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Article Summary: Mary Bonner Lightfoot organized a school and a Sabbath School while her husband Thomas Lightfoot was the agent at the Great Nemaha Agency. Her diary describes everyday activities: her correspondence, her purchases, and the people she saw.

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Names: Mary Bonner Lightfoot, Thomas Lightfoot, Gerrie Lightfoot, Albert Green, Sallie ("Sis") Lightfoot Green, Samuel M Janney, Dr Shreaves, Ellen Garrigues, Sam Ely, Sallie Ely, Mary Childs

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DIARY OF MARY BONNER LIGHTFOOT, GREAT NEMAHA AGENCY, 1869

Edited by Mary Bloodgood

Mary Bonner Lightfoot was born September 28, 1820, to a prominent Quaker family in Upper Dublin Township, Pennsylvania. In 1846 she married Thomas Lightfoot,¹ nominated in 1869 as Indian agent for the Great Nemaha Agency located on the eastern Kansas-Nebraska border.² To remedy injustices against native Americans and to secure settlement and an advancing railway system, President Grant had implemented a "Quaker policy" for the management of the Indian tribes. Through the use of Quaker agents and superintendents, he hoped to renew the Indians' trust and confidence in the government. The opportunity to help integrate these poverty-stricken tribes into the mainstream of civilization appealed to Thomas Lightfoot, and he undertook the mission.

The lack of such things as instruction, tools, and oxen for working the land contributed to widespread idleness among the Iowa, Fox, and Sac tribes to whom Lightfoot was sent. The Iowa numbered 240 individuals; the Fox and Sac, eighty.³ Their annuity consisted principally of interest from trust funds and could not be diverted from direct payment to the Indians without their consent.⁴ The three languages used by the three tribes increased the difficulty of communica-

tion and helped foster a misunderstanding over the previous sale of a part of their reservation.⁵ The Fox and Sac seemed to have some interest in moving to the Oklahoma Indian Territory but only if they could first visit and approve it as better for them.⁶

Lightfoot's work among them continued for four years, resulting in the formation of a temperance league, an Indian police force aimed at seeking out and capturing liquor suppliers, religious services, and a school for the children run by his wife, Mary.

Mary Lightfoot came from a family of eminent Quaker ministers and missionaries.⁷ At age forty-nine she met the challenge of removal with her two teenage children from home and relatives in Upper Dublin Township to an Indian agency on the edge of the frontier. The labor of organizing a school, her growing interest in the Indian children, plus her appreciation of the beauty of the prairie and the Missouri bluffs eventually overcame her initial loneliness. Fortunately she disciplined herself to keep a diary of the events of those first months on the reservation.

The Lightfoot home became a welcome stop for Albert Green, the young Quaker agent on the Oto reservation to the west, who came for supplies from the Nemaha Agency store. In a letter to Green, Mary wrote of her hopes that a Friends' mission school might become fully established for their Indians.⁸

The agents were responsible for supervising the justice and equity of all affairs between their agency Indians and the government. They met with the Indians in council, listened to debates, and served as mediators and final judges when that was required in the interest of decision making and peace between individuals, bands, and tribes. Oto agent Albert Green is credited with breaking up long existing enmity between the Oto, Osage, and Omaha tribes.⁹

Agents were, in fact, the highest law of the reservation, the chiefs ruling within their own bands or clans as teachers of tribal laws and customs handed down to each generation. Each chief had badges of office, insignia, perhaps a peace pipe, and represented his particular family.¹⁰ Agents came to be given the courtesy title of "major," a holdover from days when responsibility for Indian relations lay within the War Department. They handled matters of business and filed regular monthly reports with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; implemented advances in education, health and well being; and mediated settler complaints against tribal members.

Correspondence was kept up with the Quaker groups who were due consultation and replies to their donations. Meanwhile, the tribes lived on their government annuities (goods and money) provided by treaty from former sales of their lands, whatever productivity came from their reservation lands and their trapping and buffalo hunts or,

Mary Kathryn Bloodgood of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, is the great-granddaughter of Mary Bonner Lightfoot.

with government sanction, they sold more land to slow the advance of poverty.

Quaker Samuel M. Janney, appointed to the Northern Superintendency in 1869, that summer accompanied a Quaker delegation which visited each agency. They were on hand to witness the actual distribution of the annuity goods to one of the tribes.¹¹ Janney, with a residence in Omaha, kept himself aware of affairs on the various reservations by letter or visit. He was an advocate to members of Congress and various church affiliates, being concerned with the condition of the tribes even after he had left the Indian service in 1871.¹²

Mary's diary, in detailing events of the summer and fall of 1869, reveals a strong and sensitive woman, adjustable to circumstances, yet willing to be an instigator of change rather than succumb to rigor and hardship. The Lightfoots espoused some of the views considered "broad-minded" in that day. Their religion was the more liberal "Hicksite" strain of Quakerism, formed by a division in the Society of Friends in the late 1820s. Mary was concerned with women's suffrage, women's rights, taxes, and Indian potential and possibilities. She avidly read as many papers as she could obtain.

Her sister and brother-in-law, Sally and Sam Ely, were living at this time near Kansas City, Kansas. The family journeyed there in the early fall of 1869. With the Elys they visited one of the chiefs of the Shawnee tribe and also were in the home of an ex-superintendent of a Friends mission school.¹³

In 1871 Lightfoot's daughter Sallie ("Sis" in parts of the diary) became the wife of agent Albert Green, and their first child, a daughter, was born on the Nemaha Reservation. Green resigned from the service effective in the spring of 1873 to seek more advantageous surroundings for his family.¹⁴

Charles H. Roberts was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the September 8,



Mary Bonner Lightfoot, Beatrice, 1896. (NSHS-G798-29)

1873, resignation of Thomas Lightfoot.¹⁵ From available documentary evidence it is impossible to tell whether Lightfoot's resignation was for personal or political reasons. The possible political context is a congressional subcommittee decision (later rescinded) in early 1873 to discontinue the Northern Superintendency as of June 30, 1873. Barclay White, then Northern District superintendent, attributed this to the insistence of Nebraska senators that they should control the appointment of agents in the state.¹⁶ Full antagonism to the religious agencies did not bloom until after Hayes became president in 1878, but the Northern Superintendency, at least, was under political pressure much earlier according to Quaker records.

By the fall of 1876 Lightfoot and Green were partners in a mercantile establishment in Pennville, Pennsylvania. The next year the Albert Green

family returned to Nebraska, settling permanently in Beatrice, which was then a small city of several thousand inhabitants.¹⁷ Garrie Lightfoot, sixteen when his parents took charge of the Great Nemaha Agency, returned to Kansas with a wife in 1878 to live on a farm in Brown County.¹⁸

Thomas and Mary Lightfoot lived more than twenty years in their old home in Upper Dublin, Pennsylvania. Thomas there suffered a stroke on January 22, 1896. Mary died at the home of her daughter in Beatrice, Nebraska, on September 16, 1907.¹⁹

Mary's black leather-covered diary, four by six and one-half inches and bearing the title "Diary 1869" in gold letters, is written in ink. It begins with a description of the long trip west by train, which culminated in the family's arrival at "Nohart," the Great Nemaha Indian Agency. In the following diary entries of the first months spent at the agency, some punctuation has been altered to aid the reader, but the original spelling has been retained. Beginning in the fall of 1869, gaps begin to appear in the account; it ends abruptly in January 1870. The diary has recently been given to the Nebraska State Historical Society for preservation.

THE DIARY

Saturday, June 5, 1869. Well, here we are in our new home, but do not as yet feel very much at home, though things do seem very much more pleasant and convenient than we anticipated. But it will be very lonely, so lonely that we scarcely dare think of it. Yet we trust all will be well in the end.

The ride from Forest City to this place, 10 miles, is over the prairie, and the country is very beautiful indeed. We took dinner at White Cloud and supper at the house of the carpenter.²⁰ Came back home where we expect to stay all night, and tomorrow we will rest and write letters home.

Sunday, June 6, 1869. Our first Sabbath on the prairie-home quietly until 4 o'clock, when friend Norris geared up his carriage and pair and took us out

Mary Bonner Lightfoot

over the reservation among the Indian huts. Poor creatures, they live so poor and meanly that you feel almost discouraged about them ever taking their place among the nations. This evening we wrote to Thomas Willett and B. Kenderdine. Chancy staid all night with us. We are feeling more settled than we have done. Hope to like it, and be able to fill our mission.

Monday, June 7, 1869. Today has been very rainy. Staid within doors. Thomas met his Indians in council, his first experience with them. Sis and I cleaned up the room and put down the carpet and set things round some, so that we look and feel quite cozy and homelike. Wrote to mother.

Tuesday, June 8, 1869. Cleared off nicely after the rain. Went to White Cloud and made some purchases to housekeep with. Dined at the hotel. While there Dr. Shreaves' wife called upon us. She is a Quaker and we were glad to meet. I anticipated much pleasure from her society, we being the only two Quaker families in the parts.

Wrote to Mary Y. Jones today, also to sister Lizzie and friend Hawkens.²¹

Wednesday, June 9, 1869. The sun rose clear and beautiful this morning. Thomas has again had the council house full of Indians. They seem to be full of business with the agent. I have been very busy unpacking trunks and putting away winter clothing. This evening went down to the trader through the timber. It was a pleasant walk. Children both quite homesick, but for ourselves we feel quite contented.

Thursday, June 10, 1869. Spent this day writing letters, fixing round some. Wrote to Hannah Gillim, brother Charlie, Mary Y. Jones, and to Susan B. Anthony about the revolution. Thomas busy planting corn. Had two men to help. Made some garden this morning.

This evening had a visit from an Indian intoxicated. Gave him his supper and sent him home. Took a walk after tea to the blacksmith's.²² Also gave dinner to one. They seem to be



Albert Lamborn Green and Sallie Lightfoot Green (both seated), near Philadelphia, 1871. (NSHS-G798-17)

very fond of making calls.

Friday, June 11, 1869. Cloudy morn, looked like rain, but cleared off before night. Ann Shreaves and a Mrs. Washburn spent the morning with us. The latter took dinner. Both very pleasant people. Think we shall want to follow up the acquaintance.

In the afternoon finished unpacking trunks, put up bedsteads, arranged our sleeping room. Begin to feel more at home. Are anxiously looking for letters from the east.

Saturday, June 12, 1869. Dull morning, wind sounding like rain. Thunder shower late in the afternoon. Received letter from sister Sallie, inviting us to come see her. Do not know when we shall get off. Thomas received letter and papers from S. M. Janney.

Children homesick. For ourselves we are quite happy and contented, though anxious to get letters from home. Thomas took a ride round among some of the neighbors on business. Found them pleasant and sociable and thinking of coming to see us. Hope they will do so.

Sunday, June 13, 1869. Our second Sabbath at Nohart. Sat all day up in our room, talking of home, feeling that we were very far from all. But we have each other and the children, so will try to be content. Had chicken for dinner; paid 25 cts. apiece for them.

The weather clear but cool after yesterday's rain. Wrote to Mary Hald and Rebecca Hawkens. Ready to send tomorrow.

Monday, June 14, 1869. The sun rose

clear, but soon clouded up — light showers through the day, and a beautiful clear sunset. Washed and scrubbed up the kitchen. Had a visit from two squaws with papoose on back of one. Brought us strawberries for which they asked exorbitant price. Bought from them, gave them something to eat, and sent them away rejoicing. Since tea took a walk over towards the Nemaha. Had a fine view of that and the Missouri. Visited some Indian graves. Saw several young men — strong, sauntering along, lying around idly. Oh, how we wish we could do something to raise these people out of their idleness, ignorance and poverty.

Tuesday, June 15, 1869. Clear and cool. Worked round in the morning; in the afternoon read some. Set out our sweet potatoe plants, and in the evening took a ride to Mr. Sperry's, just off the reserve, in search of provision. Bought a pair of old hens for 50 cents. Had a most delightful ride, but were rather late home. It is not well to be too late out on the praries. We might take the wrong road. Besides we had the little colt along with its mother, and it felt quite a care. Thomas today paid his first visit to the Sacs, Foxes.

Wednesday, June 16, 1869. Woke this morning to find it raining. Has been cloudy and stormy all day. Had chicken for dinner. Have read and sewed some, and we talked a good bit about home. Were disappointed in not getting papers and letters from the east. Received a letter from sister Sallie. Feel quite happy and contented though we think much about our friends away.

Thursday, June 17, 1869. Lovely morning after the storm of yesterday. Spent the forenoon writing to sister Sallie and Thomas Atkinsons. At one took Doty's team and went to White Cloud. Called at Brig's and bought some lard and chickens. In town purchased chairs, lounge, rocker, and mattress — also groceries and other things at Barlies and Nirres [?]. Called at Dr. Shreaves. Had a pleasant visit. Talked of many things — the anti-

slavery movement, woman's rights, religious organizations, & C. Expected to come home to tea, but they kindly insisting, we staid. Had a delightful ride home. About sunset found a party of 6 Indians waiting to see the Father about making a new chief.²³

Friday, June 18, 1869. Pleasant morning. Passed the day as usual working round house, sewing a little, reading some, and again disappointed in not receiving letters and papers from home. Our life here is going to be very monotonous. Still we feel happy, enjoy the scenery round us, and hope we shall not get homesick. Planted beans and cucumbers. Our corn, planted 1 week ago, is up and looking nicely.

Saturday, June 19, 1869. Dull and rainy all day. Received a letter from Ellen Garrigues today, the very first letter from home. We were glad to hear that all were well. She informs that strawberries were not ripening very fast. Her letter was written on the 11th, mailed on the 12th, thus taking seven days to reach us.

Thomas and Garrie went to Fall[s] City today. T. was much pleased with the country. It was quite an event for Garrie. He brought home a handsome little poney, a gift from D. Holt, the trader.

Sunday, June 20, 1869. Very heavy thunder storm during the night. Dull in the morning, but gradually cleared off towards noon. Commenced our Sabbath School. Had about 25 in attendance, old and young, large and small. Only three could speak English. Have to talk through the interpreter, Elisha Doran. There were present three chiefs with their wives and little ones. I read S. M. Janney's two poems: "The Last of The Lenape" and "The Lost Child."²⁴ The Chiefs manifested pleasure and satisfaction. The women made no demonstrations of course. Gave each child a comb, and each woman and little girl a ribbon for her hair. Allso distributed crackers among them all. Bought these articles out of T. Willett's \$5.00. Feel some encouraged, but would be more hopeful if I could talk

directly with them. Feel it is right to do this much.

Monday, June 21, 1869. A beautiful, clear, bright morning and lovely day, just cool enough to be pleasant. Washed in the morning, had Holt to dinner, George to tea. Received The Standard, the first paper we have had from home. Again disappointed about letters. Thomas wrote to Ellen Garrigues. Sent it in the morning mail.

Had a council here this evening, three chiefs and interpreter. Subject in hand: one of the tribe in prison at Falls City for horse stealing. Thos. much pleased with the manner and bearing of the head chief, named [blank in the diary] signifying in English [blank in the diary]. They wore the blanket, moccosons, scarfs twisted around their heads Indian fashion. Was pleased to see them and hear them talk Indian.

Tuesday, June 22, 1869. Another pleasant day. A letter from Mary Y. Jones, saying all were well [at] home. Were so glad to get it.

This afternoon Tohe's wife and 4 children made us a visit and staid to tea. I helped her cut and make pants for her little boy. We allso had a call from 5 others. Fed them on the door step. Allso a poor old withered up woman brought gooseberries to sell. We gave her dinner, paid her for the berries, and sent her home.

Wednesday, June 23, 1869. Clear and cool in the morning. Received a package of papers today — the dear old Standard [and] the Tribune. Our life here is very monotonous, consisting mainly of (at liest mine) sleeping, eating, talking with Indians, and looking for letters and papers. But still, we find contentment does not depend entirely on these things. Sent journal letter to Hannah Ambler, allso letters to David and Susan Washington and Mary Y. Jones.

Thursday, June 24, 1869. Rather dull this morning, threatening rain. The mail brought us more papers from home and letters from Thomas and Susan Willetts. We were so glad to get them. Have had a very quiet day. Did



Drawing of Nemaha Agency by Albert Lamborn Green in early 1870s. (NSHS-G798-13)

some sewing and reading, and as usual talked of home and home affairs. Had such a feast reading The Standards, the proceedings of New York Meetings, the first account we have had. Particularly enjoyed Wendall Phillip's last speech. He seems to be growing all the time. His great large liberal nature seems to know no bounds or stopping place.

Friday, June 25, 1869. Awoke early this morning to find it raining very hard. Continued dull and rainy through the day, with no prospect of clearing off tonight. Sis ironed and I sewed all day pretty much, with some little reading.

Received the "Free Press" from Joseph Amblers. Take it very kind in our friends to be so mindful of us about papers. T. sent a letter to Thomas Willets. Garrie wrote to Mattie Rich, which he will send tomorrow.

Saturday, June 26, 1869. Very dull and rainy. Find life here monotonous, especially in dull weather. Bought some raspberries of an old Indian at 10 cts. per qt. Looked until dark for the

stage, which did not come at all, owing, we suppose, to the rain having washed the railroad. Were quite disappointed at not receiving the mail. Spent the day as usual with our little work, sewing and some reading.

Sunday, June 27, 1869. Awoke this morning with headache. Laid around all day. Was not able to go up to my Sabbath School. Regretted it much, as quite a large number of children and others came, and were disappointed to have to go away again. Today has seemed teadeous, and I have so longed to have some of our old friends come in awhile. But that cannot be, and we will have to content ourselves as best we may. Rather dull and gloomy out all day, but the stars are shining tonight, and we hope it will be clear tomorrow.

Monday, June 28, 1869. Sun arose bright and clear this morning. I am not feeling very smart today. Staid pretty close in my room. Looked anxiously for the mail. When it came, brought letters from Ben and Lizzie Hillis and Ellen

Garrigues, giving account of things at home, strawberries, etc. Thomas bought a poney today for \$75.00. Now when we get a carriage and harness, we will ride round and see the reserve.

We think it very strange indeed that Mother and Lizzie do not write. Shall remember it when we answer.

Tuesday, June 29, 1869. Still dull and rainy. Mail came, but no letters. Brought the Standard. Read the conclusion of the New York meeting and the account of the Boston Woman Suffrage Convention. Was much interested in both. Wrote to sister Lizzie and Maria Kelsey. Spent the afternoon until tea time up in the office with Thomas, helping make out the monthly reports. Passed a pleasant evening up in our room with husband and children, sewing, reading, and talking. Much interested in looking over the old reports of the agents, which we find in the office nicely bound.

Wednesday, June 30, 1869. Another rainy, disagreeable morning. Had again to put off washing. Instead made a

general cleanup of cupboards and swept the house all over. Put the clothes in soak for tomorrow's wash.

After tea it had cleared. Thomas, Garrie, myself took a ride, a new road off the reserve to the southwest. Enjoyed it so much. On our way back called at an Indian hut. Found only some women who could not talk. Tried to buy berries, but could not make them understand, so had to come without them. Had papers by the mail. Very glad to get them. Think it so kind in friends to remember us.

Thursday, July 1, 1869. Sun rose clear, but soon went under. Rained some, broke away toward evening. Thomas and Garrie went to White Cloud, bought some groceries and other necessaries. We washed, but did not get the clothes up. Had more papers, letters from Annie Thomas and Ellen Lightfoot. These letters and papers are a great comfort to us all. We do not know what we should do without them.

Friday, July 2, 1869. A nice clear morning. Very pleasant to see the sun after the long rainy time. After tea went over to Bowes, just off the reserve, to see if they would take boarders. Have letters from Henry and Mary Y. Jones bringing the good news that they talk some little of coming out this fall, if H. should be well enough. But we hardly let ourselves hope or think of it, it would be so good to see them.

This evening's was my first ride on horseback. I enjoyed it ever so much. Think I shall try it again. Read our fresh papers this evening. Think so much of having them.

Monday, July 3, 1869. Another nice morning. Letter from sister Sallie inviting Sis down to spend the 4th. The letter was delayed, and she could not go. She is not very well, and is quite homesick. Feels lonely and dispirited. She and Garrie rode out this evening. Garrie enjoys his ponie so much. I feel so glad he has got it. He anticipates going to White Cloud tomorrow to church. Hope it will not be cloudy and disappoint him.

Sunday, July 4, 1869. Clear but smoky. Very cool and pleasant. Had my Sabbath School this morning. Not many out, but they could all understand English but two. Read some poems to them, and talked, and had a good time. Feel encouraged. Hope it will do some good.

After tea Thomas and I took a ride on horseback over to Chief Nag-a-rash, where they had quite a gathering, preparing to celebrate the 4th. T. gave them a sheep, thinking they would have it for their picnic tomorrow, but they could not wait, and went right at it today. We did [not] like it at all, but could not help it after it was done.²⁵

Monday, July 5, 1869. Pleasant morning, though the sun is not shining very brightly. Had calls from Mr. Briggs and Bowers family, on their way to the picnic on the Nemaha. Chancy Norris also came this morning. At 12 o'clock we shut up house and went down to the grounds. The Indians were dancing — and quite a large number out in their rings, ribbons, and beading.

At 6 o'clock the boat from White Cloud came up to take the people home. Sis and I went down for a sail. It is 12 miles by water, and a most delightful trip we had. Thomas drove down to meet us, and we all took tea at Noyes [?] found them very kind, live nicely. Called a moment at Dr. Shreaves, reached home at 8 o'clock. Received letter from H. Ambler.

Tuesday, July 6, 1869. Bright morning. Opened school at the Council House. 11 children in attendance. Only one could talk English. The girls mostly well dressed, but the boys dirty and miserably clad. Feel as if I had a big job before me. Certainly their inability to talk will be a great obstacle in the way of their progress.

Received letters from Ellen Garrigues, B. Rich, Mother, and Lizzie. This afternoon Thomas went to St. Joseph in company with Chancy Norris and David Holt.

Wednesday, July 7, 1869. Pleasant day, but very warm. Mercury 87 in the afternoon. School some larger today.

Still fear they will not progress very fast on account of not speaking the language. Feel that I must make some effort to get them washed up and better clad. By mail received letters from Albert Atkinson and several papers from the East.

Thomas did not return from St. Joseph as expected. Will come tomorrow, no doubt. Took nice ride on horseback with Garrie over toward the Nemaha.

Thursday, July 8, 1869. Cloudy morning, threatening rain. Thomas arrived home about 1/2 past eight. Had Chancy and Holt to dinner. School small, sewed and read some as usual. No letters or papers today. Heavy shower towards noon and cleared off in the evening. Thomas bought a carriage at St. Joseph. Expect it home next week.

Friday, July 9, 1869. Beautiful bright morning, but very warm. School increased considerably — a lot of unwashed, uncombed, ragged little boys. Must manage some way to get them better clothed. Feel I shall get interested in them, but know it will be a great toil to teach them or get them settled into any kind of order or system. Had Chancy to breakfast — he began to move today, at least to pack up ready to start tomorrow. Received papers from home and letters from the Baltimore Committee.

Saturday, July 10, 1869. Clear but very warm — no school today. No letters or papers from home or elsewhere. Worked round and set house in order generally. After dinner drove into White Cloud, made some purchases, called a little while at Dr. Shreaves, and had a lovely ride home. Seems as if we never would grow weary riding over these beautiful praries. We're home by dark, sewed, chatted, and battled with musketoes untill bedtime.

Sunday, July 11, 1869. Another clear, bright day. Opened the council house early for my Sabbath School. Had quite a large attendance of young and old — a number present who could speak some English and understand

Mary Bonner Lightfoot

more. Read the commandments, made some comments and explanations, also the sermon on the mount, and read some poetry. Sallie and Garrie sang 2 or 3 pieces for them. I talked a little and adjourned. Find it does not do to keep them to long. They get tired of sitting. Took a lovely ride this eve up to the Sacs — the first time. My first visit to this tribe. Did not see much to encourage us.

Monday, July 12, 1869. Clear and warm. Musquitos very plenty, also a disagreeable little fly that comes round our faces in swarms. Went to school and sent the children home for their mothers to sew. Sallie and I cut out, and by night had several suits all most done. Came home, tired and worn out. Took a good wash and read in the evening some. Much interested in looking over the old reports in the office. Received no letters today.

Tuesday, July 13, 1869. Continues clear and warm. The squaws came and finished up their work today, but I have some left on my hands to make and finish. Did not have much school this afternoon. Attended a grand council of the Indians, held in the office. Was much pleased with the manner and style of the head Chief, Nag-a-rash. They want to break the treaty made last winter. T. will send word to Washington to that effect.

Towards evening Mrs. Washburn and Mrs. Sargent from Salem came to Doty's to stay all night. Will visit us tomorrow. A good letter from William Hawkins.

Wednesday, July 14, 1869. Cloudy morning, betokening rain. Had the friends to breakfast. Sis went out riding with Mrs. Washburn, was caught out in a heavy shower. Had a good mail today — 11 letters, 8 for Sis, 1 from Mary Heald, 1 from Henry Jones, and 1 business letter.

Took a ride after tea on the pony with Garrie over to the Nemaha and round by Frank's home. Found plenty of musquitos, both while we were gone and at home. In the evening made an attempt to smoke them out. School passed off



Samuel M. Janney. Courtesy of Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

as usual. Wrote to Hawkins. Will send tomorrow.

Thursday, July 15, 1869. Some cloudy. Very close and warm, but a good air stirring all the time. Plenty of musquitos. Sent letter to W. and B. Hawkins. Received papers by mail. After tea Thomas and I took a long ride off the reservation in search of chickens. These rides over the prairie are a great delight to us. Letter from Ellen Garrigues and sister Sallie. Letters from home all tell of good crops

and abundance of fruit. Wish we could get some.

Friday, July 16, 1869. Cloudy and showery round, though not much rain fell here. Thomas and Sis went to Bowe's and into White Cloud after tea, caught in a light shower. Received papers and a letter from Ellie Thomas. School small, not particularly encouraging. Still hope for the best. Read some in the evening, put up screens to keep out flies and musquitos.

Saturday, July 17, 1869. Rainy day.

Cleared off in the evening. Spent the day working round house, patching, and reading *The Standard*. Sent letter to Phebe Foulke, asking for assistance in fixing up my scholars.²⁶ Have no doubt we will receive help. We are having beautiful moonlight nights, but we cannot enjoy them outside on account of the musketoes.

Sunday, July 18, 1869. Clear and pleasant after the storm of yesterday. Went to Sabbath School — small but quite interesting. Had a quiet afternoon and evening, talking and reading. Children took a ride. Seem quite cheerful and happy. As for ourselves, we are surprised that we can be so contented. But we have plenty to do and much to occupy our minds.

Monday, July 19, 1869. Clear, much cooler than it has been. Thomas and I took a ride on horseback. Called at Chief Taw-a-kee's. Had quite a pleasant call. Showed us his pictures and credentials of chiefship. He lives in quite a snug frame house. It was pasted with pictures from the pictorials & etc. Stopped at Norris' as we came home. This afternoon had a short but pleasant call from D _____ and wife from White Cloud. Hope to see them again. It was their first acquaintance. Mary Childs today commenced to assist me in school. I think it will help me very much. Sent letter to Mother today.

Tuesday, July 20, 1869. Still clear and pleasant. School quite large. Find it very difficult to regulate or systematize them. They are about like so many birds or squirrels — hop in and out the windows, dodge round the corners, mount the desks, and keep in motion generally. After tea Thomas, Garrie, and I took a long ride off the reservation, bought 4 chickens at 25 cts. each. Came home on a new road. Enjoyed it so much.

Wednesday, July 21, 1869. Still very clear and pleasant. Had company to tea — Mrs. Norris, her mother, Frank, Chancy, and Hull, the Methodist minister from White Cloud. Seems quite natural to sit down with a table full of friends. Have had so little company

since we came here that we quite enjoyed it. School very large today. Find it very wearisome indeed, yet cannot help feeling interested in the poor little duds.

Thursday, July 22, 1869. Cool, cloudy all day with several showers. School small. Mary did not attend to her duties today. Feel some encouraged about the children learning, but it will take time, labor, and patience. Spent the evening writing letters and reading. Thought and talked about home. Would so much like to step in and see how they do. No letters or papers yesterday or today. Had David Holt and friend to tea.

Friday, July 23, 1869. Clear bright day, cool and pleasant. Rose in the morning feeling quite unwell. Could not go to school, growing more poorly towards evening. Sent for Dr. Shreaves. Not suiting him to come, he sent me medicine, which relieved me, and I slept all night.

Saturday, July 24, 1869. Still bright and clear. Dr. came early in the morning, gave strong medicine. Rather comfortable all day, but towards evening had a slight return of first symptoms. But on taking medicine and applying hot fomentations, was soon relieved. About sunset had quite an arrival of friends from the east: S. M. Janney, B. Hallowell, F. Haines, John Dudley, Joseph Powell and wife.²⁷ The rest of the family had to attend to them as I was not able to go downstairs.

Sunday, July 25, 1869. Clear and pleasant. T. rose early and went round among the Indians to give word of meeting to be held in the council chamber at 10 A.M. Quite a number gathered, sat awhile in silence, then S. M. Janney rose and addressed the meeting. After him B. Hallowell spoke. T. appeared in supplication. After a short silence the meeting closed, everybody shook hands with the strangers, and departed apparently well pleased. In the afternoon we took a long ride over the reserve. Albert Green came this morning to take the friends with him. I have been up most of the day

though feeling quite shabby. Bile [boil?] no better.

Monday, July 26, 1869. Still dry and clear. The friends met the Indians in council this morning. Had quite a satisfactory time. I did not feel very smart, but made out to keep up most of the time. After dinner these friends left for the Otoe Agency. We all accompanied them as far as the Sac's village. There we bade them farewell, and came back, went off the reserve and called at several of the settlers in search of eggs and chickens. Did not succeed very well. Bought a few eggs.

Tuesday, July 27, 1869. Still dry, but not uncomfortably warm. Went to school though I was hardly fit. After school sat in council with T. and his Indians formed a temperance league — about 40 joined. Appointed a police force to help detect the liquor dealers. The occasion was an interesting one. Hope it may do good. Do not feel very well tonight — suffering considerably from my bile [boil?].

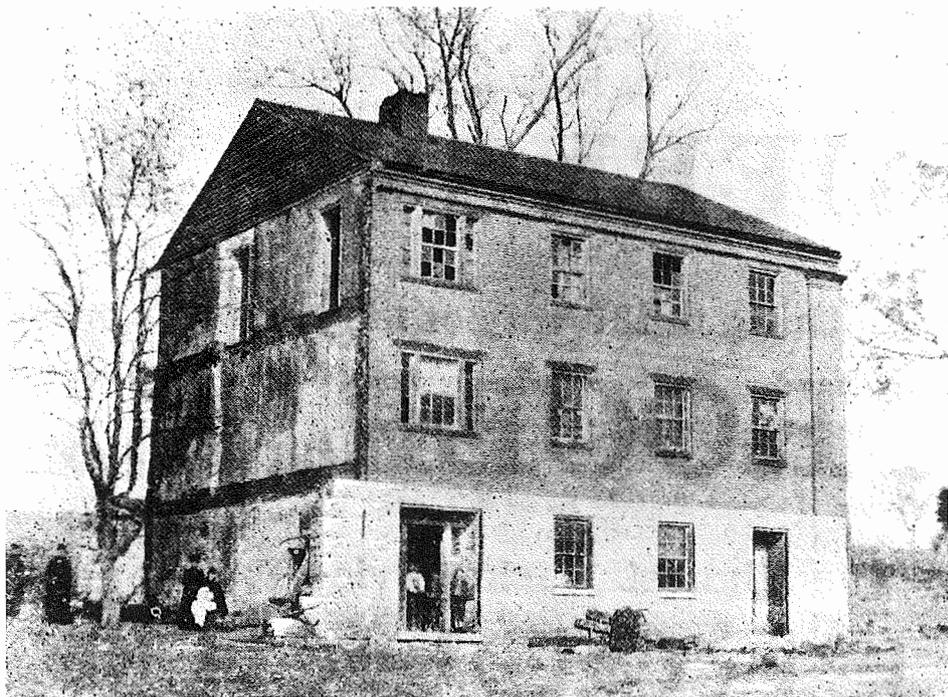
Wednesday, July 28, 1869. No sign of rain yet, the ground getting very dry. Corn needs rain. Went to school though did not feel able. After school drove over to White Cloud, bought some blue drilling and calico for the children. Made a call at Dr. Shreaves. Found Julia in bed, but not seriously ill. Arrived home about dark. Bile [boil?] feels very uncomfortable. Have slept very little for several nights.

Thursday, July 29, 1869. Warm and dry. Went up to school this morn. The mothers soon began to come in according to appointment to make up the clothing. Lydia and I cut up 21 yds. of blue drilling into pants and 15 yds. of calico into bonnets. Sallie helped the little girls, and the women sewed well. Thomas provided refreshments in the shape of apples and crackers. Came home at 5 o'clock, wearied out and almost sick. Hope to be able to sleep tonight.

Friday, July 30, 1869. No sign of rain yet. Closed school for 2 weeks. Expect to go to Kansas City next week. The women and children came and finished

Mary Bonner Lightfoot

The Highland Mission, Doniphan County, Kansas, was a Presbyterian mission among the Iowa. Erected in 1845, it was destroyed in 1907. . . . (Below) White Cloud, Kansas, 1890s. Both photos courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.



WHITE CLOUD, KANS



up their work. Seemed well pleased. Received letters from Ellen Garrigues, Henry Jones, and Lizzie Hillis.

Saturday, July 31, 1869. Weather very pleasant, though we should be glad to have it rain. Received papers and a letter from Albert Green. Sis and I sat all the afternoon in our room and sewed. Had a visit from Catharine Deroin. She told us the poor Indian women were so rejoiced that their husbands had joined the temperance league. We do so hope they may hold on.

Sunday, August 1, 1869. Wind blows, sounds a little like rain. Had no Sabbath School today. Staid quietly home all day and rested. Feel much better for the rest. Tonight hope I can sleep and be ready to work tomorrow.

Monday, August 2, 1869. Cloudy in the morning. Rained a little early, but soon cleared off. Had a large wash. Worked all day long preparing to leave home tomorrow. The mail brought me a letter from Mother. She says she misses us very much indeed. Hopes we will not stay more than the year. [During the first part of August 1869 the Lightfoots traveled to Kansas City to visit Sam and Sally Ely, Mary Lightfoot's sister and her husband. Both later worked at the Great Nemaha and Otoe agencies, Sam as a carpenter and Sally as a teacher.²⁸ While there, the Lightfoots also visited other friends and relatives, returning home on August 16.]

Tuesday, August 17, 1869. After a cool nice night to sleep, the sun rose clear and hot. After breakfast went to the office. Met some of our Indians. Was glad to see them again. Wrote a letter to Albert Green. Came home, undressed and rested a while, then went down and scrubbed and cleaned up the back room. Put up bedstead ready for B. Kenderdines, whom we expect in a few days. After ten went upstairs and wrote M. Jones. Musquitoes are bad outside, but as we have screens, they do not trouble us much inside.

[Intermittent gaps now begin to

appear in the diary.]

Friday, August 20, 1869. Cloudy all day. Rained some. Thomas went to White Cloud to meet friends from the east. B. Kenderdine and wife, and Ellen Garrigues arrived about 2 o'clock. They looked very natural. There happened to be a lot of Indians to hold a council that very afternoon and we all went up to see them. It was quite a novel sight to L. & E., who had never seen Indians before. We spent the evening asking questions and talking about home.

Saturday, August 21, 1869. Clear and warm. After dinner took a ride out among the Indians, called at chief Tohee's. The friends were much pleased, and interested in all they saw.

Thomas and B. went to hunt prairie hens. Came home with one, which we had next day for dinner. Mr. Irwin spent a few hours with us.²⁹ We were much pleased to have him come.

Sunday, August 22, 1869. Rained very hard last night, but cleared off in the forenoon. No children came to school, so we took a delightful ride down to the Nemaha and out over the bluffs. Came home, had dinner, and did not go out again today. The weather is very warm.

Monday, August 23, 1869. Clear and extremely hot. Indians about all the morning. T. and B. went to White Cloud. After tea F. and us women went to Mauhee's [?] to see his sick boy, and to take him some medicine. Our friends find the musquitoes very annoying.

Commenced my school, the first since vacation. E. and S. have been very busy fixing up the paper dolls for my little girls. They both came up to see the school today.

Tuesday, August 24, 1869. No sign of it being cooler. Thomas and Benjamin went to Highland. B. was much pleased with the fine corn and general lay of the land.

The dolls being finished, we distributed them among the little girls. It gave me real pleasure to see how pleased and interested they were in changing their dresses and fixing on the

little hats and bonnets.

Wednesday, August 25, 1869. Clear, and, we believe, still growing warmer. The friends preparing to go home tomorrow. School quite large. Mary Childs is busy about her corn, and cannot come until next week.

Thursday, August 26, 1869. Clear, but still extremely warm. Last night the only night since we came here that we could not sleep comfortably.

Thomas took the friends to Forest City on their way homeward. I went with them as far as Dr. Shreaves, and spent a very pleasant afternoon with Ann and Julia. Came home before dark.

Friday, August 27, 1869. Clear and some cooler than it has been. This evening Garrie and myself went on horseback to visit Susan Camel, wife of Charles Doran. Found her very sick indeed. Fear she will hardly recover. Took her some tea, sugar, and rice crackers and a bit of bread.

Feel quite lonely without the folks. Hope they will get along nicely. Tomorrow shall look for Sis. Hope she will come, as we need her very much.

Saturday, August 28, 1869. Rained last night, and been showery all day — prospect of it being cooler. Thomas and Garrie went to a sale to buy a beef and pigs, but did [not] get any however.

Sunday, August 29, 1869. Nice morning, cool and pleasant. Sabbath School small, but satisfactory. Distributed books to each one of the children. After dinner T. and myself rode out among our Indians. Called to see Susan. Found her very poorly indeed. Took her some jelly, which she seemed glad to get.

Monday, August 30, 1869. Clear, cool, and pleasant. School very large. Have a very sore boil on my arm. Did not enjoy being in school much. Fear I shall be almost crippled with it tomorrow. Did not sleep any last night. Word came this eve that poor Susan Camel is dead. Her husband came to get an order for a coffin.

Tuesday, August 31, 1869. Clear and almost cool enough for fire. Did not go to school today. My boil was so painful

Mary Bonner Lightfoot



Falls City, 1868. (NSHS-R521-01H1)

that I really was not fit to be up much. Laid all day on the bed, resting my arm on a pillow. This evening it opened, and I hope it will feel much better tomorrow.

T. went over to the funeral. They lowered the coffin into the grave, put a board on top, and spread a buffalo robe over it before they shoveled in the earth.

Sunday, September 5, 1869. Pleasant morning. Had quite a satisfactory day with my Sabbath School children. Distributed the little papers, gave pictures to the little ones, and they all went away apparently well pleased. After dinner T, the children and I took a long ride down to Frank Duper's and Jo Tesson's. Had a pleasant call with Sarah Tesson — like her very much.

Monday, September 6, 1869. Went to school as usual. Good attendance.

Mary was on hand — the first since vacation.

Tuesday, September 7, 1869. After dinner today rode to one of the neighbors off the reservation to get chickens. Purchased 24 at 25 cts. each. Had a nice ride home.

Thursday, September 9, 1869. Took a ride this evening over the reserve. Called to see Susan Nohart, Willie Dole, and Tohee's wife, all of them sick. I fear Susan will not recover. Has few comforts in the way of nursing. Found her lying on the ground with buffalo skins under her, cushions under her head. Took her some food.

Friday, September 10, 1869. Sis very busy all day putting up tomatoes and getting ready for tomorrow's picnic. School continues large and things go on quite satisfactorily. Mary has been on hand all the week.

Saturday, September 11, 1869. Lovely morning. According to pre-arrangement we started after breakfast for Hiawatha Brown County, Kansas, a pleasure drive of 15 miles over the prairie — mostly open, very few improved farms, the land being mostly in the hands of speculators waiting for higher prices. Arrived in the evening about sunset. Found a party of Sacs waiting to see the Major.

Sunday, September 12, 1869. Cloudy morning. About noon set in the rain. Threatens to be a rainy night. Owing to the appearance of rain, few children came to Sabbath School, though several men were about all the morning. Sat upstairs all the afternoon, and read and thought about home and friends away.

Saturday, November 13, 1869. Very cool for the time of year. School large

and interesting. We feel that they are making some progress. Was much, much gratified to receive a letter from Lizzie Dorsey informing that she and others contemplated sending a Christmas greeting to our school children. Wrote immediately saying we would be most happy to receive and distribute anything they might send.

[Saturday] January 1, 1870. Pleasant morning. Up early making preparations for distributing Lizzie Dorsey's Christmas gifts to my children, and having the chiefs and their wives to New Year's dinner.

They all came, looking clean and nice. We had 4 turkeys roasted and other things which they appeared to enjoy much. We were interested in them, and glad that we thought of making the entertainment. We had many calls through the day for New Year's gifts, which we gave out of the box received yesterday from Philadelphia.

[Sunday] January 2, 1870. Clear but cold; mercury standing at 28. Been very busy all day getting Thomas ready to start for home tomorrow. Feel a little dull about being left so far behind, but hope it will all be right, and he get back safe. Shall be so glad to have him return and tell all about our friends.³⁰

NOTES

¹Albert L. Green family papers, Nebraska State Historical Society. Hereafter "Green family papers."

²Ibid.

³Albert L. Green, Green Manuscripts, 1935, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

⁴Barclay White to John Saunders, Apr. 28, 1874, a part of the Indian Committee Report to the Yearly Meeting, 1874, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

⁵Ibid.

⁶"The Quaker Report on Indian Agencies in Nebraska, 1869," *Nebraska History* 54(Summer 1973):165-66. Hereafter "The Quaker Report."

⁷Green family papers.

⁸Mary Lightfoot to Albert Green, Aug. 17, 1869, Green family papers.

⁹Richard Jensen, "Agent to the Oto," *Nebraska History* 69(Winter 1988):176, 177, 178.

¹⁰Richard Shunatona, "Otoe Indian Lore," *Nebraska History* 5(October-December, 1922):61.

¹¹"The Quaker Report," 179-80.

¹²Jensen, "Agent," 180.

¹³Mary Lightfoot to Albert Green, Aug. 17, 1869, Green family papers.

¹⁴Green family papers. Jensen, "Agent," 174.

¹⁵Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Entry 976, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶The Barclay White Journals, Manuscripts, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

¹⁷Green family papers.

¹⁸Mary Lightfoot diary, Mar. 3, 1878 entry, Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁹Green family papers.

²⁰John R. Dowty was carpenter for the Iowa tribe. He had a wife, Lydia, and three small children. U.S. Census Record, Great Nemaha Agency, July 18, 1870.

²¹Ibid. Mary Y. Jones and husband, Henry, were agency employees, Henry replacing D. Holt as Indian trader.

²²Ibid.

²³A nominee for chief among the tribes had to be a member of the family creating a chief, and much depended upon the name, influence, distinction, knowledge of tribal laws and laws of

nature, and ability to teach as a leader. Richard Shunatona, "Otoe Indian Lore," *Nebraska History* (October-December, 1922):61.

²⁴The Lenape were an ancient Indian people believed to have lived along the Atlantic seaboard.

²⁵Mary Lightfoot was careful to read the Indians the Ten Commandments the next Sunday. Mary Lightfoot Diary, p. 24. The Lightfoots felt pain that their good deed had caused the Indians to break God's commandment for a day of rest.

²⁶Letters to Mary Lightfoot from Quakers such as Phebe Foulke (involved in the Friends Indian Aid Association of Philadelphia) and from Mary's Indian students after her return to Pennsylvania have been preserved. "Lightfoot Manuscripts," Series 1, Box 1, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

²⁷These were members of a committee from the "Convention of Delegates." Some of them became authors of parts of "The Quaker Report," issued by the convention of Delegates after all Indian agencies had been visited.

²⁸Green family papers.

²⁹This may have been S. M. Irvin, missionary to the Iowa Indians. He had built a stone mission house for them seven miles from their village. S. M. Irvin to Albert Green, July 31, 1872, Green family papers. His letter to Green was written from Highland, Kansas.

³⁰In 1876 Superintendent Barclay White received orders from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to close his office, ostensibly for financial reasons. Quakers who continued as Indian agents reported thereafter directly to the commissioner in Washington. Between 1877 and 1882 reform efforts of the Department of the Interior were intended to reassert government control which had, in their opinion, been usurped by the churches. All but one of the Quaker agents resigned. Quaker assistance and oversight was limited to the Santee Sioux Agency by 1885. A committee was appointed (1878-83) to look after routine Indian business in Washington and to assist the resigning Indian agents in the settlement of their accounts. "Convention of Delegates," 1869-1884, Record Group 4, Series 2, Box 1, and Series 6, Box 3, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.