

6166

OFFICE OF
Indian Affairs
Rec'd FEB 9

1895

Capt. R. H. Pratt,

Carlisle, Pa.

Feb. 7, 1895,

Reply to letter of 4th inst.
and make reply to
Supervisor Moss's report
on the Absentee Shawnee
School,

Letter to Capt. Pratt, Feb. 12/95

Memo

File

Guph,

United States
Indian Industrial School,

6166
9919

Carlisle, Pa., February 7, 1895

Dr. W. N. Hallman,
Supt. Indian Schools,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have yours of Feb. 4th 5073, covering extract from report of Supervisor Moss on Absentee Shawnee School, Oklahoma, and feel impelled by one sentence in it, to make remark.

Supervisor Moss says there is big improvement even in the most "hostile". To those who know the history of the Shawnees - their real conditions, past and present - the idea that there is now, or has been for several generations a "hostile" among them, is the quintessence of sarcasm.

The Shawnees were parties to the treaty of Am. Penn in 1682; they were peaceable and kept their treaty, living neighbors to Am. Penn's communities of Friends for years. They drifted 'round a good deal and were finally crowded out of Pennsylvania, living part of their time in

United States
Indian Industrial School,

6166

II Carlisle, Pa., 189

the Southern States. About 1750 or '60 they located in Ohio, in the vicinity of Piqua and Sandusky. There they lived in good houses, farmed extensively and schools were established among them by the Society of Friends who also put up a grist mill and a saw mill.

It was the declared purpose of the Society of Friends at that time, to induce them to settle among the Whites - engage in farming and other industries, and to educate the white children and theirs together, and in all respects to be on an equal footing with their white neighbors.

The Friends, at that time, did not believe it important to crowd upon them the principles of Christianity but to begin the work of civilization first.

But the greed for land and the inevitable pressure therefrom drove them out of Ohio and in 1840 we find them settled in Kansas. Then, in one of the reports of the time, a Commissioner of the Society of Friends states that they were living

6166

United States
Indian Industrial School,

III Carlisle, Pa., 189

in comfortable log houses with barns and other out buildings, having pretty good furniture in their houses and utensils for cooking. They raised a good supply of Indian corn; kept oxen, cows, horses, hogs and sheep. It is mentioned particularly that all raised a large number of fowls: that they had peach orchards and sent peaches to market. Men and women of the tribe were industrious; a few of the men were mechanics working for white settlers and giving satisfaction. In '55 most of their children were in Mission schools - good school houses, and Church accommodations maintained by the Methodist denomination both north and south; by the Baptist and Society of Friends. All these Missions had large farms attached and taught the children farming.

It is related of the Southern Methodist Mission that the preachers and teachers were rich and had slaves with them, much to the annoyance of the Northern Missions.

It is a historical fact that the Shawnee and

United States
Indian Industrial School,

6166

IV Carlisle, Pa., 189

Delaware Indians furnished more men for the Union army in proportion to their numbers, than any other community of people in the United States.

Being near the Kansas and Missouri line they suffered greatly from the predatory warfare carried on in that region during the war.

Land-greedy whites drove them out of Kansas to their present location - and, I think I need not follow their history farther, but the earlier Indian office reports Moses Report of 1820, Harvey's History of Shawnee Indians, published in 1855, and The North American Indian and Friends, published in 1844, all ~~of which~~ would be good reading for Supervisor Moss, and when he got through, he would - if he is a man of ordinary common sense - cure the system that would be continually lifting into important places in the Indian service and management men who are as absolutely ignorant of what has been done, and having as gross and malicious ideas of what is being done as he has. You will, I am sure, agree with me, Doctor, that

6166

United States
Indian Industrial School,

V Carlisle, Pa., 189

that a system which is so unchanging and which can ^{repeatedly} wrong any class of people as greatly as the Shawnees have been wronged, has nothing whatever to commend it for further trial.

I find in their intercourse with the whites, sentiments of peace, loyalty and industry expressed by their great leaders to Washington and other historical characters on our side, which are worthy to be classed with the utterance of sages of any age.

They have been driven to the wall and are constantly going down in number and character under the pernicious influence of a settling system that thinks of nothing but its own perpetuity.

Agents and Missionaries constantly report improvement which reminds one of a case under medical treatment. A lady had a particular friend who was ill, and she in her concern asked the doctor almost daily how her friend was, and his almost invariable answer was

R. H. PRATT,
Capt. 10th Cav'y., Supt.

United States
Indian Industrial School,

VI Carlisle, Pa., 189

"She is getting better." Finally the patient died and the friend being asked what she had said of, said she supposed of "Getting Better." That is about the condition of our Indians today. The Shawnees are not particularly an exception. Excuse this long letter which I have been led to write by so small a thing as Moss's favorable report upon a condition which ought, in reality, to be a thousand times better than it is, and calls for an entirely different presentation. I am glad to have it, ^(the report) notwithstanding.

Faithfully yours,

R. H. Pratt

Capt. 10th Cav'y., Supt.