



George Bent Letters (K0201)

Collection Number: K0201

Collection Title: George Bent Letters

Dates: 1906-1928

Creator: Bent, George, 1843-1918

Abstract: The collection contains correspondence and abstracts of letters written by George Bent to George E. Hyde. In addition, a photograph of Bent with his wife, Maggie is included.

Collection Size: 0.02 cubic foot
(3 folders, 1 photograph)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the University all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *George Bent Letters* (K0201); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

Donor Information: The papers were transferred to the University of Missouri by the University of Missouri-Kansas City, General Library on October 24, 1980 (Accession No. KA0054).

Related Material: Additional materials related to the George Bent Letters can be found in the following collections:

George Bent Papers (WH1704)

The Denver Public Library, Western History/ Genealogy Department

George Bent Papers (WA MSS 32)
Yale University, Beinecke Library

Publication Note: Some of the materials in this collection were used in the publication of *The Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters* by George E. Hyde and edited by Savoie Lottinville (1968).

Processed by: Processed by State Historical Society of Missouri staff, January 2016. Finding aid format and index terms were updated by Mimi Loran, January 2018.

Historical Note:

George Bent, also called Ho—my-ike in Cheyenne, was the son of Indian trader, William Bent, and Owl Woman, daughter of a Cheyenne chief. Bent's father and uncle traded with the Indians on the Great Plains and built Bent's Fort on the north side of the Arkansas River, in present day Bent County, Colorado. George and his younger brother Charles were born at the fort and raised there until they went to Westport and St. Louis for schooling.

When the American Civil War began, George and his brother joined the Confederate Army, serving under General Sterling Price. However, they tired of the "white man's war" after the Battle of Pea Ridge. By 1863, George Bent returned to his mother's people, the Southern Cheyenne, just as the Indian wars in the Great Plains began. Bent fought for the Cheyenne during the American Indian Wars as one of the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers.

After the American Indian Wars ended, Bent became an interpreter and peacekeeper between the Cheyenne and the United States military and government. By 1901, his influence with the Cheyenne and U.S. military had lessened. Bent then met anthropologist, George Bird Grinnell. Bent gathered groups of Indians for interviews and translated answers to Grinnell's questions. During his service, Bent became acquainted with George Hyde, one of Grinnell's research assistants. Hyde and Bent began a lengthy correspondence, which started in 1905, and continued until Bent's death in 1918.

Prior to Bent's death, he and Hyde discussed writing a history of the Cheyenne, and Indian life on the Great Plains. Hyde wrote the book from their correspondence, but publication did not occur in Bent's lifetime. Nearly 50 years later, Savoie Lottinville, then director of the University of Oklahoma Press, rediscovered the manuscript, and with the support of the aged Hyde, edited and published, *The Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters* in 1968.

Arrangement:

This collection has been arranged into three folders, and items in the folders have been arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains correspondence, abstracts of letters, and a photograph. The letters were written by George Bent recounting his memories of Native Americans living on the Great Plains, and were sent to George Hyde. The abstracts consist of lists of the topics discussed in each letter. In addition, there is a 1928 reproduction of an 1867 photograph of Bent and his wife Magpie.

Container List:

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1906-1928
- f. 2 Abstracts of George Bent Letters, 1097-1916
- f. 3 Photograph, 1867 (1928 reprint)

Index:

Index Term	Folder	Image
Cheyenne Indians	1-3	Yes
Cheyenne Indians--Social life and customs	1-2	
Great Plains--Description and travel	1-3	Yes
Indians of North America--Great Plains	1-3	Yes
Indians of North America--Wars--Personal narratives	1-2	