

2nd letter

1711 Graham Lane
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Milo and Lewin

My dear boys:

When I wrote you last time, I promised to tell you about my grandfather Bender. That is a strange name too, but Grandpa Bender was an Indian and he had no other name. We children did not like him not having but one name so we just called him grandpa Jim. He lived on Myrtle Grove Sound and was a fisherman. He would bring us children a burlap bag full of oysters in the shell. My oh my! We would have big oyster roasts in the back yard. Do you know, I don't like oysters you get here. They have no taste to them. Ours were so succulent; here they taste as if they had been dipped or soaked in water.

Grandpa lived with his son and daughter-in-law. Grandma had been dead long ago. In fact, my grandmother Sadgwar had been dead for years when I was a baby. I used to spend a part of a vacation with grandpa. He never slept in a bed. It was always cold nights down there and he would take a blanket, not a bed blanket, but a darkish kind of blanket with stripes in it, red and yellow and other colors, and roll himself in it and sleep on the piazza floor. Even if it rained, he was out there. One day, I said to him, "Grandpa, your face is not copper like the wood Indian in front of the cigar store and you have no feathers and no red paint on either.

Your face is just like Mr. Fulfends and he is a white man."

Mr. Fulfend's face was as tan colored as mine but he was a white man. Grandpa got fiery angry. He caught hold of my arms and said "No white blood, me Cherokee." I was terribly frightened. He sat me down in a chair and got my book I had been reading and said "You read book." I don't remember saying any thing after that time, for I was afraid of him.

My mother told this to me about my grandmother. When she was a little slave child, she played with her young master. When her master died, the young master inherited the slaves. He never sold a single slave. Luke Huggins, her master, wanted to send his daughter to Mary Lyon Seminary and did not have the money. He told my grandmother, Julia, to put a clean frock on Caroline and send her in the parlor. She said grandma put a clean frock on her and then sharpened her carving knife and went in the parlor and said "Luke," not master, but Luke, "If you sell my Caroline away from me, before you can touch her I'll cut her throat from ear to ear," and she tucked her big wide skirt around me and flashed that carving knife over my face. Mother said she really thought she was killed. The master said "take her back in the kitchen, Julia." He and his friend knew Julia would surely have done it. So my mother was never sold. If God in his all wise power permitted slavery to exist in America, I do thank him for giving my mother to Phoebe Huggins. Mrs. Huggins taught my mother to do the finest kind of needle work. All clothes were

made by hand in those days. You boys see and know the lovely needle work your mother does, well my mother taught me. I am eighty-two years old and I still do my embroidery and chrocheting. You should have seen the lovely sweater I just finished. I am doing some linen table napkins now and put my work aside to write this letter. You remember the slippers I used to crochet for you when you were kids and how Lewin used to snap the elastic and sail his across the room? I have to smile now when I think of the night Dad was reading the evening paper and that slipper sailed right on Dad's head. He thought a bat flew in the window and lighted on him. Such scramblings!

Boys, I was looking at the school bus pulling out this morning and some of the children have to walk less than a block and are sometimes late for that bus. You boys had to walk all that distance to high school. Now it is considered too far. Are things any better? I wonder! I think they have it too easy don't you?

If I feel like writing tomorrow, I will tell you about my school days, "my dear old golden rule days," when I was punished with a paddle. My grammer days! Whew! I was happy though and I loved my teachers and they loved me.

Good bye boys until next time I write.

Lovingly,

Mother