

Amelia Jordan

8-6-41

Age 54

My mother died when I was about 6 or 7 years old and I had two sister ad a brother. My father gave all of us away for adoption to different families. My father's last name was Wheelock, and I was adopted to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Swamp. They were quite elderly people, and had no children. I was sent to the mission day school, and I attended the school all winter. The following winter I was sent to the Government Boarding school and I went there two terms, then I was sent to Tomah Indian school, and I was there three years then I returned home. My foster mother had died during the winter. I was very fond of her because she was good to me, and although my foster father was very good to me, it was not the place for me to stay, so I next signed up to go to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. I stayed there five years. I was sent to work for some Pennsylvania people and I stayed one year. I could not learn for some reason. I learned to talk English fluently, but I was slow to learn anything. I guess I did not know how to study, and way I made slow progress. I stayed at Carlisle as long as I could. I had no incentive to come home, because I

had no home as it were, and I was having a good time there with all my friends, and school mates.

I was at Carlisle during the time Major Mercer was superintendent of Carlisle and the rules of the school were lax, and the students were more interested in social activities than in their studies. We had social gatherings every Saturday night and we were allowed to dance and the boys and girls were allowed to sit down together and visit. In the winter time they flooded the pond and we had nice ice for skating and they used to allow the girls to go skating after stuffy hour for one hour. Of course the boys were there too. In previous years the girls were never allowed to go out at night, excepting when they went from their quarters to the school building, auditorium, or gymnasium, and they had to line up like soldiers in the army. Do you wonder that I had no inclination of leaving Carlisle? But when some of my girl friends started to get ready to come home to see their parents or relative I tried to think of someone whom I could come back to. I could not make up my mind at last I thought of my father. He was married again. I came home with the rest of the Oneidas in 1909. How well I remember that year. I was really coming away from school, and I could really do as I please. I was seventeen years old and I felt so grown up. My

father let me stay there but he was like a stranger to me. I helped with the house work, and whenever I wanted to go any where I got ready, and went. I was actually doing as I pleased, and it was a grand and glorious feeling. During the summer my friend and I worked in Green Bay for some rich folks. We used to come to Oneida and attend all the dances, and festivities. We had some Oneida boy friends. In the fall my girl friend went back to Carlisle, and I felt lonesome for a while, because I knew I could not go back. My friend was a Senior and expected to graduate the following spring. I worked all winter and early in the Spring I got off the train at Oneida with another girl. As we stepped off the train I noticed a young fellow standing near by. I had never seen him before, but I knew he was an Oneida. He kept looking at me so I gave him a smile as I went by him. A little while after he started to talk to us, and as we walked down the road he walked along with us. He was going the same way. He came to his home before we did and he said "Good Bye" and we went on. The following Sunday he came to my place and invited me to go out for a ride in a top buggy. He had an ice driving team and he was jolly and I am the same, so I guess we suited each other in that respect in the meantime I had found out who he was and no doubt he knew who I was. Any

way I knew I was not related to him it was a quick romance, and that summer we were married. I had a little money at the agency left to me from my foster father who had died while I was still at Carlisle. We built a small house on seven acres of land that my husband bought. We had not planned how we were going to make our living. The other married people were getting along some way so we thought we ought to be able to get along too. My husband used to work for his father and other farmers around us. White people had started to settle on the reservation. My father-in-law had his 90-acre farm and he was beginning to get old, so my husband worked for his dad a great deal. We managed to buy two cows, and the cows brought a little income for us, and although I was having children about every two years, yet I used to make lace. We used to get good price for our lace. I made about \$12 to \$15 a week. Every Saturday we went to town and bought out weekly supplies of groceries and what clothing we needed. We lived in that small house while the children were small. We have nine children. Of course as soon as the children were old enough to go away to school we sent them to Tomah Boarding school. We really had them only in the summer time. When his father got too old to farm he asked us to live with him, so we sold our little place and

lived with the old man. After his death the farm was sold, and the money divided among the heirs. My husband got his share, and bought seventeen acres of land with a house on it. We had quite a few cows by this time and we were getting along fine when my husband got a shock from lightning. I really think that he was almost struck. After that he was not himself, and one of his eyes got infected, and that had to be removed. He had to use so much money that we were forced to sell our place. We next rented a 7 acre farm. We lived there two years then we bought the place, and we still have the place. We have three cows and we sell cream. Our monthly income from the cows is about \$25.00 per month. My husband always works for the big farmers and since there has been the W.P.A. he has been working on the government project, and that is how we make our livelihood. I always can some vegetables and as much fruit as I can possibly put up. In the summer time my children pick beans and earn a little money that way. Three of my girls are now married and my son just got married recently. One of my daughters lives in Milwaukee, one in Chicago, and one lives in Oneida. We have only five left to support.

I never thought of preventing from having children. although I would not consider that a sin or a crime. There was just once that I was going to

do something to get rid of it. I don't remember how long I was pregnant when my own sister-in-law was going to doctor me. We went to the woods and we gathered up different kinds of Indian medicine. My sister-in-law knew the different roots and plants and herbs. She showed me how to boil them and I drank the liquid. I got very sick but nothing happened. Either I did not make it strong enough or I had such a strong constitution that it did not affect me. My sister-in-law wanted me to try again, but I refused. At the time I did that I was mad at my husband, because he was chasing around. I don't know if it is true but I heard that he was. I had several children after that and all healthy. I really love children and I never really dreaded to have children. I enjoyed taking care of them of course after my oldest girls were 5 or 6 years old they were my nurse maids. I showed them how to hold the baby and how to take care of it. I only held the baby when I nursed it, and when I bathe it. The girls would rock the baby to sleep. I did not have to buy dolls for the girls. They had a live doll to play with. I always had a doctor engaged when I am expecting to be sick, and my sister-in-law usually worked for me at least ten days. My husband is very handy in doing housework, and after I get up he usually just hires some one to do the washing. I

have been troubled with milk leg. I supposed I was not careful of myself. When a woman does something to cause abortion then I think she is committing a crime. I happened to know of a woman who had a miscarriage. I don't know what caused it, but she sent for me and my sister-in-law and it must have been just over a month but all we could see was a tiny head about _" diameter but it showed the eyes and the limbs were like white thread, but we did not see the hands or feet. We buried it and for a long time I remembered that. I think that while the baby is a part of the mother that the child would not need a soul, but just as soon as it is separated from its mother, and starts to breathe then it receives its soul. I think the breathe and soul come together, because when a person takes his or her last breath then the soul leaves the body, it seems to me that the breath of life is a part of the soul. Of course it is just a supposition. Nobody ever told me anything in that line. The doctors and minister should know if any one know. I never think too long on that because it is so mysterious, and the more I think of that the more puzzled I get. I always remember what I was taught in the Sunday school that God created everything in the beginning. But there have been times when I had my doubts and then I would stop and think that if

God did not start then who did? And I would not be any nearer solving it, so then I just renew my faith on God.

I often think of what I tried to do, and I am always relived to think that I did not accomplish my purpose. My son has grown up and he just got married lately, and I would not want him to ever find out.

I am beginning to feel old as I see my grand children, although they are small yet. I suppose it is time for me to try to learn some of the Indian remedies and be a medicine woman, but I don't know of any remedy. I am sort of alone, because I never had a grandma. My people all died early in life, my sisters and one brother all died while they were young. My father was the only one left when I grew up but he and I had lived away from each other so that I was not attached to him. There was no one to show me this or that, to tell me about any thing. For that reason I don't know any Indian stories or Indian medicine. I think it is nice to know some of the old Indian remedies, because they were really good remedies. They say that Peter Powless has the best remedy for any kind of rhumatism.

consider themselves good Christians, but they don't do any kind deed. There is a man partly paralyzed that goes around in our neighborhoods, and he always goes in people's houses to visit because he has nothing else to do. Some people won't let him in, and others don't treat him very nice. I always ask him to come in and sit down and if it is mealtime I invite him to eat with us. That man can't help it if he is in that condition, and people should not treat him mean on account of that. I always try to treat every body as well as I know how. I even adopted an orphan girl one time, and they took her away from me.

Mrs. Esther Hill

11-18-41

Age 64

Religion

My husband and I both were made members of the Episcopal church when we were infants, and we have remained members of that church, although at times we attended other church, which happens to be the nearest. For that reason we could not be considered active members. We both believe that all protestant churches are alike. Jesus Christ is at the head of all these churches, but the Pope is at the head of the Roman Catholic churches. We believe that it is all right to attend any of the Protestant churches, if we

cannot attend the church of the Holy Apostle. I never went to Sunday school until I was at the Wittenburg School. I could not understand English, but they use to show us some Bible pictures and I remember seeing the picture of Jesus as a little child, and as a young boy, and after he was a young man. I imagined Jesus as a person, but I had the idea that God was a spirit and yet he and Jesus are the same. The Holy Ghost is also part of God too. There are three person in One God. The Trinity always puzzled me, but God is a mystery, so I always give up trying to solve things. I just have faith and believe what I have been taught. We were taught that God has no body, and he is every where, and invisible. He sent His son Jesus into the world to save the people, who believe in Him. The Son is really God himself. The Holy Ghost is also God, and they are united in One. What perplexes me is that the white people seem to consider their particular church to be the only one worth belonging to. Each denomination claims that their church is the only Christian church. Sometimes the ministers are hateful to each other if they belong to different churches. I wonder if God approves of that. They try to teach their congregation to love each other, and then they give an example of how they should act to one another by saying hateful things in the pulpit of the church about some other church. That is the reason so many of

the Oneidas are backsliders today. They really want a true religion, and when they notice that even the ministers don't adhere to what they preach it makes them lose faith in every thing pertaining to religion. Most of our young people today are not interested regarding religion. It is that way with every denomination. Very few parents are able to influence their young boys and girls to go to church regularly, and to be active in the church doings. Those that have radios stay at home on Sundays, and listen to the sermons, and church services in some big church in one of the large cities. They hear some swell music, and so a person can't blame them if they stay away from any church if they can listen to the good church music by their fireside.

G-38 Mark Powless to Guy Elm

Long time ago, Nelson Metoxen organized an Oneida Band, and Indian dancers here in Oneida Reservation. It was at Two Rivers where they would go and join a show there, and so they hired out and went there. When they got there, he borrowed a big tent. This was the place, they would put on their show, the Band and the Indian dancers. They were two men, Oneidas, who were the best war dancers. And the way they were dressed up was something like this. They had beaded bands, silver, and different colors ribbons around their arm and legs, and also around their neck. Also they had small bells what they used on horses, tied around their legs. And on their heads, they had eagle's feathers war bonnet, and also buffalo's horns they had that too.

They were doing very good with their band and dancers, and they drew lots of people to their shows.

They were there several days, then one evening, they saw mean looking clouds coming, that looked like strong wind storm and heavy rain with it. And so right away he was anxious and worried, this leader of the show. Nelson, said, by gosh, I think we are going to get that wind storm, we might all die now. Hurry up, and tighten those ropes to the stakes. Lets not have the tent go down, because its worth lots of money that tent of ours. Now then they were running around and they all got busy tightening the ropes on the tent to the stakes. These two Oneida men their names were Wilbur Archiquette and Johnston Denny. They were still at it, when the big storm broke loose and struck their big tent. And these two Oneidas had their dancing outfits on, they didn't have time to change to their civilian clothes (?), so there, they were running around there with the buffalo's horns on their heads.

So he encouraged them, he said, do your best my chums, you see that part of the tent raising up and down over there, you two grab it, and try to hold it down. And so thats what they done. They were hanging on to the tent, pretty soon they were off the ground, but still hanging on, their buffalo horns were on back of their heads, but they did'nt let it go, their hold.

F7 Simon Adams to LaFront King.

When he was young he went in the East for his schooling this Dchol^hyatcho (Shining Sky) and that was forty years ago. They had band instruments there so he took one instrument. The Band master taught him how to play. The Band master said he wanted to organize a Band, so twelve of us boys joined. When I got back to Oneida it was in nineteen hundred, I was interpretor for the Oneidas and I joined the Oneida Band and I took census of the Oncidas.

Oneida National Band

The people's band. It is the oldest band. And we still have a band at this time. Only the bandsmen are so scattered. They live here and there in different towns and cities. I would say the Oneida National Band is about eighty years old. They called Oneida National Band because the band use to belong to the people. Some bandsmen left the Oneida National Band and organized another band and called it the American Band. Some more men left and organized another band and called it the Union Band. There was still another band. They used to call themselves the Bear Band.

The people's band has helped our stone church so much. Every time any church doings, dinners picnics, the people's band always played for them, and they always played free for the church. There are two of us left, that joined the band about the same time, only Jonas left ten years ago and lives in another town. I have been a member of the Oneida National Band about forty-five years. There is still another man his name is Tom. He used to be a member of the American Band and when that broke up he joined our band. Tom and I are the oldest men in our band at this time. We still get together some times when we get a job.

There was Oneida National Band already here when two Tuscarora men came from New York. Their names were zanhósgwa and zagosw^dót. They were the ones that taught the Oneidas how to play music (?).

We used to get quite a few jobs long ago, We would (?go to) different towns some times we would be gone a few days at (?a time) . (?We) used to play at the different fairs and always on

the 4th (?of July). Those days they used to pay ten to each man. At that time (?).

We don't get any more jobs because there are so many (?) High Schools learning to play in the bands. At this time.

Oneida Nation Band sure could play. You could them any classical music and they could play it.

S6 Fred House to Stadler King.

Every since I was a little boy I remembered that the Oneidas always had a Band and they used to travel all the time. After awhile I became a member of the Band and once a man hired us to go and play at Menitowak (Manitowoc). We found the man who had a big tent put up, where we were to play for a show. Just then two men came there who were owners of the place, they told the man that he must pay twenty five dollars before he starts putting on a show. This man only had fifteen cents, so we Band boys donated until we had the twenty five dollars. As we done this most of us were then broke, and our meals had to be paid in cash, so we did not eat there but every mealtime we would get some bolgna and thats all we would eat. There are only a few of us Band boys left now and it will not be long when they will all be gone.

S1 Thomas Elm to Stadler King

Band.

Long ago the Oncida Indian Band were hired to play at a Fourth of July Celebration. When they got there they were put on a wagon fixed for them (?and) they got on and everything was made ready. The driver drove ahead and the Band started to play, the horses never heard a Band play so they got scared and started to run away.

The boys got off as best they could, some jumped off and some fell off (?) one of them who plays the Bass Drum was so excited he could not unbuckle the straps that hold the Bass Drum so he fell off with the Drum hanging onto him.

So the Oncida Indian Band got off the wagon many different ways.

G-25 Tom Elm to Guy Elm

The Oneida Band.

It has been a long time already, that the Oneidas had a band here on the reservation.

The first band that the Oneidas organized was called the Nation Band. The way they first got the instruments, was donated by the people. The money that they got from the U.S. government at that time was \$1.00 per head, and they used that to buy the band instruments.

Its about seventy years ago since the first band was organized. When the instrument got worn out, then they re-organized the band, and they changed the name to National Band.

So they been changing the name of the band, and the players. I finally joined the Band myself.

James Wheelock organized a traveling band and I went along. We went all over the country, we went through about fourteen states. When we was coming back towards their way, we had bad luck. Wilson Skenandore died, and we sent his body home. The band paid all the expenses. One hundred and fifty dollars.

About half of the members of that Band are living today and the rest have died.

This same Band, have played many times at the State Fair Milwaukee. It was the year of 1926 that the Band played there last.

From that time on we have been satisfied, just to play here, and the surrounding towns.

We took Scymour Bus, and went to Mineral Point to play there. We were there four days. Then we went to Pittsville was the name. We were there one day. They were having pawa at that place. The Indians sure had a good time. Then from there, we went to Milwaukee and

stayed there five days. It was during the Eagles Convention.

At the present time they call the Band the Oncida Band. The players (?re) getting old, those that are the best players and some of them are poor in health. And the young players are hired by different good bands away from here. So it seems kind of hard to have a band.

G-38 Mark Powless to Guy Elm

Long time ago, Nelson Metoxen organized an Oncida Band, and Indian dancers here in Oncida Reservation. It was at Two Rivers where they would go and join a show there, and so they hired out and went there. When they got there, he borrowed a big tent. This was the place, they would put on their show, the Band and the Indian dancers. They were two men, Oneidas, who were the best war dancers. And the way they were dressed up was something like this. They had beaded bands, silver, and different colors ribbons around their arm and legs, and also around their neck. Also they had small bells what they used on horses, tied around their legs. And on their heads, they had eagle's feathers war bonnet, and also buffalo's horns they had that too.

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