

# “A Very Serious and Perplexing Epidemic of Grippe”

The Influenza of 1918 at the Haskell Institute

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**Abstract:** In the spring of 1918, students at the Haskell Institute, a federal Indian boarding school in Lawrence, Kansas, began falling victim to a mysterious illness. Although disease outbreaks were common at the overcrowded and underfunded Indian school, this year was different: within a few months, more than a third of the student body was hospitalized, and at least seventeen students died. The students suffered from a virulent new strain of influenza, one that traveled the globe in the lungs of soldiers and civilians dislocated by the First World War and killed approximately fifty million people. This article traces the influenza pandemic at the Haskell Institute and examines its consequences for students, their families, and school officials. The story of the outbreak at Haskell provides a window into Indian boarding schools during the early twentieth century and demonstrates how Indian Office officials often prioritized the survival of their institutions over the well-being of the people they supposedly served. Students and their families did not passively accept the authority of federal officials, however. Instead, they made their own choices, even under the most difficult circumstances.

**Keywords:** Haskell Institute, Indian boarding schools, Superintendent H. B. Pears, 1918 influenza pandemic, Spanish flu, medical history

Although scholars of Native America have long recognized the devastating effects of diseases on Indigenous communities, medical history remains an underutilized lens through which to view the Native American past. Existing works have focused predominantly on the colonial period, when Old World diseases combined with the violence of colonialism to reduce Native populations by 90–95 percent.<sup>1</sup> Few scholars have looked at how diseases continued to shape Native lives

into the twentieth and even twenty-first centuries.<sup>2</sup> Yet, medical history can provide valuable insights, since, as historians of medicine have shown, disease is both a biological reality and a social construction. By studying the causes and consequences of disease, as well as the meanings that people assigned to their experience of illness, scholars can learn much about the morals, values, and beliefs of societies during particular historical moments.<sup>3</sup> Moments of medical crisis also generate copious correspondence, which can reveal struggles and contradictions that otherwise might have remained obscured from view.

This article traces the influenza of 1918, the most lethal pandemic in recorded history, at the Haskell Institute, the largest nonreservation Indian boarding school in the United States at the time. The story of the outbreak at Haskell illuminates some of the tensions that existed within boarding schools during the early twentieth century as Indian Office officials endeavored to control Indigenous children and to keep their institutions solvent. During the crisis, Haskell Superintendent Hervey B. Peairs often prioritized institutional survival over the well-being of his charges. Native people did not submit meekly to his authority, however, which reveals the contingency of federal power.

In the early twentieth century, both medicine and federal Indian policy were undergoing a time of transition and modernization. With the rise of germ theory in the late nineteenth century, physicians and public health officials felt confident that science would soon conquer disease, but effective treatments remained elusive prior to the discovery of penicillin in 1928.<sup>4</sup> Federal Indian policy, meanwhile, underwent a Foucauldian shift from the physical punishment of Indigenous bodies in the Indian wars to a psychological assault on Indigenous souls through assimilationist programs enforced by constant surveillance.<sup>5</sup> A small army of federal employees invaded Indian Country to supervise the implementation of “kill the Indian and save the man” campaigns to allot tribal homelands, destroy tribal governments, and reeducate tribal children in boarding schools. Their ultimate goal was to culturally transform Native people into productive American citizens.<sup>6</sup> Although the government promised its “wards” certain services—including education and health care—to ease their transition to “civilization,” funding for these programs frequently fell short. Native people, meanwhile, were not always willing participants in federal plans. As Philip J. Deloria has pointed out, officials lived in constant fear of Indian

“outbreaks” from their systems of surveillance and dominance.<sup>7</sup> The influenza epidemic at the Haskell Institute reveals the limitations of both modern medicine and federal Indian policy as Superintendent Peairs struggled to control both a frightening new disease and the Indigenous children under his supervision.

An ardent assimilationist who had made his career in Indian education, Peairs was determined to prove both his competency as superintendent and the federal government’s capability of caring for its Indigenous “wards” during the outbreak. Although Peairs did his utmost to secure extra medical help for the school, he also made decisions that came at a cost to the physical and emotional health of his charges. To keep the school financially solvent, he overenrolled students into congested dormitories that facilitated the spread of disease. To downplay the severity of the crisis and preserve the school’s reputation, he waited until the last minute to notify parents about their children’s illness. To maintain control over his charges, he discouraged parental visits and refused students home leave. Students and their families did not uncritically accept these choices. Instead, they did what they could to mitigate their suffering even if that meant resisting Peairs’s authority and disobeying his orders. Rejecting the notion that federal officials knew what was best for them, Native peoples broke out from federal control during the outbreak and made their own decisions even under the most difficult circumstances.

By the time the first wave of influenza struck Haskell in mid-March 1918, the school had already suffered through decades of sickness. Founded in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1884, Haskell, like other Indian boarding schools, was designed to assimilate Native children through education and to prepare them “in due time” for “all the responsibilities of citizenship.”<sup>8</sup> In spite of these lofty ideals, boarding schools were underfunded and unsanitary places. Tuberculosis, trachoma, measles, mumps, smallpox, and other contagious diseases swept through these institutions. Haskell buried forty-nine students in the school cemetery during its first six years alone.<sup>9</sup> Sickness undermined the educational mission of the Indian Office. As Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells remarked in 1916, “We cannot educate [Indian] children unless they are kept alive.”<sup>10</sup> By the early twentieth century, reformers, humanitarians, and friends of the Indians had begun to use charges of children’s poor health to attack the Indian Office and to demand an overhaul of

the boarding school system. Indeed, the exposure of deplorable conditions at the Haskell Institute in 1908 helped to fuel these calls for reform. Congress responded by appropriating funds for Indian health in 1913; the Indian Office also instituted new regulations to improve sanitation at the boarding schools. These advances, however, were threatened by the entry of the United States into the First World War. With cutbacks to congressional appropriations and medical personnel called to military service, Indigenous people once again faced inadequate care.<sup>11</sup> It was in this context that influenza arrived at Haskell.

“LIKE A THUNDER BOLT OUT OF A CLEAR SKY”: SPRING 1918

Scholars continue to debate the origin of the deadly strain of influenza that swept the globe in 1918.<sup>12</sup> They agree, however, that Camp Funston, an army cantonment near Junction City, Kansas, suffered one of the first identifiable outbreaks. On March 4, a camp cook reported ill with influenza. Within three weeks, more than eleven hundred soldiers required hospitalization. From Funston, the virus quickly spread to other American army bases and to France, sparking the first wave of the pandemic.<sup>13</sup> The Haskell Institute, which was located less than ninety miles east of Funston, was probably infected directly from the camp. Wartime conditions encouraged frequent contact between Haskell students and training camps like Funston, which provided influenza with ample opportunity to infiltrate the school. The army operated recruitment stations in Lawrence, and Haskell boys, many of whom were “very restless” to enlist, often met with recruiting officers while on town leave.<sup>14</sup> Haskell’s sports teams also regularly competed against camp teams, which helped show off students’ athletic prowess and potential for military service.<sup>15</sup> Eventually, more than 250 Haskell boys volunteered to fight for the United States.<sup>16</sup> Many of those enlisted students, as well as relatives of school employees, used military leave to visit friends and family back at the school. During the weekend of March 8–10, for example, Lieutenant Albert Birch, the son of the assistant superintendent, visited his parents from Camp Funston.<sup>17</sup> The following week, G. E. E. Lindquist, a former Haskell employee who was then working for the International Committee of the YMCA, also visited Haskell after touring the camps.<sup>18</sup> Haskell officials welcomed interactions with military personnel and promoters as a way to encourage patriotism

among the students. As Peairs bragged to the Indian Office, "It cannot be doubted that Indian schools have been good teachers of patriotism."<sup>19</sup> Yet, these contacts inadvertently brought to Haskell an enemy far deadlier than the Central Powers.

Whatever the precise pathway of infection, influenza struck Haskell "like a thunder bolt out of a clear sky."<sup>20</sup> On March 15, eleven days after the outbreak began at Camp Funston, the Haskell school hospital admitted a student with an ailment "diagnosed as gripe." Two days later, three more students sought treatment. The following day, the number of new cases jumped to thirty-six.<sup>21</sup> The children complained of "sore throat, head ache, pains in the glands of the neck, and general lassitude." A few also experienced "nausea, vomiting, chills and rigors." Temperatures ranged from 101 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>22</sup> Cramped conditions ensured that the virus found a ready supply of susceptible victims at the school.<sup>23</sup> Over the next week, dozens of students sought treatment daily. So many were sick, in fact, that the "school and industrial departments practically had to stop their work."<sup>24</sup> Within two weeks, the virus had "seized half the pupils with more or less severeness."<sup>25</sup>

Alarmed by the rapid spread of sickness, Peairs appealed to the Indian Office for assistance on March 21.<sup>26</sup> Peairs had reason to be especially concerned. A decade earlier, Haskell had become the target of a month-long health investigation due to its unusually high number of tubercular cases.<sup>27</sup> The school nurse at the time accused Peairs of failing to do enough to preserve student health. Instead of promptly sending infected students to sanitariums, she alleged, he had doubted the diagnosis of "a large number of cases" and "tended to the retention in the school of tubercular cases as long as possible."<sup>28</sup> Peairs did so in part because he feared that a drop in enrollment would lead to a drop in appropriations to the school. The Indian Office sent Special Agent Walter W. McConihe and Medical Supervisor Joseph A. Murphy to investigate the charges. Although these men cleared Peairs of intentional wrongdoing, they did bring the superintendent to "a realization of the gravity of the situation." Peairs protested that lack of funding rather than lack of will was to blame for poor conditions at Haskell, but over the next few months he did what he could to clean up the school and improve student health.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the experience shook him. He did not want to be accused of failing in his duties this time around.

Despite Peairs's appeal for help with the outbreak, the Indian

Office was not immediately responsive. At the time, influenza was not considered a particularly alarming disease. Historian Nancy K. Bristow has argued that by the early twentieth century influenza had become “domesticated” in the popular American imagination as a “well-known and ultimately insignificant presence.”<sup>30</sup> Confident in the promise of modern medicine, Americans little suspected the nightmare to come. The Indian Office probably had not heard about the recent outbreak at Camp Funston. Even if officials knew of it, they might not have made the connection to events at Haskell, since at that point there were few civilian accounts to put alongside the army’s records to indicate a nationwide epidemic. Since Haskell’s flu cases constituted the first large-scale civilian outbreak of influenza that spring, the Indian Office lacked a blueprint for how to respond. The day after receiving Peairs’s telegram, Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edgar B. Meritt informed the superintendent that there were “no field nurses available.” He suggested that Peairs employ local help if necessary.<sup>31</sup> Peairs promptly hired four graduate nurses.

By that time, the school hospital, designed to hold fifty patients, overflowed with more than two hundred severely ill children. Another 250 students with milder cases convalesced “in the different dormitories until able to attend school.”<sup>32</sup> The school’s resident physician, Dr. Charles F. Ensign, Nurse Hannah Anderson, and their student assistants worked around the clock to tend to the sick, but they also contracted the virus.<sup>33</sup> Although many of the afflicted students “were fully recovered in two or three days, after a day’s rest in bed,” others experienced complications. Some suffered “purulent discharge from the ears.”<sup>34</sup> Others had “rheumatic complications,” with painful swelling of the joints and muscles. Most dangerous of all were the “lung involvements,” which resulted from the body’s extreme immune response to the virus or from secondary pneumonia infections.<sup>35</sup> Children with undiagnosed tuberculosis were particularly at risk due to their weakened lungs. One student expelled “large quantities of pus” from “an abscess within the lung structure.” Another ultimately suffered a fatal pulmonary hemorrhage.<sup>36</sup>

The first student to succumb to influenza that spring was Davis Bond, a sixteen-year-old Chickasaw boy from Texas. The death stunned the school. As the school newspaper, the *Indian Leader*, reported, “When the flag was placed at half-mast Monday morning there were many startled inquiries, for no one realized that death was near.” Although Davis

had suffered an “attack of pneumonia” following influenza, he had not appeared “dangerously ill” until March 24. When he took a turn for the worse that afternoon, Peairs wired the boy’s parents. By the next morning, Davis had passed away. His parents arrived the following day to collect their son’s body. Dismayed by the loss of the “quiet, well-behaved boy,” some of the school employees “sent beautiful flowers with the casket.”<sup>37</sup> Peairs sent another telegram to the Indian Office. Relaying the news of Davis’s death, he once again implored the office for help, since many of the victims of “La Grippe” were developing “serious cases [of] pneumonia.”<sup>38</sup> This time the office was more accommodating. Assistant Commissioner Meritt informed Peairs later that day that he would dispatch William Van Cleave, a special physician in the Indian Service, as well as a nurse, to assist with Haskell’s “pneumonia epidemic.”<sup>39</sup> Dr. Van Cleave reached Haskell on the morning of March 28.<sup>40</sup>

The forty-eight hours after Dr. Van Cleave arrived were among the most difficult ones of the spring outbreak. Before the special physician could get his bearings, three more students had died. Carrie Rice, a fourteen-year-old Sac and Fox girl, succumbed to pneumonia on the afternoon of March 28. Later that night, Edward Stevenson, a sixteen-year-old Wichita boy, passed away.<sup>41</sup> Astonished by the severity of the disease, Van Cleave joined Peairs and Ensign in sending another telegram to the Indian Office: “Epidemic unusual, perplexing, and alarming. About half the school afflicted with Streptococcus La Grippe. Eighteen cases pneumonia following. Two seriously ill. Three have died.”<sup>42</sup> By that point, Peairs had brought in several local physicians, as well as members of the Kansas State Board of Health, for consultations.<sup>43</sup> Yet with no end to the epidemic in sight, Peairs, Van Cleave, and Ensign requested that the office send the “best medical advisors from public health or army for immediate consultation and for thorough investigation of conditions.”<sup>44</sup> Later that evening, Alice Pepper, a sixteen-year-old Kaw girl, “died from pulmonary hemorrhage following la Grippe.”<sup>45</sup>

By this time, the Indian Office was seriously alarmed. The Haskell Institute was the largest and most prominent Indian boarding school in the country. A severe health crisis there called into question the federal government’s ability to care for its “wards.” Upon receiving the news of the latest deaths at Haskell, the Office asked the US Public Health Service (USPHS) to intervene.<sup>46</sup> The USPHS, which had evolved out of the Marine Hospital Service in the late nineteenth century, reorganized in

1912 to take a more active role in the control of infectious diseases nationwide. Indian peoples technically remained outside its purview, however, because the Indian Office operated its own Indian Medical Service.<sup>47</sup> The Indian Office was wary of the USPHS assuming too many of its duties. As Assistant Commissioner Meritt argued, only the Indian Office was “familiar with the characteristics of the Indians; their peculiarities and diseases.”<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the office recognized that wartime conditions had depleted the Indian Medical Service of the staff and expertise necessary to tackle the mysterious outbreak at Haskell. Involving the USPHS also might diffuse blame for the outbreak by demonstrating that the Indian Office had done everything in its power to stem the epidemic. The following day, March 30, Senior Surgeon Charles E. Banks of the USPHS arrived at the school to conduct a full investigation.<sup>49</sup>

Although Dr. Banks came armed with the best medical knowledge of the day, he was unable to explain adequately what had happened at Haskell. The germ theory of disease had gained a wider acceptance among American physicians over the previous few decades, but some doctors still subscribed to older climatic theories. Even the best medical researchers in 1918 did not fully understand the nature of viruses that cause illnesses like influenza.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, it was not until the invention of the electron microscope more than a decade later that scientists got their first glimpse of these enigmatic pathogens.<sup>51</sup> During the first weeks of the outbreak, Dr. Ensign made “over fifty microscopic slides from sputa [i.e., sputum],” which he sent to the bacteriology department of Kansas University to culture. These slides revealed active strains of strep, staph, and pneumococcus, all of which were bacterial infections, but not the underlying viral source of the epidemic.<sup>52</sup> Dr. Banks also reported the presence of Pfeiffer’s bacillus, which in the early twentieth century was widely but erroneously believed to cause influenza.<sup>53</sup> Unaware that an invisible virus afflicted the students, Banks speculated that “a long, dry spell and high winds” in Kansas had contributed to the outbreak at the school, which he noted was “practically coincident with a similar outbreak, following the same climatic conditions, which resulted in over a thousand cases of epidemic influenza at Camp Funston.” He proposed that recent rains in Kansas, “which laid the dust,” would bring “a prompt decline in the number of cases.”<sup>54</sup> Banks found the outbreak at Haskell sufficiently alarming, however, that he reported it to the US surgeon general for inclusion in the April 5 edition of *Public Health Reports*.<sup>55</sup>

Although from today's perspective Dr. Banks's climatic explanation for the spring epidemic is medically unsatisfying, his report gratified Peairs because it cleared school officials of blame.<sup>56</sup> Anxious about the school's reputation, Peairs had been cautious about publicizing Haskell's affliction, especially during the first few perplexing weeks of the outbreak.<sup>57</sup> Despite his private correspondence with the Indian Office, the superintendent had divulged little publicly about conditions at Haskell other than to notify parents when their children became dangerously ill.<sup>58</sup> As much as possible, the school conducted business as usual; students even participated in local events in Lawrence, including a Liberty Loan parade on April 5 and a Sousa Band concert on April 7. At the time, dozens of students still suffered from influenza. Mary Marshno, a fifteen-year-old Potawatomi girl, succumbed to pneumonia on the morning of April 5. Although the *Indian Leader* offered obituaries for the students who died, the only real mention of the epidemic came at the tail end of the crisis, on April 12, after the USPHS had pronounced climate the culprit. Reprinting Dr. Banks's report and a letter from Dr. Ensign, the newspaper reassured readers that the school had used every "available means" to manage the outbreak and that at "the present time . . . school conditions are about normal."<sup>59</sup> As the managing editor of the school paper, Peairs endeavored to shape public perception of events at Haskell in a way that cast the school in the best possible light.

Despite Peairs's efforts to persuade the outside world that Haskell had everything under control, there were hints that within the school, students thought otherwise. As minors—and sick ones at that—these children were limited in their ability to exert agency during the outbreak. Nevertheless, when they could, they pushed back against personnel and policies that seemed only to exacerbate their suffering. In particular, conflict arose between Head Matron Katherine Keck and the girls in her dormitory. During the emotionally heightened weeks of the spring epidemic, Keck's effort to enforce discipline resulted in many girls "mutin[ying] and rebell[ing]." The girls petitioned for Keck's removal, but Peairs declined to do so at the time out of fear that such a change would "ruin discipline." Instead, he began "to keep a very close and personal supervision of the discipline among the girls" to forestall "another rebellion."<sup>60</sup> As for the students, the experience left them "greatly discouraged and disgusted." Luciant La Voye, who graduated that June, "felt so mean" about her last three months at

Haskell that when she learned that influenza had returned to the school the following October, she wrote to a friend that she “wish[ed] to goodness Miss Keck and Mrs. McK. would get it and die with it.”<sup>61</sup> Although the girls did not get the immediate satisfaction of seeing the hated matron removed, Peairs eventually conceded their point: by the end of October, as the school battled a second deadly wave of influenza, he quietly recommended that the Indian Office transfer Keck out of the school.<sup>62</sup> Although students could not stop influenza, they could shape institutional responses to the disease.

Even as tensions mounted at the school in the spring of 1918, the virus retreated. By the first week of April, the school physician reported that “the epidemic appears to be about spent.”<sup>63</sup> Slowly, the school returned to normalcy. Peairs congratulated himself on steering Haskell through the crisis. He wrote to a fellow superintendent that the “epidemic [was] just the same as [was] prevalent in the Army camps,” but that “better conditions” at Haskell had made “it possible to keep the death rate down much lower than in the camps.”<sup>64</sup> Peairs’s assertion was wishful thinking. Although fewer people died at the school than at the military camps, Haskell had higher morbidity and mortality rates. Just 11.8 percent (143,986 out of 1,219,359) of military personnel were hospitalized for respiratory illnesses during the spring, but 27.6 percent (207 out of 750) of the students at Haskell required “day and night attention” in the school hospital.<sup>65</sup> Whereas hospitalized soldiers experienced a 1.1 percent case-fatality rate, six of the hospitalized students at Haskell died, and one more passed away shortly after his return home, which brings Haskell’s case-fatality rate to 3.4 percent (7 out of 207).<sup>66</sup> Peairs downplayed this number by arguing that only one death directly resulted from the epidemic. He blamed the others on the students themselves, since some of the victims allegedly came “from families where there had been Tuberculosis and some had weak hearts.”<sup>67</sup> Although Peairs’s efforts to secure extra medical help may have saved lives, his unwillingness to accept any blame for the conditions that allowed the disease to flourish at Haskell demonstrates that his primary concerns were personal vindication and institutional survival.

As summer approached, members of the Haskell community endeavored to put the outbreak behind them. Teachers and students prepared for the June 9 graduation ceremony, which featured songs, prayers, and speeches praising the patriotism of young Indian men and women but

no mention of influenza.<sup>68</sup> Following graduation, some students visited their families. Others went to work in nearby homes and farms as part of Haskell's "outing system," which encouraged the industriousness and "civilization" of Indian children by placing them with white families.<sup>69</sup> Unbeknownst to students and staff, however, influenza was making its own journey. Lurking in the lungs of American soldiers, the virus traveled to the trenches of war-torn France, where it mutated to an even deadlier form.<sup>70</sup> If Peairs made special note of the outbreak of so-called Spanish flu in Europe, he did not record his thoughts.<sup>71</sup> In his July 24 annual report to the Indian Office, he detailed the spring epidemic at Haskell but did not draw connections to events overseas.<sup>72</sup>

The superintendent had more immediate concerns. In May 1918 Congress passed an Indian appropriations act that limited the annual expenditure on any one boarding school student to \$200. Congress would determine each school's appropriation, moreover, based on average attendance rather than on enrollment, which incentivized Peairs to overenroll students for the fall term, since he expected many of the older boys to join the army that winter.<sup>73</sup> Then, late that summer, Peairs learned that the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania would close on September 1 to serve as a rehabilitation hospital for wounded soldiers. The Indian Office planned to transfer many of the displaced students to Haskell. By that time, Peairs had already enrolled an unusually large number of students.<sup>74</sup> As a result, the Haskell Institute was "taxed to its fullest capacity" with an enrollment of 1,130 students for the year, 830 of whom were present at Haskell by September 20.<sup>75</sup> This number was eighty more than had filled the school in the spring. Military necessity also deprived Haskell of its resident physician, Dr. Ensign, who was called to active duty that summer.<sup>76</sup> Dr. Edward F. Menger, a less experienced physician who transferred to Haskell from Carlisle, replaced him.<sup>77</sup> Dr. Menger had just over a month to familiarize himself with the school before his abilities would be put to the ultimate test with the return of influenza.

"THE WORST SIEGE OF INFLUENZA THAT WE  
COULD POSSIBLY THINK OF": FALL 1918

As students began arriving at Haskell for the fall term, influenza returned to the United States. On August 27, 1918, two sailors reported

sick in Boston.<sup>78</sup> From there, the disease swept across the country. Influenza returned to Haskell during the first week of October. By that time, the virus was widespread in Kansas, which makes it difficult to say precisely how it reached the school.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps students contracted influenza during their bimonthly leave in Lawrence. School officials permitted these outings in the hope that exposure to American city life would have a “civilizing” influence on the children.<sup>80</sup> A clergyman also could have transmitted the disease during one of the school’s weekly religious meetings: each Tuesday, local pastors came to Haskell to meet with students of their particular denomination.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps Peairs infected the school following his own trip to town. He later reported that he was among the first at Haskell to fall ill.<sup>82</sup> Whatever the source, influenza soon devastated the Haskell community. Although the school had survived a similar outbreak just months before, Peairs lamented that the October wave was “the worst siege of Influenza that we could possibly think of.”<sup>83</sup>

As had happened during the spring, influenza spread rapidly through the overcrowded dormitories that fall.<sup>84</sup> This time, however, Haskell officials were better equipped to make sense of the disease than they had been the previous March. Peairs acquired a copy of a USPHS bulletin that informed the public about the symptoms of influenza, the “germs with long names” that potentially caused it, its mode of transmission “in the air along with the very small droplets of mucus, expelled by coughing or sneezing,” and “the very close relation between its spread and overcrowded homes.”<sup>85</sup> No longer offering climatic explanations for influenza, the USPHS grounded its bulletin in the latest scientific research about the disease and recognized the conditions that facilitated its spread. Armed with this knowledge, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells wired Peairs on October 11 with advice on how to care for his charges. Keep school buildings at “uniform temperature,” maintain “good ventilation,” and avoid “all forms of detrimental exposure of pupils,” Sells urged Peairs. He also warned against overcrowding and encouraged the superintendent to discontinue classes and assemblies if necessary.<sup>86</sup> Overcrowding spread disease, but unless Peairs was willing to send students home, there was little he could do to relieve Haskell’s congested dormitories and halt influenza’s advance. Although he suspended classroom work and detailed teachers as nurses, Peairs apparently never considered closing the school.<sup>87</sup> A drop in attendance would result in less money for Haskell and put the institution’s survival at risk.

By October 13, 117 students were sick with influenza, including 3 who developed pneumonia.<sup>88</sup> Spreading from student to student, the virus continued its rampage until, by the end of the month, 343 members of the Haskell community had fallen ill.<sup>89</sup>

Peairs did not reduce overcrowding at Haskell, but he did seek out extra medical help. He managed to secure two Lawrence physicians on a part-time basis to assist Dr. Menger in the school hospital.<sup>90</sup> What Haskell urgently needed, however, was expert nursing care. Although Nurse Anderson was an “unusually efficient” employee, she was unable to keep up with the sick even with the help of the teachers and students detailed to hospital work.<sup>91</sup> Peairs tried to hire additional nurses as he had in the spring, but medical professionals were in short supply that fall due to the demands of war and the wide reach of the virus. Peairs wired the Indian Office on October 15 to beg for “two or three trained nurses,” but Sells replied that no help was available, since reservations across the country were likewise desperate for care.<sup>92</sup> The city of Lawrence was so medically understaffed that it appealed for relief to the Kansas Board of Health. The board sent three trained nurses to the city, but none of these women could be spared for Haskell.<sup>93</sup> Unable to find nurses in Kansas City or Topeka either, Peairs appealed to the local Red Cross for untrained volunteers.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, twenty young women from Kansas State University agreed to care for Haskell students.<sup>95</sup>

Although devoted to their charges, the young women who volunteered at Haskell could do little to mitigate the effects of influenza. Even if medical researchers had known that a virus causes influenza, no antiviral treatment existed in 1918. Antibiotics, which could have combated the secondary pneumonia infections that so often proved fatal, were a decade away from discovery and even longer from development and distribution.<sup>96</sup> Care in 1918 consisted of keeping patients comfortable, hydrated, and fed as their immune systems battled influenza and doing as much as possible to prevent further infection.<sup>97</sup> To this end, the school made special purchases of aspirin, ice bags, and hot water bottles, as well as disinfectants like chloride of lime.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the school converted three domestic science departments into kitchens where the staff prepared “suitable food” to restore the strength of convalescent students.<sup>99</sup> Dr. Menger also experimented with herbal remedies and patent medicines like gum camphor, phylacogens, and Libradol.<sup>100</sup> Some of these products may have eased patient discomfort, but they could not

stop the virus. Despite the school's best efforts to care for the sick, children began dying.

Ruby Dailey, "an Otoe girl of about 15 or 16 years of age," was the first student to succumb to influenza that fall.<sup>101</sup> When Ruby arrived at the school hospital during the second week of the crisis, Dr. Menger made a startling discovery: the girl was nearly seven months pregnant. Unfortunately, pregnant women were particularly vulnerable to influenza due to their suppressed immune systems. According to thirteen studies of hospitalized pregnant women during the 1918 pandemic, the death rate ranged from 23 percent to 71 percent. Of those who survived, more than a quarter lost their babies.<sup>102</sup> Although Ruby weathered her initial bout with the virus, she developed pneumonia. At first, the doctor did not consider her life in danger, but she took a turn for the worse on October 14. That morning, Ruby delivered a premature baby boy, who died a few hours later.<sup>103</sup> Not long after the birth, Assistant Superintendent Charles E. Birch sent a telegram to notify her parents that Ruby was "critically ill with pneumonia and other complications."<sup>104</sup>

Concerned that death was imminent, Birch had Rudy sign an affidavit identifying "the author of her misfortune."<sup>105</sup> Haskell officials took seriously the sexual behavior of students because they linked promiscuity with paganism and believed that for Indian children to become "civilized" they had to embrace Victorian concepts of morality. School officials had previously expelled girls after discovering their pregnancies.<sup>106</sup> One can only imagine Ruby's fear, embarrassment, and exhaustion as she recounted her story. During a visit home in March, she had attended a picture show with her sister and brother-in-law, George De Roin. After the trio returned home, her sister went out "to purchase some candy," at which point De Roin "compelled [Ruby] to submit to sexual intercourse." More sympathetic to Ruby once he learned of her rape, Birch hoped that her testimony would be enough to convict De Roin of the offense. He even considered having Ruby sign her affidavit as a "dying statement," which would carry more weight in court. Mercifully, he concluded that such an action might cause her to give up "when she would otherwise have a chance to recover."<sup>107</sup> The girl lost consciousness a few hours later.<sup>108</sup> Ruby's parents arrived at Haskell that evening. She passed away the following morning.<sup>109</sup>

That same morning, nineteen-year-old Preston Harley lost his life. Preston, a Choctaw boy, had transferred to Haskell from the Jones Male

Academy in Oklahoma earlier that fall. The superintendent of his former school had advised Peairs that the boy needed “a new school and new friends.” His mother, a struggling widow, agreed to send her son to Kansas.<sup>110</sup> Like many other students, Preston developed pneumonia. On October 11 Peairs notified Sissy Harley about her son’s condition but reassured her that the boy was receiving good care and doing well. Three days later, however, Preston was still seriously ill. Peairs did not indicate that Sissy should come. Instead, he told her that he would keep her informed. By the next morning, Preston was critically ill. With just hours to go before his death, Peairs finally wired the boy’s mother to advise her “to come if possible.”<sup>111</sup> Sissy did not receive the telegrams in time. Only after Peairs contacted the US field clerk in Idabel, Oklahoma, did Sissy learn of her son’s illness and death. She asked Peairs to send his body home.<sup>112</sup>

In the weeks that followed, Sissy Harley endeavored to process her unexpected loss. In particular, the mother worried about “whether or not any minister waited on [Preston], and whether he professed religion or had any talk with him as to his Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or not.” Peairs instructed Nurse Anderson, who had cared for Preston, to write the mother.<sup>113</sup> The letter evidently never reached its destination. Two months later Sissy wrote Peairs again. “According to our old way,” she explained, “there will be funeral here at my home for Preston Harley dec’d and we want to know just axactly [*sic*] about as to whether Preston Harley ever join church at the time he attending school at Haskell, Inst.”<sup>114</sup> Unable to tend to her son at the end of his life, his mother at least wanted to honor him in death by respecting his religious beliefs. Indian boarding schools could create a gulf between parents and their children, but deep ties of affection continued to link them.

In the days after the deaths of Ruby Dailey and Preston Harley, other students followed them to the grave. Irvin Harrington, a fourteen-year-old Arapaho boy, died on the evening of October 18.<sup>115</sup> The same day, Roy Eastman, a thirteen-year-old Santee Sioux boy, took a turn for the worse, prompting Peairs to telegram his parents to come as “soon as possible.”<sup>116</sup> Roy’s father quickly made the trip to Haskell, but the boy passed away on October 22.<sup>117</sup> Grace Butler, a thirteen-year-old Sac and Fox girl, died in the early morning of October 20.<sup>118</sup> Peairs had contacted the superintendent of the Sac and Fox Indian School two days prior to ask him to notify her parents that Grace’s condition was critical, but the

Butlers got the news late and arrived at Haskell just hours before their daughter succumbed to pneumonia.<sup>119</sup> A few days later, Thelma Bedford, a nineteen-year-old Choctaw girl, also died.<sup>120</sup> Her loss must have felt especially bitter to her father, since he had implored Peairs to send her home less than three weeks earlier. Since Ben Bedford was a white man and not a federal ward, Peairs could not refuse his request, but he delayed releasing Thelma out of fear that she would not attend school at home. Her father threatened to come to Haskell to collect his daughter. He was too late. Thelma already had contracted influenza. Peairs promised to send her home “as soon as it is safe for her to travel,” but Thelma never recovered.<sup>121</sup>

Parents who lost children at Haskell suffered an incalculable emotional cost, but these deaths often also proved a financial burden for families already struggling under federal allotment policy, which had stripped Native people of land and resources in the decades preceding the pandemic. Many families lacked the means to visit their critically ill children or to bring their bodies home. Sickness among kin on the reservation also made travel to Haskell impossible for some. When the father of Irvin Harrington learned of his son’s deteriorating condition, for example, he wired Peairs that he was ill and had no money to travel. “In case boy dies,” he instructed the superintendent, “bury him there.”<sup>122</sup> Behind the man’s terse telegram lay a family tragedy. Three family members, including Harrington’s wife, had died of influenza.<sup>123</sup> Similarly, Preston Harley’s mother could neither travel to Haskell nor pay the “shipping and undertaking services” for her son.<sup>124</sup> In both cases, Peairs used school funds to send the bodies home, but he later sought reimbursement from the students’ reservation agencies.<sup>125</sup>

Parents who managed to make the trip to Haskell also faced difficult financial decisions in the wake of their children’s deaths. Peairs offered these parents seventy dollars out of school funds to pay for a simple casket, but some families viewed this as an insufficient way to honor their loved ones. The father of Roy Eastman, for example, “decided that [he] wanted a better casket” and arranged with Talmage Funk, a local undertaker, for services totaling \$270.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, the parents of Grace Butler selected “a very expensive steel casket and also a vault.” Ultimately, their bill soared to \$460.<sup>127</sup> At the time, the average annual household income in the United States was just \$1,518.<sup>128</sup> Unable to pay Funk at the time of service, these families purchased the caskets on

credit with the promise, in the case of the Butlers, that “they had plenty of money at the Sac & Fox agency in care of the superintendent.”<sup>129</sup> The undertaker risked extending them credit because he assumed that the federal government would make good on the bills. Perhaps he even encouraged grieving families to select services beyond their means. Once the parents returned home, reality hit. Eastman had nothing in his account at the Yankton Indian Agency.<sup>130</sup> The Butlers had mortgaged their allotments in Oklahoma and faced foreclosure.<sup>131</sup>

When the undertaker failed to receive his money, he appealed to Peairs for restitution. Over the next few years, the superintendent sent several letters to families who lost children to influenza, as well as to their reservation agencies, to inquire about payment for such services. In some cases, reservation superintendents were able to pay these debts out of the trust funds that the Interior Department held for these families.<sup>132</sup> In other cases, the agents covered the bills out of Treasury Department appropriations for expenses related to the epidemic.<sup>133</sup> Sometimes, however, there were no financial resources. Had Grace Butler lived, for example, she would have shared in tribal trust funds, but her death voided her claim. Concerned that Haskell might have to bear the cost if her parents did not pay, Peairs repeatedly wrote to the Sac and Fox Agency to demand that the Butlers settle the bill.<sup>134</sup> Two years later, the Butlers were still exchanging correspondence with Peairs and promising to pay Funk “as often as we possibly can.”<sup>135</sup> Although allotment policy had promised financial independence for Native people by “liberating” them from communal landownership, in reality, many allottees soon found themselves landless and indebted. The influenza pandemic accelerated this process.

Despite the mounting body count at Haskell, Peairs endeavored to downplay the severity of the crisis. The superintendent notified families about their children’s illness only when cases became serious. He defended this decision by arguing that he did not wish to “alarm [parents] unduly,” but the silence from Haskell was more frightening than any telegram.<sup>136</sup> Parent after parent sent letters to the school begging for news and, in some cases, asking the superintendent if they could come to Haskell or if he would send their children home. The mother of Lucy Green, for example, was “awful uneasy” that her daughter was “sick with this disease that’s raging” since “nearly all [her] neighbors [were] sick with it.”<sup>137</sup> When the mother of Ethel Barnes heard that her daughter was

ill, she asked Peairs if she could come to the school to tend to her.<sup>138</sup> Bertha Merrick's mother worried that her daughter might contract tuberculosis following her bout of influenza and begged Peairs to give her lighter chores in the school kitchen since she was "not a stough [*sic*] girl."<sup>139</sup> The father of Jim Childers, a Creek boy, fretted about his son's poor health and asked Peairs to "permit him to come home."<sup>140</sup> Similarly, after learning that her son had pneumonia, Arthur Howling Crane's mother requested his furlough.<sup>141</sup>

Unwilling to break discipline or reduce attendance, however, Peairs discouraged parents from coming to Haskell, and he also refused students home leave except under special circumstances. By the early twentieth century, Indian parents had to give consent for their children to attend out-of-state boarding schools, but once they had made that decision they signed contracts that gave the superintendent significant authority over their children for three to five years.<sup>142</sup> Peairs decided if and when students could take leave, and he exerted this power during the outbreak. Although the superintendent recognized that parents were anxious, he insisted that everything was under control at Haskell. On October 15, the same day that Ruby Dailey and Preston Harley passed away, for example, Peairs wrote Lucy Green's mother to say that influenza was "now checked" at the school. "Lucy Green," he reassured her, "is not sick with this Spanish Influenza and has not been at any time since coming to Haskell."<sup>143</sup> Just hours before Irvin Harrington died on October 18, Peairs advised Ethel Barnes's mother not to come to Haskell to tend to her own daughter because "you too might take this disease from traveling on the train or even after you arrived here."<sup>144</sup> He told Bertha Merrick's mother that although there had been many cases of influenza at Haskell, "nearly all are recovering rapidly." He promised that he would give her daughter his "personal attention."<sup>145</sup> Peairs admitted that Jim Childers had spent a week in the school hospital, but he declined his father's request to send the boy home since he had "entirely recovered" and was "gaining weight."<sup>146</sup> Similarly, Peairs told Arthur Howling Crane's mother that he was receiving good care at the school and did not need to go home.<sup>147</sup> As the arbiter of leave, Peairs wielded tremendous power over students and their parents during the epidemic. Having their fate in his hands only increased the anxiety of these families as they navigated the terror of influenza.

Some parents pushed back against the superintendent's claims to

authority. The case of Irene Spratt is illustrative. The thirteen-year-old Anishinaabe girl from White Earth, Minnesota, had suffered extreme homesickness since she arrived at Haskell that fall. Even before influenza struck the school her parents had written to Peairs imploring that she come home. Peairs demurred to their request by asserting that he “should like to try Irene a while longer and see how she feels after she becomes acquainted and gets into the school work.” Once they learned about the outbreak at Haskell in mid-October, however, the Spratts became increasingly desperate to regain custody of their daughter. They even forwarded Peairs sixty-five dollars to pay for her journey home. When the parents still had not heard from the school more than a week later, John L. Spratt protested that he was “at a loss in my efforts to effect at least the business [*sic*] courtesy which I know that should have been extended to me without question.” On October 26, Peairs finally replied. He informed the Spratts that although Irene was “at present sick with the grip,” she was “getting along very nicely,” and there was “no reason whatever for you to be worried concerning her.” He made no mention of sending her home.<sup>148</sup>

By this point, John Spratt had had enough. Frustrated that Peairs continued to disregard his ability to make decisions for his daughter, he wrote that “frankly . . . Irene’s transfere [*sic*] to your School was a mistake.” In a carefully crafted letter, Spratt invoked his parental authority, his status as a recently minted US citizen, and federal Indian law to demand the return of his daughter. Telling the superintendent, “We know best because we have raised her,” Spratt promised he would give Irene “a good Public school education [at home] which is my duty as a citizen.” Turning to the law, he reminded Peairs that Irene was only thirteen years old and that according to federal rules outlined in 1909, “no Indian pupil under the age of 14 years shall be transported at Government expense to any Indian School beyond the limits of the State or Territory in which such child reside.” Confident of his position, he insisted that Irene be sent home as soon as the epidemic ended.<sup>149</sup>

Peairs knew he had been defeated. Three days later, on October 31, he wrote a terse reply to Spratt: “We did not solicit Irene and do not need her so far as attendance is concerned because we have scores of applicants on the waiting list at all times. As soon as she is able to travel I will arrange for her to go home.”<sup>150</sup> When Irene had not arrived by mid-November, however, John Spratt came to Haskell to collect her

himself.<sup>151</sup> The Spratts were fortunate to possess the literacy, legal knowledge, and financial means to force Peairs to release their daughter; other parents were not so lucky. Whether or not they had those advantages, Indian families did not passively accept the decisions boarding school administrators made. Instead, they actively worked to preserve their kin ties and parental rights during this moment of crisis.

Haskell students also found ways to resist Peairs's authority. Some students fled the school during the epidemic. Kickapoo boys Charles Green and Joseph Masquat, for example, left on October 5 just as the virus began spreading at Haskell.<sup>152</sup> James Crawford, from the Laona Indian Agency, departed the same day.<sup>153</sup> As the number of influenza cases grew, so did the number of desertions. Jesse Wapp, the father of two runaways, explained to the superintendent that "they were running away from disease."<sup>154</sup> With more than a third of the student body confined to bed, classes canceled, and teachers acting as nurses by mid-October, many students felt that "they might as well be at home."<sup>155</sup> Concern about sick family members also drove some students to leave. The older brother of Wayne Eshelman, a Pawnee student, for example, came to Haskell in mid-October to request leave for the boy so that he could help at home. When Peairs delayed granting permission, the brothers simply left.<sup>156</sup> During the first chaotic weeks of the outbreak, students probably found it easier to slip away from Haskell since the school staff were otherwise occupied.<sup>157</sup>

Although Peairs conceded that "the boys must have become alarmed about the epidemic as quite a number of them ran away," he endeavored to maintain order at the school by insisting on the return of runaways.<sup>158</sup> Parents, however, were unwilling to part with their children while the epidemic raged, even if that meant forfeiting their right to a government education. When Peairs demanded the return of Fred Burnett, a Sioux boy from South Dakota, for example, the boy's father replied that he would keep him home and send him to a local school because there was "so much sickness I am afraid."<sup>159</sup> The mother of Wayne Eshelman also refused to send her son back to Haskell.<sup>160</sup> In a particularly tragic case, two Potawatomi brothers, Leo and Richard Wapp, brought influenza home with them. Their father, Jesse Wapp, notified Peairs that "Richard came home sick and his fever was 103." He refused to return his sons until the epidemic ended and they were healthy. Peairs agreed that the boys should recover before traveling but warned Wapp that he expected

them back at Haskell by October 28. Four days before the deadline, Wapp wrote Peairs that Richard had died of pneumonia. "I ain't gone send Leo until he is well and the disease is over," the broken-hearted father exclaimed. "I lost one boy and I hate to loose [*sic*] another." Peairs sympathized with these parents, but he drew a hard line when it came to discipline. He was "sorry indeed to learn of the death of Richard and of the sickness of Leo" but still told their father that the boys "should not have gone without permission."<sup>161</sup> When it became clear that Wayne Eshelman would not return voluntarily, Peairs expelled him. Fearing the example that runaways set, Peairs was unwilling to make special allowances, even during the epidemic.<sup>162</sup> But students and their families made their own choices, revealing again the limitations of federal authority.

The fall epidemic at Haskell gradually subsided. After sweeping through the school and forcing students to take "to their bed in large numbers daily," the virus ran out of susceptible victims by October 24, at which point there was just an occasional new case.<sup>163</sup> Regular classwork resumed on October 28, but convalescing students remained in the school hospital through late November.<sup>164</sup> By early December, the epidemic at Haskell was largely over. Unwilling to take any chances, Peairs "declared a partial quarantine" on the school. He suspended town leave and declared that no one would be "permitted to return home at any time during the holiday season, and also that no parents or friends from the students' home [would be] permitted to visit here during that season."<sup>165</sup> For students and their families, this decision was a bitter pill. Having just survived the terror of influenza, many students were keen to reunite with their kin. Elizabeth Frances lamented that her parents could not visit on Christmas Day to see the "fine programs" at Haskell.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Alexander Boyer wrote his mother that he was "very sorry" that he could not invite her for Christmas "because you might bring us the influenza." He wished her a good Christmas and asked her to send him money for some Christmas toys.<sup>167</sup> Peairs admitted that the quarantine was difficult for students, but he believed it was the only way to keep the school free of influenza.<sup>168</sup> As soon as he lifted the quarantine in the spring of 1919, scores of students applied for leave. Peairs complained in April 1919 that he must have "sent home at least a dozen girls to eastern Oklahoma this winter." Although they "promised faithfully to return promptly," many did not return at all because their parents feared a return of the disease.<sup>169</sup>

In the end, Haskell lost nine students to influenza during the fall of 1918.<sup>170</sup> At least one other student died shortly following his return home, which brings Haskell's mortality rate for the fall wave of the epidemic to 1.2 percent (10 out of 830).<sup>171</sup> This rate was nearly double that of the national average, which scholars have estimated at around 0.64 percent (675,000 out of 105 million).<sup>172</sup> It was also higher than the mortality rate of the epidemic in Kansas during the last four months of 1918, which the Bureau of the Census assessed at 0.86 percent.<sup>173</sup> In part, this higher mortality rate may have reflected the age of Haskell's students. Studies of the pandemic reveal that influenza struck hardest young adults with robust immune systems, since it was often the body's extreme immune response to the virus that killed the patient.<sup>174</sup> The mortality rate probably also reflected the crowded conditions at Haskell, which meant that few students could escape the virus. Biological and environmental factors combined to make boarding school students particularly vulnerable to influenza.

Haskell's mortality rate was significantly lower, however, than the 2.1 percent (6,632 out of 320,654) mortality rate for Native Americans across the country.<sup>175</sup> Three factors may account for why Haskell fared better than other Native communities. First, exposure to the virus during the spring wave may have protected some Haskell students from infection during the fall wave. According to a study of US Army camps, the first wave provided 35–94 percent protection against clinical illness during the second wave and 56–89 percent protection against death.<sup>176</sup> Although not everyone benefited from this cross-protection—in particular, transfer students from Carlisle—at least some children may have avoided serious complications as a result of their prior experience with influenza. Second, although Haskell's proximity to Lawrence provided influenza with a pathway of infection, it also ensured that the school could take advantage of outside help during the epidemic. In particular, the young women who volunteered as nurses made it possible to give the students good care.<sup>177</sup> Given the limits of medical treatment in 1918, nursing care was about the best that anyone could hope for during the outbreak, and the fact that Haskell had people who were able to perform basic tasks such as feeding patients and changing bedding may have saved lives. Finally, Peairs's decision to put the school under quarantine helped ensure that the virus did not return to Haskell for the third wave of the pandemic during the winter of 1918–19.

Pandemic influenza returned for one final wave in the early months of 1920. Assistant Superintendent Birch reported that the disease struck Haskell again in late January of that year, “although apparently in not so severe a form as heretofore.”<sup>178</sup> By that time, the virus had mutated to a less virulent strain, and the immune systems of exposed people had adjusted, which made the disease less deadly than it had been in 1918.<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, school officials took the return of influenza seriously. When the Kansas Board of Health offered Haskell free doses of the Rosenow prophylactic vaccine, Peairs leaped at the opportunity.<sup>180</sup> Developed by Edward C. Rosenow of the Mayo Clinic’s Division of Experimental Bacteriology during the height of the 1918 pandemic, this vaccine supposedly protected against the pneumonia infections that often followed influenza. Although some researchers at the time doubted the efficacy of this vaccine, which scholars now know was useless, the Mayo Clinic distributed it widely across the upper Midwest, and ultimately more than one hundred thousand Americans received at least one dose.<sup>181</sup> The Kansas Board of Health evidently hoped to conduct a trial of the vaccine at Haskell. The school received “forty 20 c.c. packages of Rosenow influenza-pneumonia vaccine,” which Dr. Menger administered to approximately three hundred students who had never had influenza.<sup>182</sup> The available records do not indicate that Peairs asked for or received consent from the parents of these children before making use of the experimental vaccine, which is unsurprising, given Peairs’s history of poor communication with Indian parents, as well as the lax standards for vaccination trials nationwide at the time. Ultimately, four of the students reacted adversely to the vaccine, but none of those vaccinated got sick, so Peairs deemed the experiment a success. One hundred thirty-five children caught influenza and one died that winter, but Peairs used the Rosenow vaccine trials as evidence that he had availed Haskell of the best of modern medicine to guard student health.<sup>183</sup>

Despite Haskell’s losses during the outbreak, Peairs was largely successful at preserving the school’s reputation and his own. Although some of his decisions exacerbated the suffering of his charges, his insistence that he had made the best possible use of modern medicine to combat influenza resonated with the Indian Office, Congress, and the public. Although postwar budget cuts led the Indian Office to consoli-

Table 1. Haskell students who died during the 1918–20 influenza pandemic

<i>Name</i>	<i>Tribal affiliation</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Date of death</i>	<i>Special notes</i>
Davis Bond	Chickasaw	Sixteen	March 25, 1918	
Edward Stevenson	Wichita	Seventeen	March 28, 1918	
Carrie Rice	Sac and Fox	Fourteen	March 29, 1918	
Alice Pepper	Kaw	Sixteen	March 29, 1918	
Mary Marshno	Potawatomi	Fifteen	April 5, 1918	
Ruby Dailey	Otoe	Fifteen or sixteen	October 15, 1918	Influenza complicated by pregnancy; premature baby boy was delivered on October 14, 1918, and died a few hours later
Preston Harley	Choctaw	Nineteen or twenty	October 15, 1918	
Irvin Harrington	Arapaho	Fourteen	October 18, 1918	
Grace Butler	Sac and Fox	Thirteen	October 20, 1918	
Roy Eastman	Sioux	Thirteen	October 22, 1918	
Thelma Bedford	Choctaw	Nineteen	October 23, 1918	
Richard Wapp	Potawatomi	Fifteen	October 16 or 23, 1918	Infected at Haskell but died at home following desertion

*Note:* According to annual narrative reports, six children died of influenza at the Haskell Institute, one died following his return home during the spring of 1918, nine died at the school during the fall of 1918, and one died during the winter of 1920. Unfortunately, I was unable to recover personal details for all these students.

*Source:* The data presented here draw from correspondence between Haskell officials and the Indian Office in file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, Central Classified Files, 1907–39, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; and student case files, 1884–1920, Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City.

date or close several smaller Indian schools, Haskell remained fully operational.<sup>184</sup> By 1922 applications for enrollment had set a record. According to Peairs, this increased demand reflected “the accumulation of the effect of education among Indian people” as former students encouraged their own children to attend Haskell.<sup>185</sup> The return of Indian World War I veterans also might have spurred applications. Since they had seen more of the world, they encouraged kin to pursue opportunities off-reservation. This development gratified Peairs, since it permitted him to keep Haskell at full capacity.<sup>186</sup> He hoped that Haskell’s success would cement the future of Indian education in the United States. Taking on the responsibility of overseeing that future, Peairs accepted promotion to the general supervisor of Indian education in 1926.<sup>187</sup>

Although the outbreak did not result in immediate changes at Haskell, concerns about Indian health did inspire renewed investigations into conditions within the Indian Service more broadly. In the fall of 1919, Congress launched hearings on “the conduct and management of the Bureau of Indian Affairs,” including the Indian Medical Service and Indian school system.<sup>188</sup> Three years later, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles Burke commissioned a large-scale investigation of Indian health, which he hoped to use to press Congress for more funds. The final report proved so damning that he suppressed it instead. It finally came out in 1928. The Meriam Report, also published in 1928, revealed deplorable conditions in Indian health, education, and economic welfare.<sup>189</sup> Although the Indian Office initially reacted defensively toward critics who attacked its policies and programs, reformers gained the upper hand in the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed John Collier as commissioner of Indian Affairs. Rejecting the assimilationist policies of the past, Collier shut down ten Indian boarding schools within his first year in office.<sup>190</sup> Although Haskell survived, its mission changed. In 1933 Dr. Henry Roe Cloud, a Winnebago, took charge of the school and employed an almost completely Indian staff.<sup>191</sup> Collier also pushed for improvements in Indian health, in part by allowing tribes to develop culturally sensitive health education programs.<sup>192</sup> As a result, Indian health conditions gradually improved, although they never kept pace with the medical advances made in society at large.

As the influenza outbreak at Haskell reveals, medical history provides scholars with a valuable lens through which to examine the Native American past and to explore tensions that existed within federal insti-

tutions designed to contain and control Indigenous people. The efforts of Superintendent Peairs to maintain order, defend Haskell's reputation, and keep the school financially solvent during the crisis illuminate some of the challenges that the Indian Office faced during the early twentieth century as it struggled to assert its authority and transform tribal peoples into American citizens. Determined to prove his own competency and to show that boarding schools were a force for positive good that deserved continued federal support, Peairs was unwilling to break discipline or to admit error during the outbreak, even if that meant exacerbating the suffering of students and their families. Native people did not accept these decisions passively. Instead, they defied orders that they found unreasonable and worked hard to preserve their kin connections during the crisis. By provoking particular reactions among boarding school officials and students, the invisible virus responsible for influenza made visible these struggles.

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#### NOTES

The title of the article is drawn from a report by Haskell school physician Charles F. Ensign. See C. F. Ensign, spring 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, 3 of 3, box 5, series 1: Subject Correspondence file, 1904–41, #600574, Haskell Indian Junior

College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City.

1. See Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1972); Henry E. Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Suzanne Austin Alchon, *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003); Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492–1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

2. For exceptions, see Diane Putney, “Fighting the Scourge: American Indian Morbidity and Federal Policy, 1897–1928” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1980); Jean A. Keller, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute, 1902–1922* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002); David S. Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics: Meanings and Uses of American Indian Mortality since 1600* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); David H. DeJong, “If You Knew the Conditions”: *A Chronicle of the Indian Medical Service and American Indian Health Care, 1908–1955* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

3. Allan M. Brandt, “Emerging Themes in the History of Medicine,” *Milbank Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (1991): 204.

4. See William Rosen, *Miracle Cure: The Creation of Antibiotics and the Birth of Modern Medicine* (New York: Viking Press, 2017).

5. See Michel Foucault’s discussion of the post-Enlightenment shift in Western penal systems from public torture and execution to confinement and surveillance within disciplinary institutions in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

6. See Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

7. See Philip J. Deloria’s discussion of late nineteenth-century American fears of Indian “outbreaks” in *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 21–29.

8. File: Haskell, History of, box 12, series 1: Subject Correspondence file, 1904–41, Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City (hereafter cited as S1).

9. Myriam Vučković, *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students between Two Worlds, 1884–1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 206.

10. Cato Sells, “Letter of January 10, 1916,” in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1916* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916), quoted by David H. DeJong in “‘Unless They Are Kept Alive’: Federal Indian Schools and Student Health, 1878–1918,” *American Indian Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 256.

11. DeJong, "If You Knew," 23, 30–33.
12. John M. Barry, "The Site of Origin of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and Its Public Health Implications," *Journal of Translational Medicine* 2 (2004): 3; J. S. Oxford et al., "A Hypothesis: The Conjunction of Soldiers, Gas, Pigs, Ducks, Geese and Horses in Northern France during the Great War Provided the Conditions for the Emergence of the 'Spanish' Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919," *Vaccine* 23 (2005): 940–45; Mark Osborne Humphries, "Paths of Infection: The First World War and the Origins of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," *War in History* 21, no. 1 (2013): 55–81.
13. Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19–25; John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 95–97, 169–70. "Epidemic" refers to the widespread occurrence of a disease in a community at a particular time, whereas "pandemic" refers to an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents. This article uses the term "pandemic" when referring to the influenza of 1918 on a global scale but "epidemic" to discuss the local outbreak at Haskell.
14. H. B. Peairs to the Indian Office, April 2, 1917, file: Registration-Draft and Organization Effect on Enrollment, 1917–18, box 18, S1.
15. *Indian Leader*, January 4, 1918, 2.
16. Annual report, 1918, section 1, "Law and Order," Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports from Field Jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907–38, Haskell Institute, rolls 59–60, M-1011, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as M-1011).
17. *Indian Leader*, March 15, 1918, 2.
18. *Indian Leader*, March 22, 1918, 2–3.
19. Annual report, 1918, section 1, "Law and Order."
20. Annual report, 1918, section 2, "Health," M-1011.
21. C. E. Banks, "Report of an Outbreak of Disease at Haskell Institute," March 15–30, 1918, file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, Central Classified Files, 1907–39, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as CCF).
22. William Van Cleave to Cato Sells, April 10, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
23. Annual report, 1918, section 3, "Schools," M-1011.
24. C. F. Ensign letter, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
25. Banks, "Report of an Outbreak."
26. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, March 21, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
27. Vučković, *Voices from Haskell*, 186.
28. Report of Joseph A. Murphy, February 17, 1909, file: Haskell, 1908, file number code 732, box 42, Haskell, CCF.
29. Murphy report.

30. Nancy K. Bristow, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17.
31. E. B. Meritt to H. B. Peairs, March 22, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
32. C. F. Ensign letter.
33. Annual report, 1918, section 2, “Health.”
34. Banks, “Report of an Outbreak.”
35. Banks, “Report of an Outbreak.”
36. Van Cleave to Sells, April 10, 1918.
37. *Indian Leader*, March 29, 1918, 22.
38. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, March 25, 1918, file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, CCF.
39. E. B. Meritt to H. B. Peairs, March 25, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
40. Van Cleave to Sells, April 10, 1918.
41. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, March 29, 1918, file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, CCF; *Indian Leader*, April 12, 1918, 3.
42. H. B. Peairs, C. F. Ensign, and William Van Cleave to Indian Office, March 29, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
43. Van Cleave to Sells, April 10, 1918.
44. Peairs, Ensign, and Van Cleave to Indian Office, March 29, 1918.
45. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, March 30, 1918, file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, CCF; *Indian Leader*, April 12, 1918, 3.
46. E. B. Meritt to H. B. Peairs, March 29, 1918, file: Haskell, 1918, file number code 731, box 42, Haskell, CCF.
47. Fitzhugh Mullan, *Plagues and Politics: The Story of the United States Public Health Service* (New York: Basic Books, 1989); DeJong, “*If You Knew*,” 24–25.
48. US House of Representatives, *Hearings before the Committee on Indian Affairs on the Condition of Various Tribes of Indians*, 66th Cong., 1st sess., September 23–October 30, 1919, 272; DeJong, “*If You Knew*,” 46–47.
49. C. E. Banks to H. B. Peairs, March 30, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
50. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 49–50.
51. Cynthia S. Goldsmith and Sara E. Miller, “Modern Uses of Electron Microscopy for Detection of Viruses,” *Clinical Microbiology Reviews* 22, no. 4 (October 2009): 552–63.
52. Annual report, 1918, section 2, “Health.”
53. Banks, “Report of an Outbreak.”
54. Banks to Peairs, March 30, 1918.
55. “Weekly Reports for April 5, 1918,” *Public Health Reports* 33, no. 14 (1918): 502; *Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States for the Fiscal Year 1918* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 17. Al-

though historian John M. Barry assumed that the “Haskell” referred to in this report was Haskell County, Kansas, and used this to argue that the virus originated in that county, the timing of the report makes clear that it actually referred to the Haskell Institute in Douglas County, which was infected after, not before, Camp Funston. See Barry, “The Site of Origin,” 3; Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 94–95. Writer Peter Grant also recognized the “Haskell” mix-up in his 2018 blogpost, “The Haskell County Origin Story and the Other ‘Haskell’ in Kansas,” *Spanish Influenza in Victoria, Canada, 1918–1920*, <http://spanishfluvictoriabc.com/>.

56. H. B. Peairs to Cato Sells, April 1, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

57. Van Cleave to Sells, April 10, 1918.

58. H. B. Peairs to Thomas Ferris, April 3, 1918, file: Good Fox, Theodore, box 46, student case files, 1884–1920, Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City (hereafter cited as SCF).

59. *Indian Leader*, April 12, 1918, 3–4.

60. Memorandum on employees, October 30, 1918, file: Inspection Reports, 1917–21, box 13, S1.

61. Luciant La Voye to Louise, October 17, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1; Luciant La Voye to H. B. Peairs, January 29, 1919, file: Vanwert, Luciant (La Voye), box 121, SCF.

62. Memorandum on employees, October 30, 1918.

63. Peairs to Sells, April 1, 1918.

64. H. B. Peairs to W. M. Peterson, April 3, 1918, file: Peterson, W. M., 1917–1921, box 17, S1.

65. John M. Barry et al., “Cross-Protection between Successive Waves of the 1918–1919 Influenza Pandemic: Epidemiological Evidence from US Army Camps and from Britain,” *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, November 15, 2008, 1427–34; C. F. Ensign letter; Banks, “Report of an Outbreak.”

66. Barry et al., “Cross-Protection”; annual report, 1918, section 2, “Health.”

67. H. B. Peairs to John Francis, April 19, 1918, as quoted in Vučković, *Voices from Haskell*, 201.

68. *Indian Leader*, June 7, 1918, 7.

69. H. B. Peairs to W. H. Ketcham, November 27, 1918, file: Students, Haskell, 1917–21, box 21, S1.

70. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 178.

71. The misnomer “Spanish flu” resulted from the fact that newspapers in Spain, which was neutral during the First World War, reported freely on the epidemic, as opposed to the French, German, and British press, which avoided negative stories that might hurt morale. See Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 171.

72. Annual report, 1918, section 2, “Health.”

73. Cato Sells to All School Superintendents, August 14, 1918, Circular No. 1457.

file: Per Capita Costs, 1918–24, box 35, 109–12, 124, Decimal Correspondence file, 1917–59, Haskell Institute Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City; H. B. Peairs to W. M. Peterson, December 16, 1918, file: Peterson, W. M., 1917–21, box 17, S1.

74. H. B. Peairs to W. H. Ketcham, November 27, 1918, file: Students, Haskell, 1917–21, S1.

75. H. B. Peairs to Josephine Bibb, September 9, 1918, file: Bibb, Myrtle, box 10, SCF; annual report, 1919, section 3, “Schools”; H. B. Peairs to C. W. Goodman, September 20, 1918, file: Peairs, H. B., 1917–21, box 17, S1.

76. C. F. Ensign to H. B. Peairs, May 2, 1919, file: Nursing School, 1918–21, box 16, S1.

77. Memorandum on employees, October 30, 1918.

78. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 183.

79. Kansas State Board of Health, *Tenth Biennial Report: Being the Thirty-Fifth and Thirty-Sixth Annual Reports of the State Board of Health of the State of Kansas, June 30, 1918, to July 1, 1920* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), 19.

80. School calendar and announcements, 1918–19, M-1011.

81. Annual report, 1918, section 1, “Law and Order.”

82. H. B. Peairs to Jesse Wapp, October 31, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.

83. H. B. Peairs to W. W. Coon, October 21, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

84. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”

85. USPHS, “Spanish Influenza,’ ‘Three-Day Fever,’ ‘The Flu,’” September 28, 1918, file: Bulletin on Health, 1918, box 12, S1.

86. Cato Sells to H. B. Peairs, October 11, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

87. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”

88. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, October 13, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

89. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”

90. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, October 21, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

91. Memorandum on employees, October 30, 1918.

92. H. B. Peairs to Indian Office, October 15, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1; Cato Sells to H. B. Peairs, October 18, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

93. Kansas State Board of Health, *Tenth Biennial Report*, 19.

94. H. B. Peairs to Cato Sells, October 25, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.

95. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”

96. See Rosen, *Miracle Cure*.

97. Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 7.

98. Voucher for purchases, Round Corner Drug Co., Lawrence, Kansas, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
99. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”
100. Voucher for purchases, Dick Brothers, Lawrence, Kansas, 1918, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1; voucher for purchases, Round Corner Drug Co., Lawrence, Kansas, 1918; W. N. Mundy, *Valuable Remedies for Influenza, Grippe and “Common Colds”* (Cincinnati, OH: Lloyd Brothers, Pharmacists, Inc., 1918).
101. C. E. Birch to Cato Sells, October 15, 1918, file: Dailey, Ruby, box 29, SCF.
102. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 239–40.
103. Birch to Sells, October 15, 1918.
104. C. E. Birch to G. A. Hoye, October 14, 1918, file: Dailey, Ruby, box 29, SCF.
105. Birch to Hoye, October 14, 1918.
106. Vučković, *Voices from Haskell*, 181–82.
107. Birch to Hoye, October 14, 1918. In the weeks that followed Ruby’s death, Peairs and Birch pursued charges against George De Roin, who was arrested and placed in the county jail at Perry, Oklahoma. The county attorney, however, warned that without a “dying statement” from Ruby, “the evidence for the prosecution will be very slim.” It is unclear if De Roin was convicted. See H. H. Smith to C. E. Birch, October 15, 1918, file: Dailey, Ruby, box 29, SCF.
108. C. E. Birch to H. H. Smith, October 17, 1918, file: Dailey, Ruby, box 29, SCF.
109. James B. and Rosa L. Dailey to Haskell Institute, October 15, 1918, file: Dailey, James B., box 29, SCF.
110. H. P. Warren to H. B. Peairs, June 27, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF; application of Sissy Harley for the enrollment of Preston Harley, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
111. Telegrams from H. B. Peairs to Sissy Harley, October 11, 14, and 15, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
112. E. P. Snead to H. B. Peairs, October 15, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
113. Correspondence between H. B. Peairs and W. H. McKinney, November 7, 15, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
114. Sissy Harley to H. B. Peairs, January 25, 1919, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
115. H. B. Peairs to Cato Sells, October 19, 1918, file: Harrington, Irvin, box 51, SCF.
116. H. B. Peairs to Mrs. Ed Eastman, October 18, 1918, file: Eastman, Roy, box 36, SCF.
117. H. B. Peairs to Cato Sells, October 23, 1918, file: Eastman, Roy, box 36, SCF.
118. Peairs to Sells, October 23, 1918.
119. H. B. Peairs to H. J. Johnson, October 18, 1918, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
120. H. B. Peairs to Cato Sells, October 25, 1918, file: Bedford, Thelma, box 9, SCF.
121. Correspondence between H. B. Peairs and B. S. Bedford, October 3, 7, 11, 17, 1918, file: Bedford, Thelma, box 9, SCF.

122. Harrington to H. B. Peairs, October 18, 1918, file: Harrington, Irvin, box 51, SCF.
123. R. E. L. Daniels to H. B. Peairs, November 15, 1918, file: Harrington, Irvin, box 51, SCF.
124. H. B. Peairs to US Field Clerk, November 12, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
125. H. B. Peairs to R. E. L. Daniels, November 19, 1918, file: Harrington, Irvin, box 51, SCF; Peairs to US Field Clerk, November 12, 1918.
126. H. B. Peairs to Ed Eastman, July 12, 1919, file: Eastman, Roy, box 36, SCF.
127. Correspondence between I. C. Deaver and H. B. Peairs, August 3, 6, 1920, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
128. US Department of Labor, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *100 Years of U.S. Consumer Spending: Data for the Nation, New York City, and Boston*, BLS Report 991 (May 2006), 9.
129. H. B. Peairs to I. C. Deaver, August 3, 1920, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
130. A. W. Leech to H. B. Peairs, November 14, 1918, file: Eastman, Roy, box 36, SCF.
131. I. C. Deaver to H. B. Peairs, August 6, 1920, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
132. Field Clerk to H. B. Peairs, November 14, 1918, file: Harley, Preston, box 51, SCF.
133. Daniels to Peairs, November 15, 1918.
134. Correspondence between H. B. Peairs and H. J. Johnson, November 14, December 23, 1918, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
135. George and Edith Butler to T. D. Funk, July 20, 1920, file: Butler, Grace, box 19, SCF.
136. H. B. Peairs to Ella Barnes, October 18, 1918, file: Barnes, Ethel, box 6, SCF.
137. Frances Green to H. B. Peairs, October 12, 1918, file: Greene, Lucile, box 47, SCF.
138. Ella Barnes to H. B. Peairs, October 1918, file: Barnes, Ethel, box 6, SCF.
139. Martha Grayless to H. B. Peairs, November 4, 1918, file: Merrick, Bertha, box 80, SCF.
140. A. S. Wyly to H. B. Peairs, December 10, 1918, file: Childers, Jim, box 22, SCF.
141. Mrs. Howling Crane to H. B. Peairs, October 17, 1918, file: Howling Crane, Arthur, box 56, SCF.
142. Vučković, *Voices from Haskell*, 39–40.
143. H. B. Peairs to Frances Green, October 15, 1918, file: Greene, Lucile, box 47, SCF.
144. H. B. Peairs to Ella Barnes, October 18, 1918, file: Barnes, Ethel, box 6, SCF.
145. H. B. Peairs to Martha Grayless, November 8, 1918, file: Merrick, Bertha, box 80, SCF.
146. E. F. Menger to H. B. Peairs, December 12, 1918, file: Childers, Jim, box 22, SCF.

147. H. B. Peairs to Mrs. Howling Crane, October 17, 1918, file: Howling Crane, Arthur, box 56, SCF.
148. Correspondence between J. L. Spratt and the Haskell Institute, October 1, 4, 12, 21, 26, 1918, file: Spratt, Irene, box 112, SCF.
149. J. L. Spratt to H. B. Peairs, October 28, 1918, file: Spratt, Irene, box 112, SCF.
150. H. B. Peairs to J. L. Spratt, October 31, 1918, file: Spratt, Irene, box 112, SCF.
151. Typed note at top of letter from J. L. Spratt to H. B. Peairs, October 12, 1918, file: Spratt, Irene, box 112, SCF.
152. H. B. Peairs to L. S. Bonnin, October 16, 1918, file: Green, Charley, box 47, SCF.
153. H. B. Peairs to Superintendent W. W. Bennett, October 16, 1918, file: Crawford, James, box 28, SCF.
154. Jesse Wapp to H. B. Peairs, October 16, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.
155. H. B. Peairs to Jesse Wapp, October 31, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.
156. H. B. Peairs to Thomas Ferris, October 21, 1918, file: Eshelman, Wayne, box 33, SCF.
157. A. S. Wyly to H. B. Peairs, November 7, 1918, file: Watts, Willie, box 125, SCF.
158. H. B. Peairs to Jesse Wapp, October 31, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.
159. John Burnett to H. B. Peairs, October 1918, file: Burnett, Fred, box 18, SCF.
160. Thomas Ferris to H. B. Peairs, October 21, 1918, file: Jim, Philip, box 59, SCF.
161. Correspondence between H. B. Peairs and Jesse Wapp, October 16, 21, 24, 31, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.
162. H. B. Peairs to Wayne Eshelman, October 25, 1918, file: Eshelman, Wayne, box 33, SCF.
163. Health report for the school year 1918–19, box 184, annual reports, 1910–20, grade reports, 1925–28, Haskell Institute Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City.
164. H. B. Peairs to A. S. Wyly, October 28, 1918, file: Bedford, Thelma, box 9, SCF; file: Health: Physicians Report, 1918–20, box 12, S1.
165. H. B. Peairs to Superintendents, December 17, 1918, file: Health, 1917–18, box 12, S1.
166. Elizabeth Frances to her father, December 18, 1918, file: Frances, Elizabeth, box 42, SCF.
167. Alexander Boyer to his mother, December 20, 1918, file: Boyer, Alexander, box 14, SCF.
168. H. B. Peairs to B. F. Caswell, December 18, 1918, file: Anderson, Lee, box 2, SCF.
169. H. B. Peairs to J. M. Lynch, April 8, 1919, file: Liver, Eliza, box 71, SCF.
170. Annual report, 1919, section 2, “Health.”
171. Jesse Wapp to H. B. Peairs, October 24, 1918, file: Wapp, Leo, box 124, SCF.
172. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 397.

173. See Sam L. Rogers, Bureau of the Census, *Special Tables of Mortality from Influenza and Pneumonia in Indiana, Kansas, and Philadelphia, PA, September 1 to December 31, 1918* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920).
174. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 215–22.
175. "Influenza among American Indians," *Public Health Reports* 34, no. 42 (1919): 2298–2300.
176. Barry et al., "Cross-Protection."
177. Annual report, 1919, section 2, "Health."
178. C. E. Birch to H. B. Peairs, January 27, 1920, file: General Health, Conditions, 1916–24, box 12, S1.
179. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 391.
180. S. J. Crumbine to J. R. Wise, February 9, 1920, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1.
181. John M. Eyler, "The State of Science, Microbiology, and Vaccines circa 1918," *Public Health Reports* 125, no. 3 (2010): 27–36.
182. T. D. Tuttle to H. B. Peairs, February 12, 1920, file: Contagious Epidemics, 1917–20, box 5, S1; annual report, 1920, section 2, "Health."
183. Annual report, 1920, section 2, "Health."
184. US House of Representatives, *Hearings*, 1206–8.
185. US House of Representatives, *Hearings*, 1342.
186. Annual report, 1922, section 1, "Law and Order."
187. File: Haskell, History of.
188. US House of Representatives, *Hearings*, 3.
189. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 857–58, 810.
190. Prucha, *The Great Father*, 978.
191. File: Haskell, History of.
192. DeJong, "If You Knew," 71.

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