he erected a fine brick residence which was the comfortable home of his wife during the remainder of her life, and it is still occupied by her son and his wife.

Mrs. Ahrens was a charter member of the First Presbyterian Church in Wagoner and she never failed in attendance. She drove her horse and surrey to town for church meetings. With her many duties, she always found time to read, and she frequently resumed her china painting. The women of Wagoner gave dinners to help pay for the church and Mrs. Ahrens contributed her part. She sang in the choir and occasionally played the organ for services. During World War I, she took part in the Red Cross work, and was a charter member of the Legion Auxiliary. A high light during the summers were the Chautauqua meetings in Wagoner, and the Ahrens family was always on hand to enjoy the interesting and profitable entertainments. After moving to Wagoner Mrs. Ahrens was amused when the postman first brought a special delivery letter addressed to her, and he asked her if she could write. She modestly replied, "A little."

Mr. Ahrens was an elder in the Presbyterian Church from 1891 to his death in 1899. Before the church was built services were held in Cobb's Hall, a building still standing on

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<sup>29</sup> According to the *Final Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes* Kate E. Ahrens was thirty-five and one-quarter Creek Indian. "Juliette Ahrens" (*sic*) four years old, one-eighth Creek and Henry Shaw Ahrens, one year old, was also one-eighth Creek. Juliet Ahrens (Mrs. George Harrison) of Sand Springs, Oklahoma is the mother of two children: Captain William S. Harrison, a doctor in the U. S. Air Force, stationed in California, and Miss Kathryn Harrison of the home.

Cherokee Street in Wagoner.

Naturally Mrs. Ahrens was a sincere believer in education and her daughter grew up with the expectation of receiving college training. Her mother frequently quoted to her, "Educate a woman and you educate a family." Although there was much hard work on the farm, Mr. and Mrs. Ahrens believed in outings for their family, and they frequently attended barbecues given by Gid Sleeper at Okay, or picnics near the river.

A former pupil of Miss Shaw's is Mrs. Anna Peterson Shortall (Mrs. Frank Shortall, Porter, Oklahoma), who has many fond memories of her teacher and describes her as her "best teacher." Mrs. Shortall says, "she taught me how to think and study. We all loved her but had a wholesome respect for her in regard to behavior. Miss Shaw was a strict disciplinarian. She was very fine in English, and she taught me Latin and algebra."

Mrs. Ahrens died in a Muskogee hospital Saturday, November 19, 1955 at the age of ninety-one. Funeral services were conducted by the Reverend Coy Lee in the First Presbyterian Church in Wagoner,<sup>30</sup> and her body rests in Elmwood Cemetery in that town.

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<sup>30</sup> *Muskogee Times Democrat*, November 21, 1955; *Muskogee Phoenix*, November 22, 1955; *Tulsa World*, November 20, 1955, p. 50, col. 7.

An application was made to the *National Archives*, Washington, D. C., which brought the following reply: "A careful examination of the records of the office of the Secretary of the Interior and of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, now in the National Archives, has failed to reveal any mention of the Indian girls or the Moody School. A special search of letters received from the Indian Agent at the Union Agency, John Q. Tufts, did not disclose any information about the Indian girls." This careful search was reported by Miss Jane F. Smith, Archivist in Charge, Interior Branch Natural Resources Records Division, The National Archives, Washington, December 13, 1956. Gratitude is due her, and it is hereby extended.