Joab Spencer Letters

Section 2, Pages 31 - 60

This correspondence from Joab Spencer to George W. Martin of the Kansas State Historical Society, deals with numerous issues related to Spencer's time as a missionary to the Shawnee Indians, including details of many of the people he worked with.

Creator: Spencer, Joab

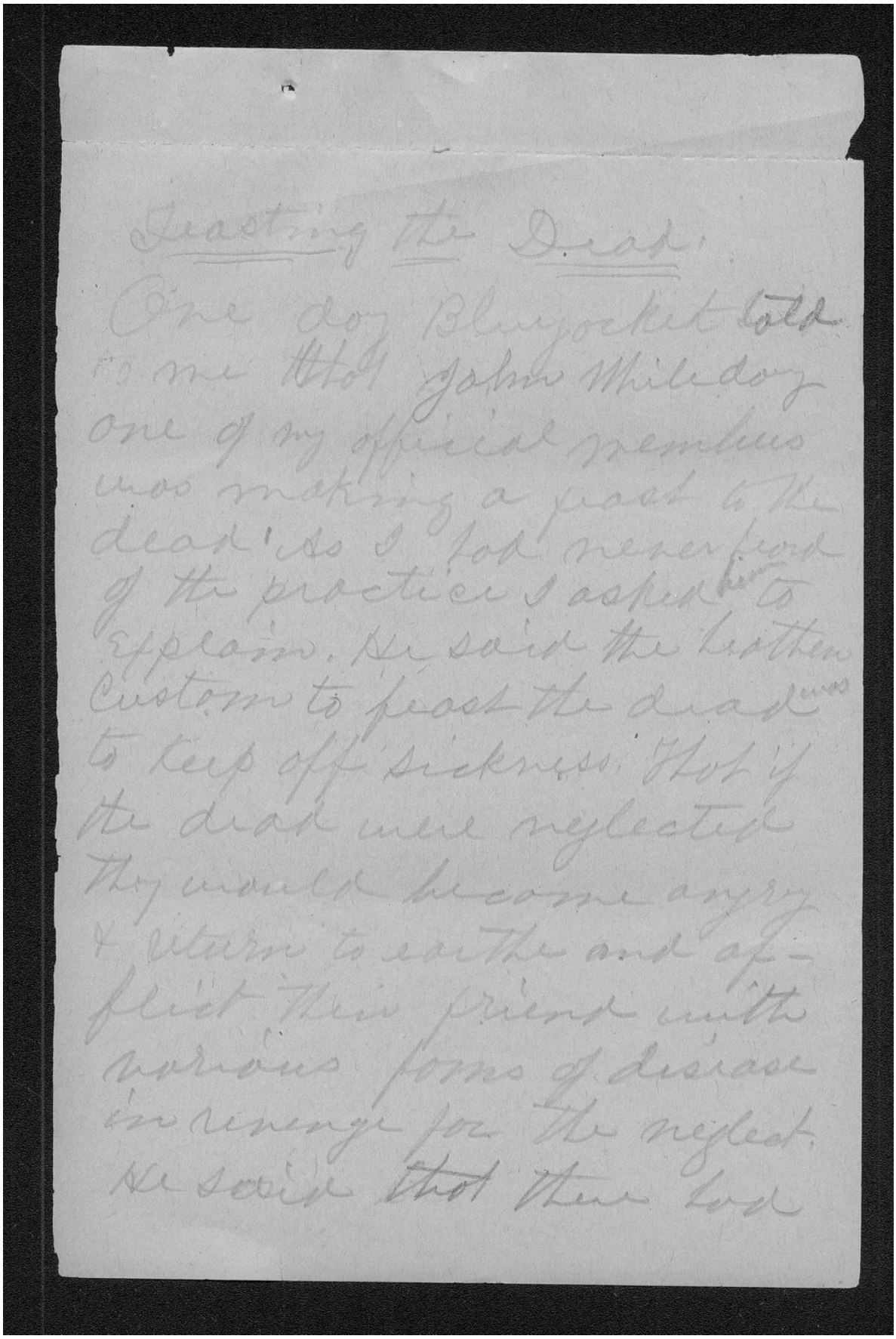
Date: February 17, 1906-August 01, 1907

Callnumber: Indian History Coll. #590 Box 7 Folder: Shawnee-Joab Spencer-Letters sent

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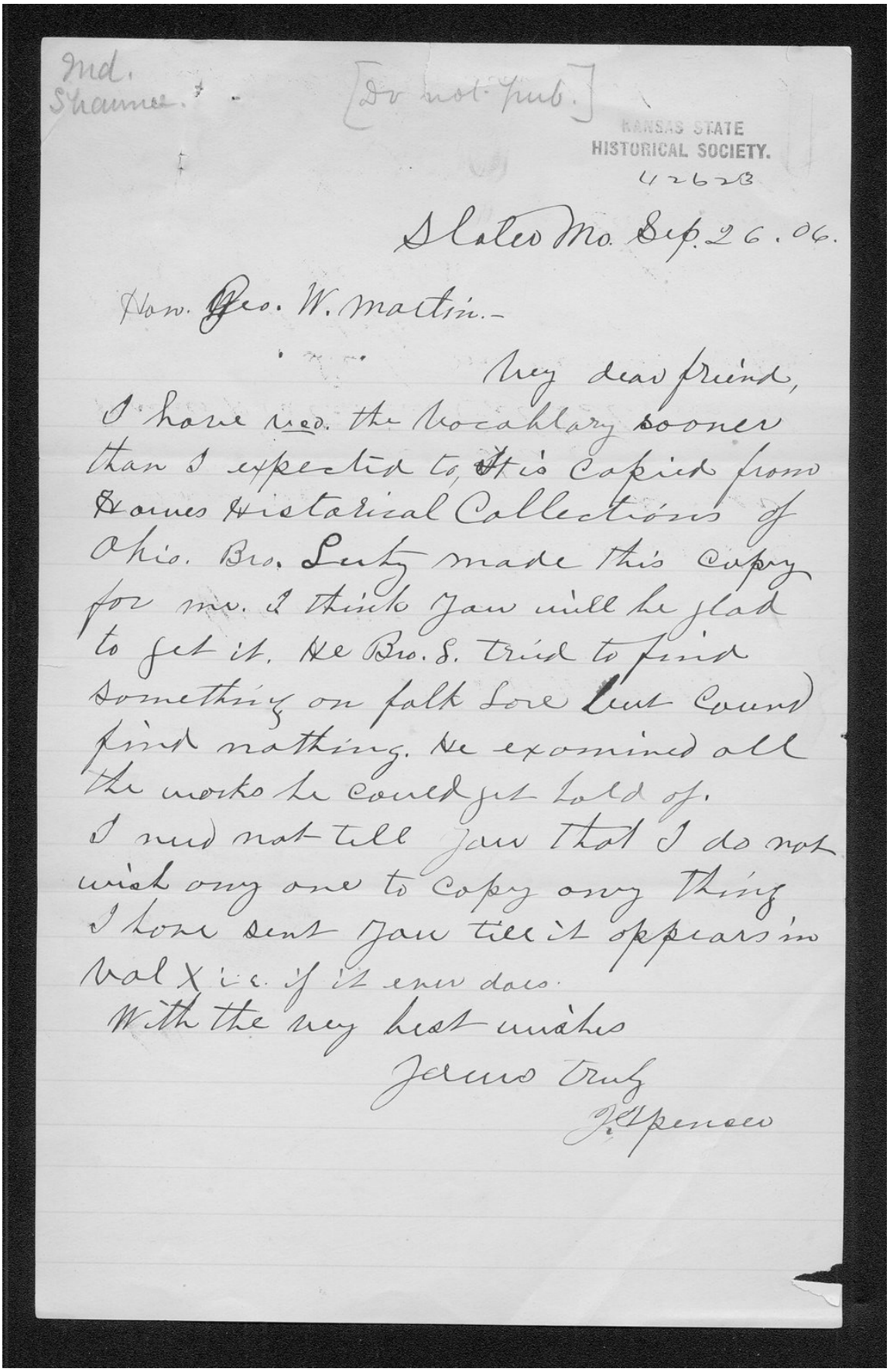
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Feasting the Dead.

One day Bluejacket told me that John Whiteday one of my official members was making a feast to the dead. As I had never heard of the practice I asked him to explain. He said the Indian Custom to feast the dead was to keep off sickness. That if the dead were neglected they would become angry & return to earth and afflict their friend with various forms of disease in revenge for the neglect. He said that their God



Ind.
Shawnee.

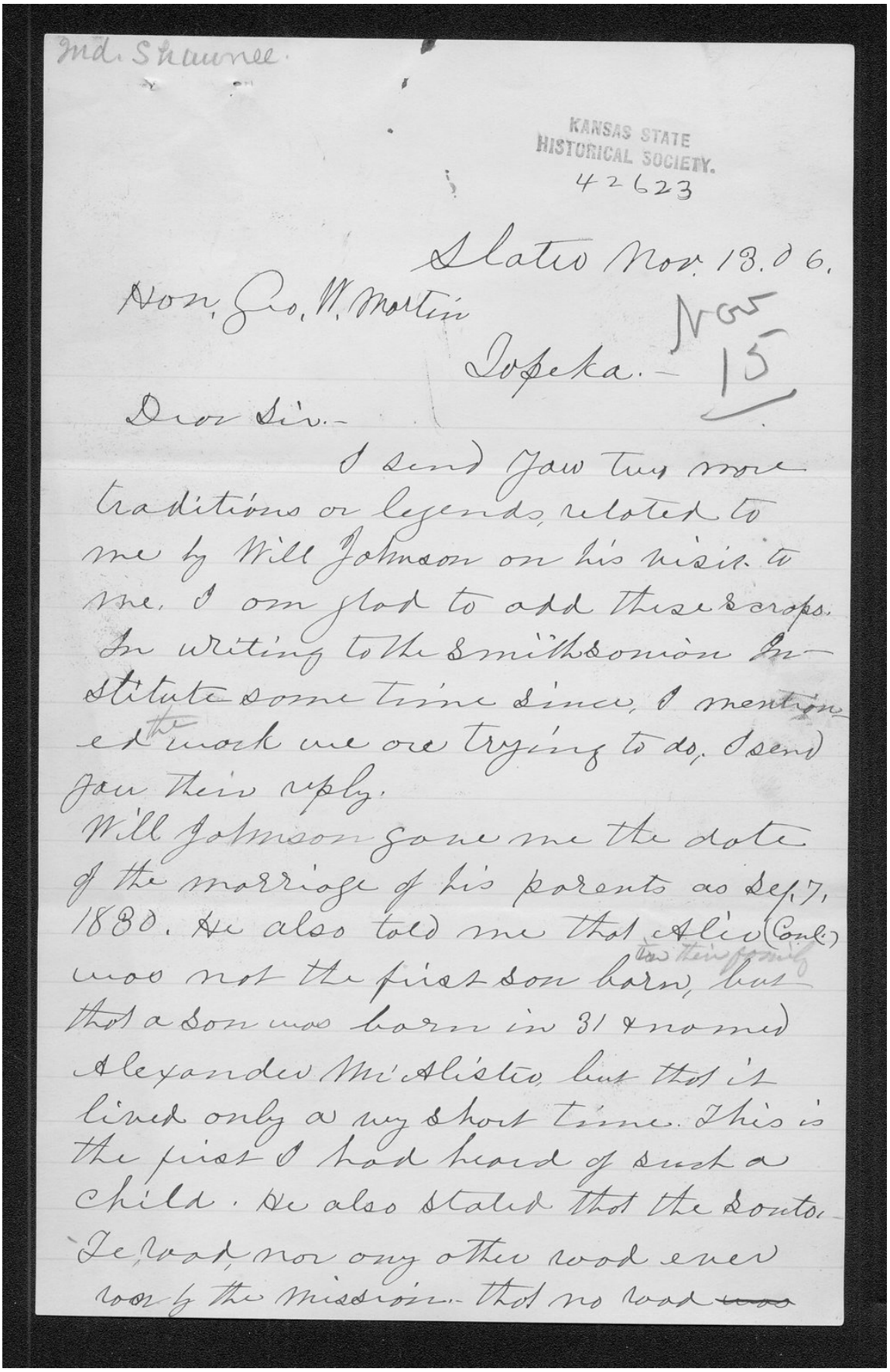
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KANSAS STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
4263

Slater Mo. Sep. 26. 06.

Hon. Geo. W. Martin.-

My dear friend,
I have rec'd. the Vocabulary sooner than I expected to. It is Copied from Stones Historical Collections of Ohio. Bro. Lusty made this copy for me. I think you will be glad to get it. He Bro. S. tried to find something on folk Lore but could find nothing. He examined all the works he could get hold of.
I need not tell you that I do not wish any one to copy any thing I have sent you till it appears in Vol X i.e. if it ever does.
With the very best wishes
Yours Truly
J. H. Spencer



Md. Shawnee.

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Alatoo Nov. 13. 06.

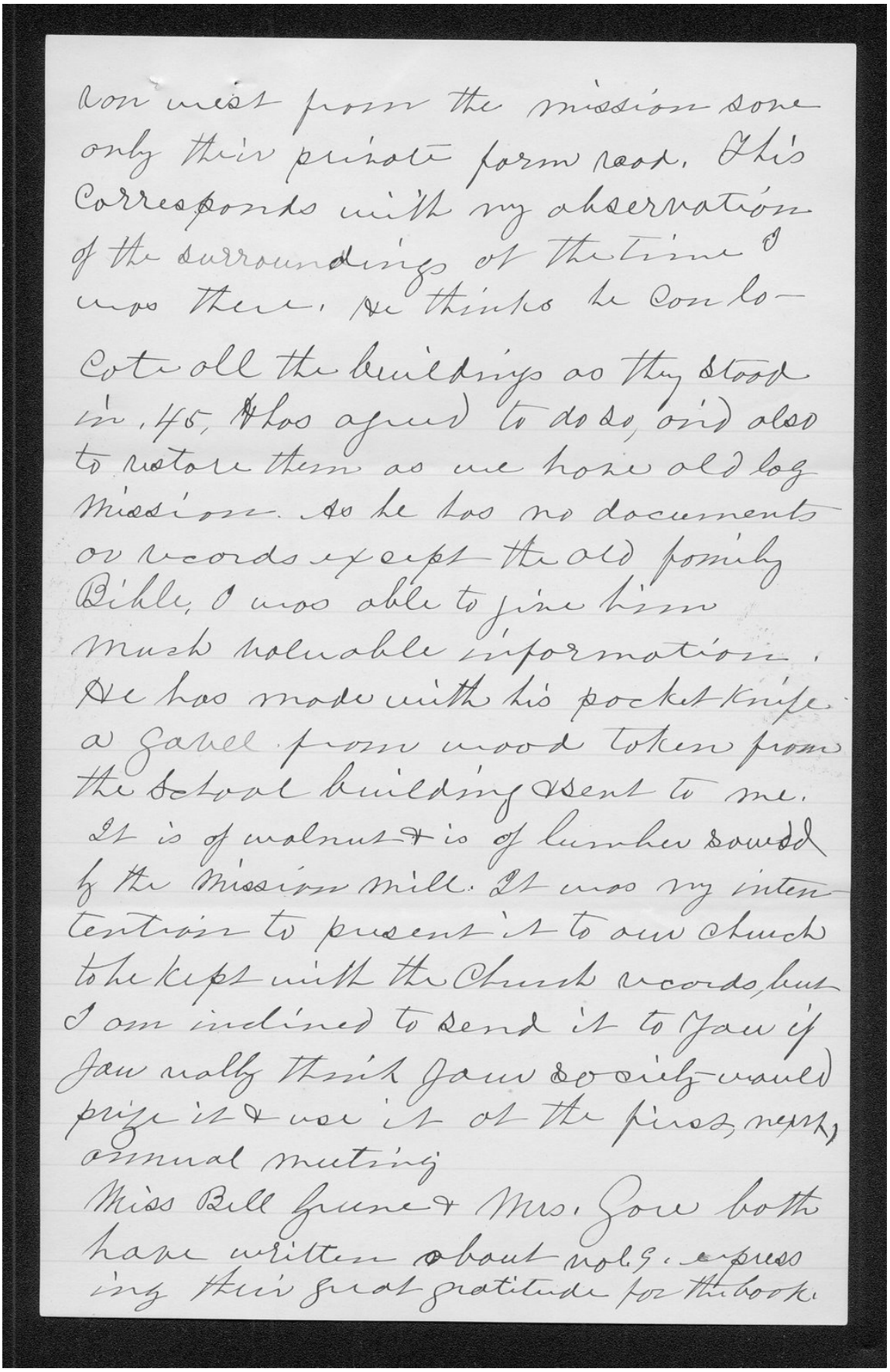
Hon. Geo. W. Martin
Topeka. —

NOV 15

Dear Sir. —

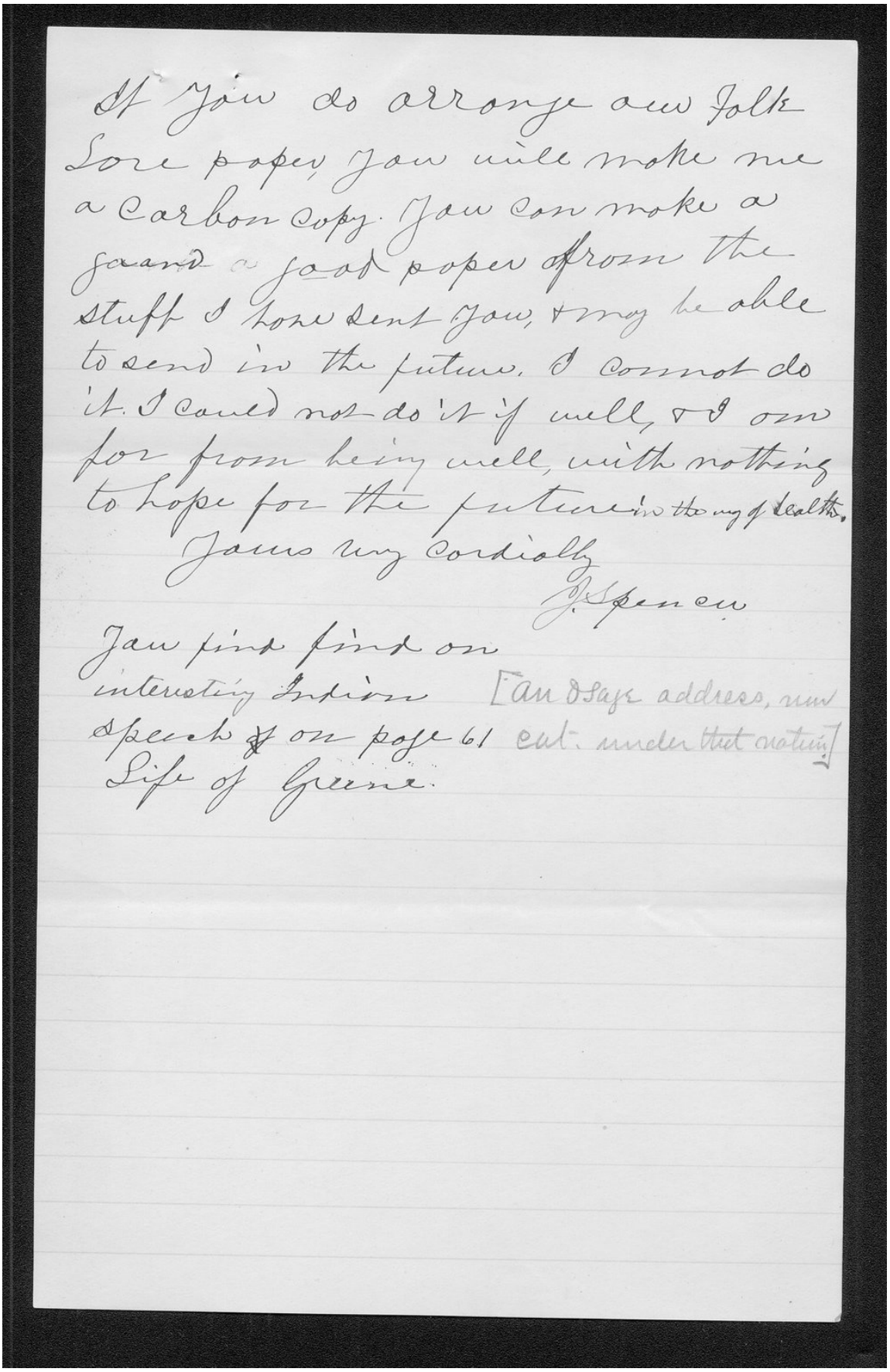
I send you two more traditions or legends, related to me by Will Johnson on his visit to me. I am glad to add these scraps. In writing to the Smithsonian Institute some time since, I mentioned the work we are trying to do, & send you their reply.

Will Johnson gave me the date of the marriage of his parents as Sep. 7, 1830. He also told me that Alice (Conk) was not the first son born, but that a son was born in 31 & named Alexander McAlister, but that it lived only a very short time. This is the first I had heard of such a child. He also stated that the Scotch Road, nor any other road ever work by the Missions — that no road ~~was~~



Ron west from the mission done only their private farm road. This corresponds with my observation of the surroundings at the time I was there. He thinks he could restore all the buildings as they stood in '46, & has agreed to do so, and also to restore them as we have old log Mission. As he has no documents or records except the old family Bible, I was able to give him much valuable information. He has made with his pocket knife a gavel from wood taken from the school building & sent to me. It is of walnut & is of lumber sawed by the Mission mill. It was my intention to present it to our church to be kept with the Church records, but I am inclined to send it to Jaw if Jaw really think Jaw would value prize it & use it at the first, next, annual meeting

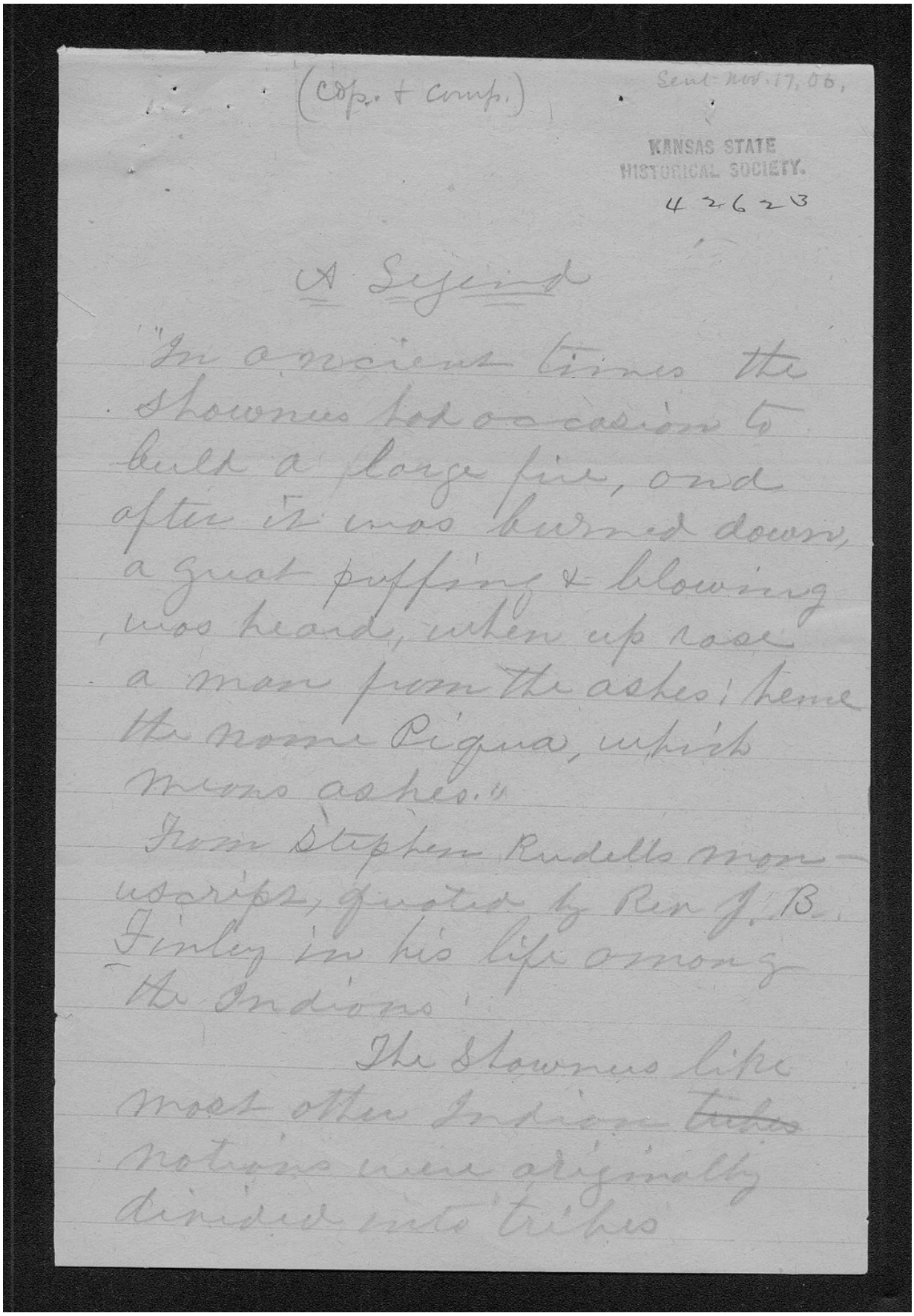
Miss Bill Grune & Mrs. Gow both have written about vol 9. expressing their great gratitude for the book.



If you do arrange our Folk Lore paper, you will make me a Carbon Copy. You can make a second or third paper from the stuff I have sent you, & may be able to send in the future. I cannot do it. I cannot do it if well, & I am far from being well, with nothing to hope for the future in the way of health.

Yours very Cordially
J. Spencer

You find find an interesting Indian Speech & on page 61 Life of Greene. [An Osage address, now cut: under that notice]



(Copy + Comp.)

Sent Nov. 17, 06.

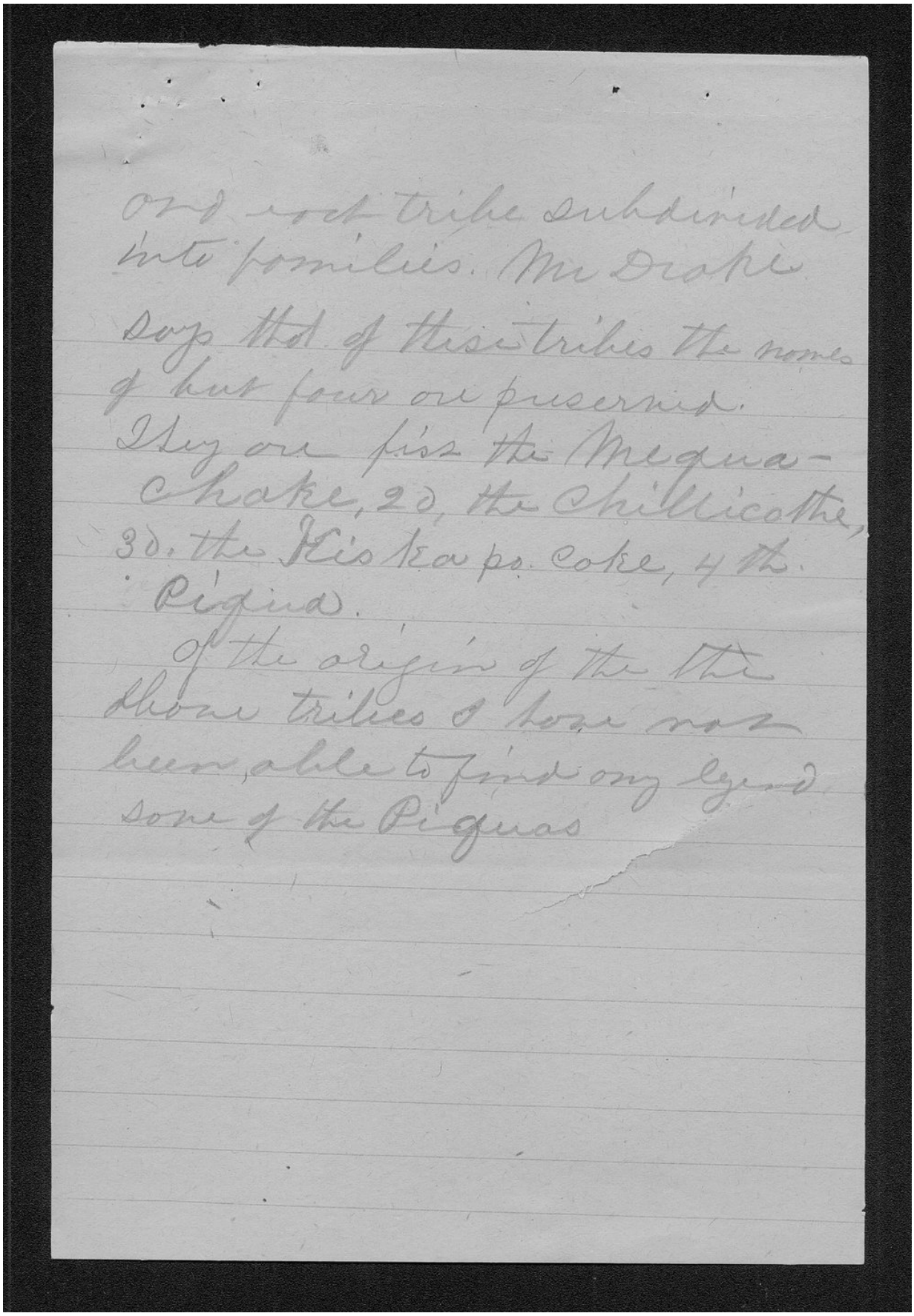
KANSAS STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
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A Legend

"In ancient times the Shawnees took occasion to build a large fire, and after it was burned down, a great puffing & blowing was heard, when up rose a man from the ashes: hence the name Pigua, which means ashes."

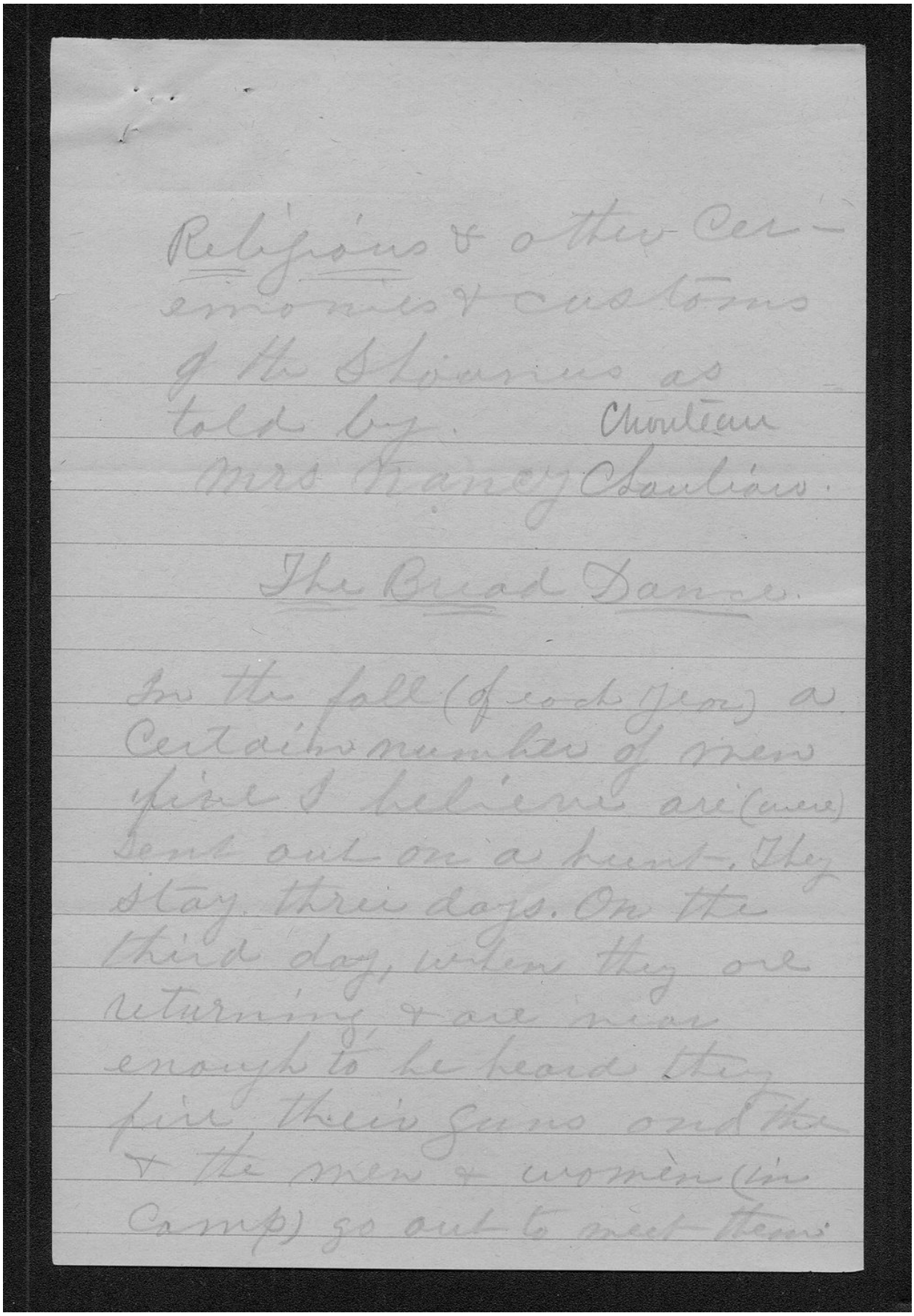
From Stephen Rudells manuscripts, quoted by Rev J. B. Finley in his life among the Indians.

The Shawnees like most other Indians ~~Tribes~~ nations were originally divided into tribes



and each tribe subdivided into families. Mr Drake says that of these tribes the names of but four are preserved. They are viz the Meguacake, 2d, the Chillicothe, 3d, the Kiskapoo Coke, 4th. Piqua.

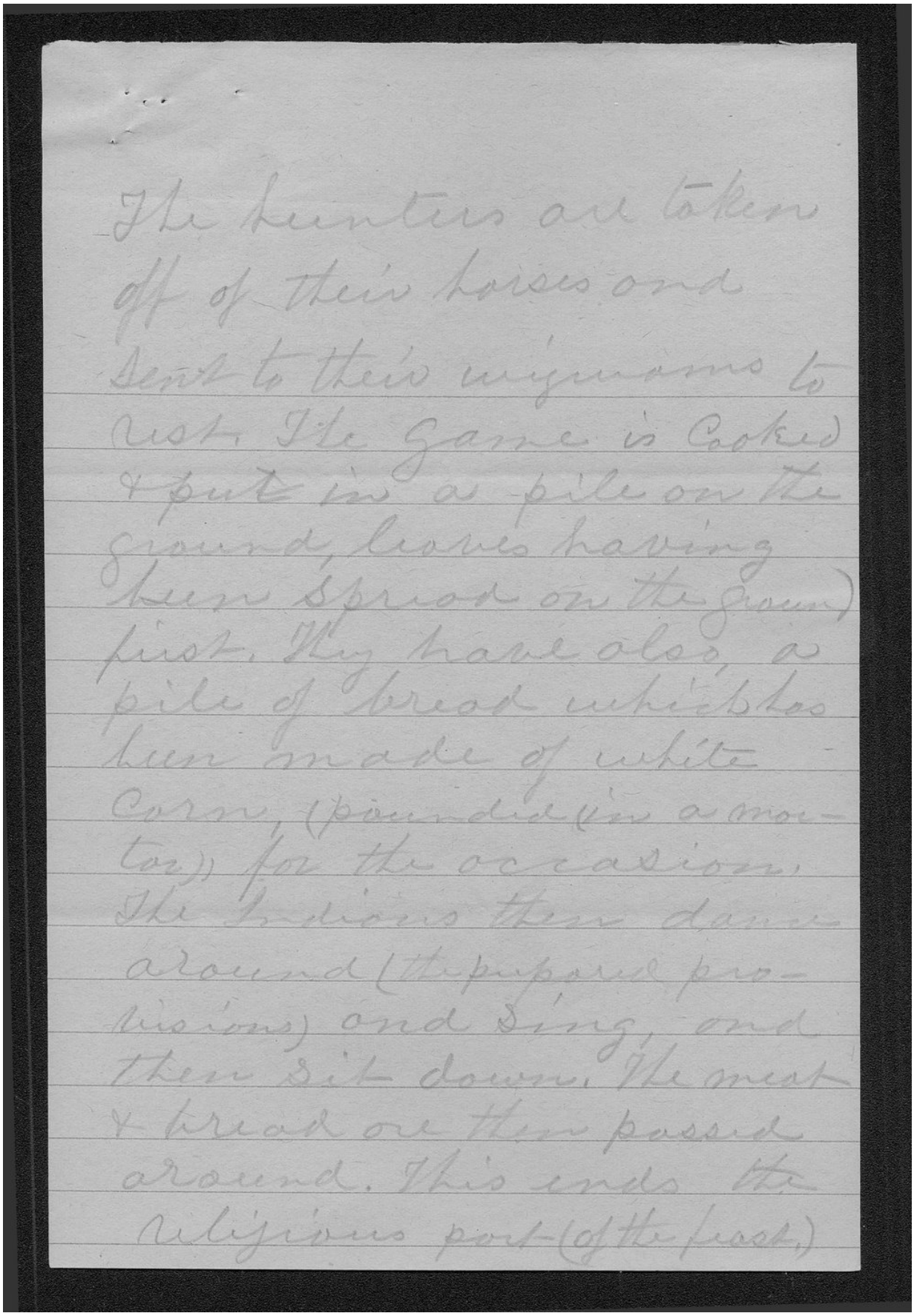
Of the origin of the three those tribes I have not been able to find any legend save of the Piquas



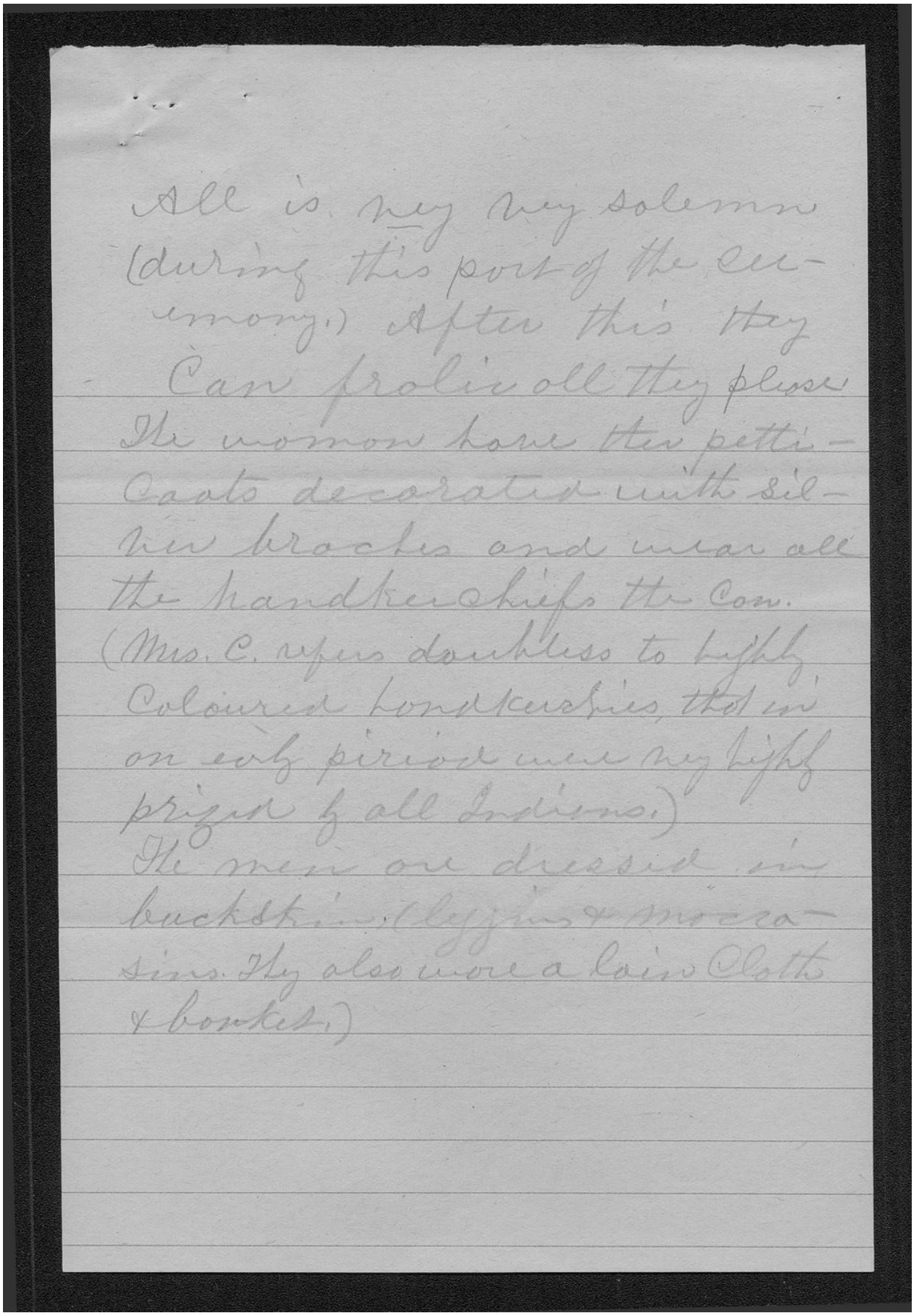
Religious & other Ceremonies & customs of the Siouxus as told by. Chouteau Mrs Nancy Saulsis.

The Bread Dance.

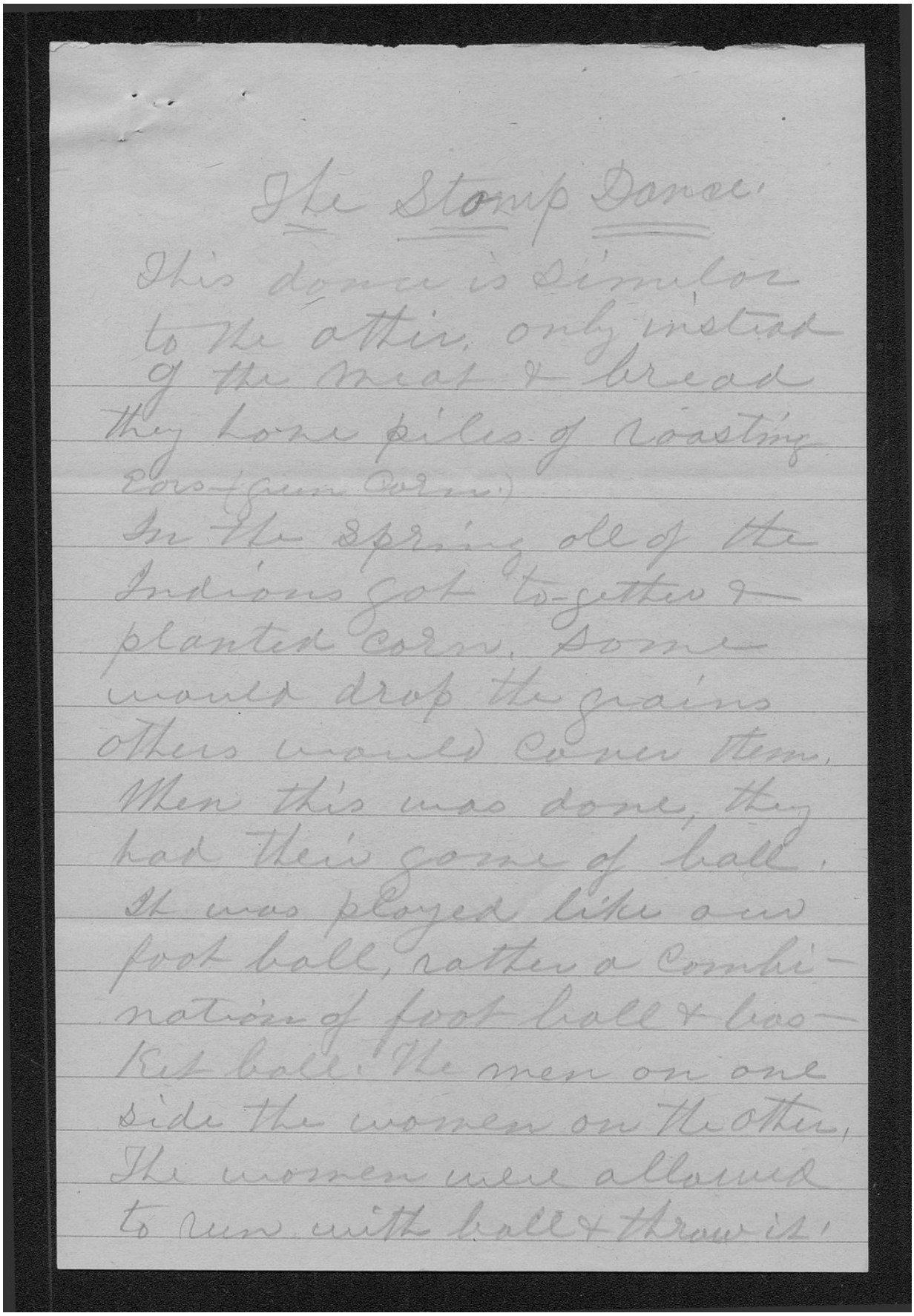
In the fall (of each year) a certain number of men first I believe are (were) sent out on a hunt. They stay three days. On the third day, when they are returning & are near enough to be heard they fire their guns and the & the men & women (in camp) go out to meet them.



The hunters are taken off of their horses and sent to their wigwams to rest. The game is cooked & put in a pile on the ground, leaves having been spread on the ground first. They have also a pile of bread which has been made of white corn, (pounded in a mortar) for the occasion. The Indians then dance around (the piled provisions) and sing, and then sit down. The meat & bread are then passed around. This ends the religious part (of the feast.)



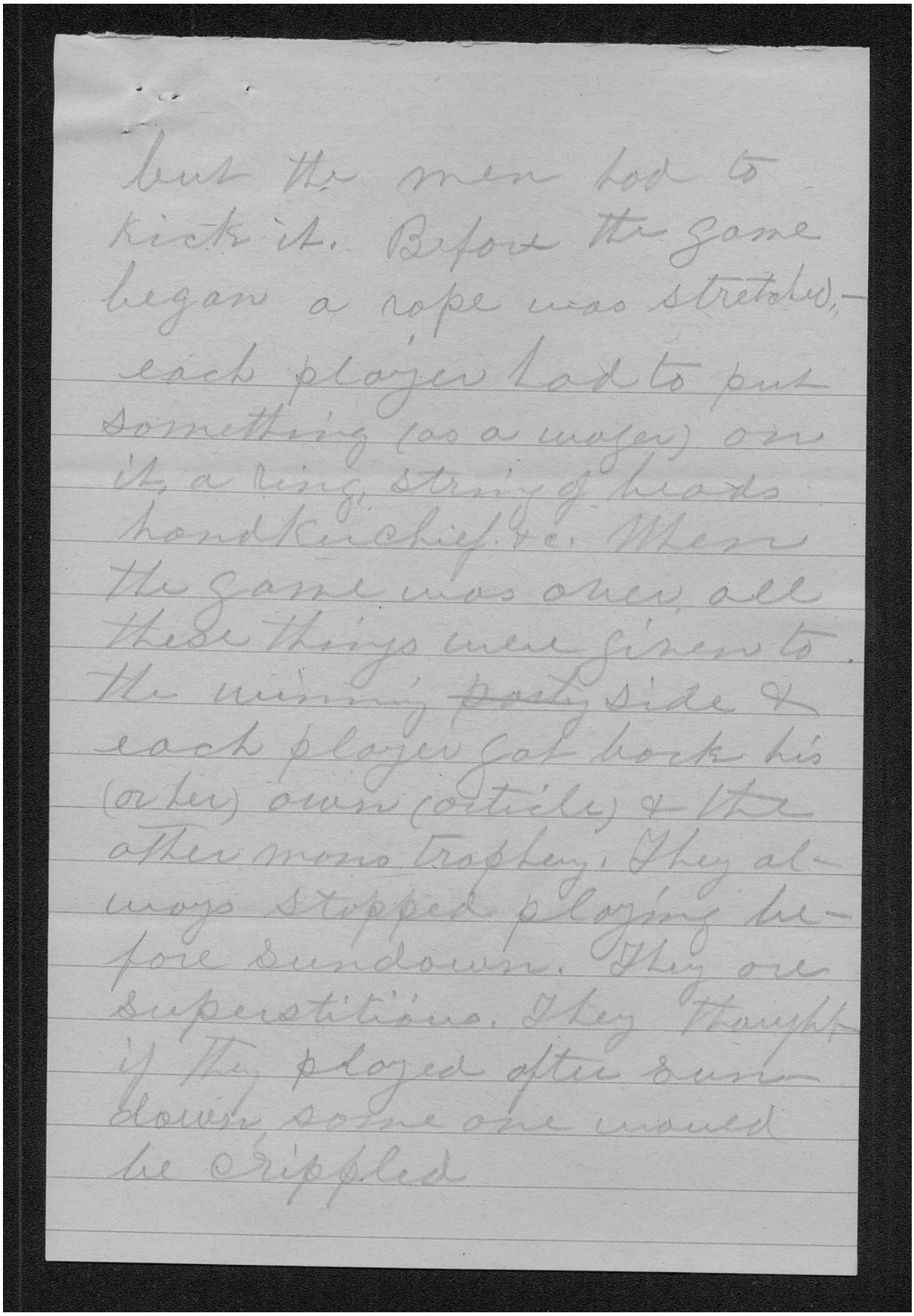
All is my very solemn (during this part of the ceremony.) After this they Can frolic all they please The women have their petticoats decorated with silver brooches and wear all the handkerchiefs they can. (Mrs. C. says doubtless to light Coloured handkerchiefs, that in an early period were my light pride of all Indians.) The men are dressed in buckskin (leggins & moccasins. They also wear a loin Cloth & bonket.)



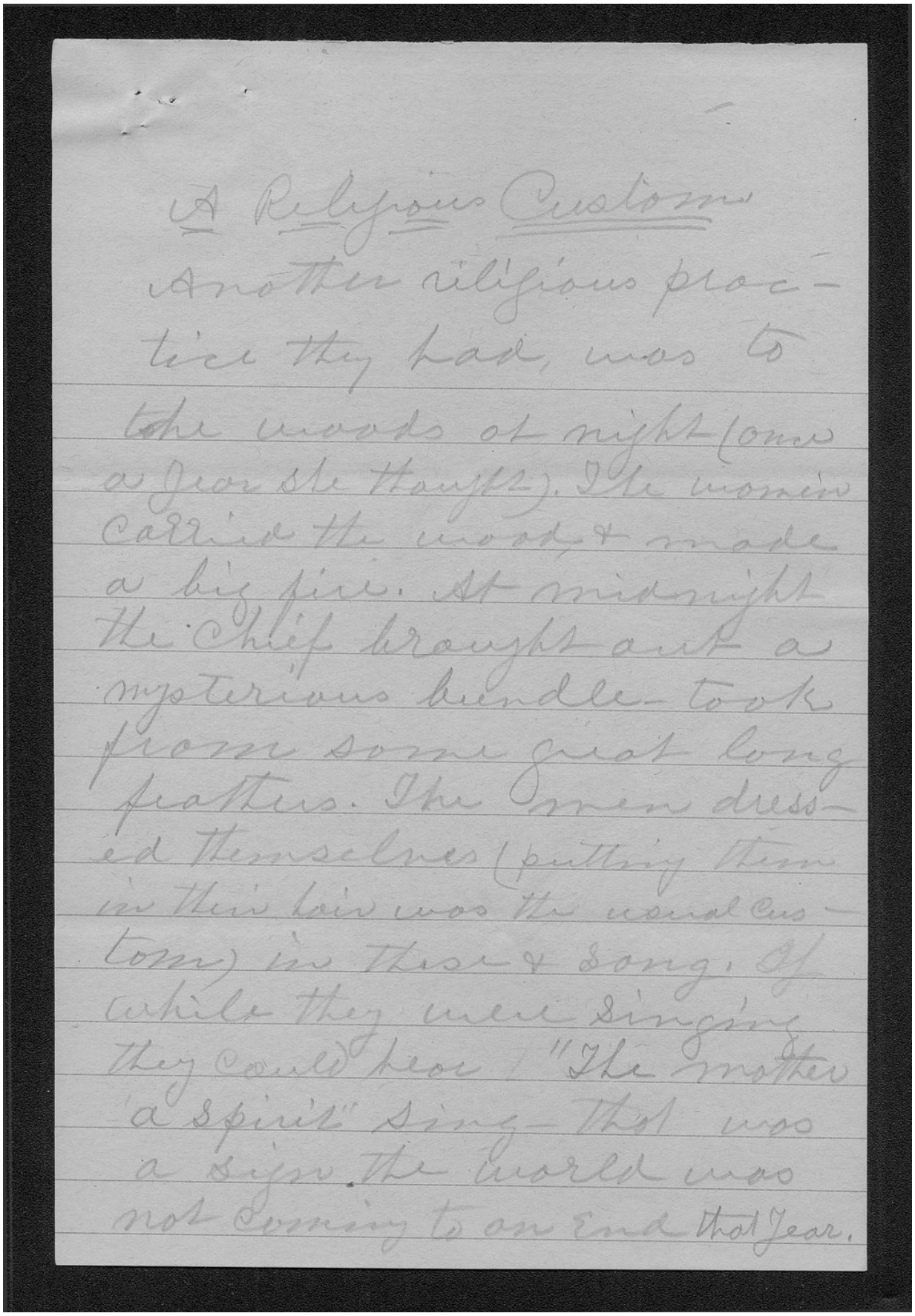
The Stomp Dance.

This dance is similar to the other, only instead of the meat & bread they have piles of roasting ears (green corn).

In the spring all of the Indians got together & planted corn. Some would drop the grains others would cover them. When this was done, they had their game of ball. It was played like our foot ball, rather a combination of foot ball & basket ball. The men on one side the women on the other. The women were allowed to run with ball & throw it.

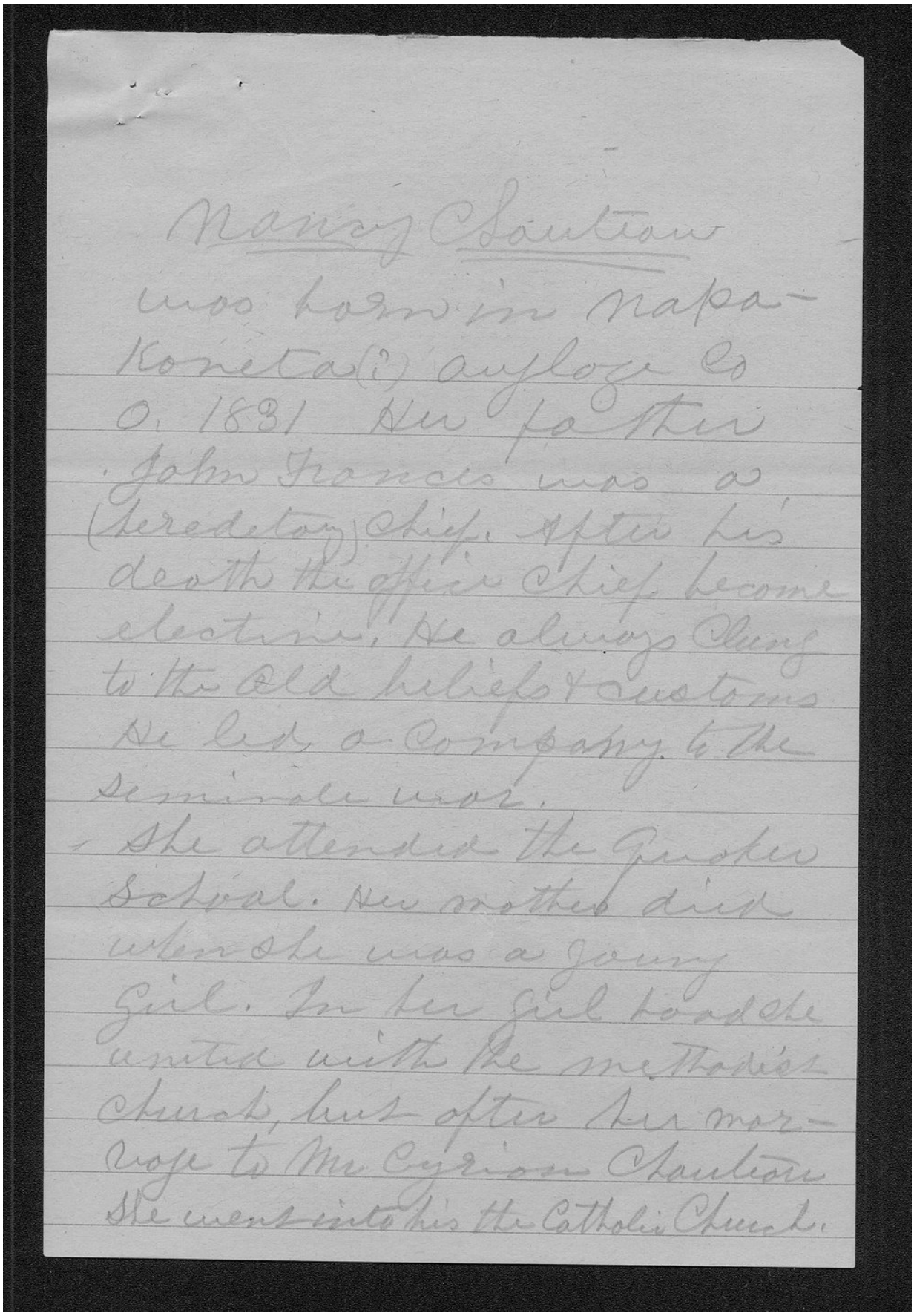


but the men had to kick it. Befor the game began a rope was stretched, each player had to put something (as a wager) on it, a ring, string of beads handkerchief &c. When the game was over, all these things were given to the winning ~~party~~ side & each player got back his (or her) own (article) & the other more trophys. They always stopped playing before Sundown. They are superstitious. They thought if they played after Sundown some one would be crippled



A Religious Custom

Another religious practice they had, was to the woods at night (one a year she thought). The women carried the wood & made a big fire. At midnight the Chief brought out a mysterious bundle took from some great long feathers. The men dressed themselves (putting them in their hair was the usual custom) in these & sang. If while they were singing they could hear "The mother a spirit" sing - that was a sign the world was not coming to an end that year.



Nancy Chouteau
was born in Napa-
Koneta(?) Ayloya Co
O. 1831 Her father
John Francis was a
(Seredetan) Chief. After his
death the office Chief became
elective. He always clung
to the old beliefs & customs
He led a Company to the
Seminole war.
She attended the Quaker
School. Her mother died
when she was a young
Girl. In her girl hood she
united with the methodist
Church, but after her mar-
riage to Mr Cyrion Chouteau
She went into his the Catholic Church.

since her husbands
death she has lived with
her Children. Her home is
now with a daughter in
Kansas City Mo. She is a
regular attendant at Church
Last year she made a
trip to California &
Ariz. She is in excellent
health & is full possession
of all her faculties

Md.
Shawnee

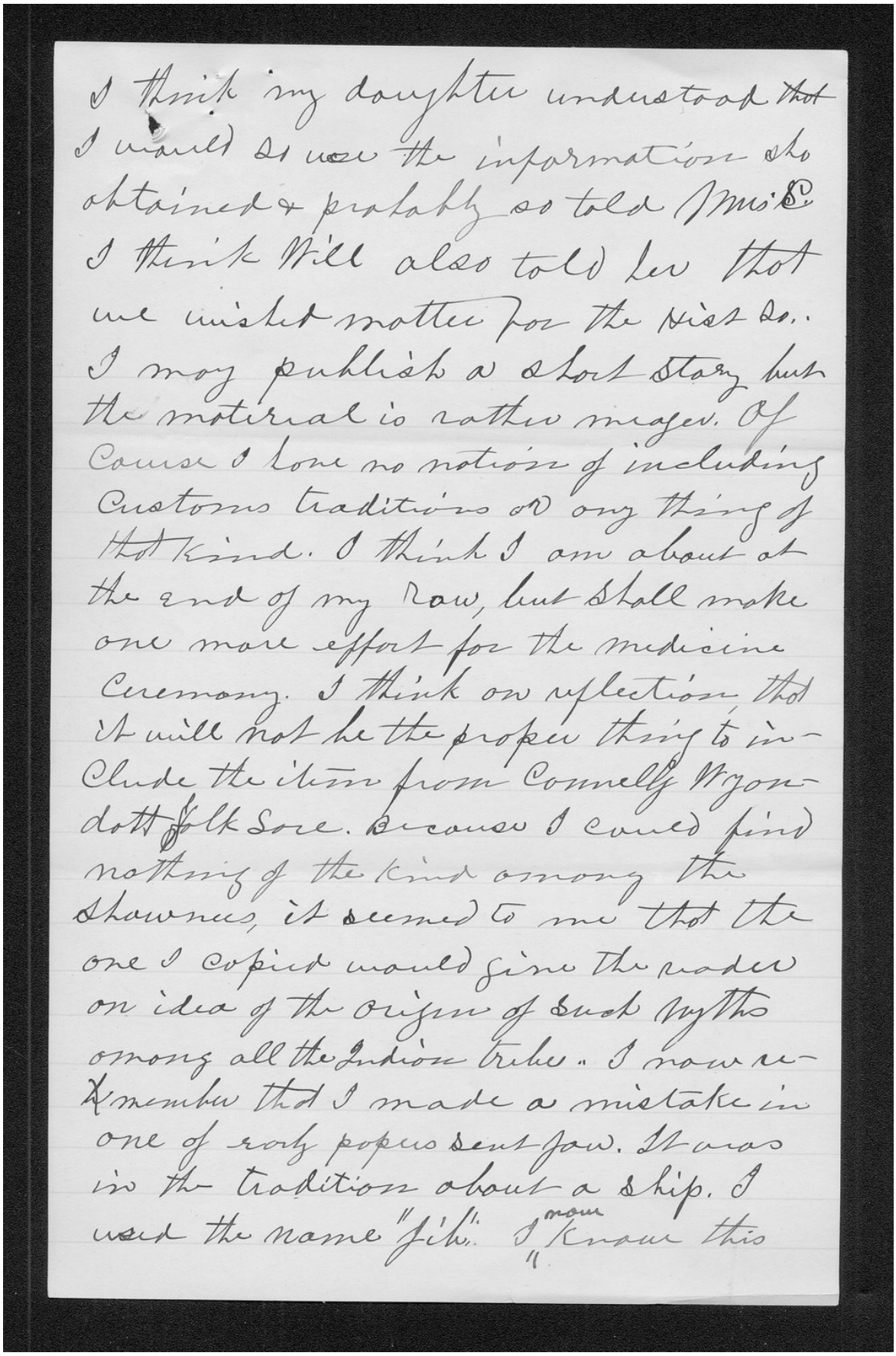
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Ans Dec 12

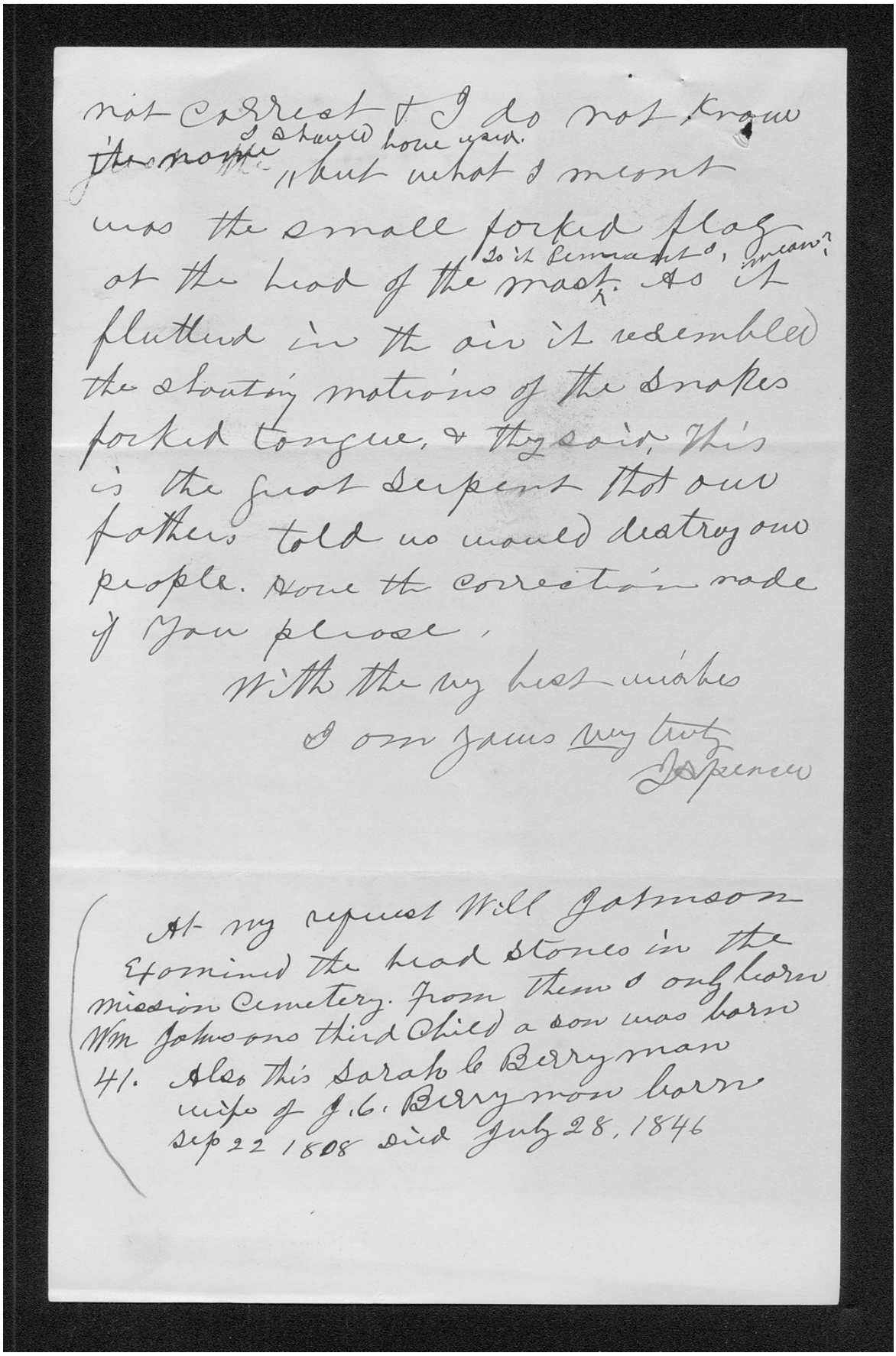
Slater Mo. Dec 11. 06.

Dear friend Martin. —

Jaw kind favor & Photo both rec'd. I thank Jaw for both. The photo I prize highly. The Nancy Lantron letter comes in with last batch sent in last one. After my daughter interviewed her, & had secured the three dances, it seems that for some reason she did not wish her name to be in connection with them. While her request was made with the understanding, probably that the interview would appear in the Adv. I think she would not like for it to appear in our paper. I am sorry that she objects. When I asked Will Johnson to see her I told him I would write a story of her if I could get material enough.



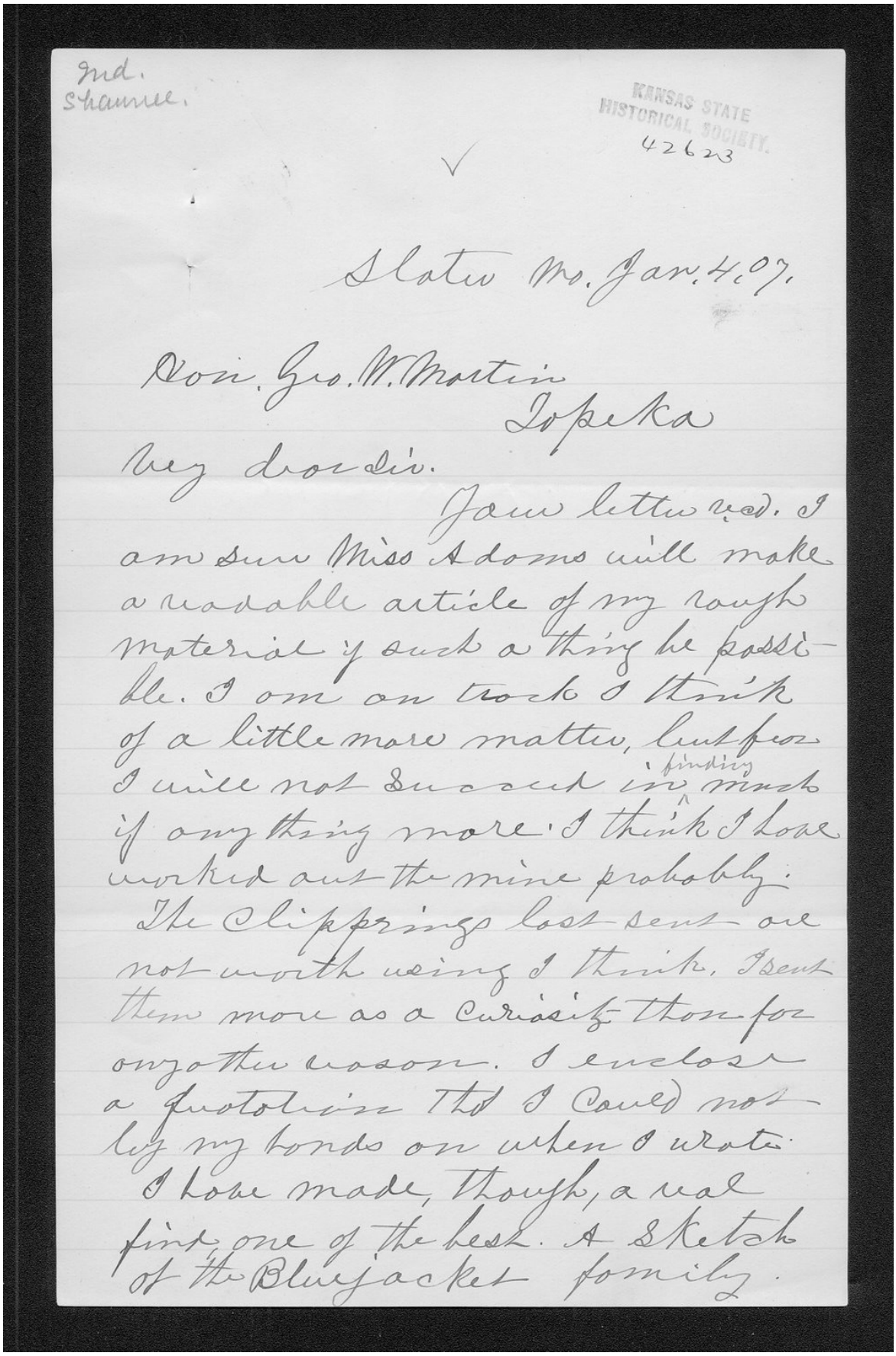
I think my daughter understood that I would do use the information she obtained & probably so told Mrs. C. I think Will also told Lew that we visited matter for the first Do.. I may publish a short story but the material is rather meager. Of Course I have no notion of including Customs traditions or any thing of that kind. I think I am about at the end of my row, but shall make one more effort for the medicine Ceremony. I think on reflection that it will not be the proper thing to include the item from Connelly Wyandott folk Lore. Because I could find nothing of the kind among the Shawnees, it seemed to me that the one I copied would give the reader an idea of the origin of such myths among all the Indian tribes. I now remember that I made a mistake in one of early papers sent Jaw. It was in the tradition about a ship. I used the name "Jib". I now know this



not correct & I do not know the name I should have given. But what I meant was the small forked flag at the head of the mast. As it fluttered in the air it resembled the skooting motions of the snakes forked tongue, & they said, This is the great serpent that our fathers told us would destroy our people. Done the correction made if you please.

With the my best wishes
I am James very truly
J. Spencer

At my request Will Johnson examined the head stones in the Mission Cemetery. From them I only learn Wm Johnsons third child a son was born
41. Also this Sarah C Berryman wife of J. C. Berryman born Sep 22 1808 died July 28, 1846



Ind.
Shawnee.

KANSAS STATE
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Slater Mo. Jan. 4. 07.

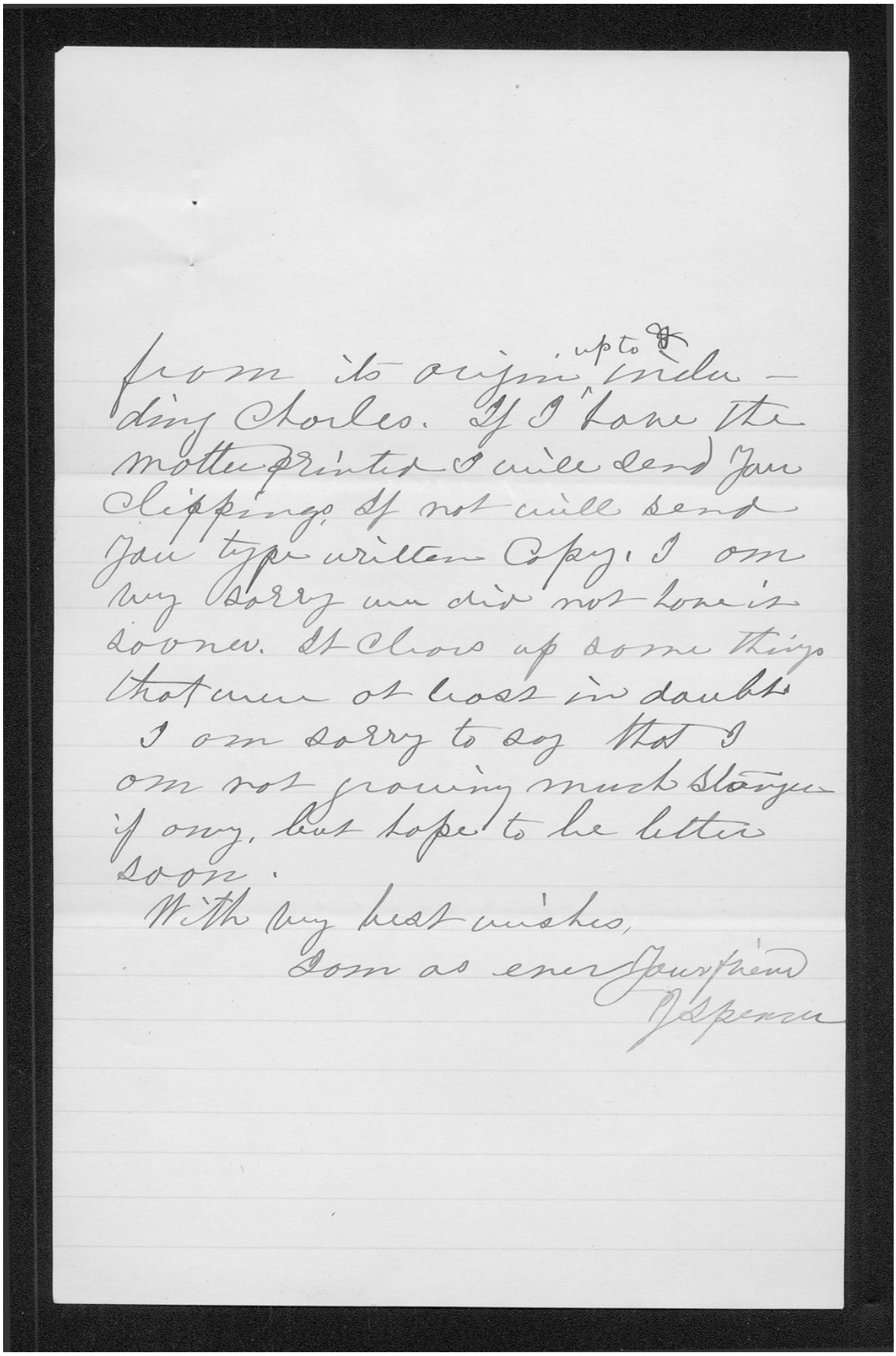
Hon. Geo. W. Martin
Topeka

Hey dear sir.

Jaw letter rec'd. I am sure Miss Adams will make a readable article of my rough material if such a thing be possible. I am on track I think of a little more matter, but for I will not succeed in finding much if any thing more. I think I have worked out the mine probably.

The Clippings last sent are not worth using I think. I sent them more as a curiosity than for any other reason. I enclose a protection Tht I could not lay my hands on when I wrote.

I have made, though, a real find, one of the best. A Sketch of the Bluejacket family.



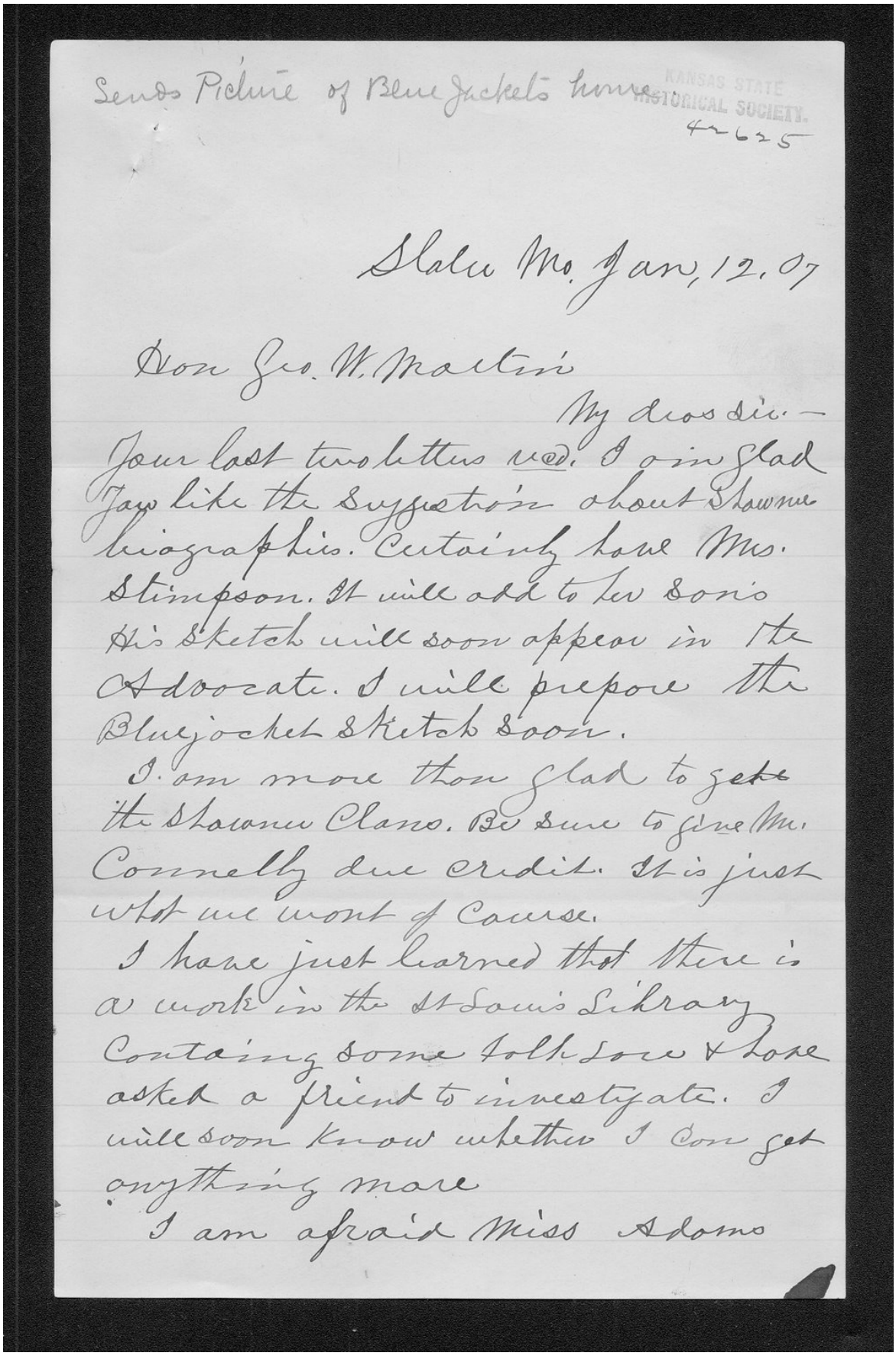
from its origin up to ~~date~~ ending Stories. If I have the matter printed I will send You Clippings if not will send You type written Copy. I am very Sorry we did not hear from You sooner. It Clears up some things that were at loss in doubt.

I am sorry to say that I am not growing much stronger if any, but hope to be better soon.

With my best wishes,

Yours as ever Your friend

J. Spencer



Sends Picture of Blue Jacket's home

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

4625

Slater Mo. Jan. 12. 07

Hon Geo. W. Martin

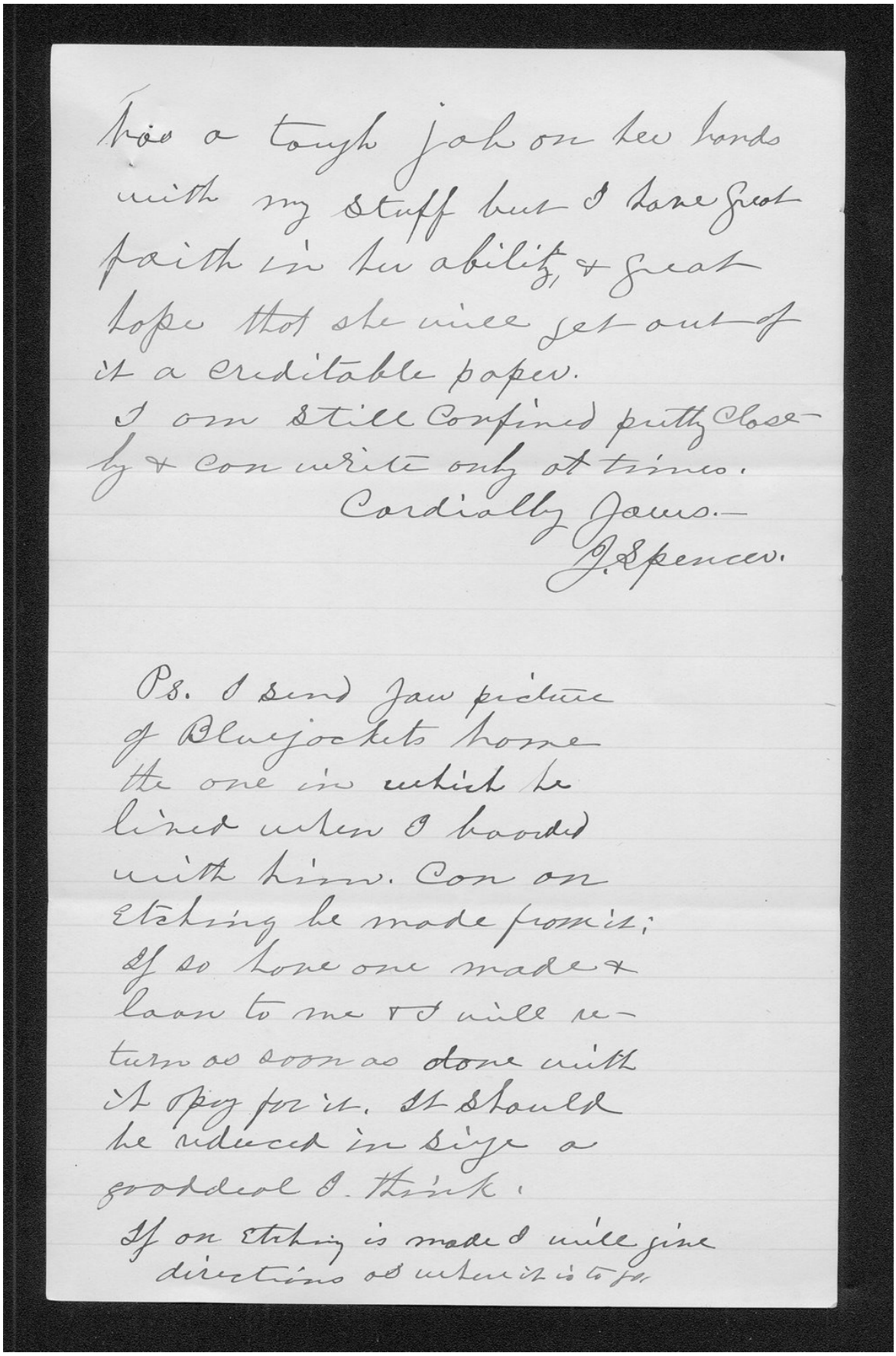
My dear Sir. —

Your last two letters rec'd. I am glad you like the suggestion about Shawnee biographies. Certainly have Mrs. Stimpson. It will add to her Son's. His Sketch will soon appear in the Advocate. I will prepare the Blue Jacket Sketch soon.

I am more than glad to get the Shawnee Clans. Be sure to give Mr. Connelly due credit. It is just what we want of Course.

I have just learned that there is a work in the St Louis Library Containing some folk lore & Love asked a friend to investigate. I will soon know whether I can get anything more

I am afraid Miss Adams



Has a tough job on her hands with my stuff but I have great faith in her ability & great hope that she will get out of it a creditable paper.
I am still confined pretty closely & can write only at times.
Cordially Yours.—
J. Spencer.

Ps. I send Jaw picture of Bluejackets home the one in which he lived when I boarded with him. Can an etching be made from it; If so have one made & loan to me & I will return as soon as done with it. Pay for it. It should be reduced in size a good deal I think.
If an etching is made I will give directions as when it is to be

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 42628

2nd Shawnee

Slater Mo. Jan. 21 07.

Hon Leo W Martin.
Topeka.

One day late but not too late to wish you a happy & profitable New Year. I do not send you this clipping because I think there is anything in it but because I do not. It is simply impossible for a red man to come from a white man. The purest white blood as I think. Indian blood & white only mixes it does not coalesce.

THE "LOST TEN TRIBES" AGAIN.

Creek Indians Think They Are Descended From One of Them.

CHICKASHA, I. T.—"The Indians are the most superstitious people on earth," said a man a few days ago who had taught for years in a Creek Indian school. "They have myths and legends by the score. Some of them are as beautiful and picturesque as the legends of the old Greeks and Romans.

"I boarded for five years with a Creek Indian who had been educated at Carlisle. He knew the Indian legends and used to tell them to me and his children as we sat around the fireplace of an evening. You know the Creeks have a legend that they are one of the lost ten tribes of Israel. This Indian was the son of a medicine man who was once great and powerful in the tribe. All his knowledge of Indian lore came from his father, the medicine man.

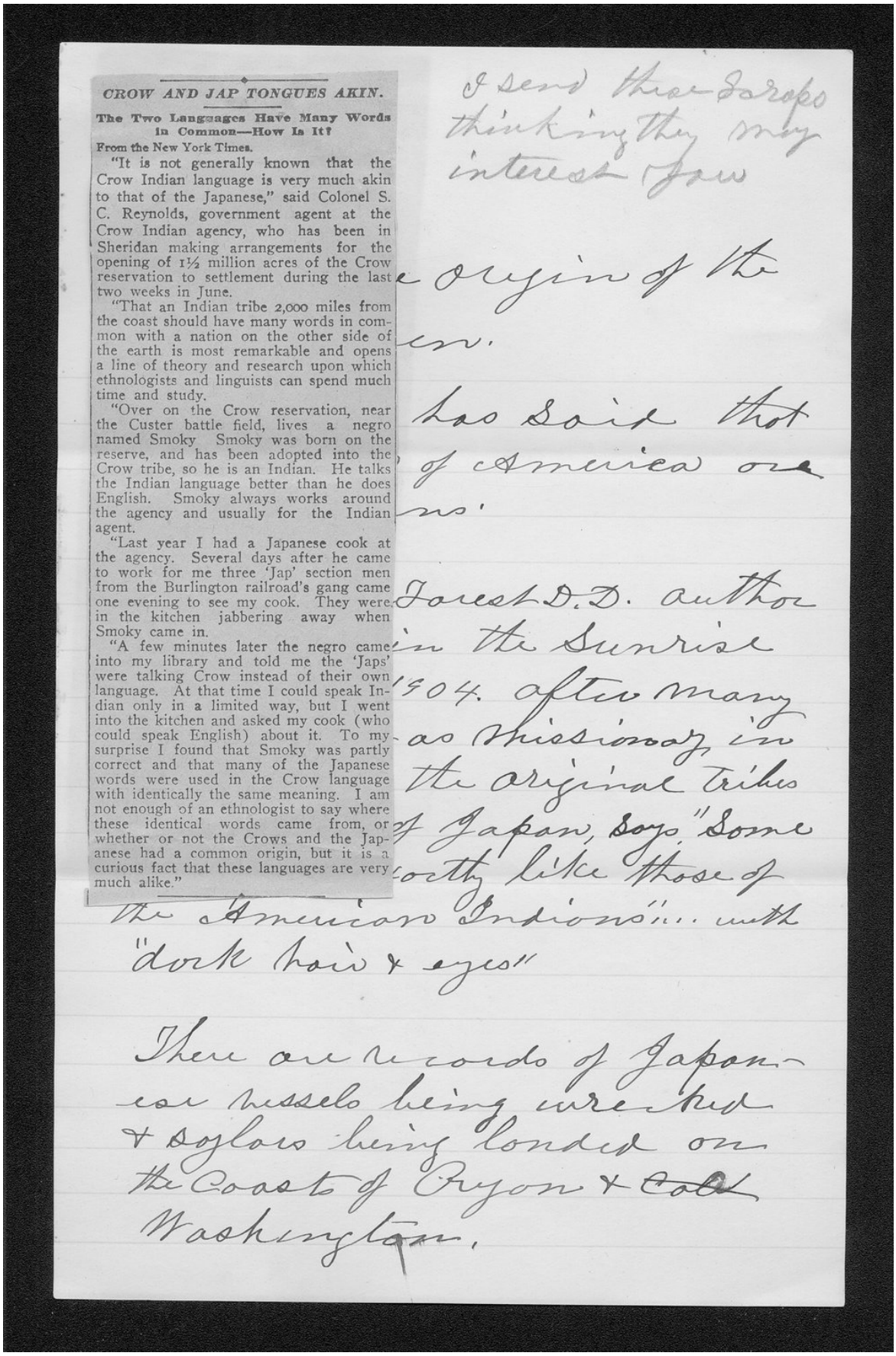
"He repeated the tales to me as his father had told them to him, except that the impressiveness of the Indian sorcerer with his long trailing robe of eagle quills, the conjuring wand and the fantastic and the weird surroundings of the Indian teepee on a lonely plain were absent. The elements must be in the right mood for the medicine man to disclose the secrets of his race.

"The storm spirit and the thunder god must be abroad when the Genesis of the Creeks was repeated. The medicine man would send out his summons and the likeliest and the bravest of the tribe would be gathered in his teepee in an unfrequented gulch.

"This medicine man said that the Creeks were one of the lost ten tribes of Israel. The legend ran that they were once associated with the other tribes and that they had wandered and become separated. They wandered for years far to the north until they came to a sea. There they built boats and embarked. They steered their course by the wand of a medicine man. Each morning he went to his teepee and set up his divining rod and told them which direction to pursue. They followed this rod from a warm country to a cold sea on which they set sail. The sea was crossed and then they traveled toward the South again.

"The Creeks have a covenant of their tribe which is kept with the chiefs. No one but the elect is ever permitted to see this guarantee of the genuineness of the Creek faith and origin.

Many Bible students and ethnologists believe that the Indians of America are descendants of the "Lost Ten Tribes of Israel." These tribes wandered away from Palestine and were never again heard of. Some believe that they wandered to the west shore of the Pacific and northward along it to the Behring straits, which they crossed to Alaska and then wandered southward and were dispersed throughout America in the ages that followed.



I send this & a copy thinking they may interest Jas

origin of the

en.

has said that

of America on

ns.

Forest D.D. author in the Sunrise 1904. after many as Missionary in the original tribes of Japan, says "Some what like those of the American Indians"... with "dark hair & eyes"

There are records of Japanese vessels being wrecked & sailors being landed on the Coast of Oregon & ~~Cal~~ Washington.

CROW AND JAP TONGUES AKIN.

The Two Languages Have Many Words in Common—How Is It?

From the New York Times.

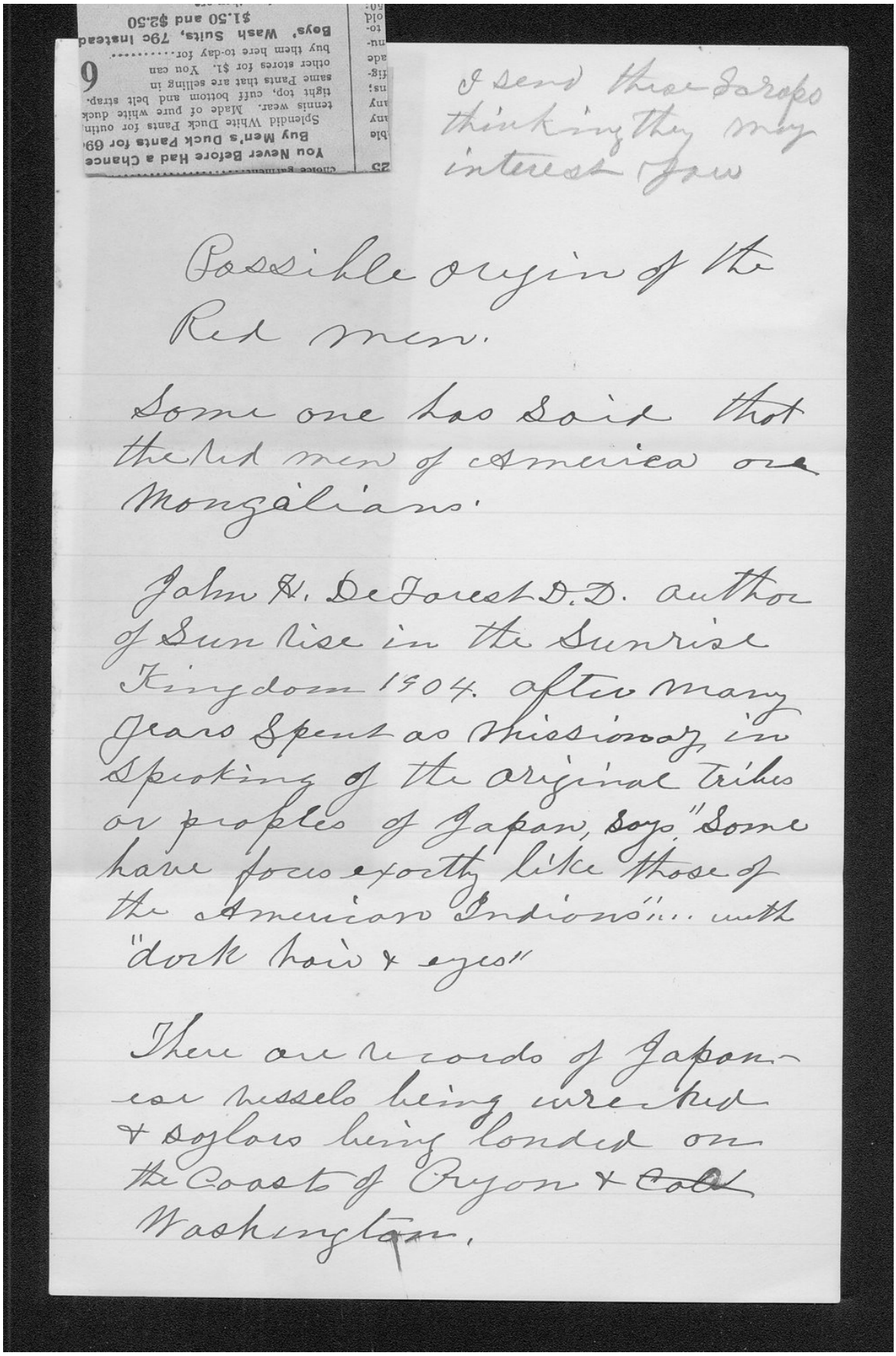
"It is not generally known that the Crow Indian language is very much akin to that of the Japanese," said Colonel S. C. Reynolds, government agent at the Crow Indian agency, who has been in Sheridan making arrangements for the opening of 1½ million acres of the Crow reservation to settlement during the last two weeks in June.

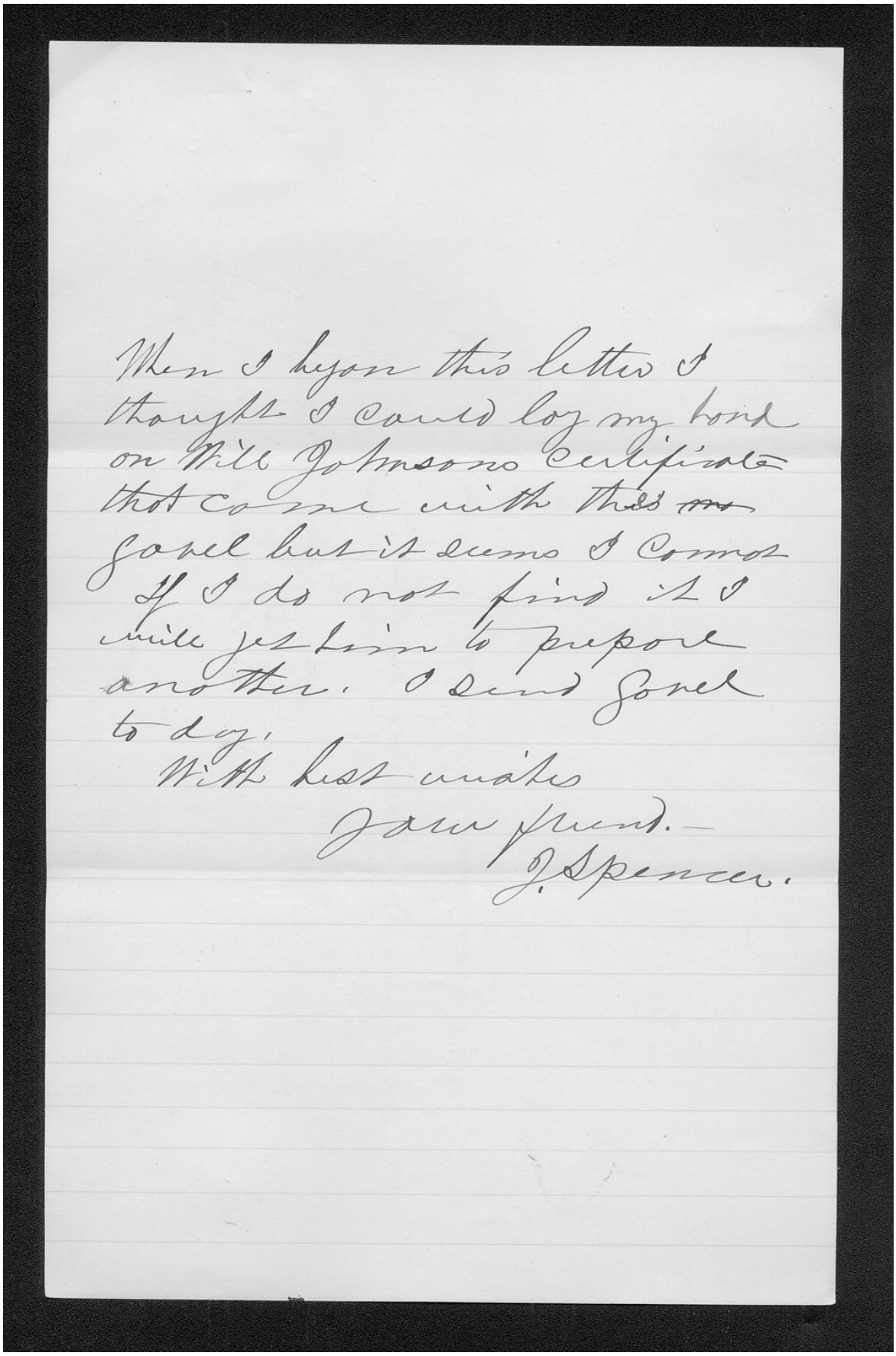
"That an Indian tribe 2,000 miles from the coast should have many words in common with a nation on the other side of the earth is most remarkable and opens a line of theory and research upon which ethnologists and linguists can spend much time and study.

"Over on the Crow reservation, near the Custer battle field, lives a negro named Smoky Smoky was born on the reserve, and has been adopted into the Crow tribe, so he is an Indian. He talks the Indian language better than he does English. Smoky always works around the agency and usually for the Indian agent.

"Last year I had a Japanese cook at the agency. Several days after he came to work for me three 'Jap' section men from the Burlington railroad's gang came one evening to see my cook. They were in the kitchen jabbering away when Smoky came in.

"A few minutes later the negro came into my library and told me the 'Japs' were talking Crow instead of their own language. At that time I could speak Indian only in a limited way, but I went into the kitchen and asked my cook (who could speak English) about it. To my surprise I found that Smoky was partly correct and that many of the Japanese words were used in the Crow language with identically the same meaning. I am not enough of an ethnologist to say where these identical words came from, or whether or not the Crows and the Japanese had a common origin, but it is a curious fact that these languages are very much alike."


Boys' Wash Suits, 79c Instead $1.50 and $2.50
Buy Men's Duck Pants for 69c
You Never Before Had a Chance
Splendid White Duck Pants for outing tennis wear. Made of pure white duck tight top, cuff bottom and belt strap. same Pants that are selling in other stores for $1. You can buy them here to-day for
9
I send these Scraps thinking they may interest You
Possible origin of the Red men.
Some one has said that the Red men of America are Mongolians.
John H. DeForest D.D. author of Sun rise in the Sunrise Kingdom 1904. after many years Spent as Missionary in Speaking of the original tribes or peoples of Japan, says "Some have faces exactly like those of the American Indians".... with "dark hair & eyes"
There are records of Japanese vessels being wrecked & sailors being landed on the Coasts of Oregon & Cal Washington.

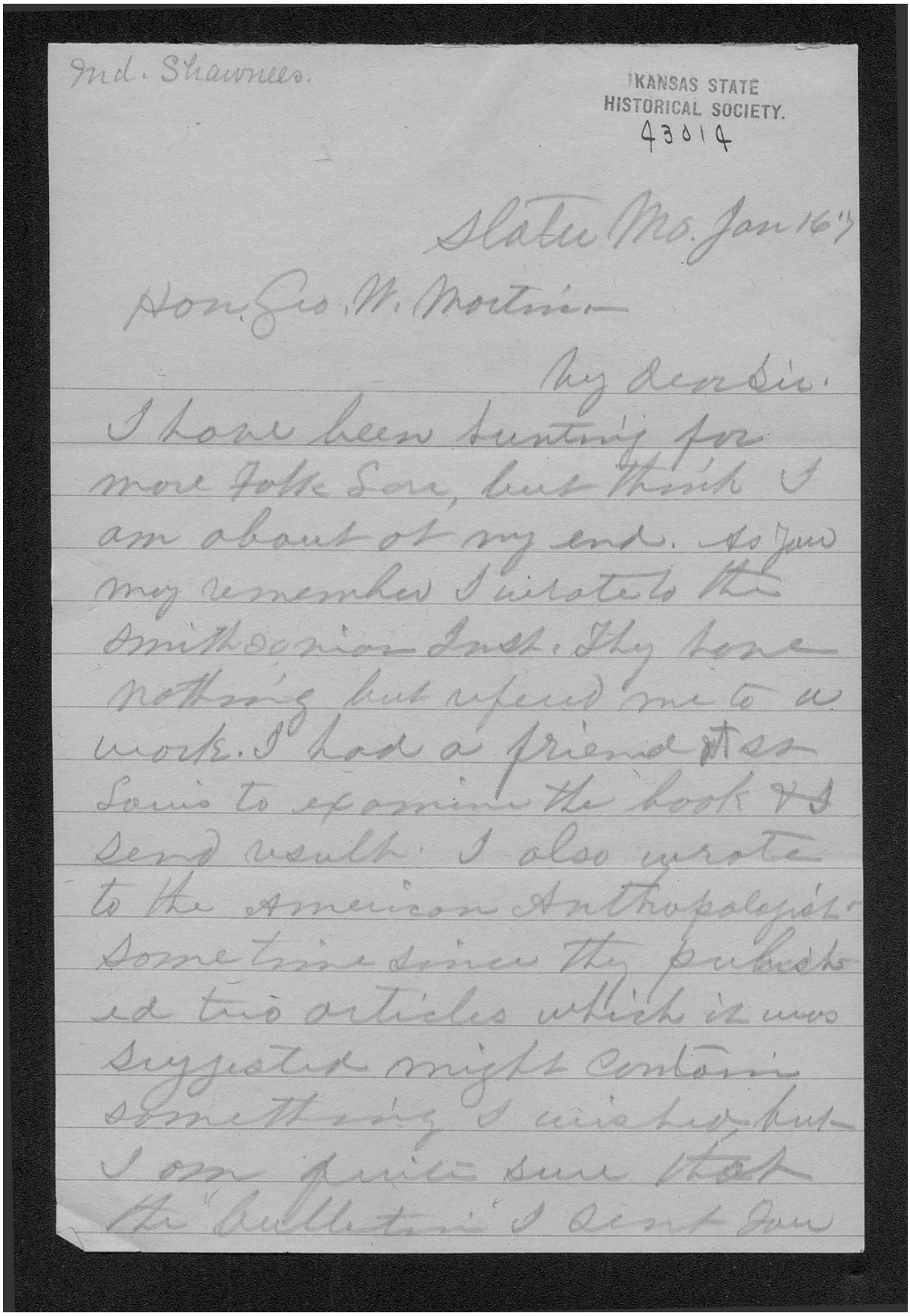


When I began this letter I thought I could lay my hand on Bill Johnsons certificate that came with that ~~m~~ Jonel but it seems I cannot If I do not find it I will get him to prepare another. I send Jonel to day.

With best wishes

Your friend.—

J. Spencer.



Ind. Shawnees.

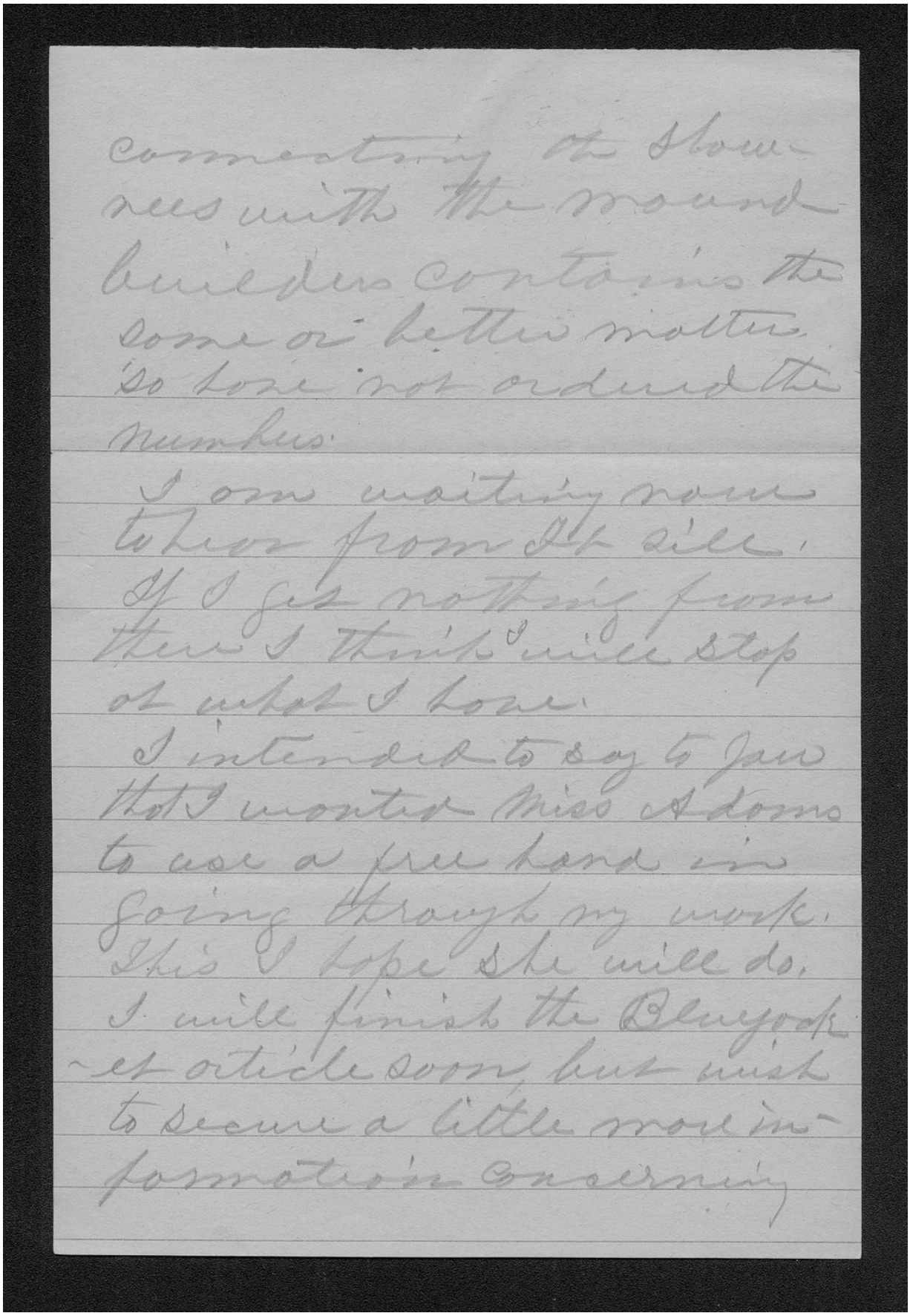
KANSAS STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
43014

Slater Mo. Jan 16/7

Hon. Geo. W. Martin—

My dear Sir.

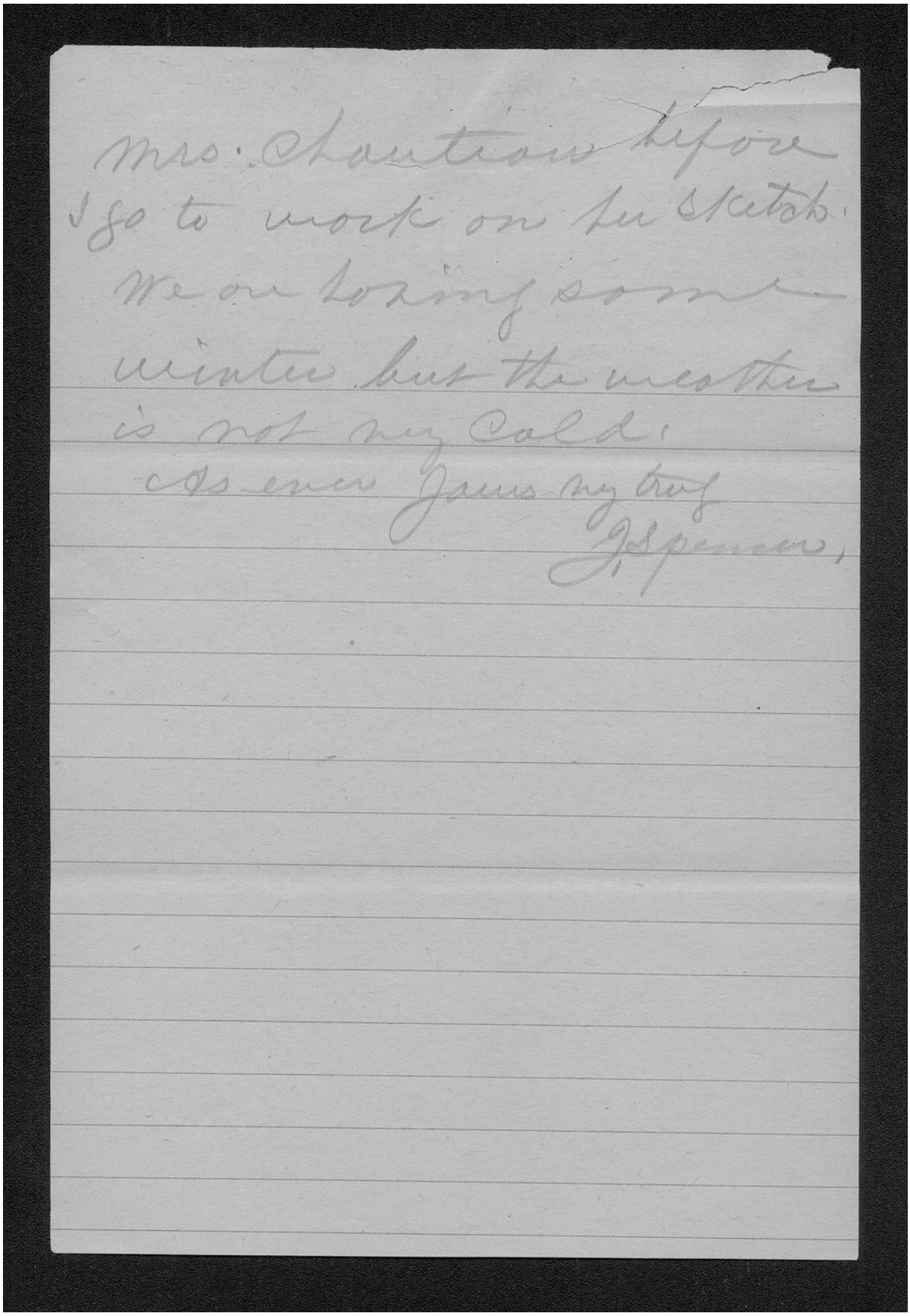
I have been hunting for more Folk Lore, but think I am about at my end. Do you my remember I wrote to the Smithsonian Inst. They have nothing but refered me to w work. I had a friend at St Louis to examine the book & send result. I also wrote to the American Anthropologist Some time since they published two articles which it was suggested might contain something I wished but I am quite sure that the "Bulletin" I sent you



connecting the Show-
nees with the mound-
builders contains the
same or better matter.
So I see not order the
numbers.

I am waiting now
to hear from Dr Dill.
If I get nothing from
them I think I will stop
at what I have.

I intended to say to Jaw
that I wanted Miss A Jones
to use a free hand in
going through my work.
This I hope she will do.
I will finish the Blueyork
-et article soon, but wish
to secure a little more in-
formation concerning



Mrs. Chanteau before
I go to work on her sketch.
We are having some
winter but the weather
is not very cold.
as ever Yours truly
J. Spencer,

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
42625

Slater Mo Nov. 2. 07.

Hon Geo. M. Martin-

My dear Sir.

I enclose you some matter that you can work over into a foot note. Of course you will make a full note of the "Nine, Loose + Blue Cloth." I may send you a little additional matter later. Mrs. Coe thinks she can find some old papers that once belonged to her father. They may be of some importance. If they are I will secure them for you if I can.

Some time since I