

Sally Doak Fannin Letter - 1877

Explanatory Text:

This is a letter written by Sally Doak Fannin to her granddaughter in 1877. Sally is the mother of Mary Elizabeth Fannin, John Deskin Rhea's mother. This letter was posted to Rootsweb by J.C. Thompson. It also includes his notes explaining who the various people are in the letter that Sally refers to. It is fairly clear from this letter that Sally was Indian, as she states that "I don't remember how to talk Indian anymore. Daddy Tom won't let me since we come to Texas."

Sally Doak Fannin is the:

- GGGGG Grandmother of Bruce Dale White
- GGGG Grandmother of Bobby Dale White
- GGG Grandmother of Mary Oleta Simmons White
- GG Grandmother of Mamie Mae Hardin Simmons
- G Grandmother of Bettie Rhea Hardin
- Grandmother of John Deskin Rhea
- Mother of Mary Elizabeth Fannin

Grandbury, Tx.
March 5, 1877

Inez Thompson
in care of ML Thompson
Overton, Tx

Dearest Nezzzy

Beth is helping me write you about your daddy and Jasper. My heart is broken with them gone but you know they in heaven now in a better place. It has come to me by way of Pinkstons you are taking it hard. Time and God heals us all. I also heard that Martin wants to go north into the nations. That being true you'd be better off in Choctaw country than the Chickasaws. Go only if its for the best.

The Brashears will take you in I am sure. I haven't seen any of them or the Everiges in years but I don't think that matters. Eva sometime went by her name in Indian, Illiapoetubbee so you may have to look her up under that name. I have no idea what it means as I don't remember how to talk Indian anymore. Daddy Tom wont let me since we come to Texas. Micajah tells me that Martin can talk Indian and not just Choctaw but some Cherokee too. I am glad to hear most of the Cherokees went north. I never trusted those Vanns after they did Daddy Tom wrong in Rusk.

Hope your momma doing better after such a loss. It is so hard to lose a child as it is on me, I don't know how shes doing it losing both. Be good to her and maybe you and Martin can take some of the kids back among the Thompsons. Please come and see us over here as we are not to well these days. Delphia has been a great help and we all miss you. I am getting tired so I will close now. Never forget we love you all and your in my prayers.

Epoesi Sally Fannin

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Notes:

The Pinkstons were Sarah's daughter Sally Delphia Fannin-Pinkston's family. Beth may be Sarah Elizabeth Jane Rhea another granddaughter through Mary Elizabeth Fannin-Rhea. Since she was believed to have been illiterate, it is obvious that someone else wrote the letter and I believe this is what she meant by Beth helping her.

The Brashears and Everidges (misspelled in letter) are cousins, the descendants of Sarah's aunt Jane Apukshunnubbee-Brashear the wife of Robert Turner Brashear. They all relocated to the Choctaw Nation from Mississippi during the removal. Micajah is most likely Micajah Pinkston, Sarah's grandson. The Vann's could be a number of people as several of this Cherokee family lived near the Fannin's in Rusk County before the Fannin's moved west. There was some friction between the Thompson's and Adair's towards Clement Neely Vann, but it cannot be ascertained if this is who she was referring to. Inez' husband Martin Luther Thompson was a leader of the Choctaws in Texas. Martin Thompson relocated to Atoka, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory in 1895 along with his cousin William C. Thompson and another cousin who was married to his wife's sister, Robert Lee Thompson. Only William C. Thompson and those that remained with him were eventually enrolled as citizens in the Choctaw Nation. Martin and Inez returned to Texas before 1900.

It further appears that Thomas Fanning, Sarah's husband did not want her to speak Choctaw or associate with other Indians. This is probably what prompted them to leave Rusk County and most of their children to marry non-Indians and fade into the dominant white society. Only her son Nathaniel moved to Indian Territory where he died in the Chickasaw Nation in 1891.

Finally, Eposi of which she ended her letter is probably the Choctaw-Chickasaw word Iposi meaning grandmother.

JCT 12/6/01

[JC Thompson]