



Frances Densmore Papers

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*Return to
C.W.W.*

Red Wing, Minnesota
January 21, 1950

Mr. Charles W. Walton,
Museum Curator, Minnesota Historical Society,
St. Paul 1, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Walton:

Let me acknowledge with thanks your letter of last December 28. I enclose another photograph to be added to those in your Pictorial Department. It is one of my own but I do not know the date nor place in the Chippewa country.

I am sending also an unfinished manuscript entitled "Notes on the life of Mrs. Julia Warren Spears" which may be valuable for the manuscript files of the society. Evidently I wrote it, consulted some members of the Warren family regarding it, and did not retype it with the corrections. It contains considerable data on the Warren family in its several branches.

If the society should care to type it, inserting the corrections, and would send me a carbon copy, I could send it to two grandchildren of Julia Warren Spears who might verify the data. Or I can send you their addresses and the society could refer the manuscript direct to them. I have the original notes on which this manuscript was evidently based, but they are probably of no value. This data was probably collected about 1908 or 1909, when I was doing most of my work at White Earth.

Sincerely yours,

Frances Densmore

Notes on the life of Mrs. Julia Warren Spears

The first known ancestor of the Warren family was Mons. Cadeau "who, it is said, came to the Ojibway country in 1671, in the train of the French envoy, Sieur de St. Lussion." ~~Warren~~ ~~1700~~ His son, John Baptiste Cadotte (as the name was then and subsequently spelled) became a trader among the Ojibways, and was engaged for a time with Alexander Henry, who in his work mentions ~~it~~ him very frequently. He was married by a Catholic priest to an Ojibway woman of the A-waus-e clan, and made his residence at Sault Ste Marie. Mrs. Cadotte is described by Henry as being a woman of great energy and tact, and force of character. She aided her husband in his trading operations, sometimes undertaking long expeditions with coureurs du bois for him. She bore him two sons, John Baptiste Cadotte, Jr., and Michel Cadotte, who also became traders among the Ojibways, and were men of energy and ability in ~~the~~ their calling! (Warren p. 10).

John Baptiste Cadotte (Jr.) married an Ojibway girl named Westwind, who was christened Madeline at the time of her marriage. According to a signed statement left by Mrs. Spears, the island known as Madeline Island was called La Ronde before that time, and was the dowry of Cadotte's wife, Westwind. It was named Madeline Island for her. (Notation, this has not thus far been found in books, but Neill, p. 194, states that "La Ronde started for La Pointe." Later-- Warren (405n) says that two of the Apostle isl. that being June 21, 1748) in front of Bayfield, are named St. Michel and La Ronde, latter for Fr. officer Michel, brother of John C. Jr., married a daughter of White Crane (Wa'bi, white, jijak, crane). Warren states that White Crane was "hereditary chief of La Pointe village . . . died at La Pointe in 1836, aet. 72 years" (p. 11).

A daughter of this Michel Cadotte married Lyman Warren, this

(Many, she was $\frac{3}{4}$ Ind)

Branches were at La Pointe
but not more connected with
the Warren Co.

Son?

couple being the ancestors of the Warren family, so well known in Minn. Lyman Warren died in 1847. He was a Presbyterian/

Lyman and his brother Truman Warren came to the Lake Sup. country in 1818 (check date). Folwell states he "became a partner of the American Fur Company and, in 1824, established his principal house at Madeline Island on Chequamegon Bay. He, also, became desirous to have a school kept at this post, where a considerable population, partly resident, centered." (p. 173, followed by an account of the school established through Lyman Warren's efforts).

Lyman and Truman Warren became associated with Michel Cadot in 1821 Bought out Cad. 1823. 1825, on board vessel in / and both married daughters of Cadotte. / Truman died leaving three

children, who were educated by his brother Lyman, first with tutors at La Pointe, and Lyman Warren then sent them to a school at Clarkson New York. A sister of Lyman Warren, named Sophie, was the wife

of Henry Adams, brother of John Quincy Adams. Lyman W. died at La P. 1847, aged 53. Had eight children, two dying in infancy.

The oldest child of Lyman Warren was William Warren, the historian of the Chippewa, who was born in 1825. It is recorded that "In his very earliest childhood, he learned to talk the Ojibway language, from playing with the Indian children. His father took every means to give him a good English education." (Warr. 12)

The other children of Lyman Warren to lived to grow up were Julia (Mrs. Wm. Spears) (3), Mary (Mrs. John English) (4), Sophie (Mrs. Warren) (6), Charlotte, (Mrs. E.B. Price) (2) and Truman. (Mrs. Lambert) (3) William Warren had charge of the Chippewa when removed to White Earth and later was interpreter at the White Earth Agency. Both brothers exerted their utmost influence for the

good of the Indians. The Warren family is descended from a long line of English ancestors, many being members of the nobility. Warren of Bunker Hill was of the same family.

(Dr. B. Williams and
Chap. 15 personal
copy - 8/11/1911)

Supreme

lined to
be 97

over 50

including Richard the Pilgrimage

Her ind. name was Co'nians, meaning ~~Little~~ Little Money, so called because when she was born her face was so round that it reminded people of a small piece of silver money.

Julia Warren was born at La Pointe in 1833. ^(Lynn) Her paternal grandfather lived at Clarkson, New York, and, after going to a district school, she went to her grandfather in New York, stayed ^(her father took her down when she was 6) many ^{graduated at} thirteen years, and attended a young ladies academy.

Truman's name was Makons, meaning Little Bear.

La P. [Chip.
Customs 140)

Mrs. Spears, when 88 years old, described events of 1847, at About 1850, when Julia Warren was 17 years old, she went

with a party of La Pointe Indians, about 800 in all, who travelled on Lake Sup. to the present site of Duluth, on their way to new locations in Minn. ^{July women in party} Her brother Wm. was in charge of the party and she went to take care of him, as he was not well. ^{three first removals} Nearing that site he stood up in his boat, surrounded by the canoes, and said there would some day be a great city on that location, with boats with wings travelling on the lake. His companions thought he was out of his head but he kept repeating the statement, while they camped at the place. ^{He said they must be careful as it would be valuable - but they would not buy it as it was Spears' die.} He never went back to La P. to live.

^{2nd camp at Superior} The party went on foot from their landing to Sandy Lake, where they expected to meet a Government agent and confer about the Chip. coming to Minn. He was not there and they were disappointed. They stayed there all winter. ^{of hunger} There was much sickness and many died.

^{N. B. Wm. Warren died in 1853 in way back from New York Dec 18} In the ~~spring~~ fall they got a payment. Many wanted to go back, but were allotted land around Sandy Lake, ^{and Bull Lake, & Mille Lac} near Aiken, and between there and Duluth. This was the first removal of Chip. into Minn. ^{on Miss. near St. Cloud}

^{N. B. Wm. Warren died in 1853 in way back from New York Dec 18} Julia Warren went to Two Rivers, thence to St. Paul, and her oldest sister lived there ~~she had married Edward Price~~ ^{she had married} ~~she had married William Spears~~ ^{she had married} He was a plasterer, which was an excellent and necessary trade in those days. ~~Ms. Warren~~ ^{Ms. Warren} was

a singer, and sang in the choir of the First Pres. Ch. in St. P.

^{Minister was E. D. Mill - she knew they were happy} William Warren had a friend named Duncan Stuart, a Scotchman, and in 1853 Julia Warren married him. He died two years later.

Mrs. Spears had prmonitions. One night she wakened and saw three pines of pale light on the wall, as though three matches had been struck. Three weeks from that day the house was burned.

Six weeks after his death her daughter was born-- named Mary-- she ~~xxx~~ married Mr. Lambert. They lived at what is now called Little Falls but then was called Swan River. Her husband had a general store, with the postoffice, and she ran the store after he died.

and married

In 1856 she met Andrew Jackson Spears. He was located in

St. Paul. He died about 1862. Two children were William, born in 1857, and Alice, born in 1861. They lived at what is now Little Falls but was then called Swan River. Her husband had a general store, with the postoffice, and she kept up the business after he died. She did this until their store was burned in connection with the outbreak. The town was a lumber town, and the Northrops, (- same family as Pres. of Univ.) had a whole street of buildings. A peddler was murdered, it was laid to Ind. at instigation of parents of Northrop. who denied it, but a mob of sawmill hands murdered the Ind., (- hung them to a tree that still stands. In revenge the Ind. set fire to the town. Her store and house were burned and she had no papers to show ownership of the land.

She had thought, when at school, that she might teach.

Then she had her education to fall back on. / The county-

got a building, on the bank of the Miss. and she started her first school. They lived in the back of the building. They saw the ~~xxx~~ flat boats carry logs down the Mias, which wound around down to the ferry that ran to Long Prairie. The building had one large room, which was the schoolroom, two small rooms where they lived, and an attic. It was a frame building. A blackboard was along one side of the schoolroom, the seats were board benches without backs. The teacher had a table. There were two sessions a day. School always opened with the Lord's Prayer and a hymn, and closed with prayer and a hymn. The classes were named according to their

*Records were kept in shingles -
Levi Sloan was president of
measur, also Spears was a measur
Name Alice was also in Warren family*

town board

*It was in with his
brother-in-law - Levi Jewellery
Sloan who had been in town
spears in town
was married
wife -
Sloan was married*

readers-- primer, first, second, third and fourth readers. Fourth was the highest. All the pupils were white-- the children of people living in the lumber town. There were about 20, the oldest being about 14 years old. They used McGuffey's primer. The people whose children came to the school paid her salary-- \$20.00 a month-- and provided her with wood and sent some vegetables. Paid no rent. Rang a hand-bell for each session of school. The Lees lived near by, and Bill Lee attended the school. Later he was William Lee, a banker at Long Prairie. ^{my uncle said} "You never knew when the Sioux would come up the Miss. They were fighting all the time." So Bill Lee slept on the floor as a guard if the Indians were reported near. On Friday afternoons the children spoke pieces. Bill Lee stood on a box and recited "The boy stood on the burning deck." Mrs. Spears praised him and said he would be president some day. He did not become pres. but he ran for governor and was in the State Leg. Mrs. Spears was very particular about spelling and geography, and they "spelled down" regularly.

Her brother Truman was then acting agent at Chippewa Agency, ^{which was about 50 miles from Sandy Lake} about 10 miles north of Crow Wing. ^{on his way from Washington DC} He stopped at Swan River when passing through and did not think conditions were good, so arranged for her to go to the agency. About 1865 or 66 ^{but} she moved there, became a government employee, with pay and a good house which her brother had been living in. He moved into a better one and gave her that for school and home. The agency was inside a stockade, with a warehouse and other gov't buildings. There was a big gate to the stockade that formerly was closed at night. There were no white children but some mixed-bloods. ^{The children came from all along the river. Last Christmas tree for J. 7}

This was the first Indian school in the state. When she went there, Hole in the day had 6 wives. He went to Wash. and got a 7th who was very dressy when she came out but soon "went Indian." Six weeks later she dressed like an Ind. woman. The Ind. wives made a great deal of her. Before this 7th marriage, Hole in the day brought one of his boys to school every day with horse and buggy. He wanted the boy to learn English and wanted Mrs. Spears to make him talk English,-- was very ambitious for him. Later brought his other children, wanted them to learn to read and write.

The Ind. lived in pointed teepees in the woods and along the river. *Ind. the wife dressed buckskin & leggings - blanket hood in white.*

Mrs. Spears had "premonitions." *as stated* Once she had put the ~~xxx~~ children to bed and went outside the stockade to visit the Moore family. The great door of the warehouse stood wide open, and she saw an Indian standing there. ~~She told~~ It made the chills run up her back. She ran to the Moores and they said "Maybe someone is going to break in the warehouse-- we better go and see." They went and could find no trace. There was fresh snow but no foot prints on it. Next day an Indian was killed in the woods and his body put in the warehouse.

Mrs Spears taught there only a short time as the agency was moved to Leech Lake and she went there-- in 1867. The agency ~~was~~ was about a mile and a quarter from the trading post. It was at the place known as the Old Agency. She did not teach but was matron of the boarding school. The head of the school was Rev, Wright from Oberlin. Thus she was the first matron of the first boardingschool in the state.

The school
At the agency, the burying-ground was not far in from the lake and at the left end (as one faced the lake) was the ~~wide~~ ground. It was a long building, with the shhool in front end, other end was boarding--kept a few at night--rest were day scholars she gave them lunch at noon

The stores were in a sort of semicircle back of the burying ground, and the traders' houses were in a curved line back of the stores. Back of these, in the woods, were the teepees of the Indians. Once she went down there from the school to see the Indians during the Midewiwin. They were having a big feast with big kettles of fish and corn. There were tree burials at Leech Lake, at any time of year. Sometimes had earth burial covered with birchbark held down with stones. They lined a grave with cedar boughs and used birchbark wrappings for body.

Rev. Wright preached Sundays and taught all week. ^{First Ch. tree} Got first china doll. Brother g

Hole in the day was ^{head} chief of the Miss. ^{got book with "Boy stood on"} Flat Mouth was

Pillager chief. The trouble that led up to the murder of Hole in 1868

the day was in regard to the selection of Indians for removal to White Earth. He wanted only full bloods to go, and objected especially to saloon-keepers and men of that sort. He was going to Washington

to fight removals of mixed bloods to White Earth. Was murdered the day before he was to start. ^{Below was with him} Mille Lac Pillagers. Certain Indians were hired to kill him. Murder occurred about 11 in the morning. ^{Next day walked down} Children seated

for their dinner when 10 armed Ind. came in, demanded food, and ate the soup intended for the children. ^{Mrs. Mee remembers this.} Leader had on Hole in the days bloody clothing and tried to sell Mrs. Spears Hole in the day's watch for \$5.00.

Rev. Wright wanted to fight these Ind. but Mrs. Spears warned him not to. ^{at this agency} Houses there believed haunted as so many crimes committed there.

There was a family named Cook-- nice family with two girls.

Mr. Cook issued groceries and supplies to the Ind. The leader told him to open the door of the warehouse so they could get provisions and ammunition. ^{stood in door of warehouse and} Cook tried to hold them back and Wright "shook like a leaf." and tried also to stop them. Mrs. Spears told ^{Cook} him not to

fire. The Ind. got in, and loaded their canoes with goods. They had about 100 canoes waiting in the shore. The agency sent to Fort

* His body was put in buggy - with Drib who was tied to the buggy - drove to Hole in the day's house - left body there tied to buggy.

Wabauagnot - White Cloud
was put in chief after Hole in the day
killed. He was Hole in the day - head scout - called "Grave"

ie. crib. did not touch
Took everything away
While wife feared for boy -
Ransacked house.
bragged to agency.

The soldiers camped there ^{all summer} ~~for several weeks~~ as the white people were in danger until the trouble blew over. They told Mrs. Spears that she was not in danger-- they would not touch her.

The first removal party camped first on the shore of Detroit Lakes but some surveyors told them the railroad would come through there so they did not make that permanent. They went on to White E. They arrived at W. E. June 14th, put up American flag, knelt down and gave thanks for safe arrival, not falling into hands of Sioux. This first camp was on a knoll around which goes the road to W. Earth Lake. They brought rations with them, and all heavy goods came up from St. Cloud. The actual settlement was on the road to W. Earth Lake, and was made later/

They broke some land the next spring, and the gov't tried to have them raise some crops but they did not like being away from water. So they were moved to White E. Lake and many lived on the island.

They were still afraid of the Sioux and huddled together.

Mrs. Spears and party went two years later-- in 1870. The party consisted of herself and three children, and her sister, Mrs. Sophie Warren and her six or seven children. Jim Warren, husband of Sophie, was a carpenter who went with the first removals. He had a shack ready for these families to live in.

Mrs. Spears went back to Little Falls for a visit, before ~~g~~ going to White Earth, and she wanted to get some personal belongings that she had left there. The party started from Little Falls. Their first stop was at Crow Wing. The next morning they took the ferry across the Mississippi, and their second night's stop was at George Wilson's "hotel." He had a store and this hotel, where lumbermen and travellers could stay overnight.

Their next stop was at Fourteen Mile Creek where there was a big log house for lumbermen to stay. At this place there was a fork in the road and they took the road to White Earth which was nothing but a trail. It took them 12 days to go from there to White Earth. ~~It was about 100 miles without a house.~~ ~~and~~ Their last ~~xxx~~ camp was at Strawberry Lake. Jim Warren met them there and was delighted to find they had made the journey safely, without being attacked by the Sioux.

They travelled in two wagons, one drawn by oxen and the other by mules, these teams with drivers being supplied by the government. The drivers took the teams back. Mrs. Spears walked a good deal of the way.

When they left Little Falls the leaves had fallen and everything was dreary, but when they reached White Earth, on Sept. 6th the oaks were still green and there had been no frost. The scenery was quite different.

Those who came with the first removals had made a nice garden during the summer, and Mrs. Spers' party had a large log house with an upstairs and a kitchen built on. They slept upstairs.

The removals had built a sawmill, and soon afterward they put up a schoolhouse at the corner of the road to White Earth Lake. It was near a pretty little lake called Rice Lake, but now the lake is nothing but a bed of wild rice.

The schoolhouse consisted of one big room, for the school, an upstairs, and one room off the schoolroom for the Spears family. The benches were of boards with no backs. The children had slates and were always drawing picture on them.

She had a big school there. Fred Smith was a scholar, with his hair in two long braids. He was so bashful that he turned his back when he read in his primer. Julius was the first boy to put on pants. The children used to come to school hungry, dressed only in their little breechcloths and moccasins. / They hated to have their hair cut. All the early Chippewa clergy went to school to her, either there or in White Earth.

She taught until 1872 when the government put up two buildings for school use at the present site of White Earth-- the building later used as an Old Folks' Home was then the schoolrooms, and near it, toward the west, was another building for the boarding department. About 150 pupils attended this school. Mrs. Spears was matron, and taught cooking to the girls. That building burned down. Brick buildings were built and the school moved to the new location.

About 1873 or 74 Mrs. Spears retired because of poor health. The Gov't had put up a little log house on her allotment, which was beyond Mrs. Sophie Warren's house. Bishop Whipple wanted the children of church families to have instruction concerning the church, and persuaded her to teach a mission school in her home. *This lasted about two years* About 20 or more attended this school. Sometimes the scholars were young men who wanted to work in the church and she taught them the creed and other things they needed to know for such work.

Mrs. Spears died June 21, 1925, at Detroit Lakes, in her 93rd year. She had made her home with her daughter after her first marriage in 1877. Mr. Fairbanks was an Oberlin graduate, Marriage to Mr. Mee June 10, 1891. Mr. Mee died Feb. 8 '36

The removals had started a sawmill, and soon afterward they put up a schoolhouse on the corner of the road, the lake was called Rice Lake but there is nothing there now but a rice bed.

The schoolhouse was one big room, an upstairs, and one room off the schoolroom for Mrs. Spears family. The benches were of boards with no backs. The children had slates and were always drawing pictures on them.

She had a big school there. Fred Smith attended-- hair in two long braids, so bashful he turned his back when he read in his primer.

The children used to come to school hungry, dressed only in little breechcloths. Julius Brown was her first pupil--all the early clergy went to school to her.

She taught there until 1872 when they put up a new school building ~~near~~ the one known later as the Old Folks Home-- that was the school rooms, and the living part was near by and burned later.

She was matron and taught cooking to the children -- about 150 pupils

About 1873 or 74 she retired on account of poor health.

The Gov't had put up a little log house on her allotment-- beyond Mrs. Sophis Warren's, and there she taught a mission school. Bp. Whipple wanted the church children taught where they had church instruction. That lasted about two years.

George Fairbanks lived in the village-- had a trading post. He had attended Oberlin 5 years and graduated.

In 1877 Alice married George Fairbanks and Mrs. Spears went to live with them.

Married Mr. Mee June 10, 1891. Mr. Mee died Feb. 8, 1936.

Mrs. Spears died in 1925 at Detroit Lakes. She was 93^{1/2} years old.

N. D. - 2 buildings put up at about same time - the boarding school that burned & the school building later used at Old Folks Home (after brick school put up)

braids long afterward (Held's cut)

about 20 or more scholars - English young men who wanted education and work in the church