Benjamin Vore, a licensed trader, removed to Arkansas from the East with his family at an early day and established a store at Fort Gibson with George S. Birnie of Fort Smith. They had a comfortable building and a good stock of goods. Mr. and Mrs. Vore were the parents of Israel G. Vore, who was a clerk in the B. Baer mercantile establishment at Fort Smith soon after his arrival in Arkansas.¹

Montford Stokes, Cherokee agent, granted a three years trader's license to Benjamin Vore on May 14, 1838; P. Pennywitt and J. Dillard were his sureties and the bond was $5000.00; the location of the Vore trading establishment was at the mouth of the Canadian River.

During the early forties there was an element in the Cherokee Nation opposed to the tribal government and many outrages were perpetrated by lawless men. The Cherokees were shocked by an execrable crime committed September 15, 1843, by Thomas, Bean, and Ellis Starr when they killed old Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Vore. The murder was committed about thirty miles from Fort Gibson on the military road leading to that post. "Mr. Vore ... was killed together with his wife & a stranger stopping for the night in the house. After robbing the premises the villains set fire to the house which was entirely consumed with the bodies of the unfortunate victims."²

Mrs. Vore was identified by her scissors and spectacles and her husband by his keys and buttons. When found he was lying with an arm extended and in his hand a knife with open blade, showing that he had fought to the last. Identity of the third person was never made known. The son, Israel G. Vore, escaped by being away at Oil Springs.³ General Taylor dispatched a company of Dragoons to pursue the murderers, who were captured across the line in Arkansas but allowed to escape by a state officer who had custody of them.

¹ *Southwest American*, Fort Smith, Arkansas, January 24, 1935.
² General Z. Taylor to adjutant general, October 8, 1843; Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, Norman, 1943. p. 327; John Ross, Tahlequah Cherokee Nation, October 3, 1843, to the National Committee and Council in National Council Convened—Photostat Foreman collection.
³ *Southwest American*, Fort Smith, January 24, 1935.
In January, 1844, the National Council passed a bill authorizing the principal chief to offer a reward of $3000.00 for the capture of the three Starr men, dead or alive; notice of this act was published in several editions of the *Cherokee Advocate* and on November 2, 1844, the newspaper described the Starrs as follows: “This monster, together with Bean Starr and Ellis Starr, are guilty of some of the most atrocious crimes that have ever been committed—they have eluded every effort to arrest them.” A man was arrested by the commandant of Fort Gibson for harboring the Starrs and when asked why he did so he replied: “He was not so much afraid to harbor them, as not to harbor them;” such is the fear the people have of these outlaws.

When Daniel R. Coodey and his party of nine captured Bean Starr some twenty-five miles above Fort Washita in the Choctaw Nation they also recovered ten horses and mules that had been stolen by the Starrs; “among them is a horse with a split hoof, which has been somewhat noted in consequence of having been rode, by one of these fiends, as was proven by the track, when they perpetrated the Vore tragedy.”

In Coodey’s report to Chief Ross upon his return from the Choctaw Nation, he related that William Harris, at whose home Starr was captured, said “that the three Starrs came into this nation in the early part of the fall past . . . shortly after their outrage upon Mr. Vore and family, in September, 1843.”

Israel G. Vore proved to be a most versatile person and served in many capacities among the Civilized Tribes as well as the Plains Indians. He was probably born in 1821 and so was only a youth when he removed west in 1838. It is known that he had some schooling in Alabama and in the Cherokee Nation, but in letters to friends in later life he deprecated his lack of education.

Like many of his Cherokee associates, he belonged to the Baptist faith, and as he grew to manhood he preached the Gospel and taught the Indians; it was said of him in later life that he had talked to every man and woman in the Cherokee Nation or that they had heard him preach. He received no remuneration for his work in the church and when he fell in love with young Sallie Vann, the daughter of “Rich Joe” Vann, he realized that he would be obliged to seek some other means of making a livelihood.

In 1847 Israel engaged in the mercantile business in Fort Smith, Arkansas; he found a suitable location, but many weeks passed before his stock of goods arrived by steamboat from states along the Ohio, and coffee and sugar from New Orleans. Early in 1848 his store began to operate and he was doing a profitable business. He

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4 *Cherokee Advocate*, December 26, 1844 (editorial page, cols. 2, 3).
soon formed a partnership and opened a store at Pheasant Bluff on the Arkansas River, which he managed.

Captain R. B. Marcy was entrusted to escort a large party of emigrants to California in 1849 during the "Gold Rush" and his trail led him to a point 140 or 150 miles west of Fort Smith, where he found the trading post of Thomas A. Aird and Israel G. Vore the center of a large Indian trade. Captain Marcy wrote that if any of his friends passed that point he would commend them to Messrs. Aird and Vore, "whose kindness and courtesy have won the hearts of all Californians." On Sunday, June 3, from their camp 350 miles from Fort Smith, the emigrants wrote letters to Vore and his partner at their post on Little River and traders forwarded them to the editor of the Fort Smith Herald.5

Israel frequently paid visits to Webbers Falls to see his sweetheart; he traveled on horseback when no steamboat was available. Dennis W. Bushyhead, who later became chief of the Cherokee Nation, was a rival for Sallie's affections, as is shown by love letters in possession of her descendants, but if Israel was aware of this, it is not known. He and Miss Vann were married at Webbers Falls in 1851 and they made that town their home, although he continued to maintain his stores at Fort Smith and Pheasant Bluff. Business detained him from home weeks at a time, but frequent letters to his devoted wife kept her in touch with him and whenever possible he boarded the steamboat J. H. White or Meigs for home. At intervals Mrs. Vore visited her husband, sometimes loading her horse aboard one of the boats, and returning home on horseback in company with her husband or friends traveling that way.

In 1852 Vore, with four other men, formed a partnership with the celebrated Jesse Chisholm to sell supplies to travelers along the Chisholm cattle trail in the western part of the territory. In a letter to his wife he told of the company and stated that he believed more money could be made in the cattle business than in anything else at that time. They also planned to buy "short eared animals" from Texas and graze them through the country to the northern markets. Israel wrote his wife that she must not worry about him going out to the plains as he had only helped to finance the deal and his partners were going to carry on the work. His share of the business was to see that they received adequate supplies and to help in marketing the cattle. This enterprise must have prospered, as Vore subsequently engaged more actively in the cattle business.

"Rich Joe" Vann was a large slave owner and his daughter Sallie and her husband also acquired some Negroes before the Civil War. Being a southerner and owner of slaves, Israel Vore naturally

adhered to the southern cause and he joined the Confederate army early in the conflict.\(^6\)

Israel G. Vore, at the age of forty, enlisted October 4, 1861, at Park Hill, Indian Territory; three days later he was appointed quartermaster of companies F. and S. First Cherokee Mounted Rifles.\(^7\) According to Joseph Albert Scales the only battle in which his grandfather participated was fought July 17, 1863, at Honey Springs on Elk Creek near the present town of Oktaha, Oklahoma. He served on the staffs of Douglas H. Cooper and General Stand Watie and reached the rank of major.

Owing to the death of Colonel William H. Garrett, Creek agent, the Creeks, in November, 1862, asked to have Vore succeed him as agent and he received the appointment in May, 1863. That spring he was engaged in disbursing funds and paying the Creek troops. His influence with the Indians was great and he was ordered to attempt to neutralize the Union advances.\(^8\)

During the period when Major Vore was engaged in the war his devoted wife and children remained at their home in Webbers Falls. Learning that Federal spies were in that vicinity, relatives and friends of Vore stored their supplies at his home, thinking they would have a better chance to save them there. An unidentified man who appeared at the Vore house, where there were only women and children, was found dead within the picket enclosure of the Vore home one morning; the Federal troops declared that Major Vore was there, but he was with the Confederate army and could not have committed the killing. The Union troops went through Webbers Falls and confiscated all of the food and other supplies before applying the torch to all of the other buildings after they had burned Vore's house. Mrs. Vore, with her children and other citizens of the town had left for Fort Washita, where they remained as refugees until the end of the war.

On March 19, 1865, General Stand Watie wrote to Tuckabatche Micco, principal chief of the Creeks, that Major Vore had been sent to the Prairie Indians with regard to their uniting with the Confederate forces, but when he arrived the Indians had dispersed and


\(^7\) Oklahoma Historical Society, *Compilation of Confederate Records*, Office of Adjutant General, Washington, D. C., under direction Grant Foreman, p. 64.

\(^8\) Oklahoma Historical Society, *Frederick Severs' Collection*, Bound Volume, Indian Archives. Cornelius Boudinot wrote to his uncle Stand Watie from Richmond, Virginia, January 24, 1864, that Vore would have to make a choice as to which post he would hold, as he could not occupy both positions (Edward Everett Dale & Gaston Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, Norman, 1939, p. 152.)
nothing could be accomplished before May 15, when a council of friendly tribes was to be held.9

Stung by his property losses, Major Vore was compelled to start life anew after his return from the army. He rebuilt his home about one mile west and a little south of the present site of Webbers Falls. Realizing the great need of the Indians for the comfort of religion, he returned to preaching and missionary work among the Cherokees and Choctaws. His cattle business became very profitable and he provided money to help maintain schools in the Cherokee Nation.

Mr. and Mrs. Vore were the parents of six children; Ellen, who married Samuel Cobb; Frank, whose wives were Pigeon Spencer and Maude Goff; Emma Vore Foreman (after the death of her husband Jesse Foreman, she married his nephew, Charles Foreman); Irving and Joseph, who died as infant.10

In the Records of Marks and Brands, Canadian District, Cherokee Nation, January 28, 1884, Major I. G. Vore's cattle brand was a large V; the ear and flesh marks were "Crop off right ear & crop & half crop off left." His children Sophia and Frank also owned cattle and had registered brands of their own.11

When the General Council of the Indian Territory met at Okmulgee on September 27, 1870, Vore served as secretary pro tem. The delegates, elected from tribes legally living in the territory, were chosen from among the most intelligent Indians. Pleasant Porter of the Muskogee Nation made a motion on December 14, 1870, that the thanks of the General Council be extended to Major Vore "for the able and efficient manner in which he has conducted the office of Secretary and that the President of the Council be instructed to compensate him for his services." This resolution was unanimously adopted.12

During his stay in the Creek Nation early in 1872, J. H. Beadle wrote of his visit to the13

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10 Statements by Mrs. Joe McGrath, Muskogee, Oklahoma, daughter of Frank Vore, and Miss Ella M. Robinson, Muskogee, Oklahoma, who recall Major Vore was a frequent visitor in the home of her grandparents, Judge and Mrs. Vann.
11 Oklahoma Historical Society, “Records of Marks & Brands” in Cherokee vol. 18, p. 3, Indian Archives Division.
12 Chronicles of Oklahoma, “Journal of the General Council of the Indian Territory,” vol. 3, no. 1, p. 36; ibid., vol. 3, no. 2, p. 129. In the Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for 1870, it is noted that Vore was thanked for his faithful manner in performing his duties (ibid., vol. v, no. 1, p. 92).
13 The Undeveloped West; or, Five Years in the Territories, Philadelphia, 1873.
Texas and New Mexico, for twenty-seven years, and is a walking encyclopedia of aboriginal history. To him we are indebted for many courtesies and facilities in obtaining information.

At the council of the Absentee Shawnees at Shawnee Town, Indian Territory, on August 16, 1872, these Indians asked permission to grant Israel G. Vore power of attorney to recover from the government the amount of money received for their lands on the Wakarusa River in Kansas. He was also authorized to recover the value of the Absentee Shawnee Lands from private citizens. In addition Vore was given power of attorney to collect back pay and bounty for twenty-four representatives of soldiers. Another power of attorney was issued to him to prosecute a claim against Brinton Darlington for damages and illegal arrest of some members of the Absentee Shawnees while trading with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes.14

In October, 1872, Vore was clerk of the Creek National Council to examine acts of appropriation, and compare drafts issued and audited, for which service he was paid at the rate of four dollars per day.15 In 1875, he was still engaged as clerk for the Creek Nation. Lochar Harjo was chief and if he “had any political ability it was purely of the primitive type, and in following constitutional forms he was entirely dependent on white men.” He gave some sound advice concerning education, agriculture, good government and Christianity in his inaugural message to the Council on December 6; it was no doubt his sentiments, but it was expressed in the style of Israel Vore, who could be trusted as a friend of the Creeks.

Ward Coachman, the next chief, had been rather sketchily educated in Alabama before he joined the Creeks in the West and “Vore, his friend and confidential adviser, wrote his messages and other state papers, but he himself directed their content.”16

From the “Executive Office Muskoke Nation Okmulke Oct. 1st, 1877,” Vore wrote a message for Coachman addressed “To the Honorable House of Kings, and House of Warriors of the Muskoke Nation in Council Assembled”, in which he stated that their farmers had been blessed with abundant crops and the stock raisers a large increase in their herds and flocks. “As our people are, and cannot be other than an agricultural and Pastoral people, it is your duty as Legislators to enact such laws as will encourage and protect them in all their industries.” He reported the schools in a flourishing condi-

14 Oklahoma Historical Society, Sac & Fox-Indian Council, Indian Archives Division. Brinton Darlington, a member of the Society of Friends, became agent of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians in 1869, establishing his agency on the north side of the North Fork of the Canadian River; and built schools and otherwise proved a wise guide for these wild Indians. He died May 1, 1872 (Lawrie Tatum, Our Red Brothers, Philadelphia, 1899, pp. 220-23).
16 Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance, Norman, 1941, pp. 158, 215, 222.
tion under their efficient Superintendent of Public Instruction and recommended that new contracts be entered into with the religious denominations having charge of the mission schools to reduce the amount for the support of each pupil since subsistence, clothing, books and other necessaries were all much lower in price. If the persons declined to enter into new contracts, support should be withdrawn and the schools put under the management of the Creek Superintendent of instruction.

Support of the Muskoke Institute had been changed from Presbyterian to the Muskoke Baptist Association; as it was the only school for the exclusive education of girls, he recommended that it be fostered and a liberal appropriation be made to carry it on.

Mothers have the training of our children, and much depends on them, as to the formation of their dispositions, habits, usefulness and success in life. Our daughters should be by Education, instructed, refined, and exalted to that position which qualifies them as mothers to teach our children in such a manner that our sons may become useful to their God, their country, society and themselves, and their daughters, teachers, ornament to society and frugal housewives, making home happy and delightful.

Another section of the message was a recommendation that the new code of laws in preparation by a committee be adopted and that the Freedmen among them

. . . whose rights under the treaty of 1866, have not by some been recognized, and in consequence thereof have been discouraged, are not improving or advancing as they might do; and that the treaty relative thereto being so plain that no one can mistake or misunderstand it. . . . I would recommend if necessary that some action be had recognizing the rights of all under the treaty [who] are entitled to citizenship and equal rights and privileges with us.

The United States had sold 175,000 acres of Creek land to the Seminole Indians and settled them on the tract. Questions of jurisdiction in this area were arising which needed to be adjusted, and Vore recommended that a delegation of two persons be appointed to go to Washington to secure a settlement due the Creek Nation.

In a penciled note Vore wrote: "Dear Ward . . . with the suggestions made in the forgoing you may with your worthy Secy. be able to send in a fair and pointed message—no surplus language—but short and to the point."17

From Muskoke, November 22, 1877, Vore wrote Chief Coachman at Wewoka to send him by a reliable person, the official list of the Reserves of land in the old Nation which had been certified by the commissioner of Indian affairs. Vore planned to send the list on to Washington to have the amounts due each person placed upon it and returned to the Nation.18

17 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives Division, "Creek-Principal Chief."
18 Ibid., No. 29741 Creek-Federal Relations, Indian Archives Division.
In May, 1878, Vore applied for a clerkship to P. B. Hunt, agent of the Kiowas and Comanches, saying that he understood that agency was to be consolidated with the Wichita Agency. As reference he gave the names of Smith Paul of Pauls Valley, Capt. Black Beaver and his son-in-law, H. P. Pruner, and several other people in Hunt’s part of the country. He told that he was fifty-six years old, had been almost forty years in the Indian country and had been employed in the Creek Agency more than eighteen months, also that he was not unacquainted with the eight bands of Indians around the Wichita Agency. In September Vore made another application to Hunt, enclosing a communication from the acting commissioner of Indian affairs, saying his work had been satisfactory.\(^{19}\)

Vore wrote to Chief Coachman from Muskoke on September 30, 1878, saying that Agent Marston had just returned from St. Louis and he learned from him that the Transfer Committee would arrive there in a few days. The men were “under the impression the Indians of these five tribes are half wild.” Dr. Marston had written for Coachman to come to Muskogee and “bring some of your most intelligent men and those making the finest appearance so they may see that they are not all what they think them to be—a great deal depends upon the impression made upon the committee, as to their report.” Vore was still in the employ of the department and said he intended to remain.\(^{20}\)

In an account about the Indian Territory written by Vore about February, 1879, he stated he had been in the country since 1838, and the only missionary he had ever heard address the Indians in their own tongue was the Rev. John B. Jones, a Baptist clergyman, and a son of the Rev. Evan Jones, a missionary among the Cherokees for forty years. The Rev. H. F. Buckner, according to Vore, understood the rules governing the Creek language, and he had listened to it for more than thirty years, and yet he could not trust himself to preach in it. “He never tried it but once and it was such another failure and he had done his Master’s cause such great injustice he never tried to preach to Indians except through an interpreter.”

Vore also wrote that he was starting on a visit to the Wichita village in 1858, that Buckner gave him a small Bible to present to Ar-shar-re-wah, principal chief of that tribe. The Indian, through Jesse Chisholm, told Vore that tradition among his people was that on account of the wickedness of man God destroyed the world by water, “but seed was left; that it is again to be destroyed by cold and seed will be left; but after that it is to be destroyed by fire, and then it will pass away and there will be no seed left.”

Vore related that he had been looking at the Indian sign language at different times for four years:

\(^{19}\) *Ibid.*, “Kiowa-Employees,” Indian Archives Division.

I know exactly how expressive and inspiring it is. It does not represent letters or words, but things. It is very meager—God's truth can neither be proclaimed or illustrated in it. The very idea to those who understand it is terribly absurd. I am no missionary—No Minister of the Gospel—No Writeist, . . . the fault is my education. I graduated among the Indians of the Indian Territory,—my studies never reached grammar. . . .

When the Indian International Fair was held at Muskogee in September, 1879, there was a reunion of the Northern and Southern Indian Brigades at the fair grounds. Captain A. W. Robb represented the Union soldiers and Major Vore the Confederate veterans.

Vore served as clerk in Wewoka District, Creek Nation, in April and May, 1878; he was secretary to the commission in re charges vs. F. S. Lyon, Creek agent; and clerk of the Union Agency in Muskogee in 1879. In 1882 he was a commissioner of the United States Court for the Western District of Arkansas.

In 1880 the Creek Council appropriated five thousand dollars for a manual labor school in the nation and Eugene Levering of Baltimore, Maryland, a prominent churchman and president of the Southern Baptist Convention gave an equal amount. Levering and his twin brother Joshua were wealthy coffee merchants in the Maryland city.21

The Reverend Henry Frieland Buckner attended a Southern Baptist Convention almost every year and it was largely through his influence that Levering Mission School was established for the education of Creek young men and women. While the school was not founded until after his death in 1882, it was a direct outgrowth of his labors.22

In his report for 1881, Agent John Q. Tufts said that the school was located in the southwest part of the Creek Nation, near the North Fork of the Canadian River. This was in Wewoka District, at the old home of Ward Coachman, then called Wetumka ("sounding waters"). The school was opened September 1, 1881, for the reception of fifty boys and a like number of girls. The Reverend J. A. Trenchard had been selected as principal by the Southern Baptist Convention. The church asked the Creeks to appropriate one thousand dollars for expenses, and $700 was set aside for the first quarter.23

On January 23, 1882, Trenchard wrote Chief Samuel Checote that only two of the trustees were present at the last monthly meeting. He explained that Mr. Benson had resigned, Simpson Reed had

21Authority, the Rev. E. C. Routh, Richmond, Virginia.
23Angie Debo, op. cit., p. 250; Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, No. 36433 and No. 36435; Routh, op. cit., p. 80.
been killed on New Year's eve, and Ward Coachman was in Washington. He suggested the appointment of William Robison who lived twelve miles from the school; G. A. Alexander who was distant fifteen miles by wagon road and ten or twelve by horse trail; and he was sure that the Reverend William McCombs would attend the meetings.24

Eighty cases of measles among the pupils had been a serious drawback, but otherwise the school was doing well. Some of the students could not endure restraint, the discipline necessary at school, or their studies, so they ran away and "generally tell very large tales of 'starvation,' 'hard work' and 'hard whippings.' The large majority were contented." This was a new institution and the students were unacquainted with any rules.25

In the Minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention for 1882 (p. 28) is found: "The mission to the Creeks, especially in its educational feature is highly encouraging. This institution established among this people, in part through the munificence of the late Eugene Levering, and bearing his honored name, is now in successful operation."

From Shawneetown Agency, I. T., April 6, 1883, Special Agent E. B. Townsend wrote to H. Price, commissioner Indian affairs, to the effect that the Shawnees, in open council, had declined to accept their lands in allotment as provided by act of congress, May 23, 1872, and as made up by Special Agent John K. Know, November 12, 1875, and approved by the department November 23, 1875.26

Maj. Vore has been a firm friend of these Indians for forty years; They have relied on him for counsel and advice; and upon their invitation he was present on this occasion to aid and assist them in this matter. He used his utmost endeavors to induce them to comply with law; dwelling at length upon the liberality of the Act of Congress by which they were to be provided with permanent and valuable homes; and assured them it was worse than useless to resist the wishes of the Department . . . or to look for other or further provision being made for them than that contemplated by this Act.

Chief Checote approved an appropriation of $1750 for Levering for the first quarter of the year and Pleasant Porter was made a

24 William McCombs was born July 22, 1844, seven miles east of Fort Gibson. His father, Zacharias McCombs, was a Scot who emigrated to the United States at an early day. Mrs. McCombs, half white and half Creek, was a member of the prominent Stinson family. William McCombs attended a neighboring school until the beginning of the Civil War, when he joined the First Creek Regiment in the Confederate Army, commanded by Col. D. N. McIntosh. In May, 1868, he was ordained a Baptist minister, and he became the most fluent preacher in the Creek language in the Nation. In 1871 he was elected to the House of Warriors where he served four years; this was followed by six years as superintendent of Public Instruction. In 1881 he was again a member of the House of Warriors and was reelected in 1889 (H. F. & E. S. O'Beirne, The Indian Territory, Saint Louis, 1892, pp. 197-99). The Rev. Mr. McCombs died in 1929.

25 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, No. 36436.

26 Ibid., "S&F & SHA—Allotments"
trustee of the mission. On May 26, 1883, Trenchard made a doleful report to the effect that his wife died on May 19; the school had owned one hundred seventy-five head of cattle on the first of May, but they had disappeared and a member of the Creek Council said they had been driven to Muskogee to be sold. Some of the cattle had been driven to the Choctaw Nation. "I fear drunkenness and thieving will nearly ruin us if no check can be put on these vile evils..."

In Trenchard’s report to Checote and the “Honorable Council of the Muskogee Nation,” dated September 1, 1883, he wrote:

At Christmas the people came in and took out most of the children to spend Christmas at home. While at home the war trouble broke out and only about half the scholars were brought back in January. I opposed with all my power the taking out of the children... but to no avail. They took them whether I consented or not and as the Trustees favored their taking them, I had to yield to what I was powerless to prevent. This Christmas business has injured the school more than two months vacation in summer.

Trenchard was succeeded by Israel G. Vore and on December 26, 1883, he wrote to the Reverend I. T. Tichenor, D.D., corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia:

I found your favor of the 3rd inst. here on my return from Okmulgee on the 21st inst, where I had been at the request of Isparhechar, the “Loyal Chief” so called to prepare some claims for his people who had been in the army of the United States and had some arrears of pay and Bounty due them. I have been promising to do this work since he and his party was arrested and taken to Fort Gibson last summer and he had sent for me as many as five times at different periods since his arrest—so I went to the Capitol and done the work.

Levering Mission opened September 1, 1884, and The Indian Missionary advised the Creeks that,

In view of the success attending the last season, it will be becoming and worthy of the Creek people to have their children there at the beginning of the session, and let them remain, if possible, the full ten months.

... We hope, too, that the parents will warn their boys and girls against the disposition to run away from school... W. P. Blake.

On April 7, 1884, from Levering Mission Vore addressed a letter to Agent P. B. Hunt at Anadarko saying he had been notified by Robert L. Owen, president of the Indian International Fair at Muskogee, that he had been selected to fix the premiums for Indian work.

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27 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, Nos. 36437, 36440.
28 Agent Tufts reported in 1883: “The regular quadrennial rebellion against the Creek government, after about a year's duration, has ceased, and Is-par-he-che and his men are again quiet citizens of the nation they attempted to destroy...”
29 The Rev. William P. Blake was a native of Martinsburg, Pennsylvania. He was born November 14, 1857, attended the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, and became a missionary among the Creeks and Seminoles, making his home at Eufaula.
to be displayed and that $200.00 had been set aside for prizes. Not being posted as to all of the Indians at Hunt’s agency he was at a loss how to fix the premiums and asked for aid in the matter.

There will be a wild Indn. Dept.—so that Wild Indians will compete only with wild Indians. The Fair is now an Indian Fair, the principal officers being Indian. The Prest. being a distant connection of Jesse Chisholm whom the old men of all the Indians at your Agency will remember.

Vore then gave a list of the articles made by the Wichita Agency Indians and asked for suggestions as to prizes suitable for each, whether silver cup, money, or what. He promised that all of the exhibits would be specially cared for, sold for all they were worth and the proceeds returned to the owner.30

In 1884 the trustees of the Levering school were Ward Coachman,31 Thomas Canard,32 William Robison,33 James Fife, and David Barnett. Vore made his report to that body on June 30, 1884, saying that when he began his duties on September 8, 1883, he found the school in “a crippled condition. I found about 10 days rations . . . 1500 lbs. Flour, 700 lbs. Bacon. 7 Bushels Irish Potatoes, some molasses, &c.” He had bought some land from Coachman for $800 to furnish range between the North Fork of the Canadian and Wewoka Creek.

There were enrolled in the seminary ninety-six boys and seventy-seven girls and the average attendance was 92 1/4; some pupils ran away and others went home because of illness. The Baptist women of Baltimore sent clothing for every Indian child in the school; and women belonging to the Baptist church in Louisville furnished an organ, a sewing machine, Bibles, and supplies of goods.

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30 Oklahoma Historical Society, “Kiowa-Fairs,” Indian Archives Division.
31 Ward Coachman (Co-cha-my) was born in Wetumka, Alabama, in 1827 and lived there until he was twenty-two when he went to the Creek Nation in the west on an exploring tour. He was so favorably impressed that he returned home and brought sixty-five Creeks to the Creek Nation in June, 1849. During the Civil War he served under Colonel McIntosh. In 1874 Coachman was elected second chief and replaced Lochar Harjo upon his impeachment a year later. He was a delegate to Washington several times and a member of the House of Kings (O’Beirne, op. cit., pp. 341-2; Debo, op. cit., pp. 103, 222, 248).
32 Thomas Canard, the third son of Yahartostanuggee, king of Eufaula Town, was born at Cane Creek in 1841. He attended Asbury Mission for eight years. He served in the Confederate army and was a light-horseman for four years. He was district judge of Weanoka (O’Beirne, op. cit., pp. 356-8).
33 William Robison was born near Muskogee, Creek Nation, on February 8, 1833. He was educated at a neighborhood school near the mouth of Little River and at the Shawnee Mission near Westport, Missouri, before going to the Warrior Stand Academy in Alabama. After his service in the Seminole Battalion under Colonel John Jumper during the Civil War he went into the mercantile business in the Creek Nation. He was elected district judge, member of the House of Warriors, member of the House of Kings, which office he held twelve years. During the Isparhecher uprising Robison was appointed commander of the national forces by Chief Samuel Che‘setah (O’Beirne, op. cit., pp. 255-57).
Land was being cleared for an orchard of one thousand apple trees and four or five hundred peach trees. The school farm had produced 400 bushels of wheat, 250 bushels of oats, 1000 pounds of beans, 850 pounds of green peas, 30 bushels of onions, 35 bushels of tomatoes, 40 bushels of potatoes and there were sixty acres of corn.

There was need of a hospital, a smoke house, milk and fruit houses, and Vore suggested that they be of rock, as they could be erected at a cheaper price than of wood.\(^{24}\) Superintendent Vore issued to the girls students: check aprons, chemisets, calico dresses, linsey dresses, plaid dresses, saucques and skirts, woolen skirts, shoes and handkerchiefs; the boys were given coats, pants, socks and shoes.

Girl pupils during the first quarter of 1884-85 were: Peggy Hill, Betty McIntosh, Betty Doyle, Martha Bruner, Lucinda Bruner, Elvia Chisholm, Emily Chisholm, Letty, Minnie and Kate Thomas, Vicey Henry, Sally Yahola, Susan Canard, Mary Coker, and others.\(^{25}\)

Boys attending Levering were Bruner Dawson, Jeff Tiger, Tony Proctor, Thompson Perryman, George Yargee, Fuller Jimboy, also members of the Kurnals and Berryhill families.\(^{26}\) C. P. Vanen was the teacher in the autumn of 1884. Vore bought goods from J. H. Scales, Turner and Byrne, Patterson and Foley.

Persons employed in the seminary were: \(^{37}\)

Charles P. Vanen, assistant teacher, born in Alabama,
Adaline Drake
Franz McConnell,
Sarah E. Porter, Matron (Creek)
Lizzie Reed, assistant matron (Creek)
Cornelia McComb, cook, born in Alabama.
H. Clay Smith, farmer,
Charles T. Smith, farmer.

During the second quarter of 1884-85 Emma Parsons, a Seminole, and Alice Coykendall were teachers.\(^{38}\) Goodrich’s United States History, McGuffey’s Third Readers and Andrews English were purchased from Patterson and Foley of Eufaula, Indian Territory. Eggs were supplied children who were ill. Lye was bought to make soap and candles were used in the kitchens and students’ rooms.\(^{39}\) All reports listed the names of girls who were detained at home to nurse their sick mothers.

The Baptist Missionary of Eufaula, January, 1885, mentioned that there were one hundred twenty pupils in Levering Mission,
which was prospering under the guidance of Major Vore. Dr. J. C. Wingo, his wife and four children were in Eufaula on their way to Levering Mission, where the Doctor expected to teach and act as physician for the school.

The articles purchased for Levering in 1885 include long lists of drugs. Groceries were bought from F. H. Scales of Wetumka; hundreds of pounds of beef at five cents per pound from Thomas Canard and Cono Harjo; eggs were ten cents a dozen and girls' shoes cost $1.30, $1.60 and $1.75 a pair. Among other items of food for the institution were twenty-five pounds of dried peaches, sixteen bushels of hominy grits, fifty-one pounds of navy beans, bought at Little Wewoka from Wallace McNac & Son.40

Mission Bands of New York City and Germantown, Pennsylvania, sent books for the school library; basted patchwork, and basted garments for the sewing class; papers and picture cards.41 A meat house which cost $85.00 was built of hewn logs. It was 16 x 20 feet. The hospital was built by D. Price of Eufaula; the size was 16 x 32, two stories, and it cost $1400; at an additional cost of $400 a basement was constructed to store fruits and vegetables. A number of orphans and half orphans were among the one hundred four students.42

The Creek Council appropriated $7,000 for Levering for 1885-6 and $385 additional to finish payment on the hospital.43 During the session of July to November, 1885, Lydia V. Sixkiller of the Cherokee Nation and a graduate of the Indian University (Bacone) was first teacher; Ellen Bushyhead was matron; Dr. J. C. Keeney, physician and assistant teacher; Lizzie Fryer, seamstress and J. O. Wright, principal teacher.

Music was being taught in 1886 by Ella M. Sutphin, general missionary; James Starrow of England and his wife Elizabeth, a Scot, were employed as the gardener and laundress and Peter Coachman as herder for the school. There were one hundred students present in 1886, fifty-six were females and one of them, Emma Bruner, died May 4, 1886. Later a Mexican herder, Vincente Chisholm, was employed, as well as Chesley Keeney, wagon maker.44

A visitor who was present at the closing exercises of the mission on June 30, 1886, wrote a description for The Indian Missionary in which he related that Major Vore had general management of all affairs pertaining to the establishment. "He is genial, kind and

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40 Ibid., No. 36508.
41 The Indian Missionary, Eufaula, I. T., July, 1885, p. 1, col. 2.
43 Ibid., No. 36512, J. C. Perryman, chairman for committee on education, to Houses of Kings and Warriors.
44 Ibid., Nos. 36544, 36547, 36549.
upright . . . While he is continued in his present position, . . . this Mission may look for success.'"

Vore's report to the trustees, dated October 2, 1886, read: "In order to raise more products upon the farm and garden I employed the past year more help—a Dairy & Poultryman, a gardner & for a few months a mechanic to repair our wagons, farming implements &c."

There was a long continued drouth so only half a crop of oats, wheat and corn were raised, but they had salads, spring vegetables, onions, beets and cabbages.

The buildings were badly in need of repair, particularly the chimneys. The beds and bunks, bought five years before, were worn out. Vore bought heating stoves "to make the girls and teachers more comfortable both in the school and their sleeping rooms and the Hospital." The library for Levering had been started when the Reverend William Bell gave a number of books—some on agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, and some religious works. They were also indebted to Professor Lyman C. Draper and the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society for volumes on history and agriculture.

The Reverend W. P. Blake sent a small box of shoemakers tools in anticipation of the establishment of mechanical shops at the school. The young men were eager to learn trades.

Dr. J. C. Keeney, our physician has done a good work the past session by taking some of the larger boys, and going into the woods, cutting small trees—learning them to score and hew logs and with them has erected a small hewed log barn—with one corn crib—a room for Harness and Farming implements, six stalls etc., without cost to the Mission except plank, nails & hinges.

When school opened September 1, there were more applicants than could be admitted, many were almost grown. All of the children were trying to obey the rules; they were studious and courteous to one another, but they remained away a long time at Christmas.\(^45\)

The first quarter of 1887-88 there were sixty-five boys and fifty-nine girls enrolled, but five boys and three girls ran away from the school. Another loss was the death on October 10, 1887, when Goliath Herod died. Chief Perryman approved an appropriation of $7,500 for the mission on December 3, 1887.\(^46\) On January 10, 1887, Vore wrote to the Reverend J. S. Murrow, Rehoboth Mission, Atoka, I. T.:

Dear Brother: . . . I have reduced the number of employes to the very lowest possible number. Our music teacher, Dr. Marston's\(^47\) daughter, is acting as Matron, besides teaching the girls painting, and sewing and knitting, both plain and fancy, and she alone will save about $150.00 to the mission this session, should her health and strength hold out. . . . Our

\(^45\) *Ibid.*, No. 36554.


\(^47\) The Rev. S. W. Marston was appointed superintendent of Union Agency in 1876.
school is full. Trustees met today and will probably send some of the scholars home, as we will have more than we agreed to educate and provide for. . . .

Levering Mission suffered a great loss on January 17, 1887, by the death of Major Vore who had been superintendent for three and a half years. Resolutions of respect for his fine character passed by the staff, were signed by Mrs. E. M. Sutphin, J. O. Wright, J. B. Robison, the committee appointed for that purpose, on January 18, 1887.

John R. Musick, a brilliant newspaper man, made a tour through the west and wrote letters for The Graphic News, Cincinnati. In one entitled "Among the Seminoles" he reported:

That evening we arrived at Wetumka. . . . Here I met Mr. Thomas H. Scales, the merchant and postmaster of Wetumka. Having introduced myself, the Major answered all questions asked, and sent out to the Mission for Major I. G. Vore, one of the best posted men on Indian history living. Mr. Scales is a white man, a native of Tennessee, and like all Southern gentlemen has a large heart. He came to the Territory in 1868, and in 1872 settled in Wetumka and engaged in the mercantile business. His customers are all Indians and under the law he cannot collect a cent, but he depends on their honor.

I stopped that night at the house of Mr. D. M. Benson, a full-blood Creek. His residence was a large, elegant two-story structure. . . . Mr. Benson, and his wife are both Creeks, and they and the family speak the Creek language all the time; yet their children are sent to school and educated in English. Levering Mission, under Major I. G. Vore, is at Wetumka. . . . The teachers in the school are: Prcf. J. O. Wright, Miss L. V. Sixheller [Sixkiller], Rose McNac, and Mrs. E. M. Sutphin, who instructs in music and the arts. This is a general mission, where plain and fancy work is done. Miss Ellen Bushyhead is matron, and Mrs. Starrow from Ohio, laundress. Two farmers are employed to instruct the Indians in farming, one from Missouri and one from Kansas.

Major Vore proved a perfect store-house of knowledge of Indian history and traditions.

According to J. O. Wright the school was opened September first with a full attendance under the management of a capable corps of teachers. A church had been organized with a membership of the Christian students, and Brother Wesley Smith wrote the Rev. I. T. Tichenor, corresponding secretary of the missionary board, Southern Baptist Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, August 1, 1883, that Smith and his family had moved to the Wichita Agency some time before. He was a member of the Creek Council and wished to be elected for another four years. The report of the commissioner Indian affairs for 1883, stated that the Wichitas had a flourishing church with Wesley Smith, a Seminole missionary, as pastor. The church was supported by the Baptists.

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48 The Indian Missionary, Atoka, I. T., February, 1887, p. 2, cols. 1, 2.
49 Major Vore and his wife were buried in the family burying ground at Webbers Falls (Authority Mrs. Joe McGrath, Muskogee, Oklahoma).
50 Vol. VI., No. 16, p. 266.
51 Vore wrote the Rev. I. T. Tichenor, corresponding secretary of the missionary board, Southern Baptist Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, August 1, 1883, that Smith and his family had moved to the Wichita Agency some time before. He was a member of the Creek Council and wished to be elected for another four years. The report of the commissioner Indian affairs for 1883, stated that the Wichitas had a flourishing church with Wesley Smith, a Seminole missionary, as pastor. The church was supported by the Baptists.
great earnestness. Miss Rose McNac who had been a student at the mission, was teaching a Creek public school, so the labors of the missionaries were bearing fruit.52

On April 4, 1888, the Muskogee Baptist Church at Levering Mission, in order to show the great respect in which I. G. Vore was held "Resolved, That we as a church recommended that his funeral be preached at the Wougufka church on Sunday, July 15, 1888, at 10 o'clock, a. m."53 According to Mrs. M. L. Herrod, Wougufke was a settlement of full blood Creeks who were quiet, peaceful people. The church and school were in good condition but financially very needy.54 This church was named for a former Upper Creek town on a branch of of Ponchishatchee Creek in southwest Coosa County, Alabama. The Creek name means Muddy Stream, or Water.55

On May 16, 1888, Superintendent Wright wrote to Miss K. L. Ellett of The Indian Missionary staff, about a May day picnic which was held on the banks of North Fork River, from nine o'clock in the morning to four in the afternoon. Among the 175 persons present at the dinner were the judge and many attorneys and jurors attending court at Wetumka. Two hundred pounds of fried fish, pies and cakes were served and Wright considered it the pleasantest day in the six years he had been at the institution.56

School closed in the summer of 1888, finishing the seventh session. During the ten months the teachers, Mr. C. W. Himan, Miss Bettie Keefer, and Miss Minnie Tyler labored faithfully for the advancement of their pupils. A long program was given consisting of class work, declamation, dialogues, songs. Instrumental music played by the Misses Grimes, McCombs and Benson indicated marked progress. As usual the trustees had their innings in the way of speech making. Dinner was served to all visitors and by four o'clock all had departed except six or seven pupils. This was the most successful session of the mission school.57

School reopened September 3, 1888, with all teachers present, but all of the "scholars" had not returned. While on their way to attend the Baptist Association near Eufaula Brother George Hicks and some of the Wichita brothers and sisters spent the night at Levering. Many new students entered and the majority of former children returned, so that Superintendent Wright wished for more room to accommodate all who wished to attend.58

52 The Indian Missionary, Atoka, I. T., December, 1887, p. 1, col. 2.
53 Ibid., June, 1888, p. 1, col. 3.
54 Ibid., p. 1, col. 4.
56 The Indian Missionary, June, 1888, p. 2, col. 3.
58 Ibid., October, 1888, p. 1, col. 2.
School was resumed on September 3, 1890, with the whole staff in attendance, but not the full number of children; by October there were more than a hundred. The majority of the 1887 students came back and the general health was good, although one little boy died of abscess of the liver. Some of the young women made such progress in music that they were permitted to play for the chapel service.

The boys under Doctor Keeney built a two room hewed log house, 14 x 30 feet, for wood work and blacksmithing. Seventy-five acres of rich bottom land had been fenced for corn and $800 worth of clothing had been sent to the mission from various societies.\(^{59}\)

The Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society of Maryland sent a set of wagon maker tools and blacksmithing tools worth $75.00. The school had a fine upright piano in addition to an organ.

There was grown on the mission land 2500 bushels of corn, one hundred tons of millet and prairie hay was put up for the winter. One hundred seventy cattle were owned by the missionaries and they brought fifty-five spring calves. There were eighty hogs, a good span of mules, one pony and a colt.\(^{60}\)

In January, 1889, a new dining room and some other improvements were being made at the mission and the boys were helping in the work, thus gaining knowledge in the use of tools and carpenter work. On March 18, 1889, Wright wrote to The Indian Missionary from Levering that they had just had "a grand, good meeting." Rev. Wesley Smith and Rev. George Sullivan preached and there were three new members added to the church by baptism and "fifteen made acknowledgements to the church and were restored to full fellowship." The general health of the school was good which indicated the watchful care of the physician. The farm employees were pushing their work and the new dining room was almost finished under the supervision of Dr. Keeney. Levering was no place for idlers or drones.\(^{61}\)

The girl students had become proficient in quilt making and they surprised Brother Smith, pastor of the school, with a beautiful quilt which had been made by students from seven to twelve years of age. The girls made and exhibited a quilt at a fair and they were encouraged when they were given first premium and $2.50.

Levering Mission had been in a bad condition financially for several years, so there was great rejoicing when the Creek Council appropriated $2,000 to cover back claims for improvements; a like amount was appropriated for further repairs and improvements.\(^{62}\)

59 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, No. 36599; The Indian Missionary, September, 1888, p. 1, col. 2.

60 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, No. 36599.

61 April, 1889, p. 1, col. 4.

62 The Indian Missionary, June, 1889, p. 1, col. 2; ibid., December, 1889, p. 2, col. 2.
On April 24, 1889, Wright wrote to the Reverend Mr. Murrow:

“Again the waters of the North Fork river have been troubled by the baptism of one of our students.” Miss A. R. Boyer, Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Keeney were the teachers that session. A large number of friends and patrons witnessed the closing exercises of Levering on June 26, 1889, the eighth session of the mission. The teachers had labored hard and their students passed a creditable examination in all of the departments. The girls displayed fine fancy work and the boys were proud of the good work they had accomplished outside of school.63

Because of illness the school closed on June 9, 1890. Dysentery had invaded the mission and Mr. Wright's little son, Bennie, was taken from his loving parents. Next Charlie Scott and Eliza Bruner were “called to their long home. . . .” On June 19 Miss Sarah Cundiff, the laundress, also died.64

All of the staff were present when Levering opened September 1, 1890; more than one hundred pupils enrolled and others were eager to attend the school. Elder D. W. Graves, principal teacher, preached and Wright thought it seemed more like home with sermons in English every Sunday.65 Twenty-three of the young Indians ran away from the school and thirty-two were late in reporting after the Christmas holidays. The Creek Council sent Sumner Hale and Tonie Proctor to the states to attend school in 1890. During the second quarter the Misses Muskogee Morrison and Jennie Croweli were sent away to be educated.66

Wright's report to Chief Perryman, dated September 1, 1890, to June 30, 1891, gave the number of pupils as one hundred eighty-two; there had been considerable sickness, some cases serious. The school had been deep in debt four years before when Wright took charge, but was then prosperous. He had the buildings painted, built porches and a 20 x 32 wash house; the school owned one hundred fifty head of stock and one hundred hogs.67

Wright reported the enrollment of one hundred thirty-eight for the autumn session of 1890. The health of the pupils was good and Elder Graves baptised an Indian girl and one white girl. “Brother Ash spent four days with us, in November and gave Bible lessons on the blackboard.” The new wash house was almost completed.68

From Muskogee, April 16, 1891, I. S. Tichnor wrote to Superintendent Wright that the Creek Council had passed an act termi-

63 Ibid., July, 1889, p. 2, cols. 1, 2.
64 Ibid., July, 1890, p. 2, col. 3.
65 Ibid., October, 1890, p. 1, col. 3.
66 Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, No. 36602.
67 Ibid., No. 36631.
68 The Indian Missionary, January, 1891, p. 2, col. 3.
nating all contracts with Levering Mission on June thirty. The school was to be turned over to the Creek Board of Education on the last of June. All products of the farm were to go to the school and the stock there to the Board of Education. The Creek Nation agreed to reimburse the Home Missionary Board $3,000 for building expenses. The Missionary Board claimed the furniture, bed clothing, farm implements, harness etc. At that time the Reverend D. W. Graves was pastor and teacher at the school. Dr. W. E. Harris served as physician, Miss Florence Stafford taught the primary department and music, Miss Susie Graves was on the staff, Mrs. Bettie Wright was matron and Enoch Cox farmer and mechanic.69

From Wetumka, May 4, 1891, Wright wrote The Indian Missionary: "Our school will close on June 18th. . . . Attendance not so large on account of sickness. Everything is in a prosperous condition." An Invoice of goods at Levering included: "25 Bibles, 71 New Testaments, 1 Smith’s Bible Dictionary, 813 Volumes Sunday School and various other books."

"I turned over on June 30, 1891 Levering Mission with all the property to my successor Wm. Robison and trustees of Levering Mission" "J. O. Wright."

The receipt in full from the Home Mission Board of Southern Baptist Convention was signed by G. W. Hyde for the Baptist Board.70

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69 The Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, Nos. 36612, 36613, 36628.  
70 Ibid., Nos. 36631, 36632, 36636; Report Home Mission Board, 1891, Minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the efficient help given me in preparing this article by Mrs. Rella L. Looney, archivist Oklahoma Historical Society; the Rev. E. C. Roth, editor-in-chief of the Foreign Mission Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention, Richmond, Virginia; Mr. James M. Wiley, Muskogee, Oklahoma, who furnished interesting material, and Mrs. Joe McGrath of Muskogee.