

University of Oklahoma College of Law

## University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons

---

American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899

---

1-26-1898

**Killing of a woman in Oklahoma by Seminole Indians, etc. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, in response to resolution of the Senate of January 20, 1898, copy of telegram and correspondence relative to the killing of a woman in Oklahoma Territory by Seminole Indians and the burning to death of two Seminole Indians by a mob in said territory.**

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indigenous, Indian, and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

S. Doc. No. 98, 55th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1898)

This Senate Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu](mailto:Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu).

KILLING OF A WOMAN IN OKLAHOMA BY SEMINOLE  
INDIANS, ETC.

---

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

IN RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE OF JANUARY 20,  
1898, COPY OF TELEGRAM AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE  
TO THE KILLING OF A WOMAN IN OKLAHOMA TERRITORY BY  
SEMINOLE INDIANS AND THE BURNING TO DEATH OF TWO  
SEMINOLE INDIANS BY A MOB IN SAID TERRITORY.

---

JANUARY 27, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be  
printed.

---

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, January 26, 1898.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the following  
resolution of the Senate, dated the 20th instant:

*Resolved*, That the Attorney-General and the Secretary of the Interior be, and  
hereby are, directed to inform the Senate as to what steps have been taken by them  
to ascertain the facts in relation to the killing of a woman in Oklahoma Territory  
by Seminole Indians and the burning to death of two Seminole Indians by a mob in  
said Territory, and what steps have been taken to punish the alleged offenders.

In response thereto, I transmit herewith a copy of Department tele-  
gram of the 12th instant to Governor Barnes, of Oklahoma Territory,  
and of his reply thereto, dated the 15th instant. Also copies of corre-  
spondence with the War Department in regard to this matter, and of  
my letter to Governor Brown, principal chief Seminole Nation, and also  
to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Very respectfully,

O. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

[Telegram.]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 12, 1898.

C. M. BARNES,  
Governor of Oklahoma, Guthrie, Okla.:

In view of alarming reports of outrages perpetrated and impending outbreak in Seminole Nation and borders of Oklahoma, I request that you report to me such information as you possess or can procure of the condition of affairs in that vicinity; and in the name of justice and humanity I appeal to you to cooperate with the officers of the Indian Department and of the Department of Justice to quiet all disturbances and arrest and bring to justice all parties guilty of violation of the law, on either side. I trust you will spare no effort in the matter.

C. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

[Telegram.]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 12, 1898.

SECRETARY OF WAR:

I have no definite information regarding reported Indian outbreak in Indian Territory. The trouble is probably exaggerated, but, as a precautionary measure to protect life and property and restore quiet, I request that one troop or more of cavalry be immediately sent to Wewoka and any points on border between Seminole Nation and Oklahoma where presence of troops may seem to be most necessary.

C. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 17, 1898.

SIR: I am in receipt of your letter inclosing two telegrams from General Brooke, stating that the excitement in regard to the reported Seminole uprising has subsided and everything is quiet, and that, in his judgment, there is no necessity for the presence of troops. In response thereto I have the honor to state that I concur with General Brooke in his opinion as to there being no necessity for the sending of troops to the border between Oklahoma and the Seminole Nation at this time.

Very respectfully,

C. N. BLISS,  
*Secretary.*

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

TERRITORY OF OKLAHOMA,  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
Guthrie, January 15, 1898.

SIR: Referring to your telegram of January 12 in regard to reported outrages near the Seminole border, in the southeastern portion of this Territory, I have to say that before receiving said telegram I had telegraphed to the county attorney and sheriff of the county in which it was reported that said outrages had occurred, asking for full information and demanding their earnest efforts to bring mob offenders to jus-

tice if it was true. The county attorney and sheriff, living at Tecumseh, Pottawatomie County, about 12 miles from the place where the burning was said to have been done, immediately took steps to ascertain the truth of the reports, and later, on the 12th instant, I received information from them briefly stated as follows: Several days before one Mrs. Leard, a white woman living in the Seminole Nation, was murdered by Indians, who outraged her person while she was in a dying condition. After she was dead people from the Seminole Nation and Pottawatomie County captured two Indians, supposed to be the guilty parties, and burned them. The burning took place in Pottawatomie County, in Oklahoma, about a quarter of a mile from the Seminole Nation. The reports of Indians on the warpath or of any extraordinary excitement or danger to settlers is false.

I am assured by the county attorney and sheriff, and by the good citizens of that county, that every effort will be made to disclose the participants in the mob, and that they will be arrested and brought to justice if found on Oklahoma soil.

I have offered a reward of \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of the parties engaged in the burning, which is the full statutory limit authorized by the laws of Oklahoma. I inclose copy of same to you for your information.

As requested by your said telegram, I placed myself in telegraphic communication at once with the Indian agent, and held a personal consultation with the United States marshal of this district, and beg to assure you that I will cooperate with them and spare no effort in the endeavor to arrest and bring to justice all parties guilty of violation of the law.

Very respectfully,

C. M. BARNES.

Hon. C. N. BLISS,

*Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D. C.*

TERRITORY OF OKLAHOMA,  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
*Guthrie.*

PROCLAMATION OF REWARD.

The recent acts of lawlessness and barbarism on the southeastern border of our Territory, in which two Seminole Indians were dragged from the home and lands of their tribe across the line into Oklahoma Territory, chained to trees, and burned to death with inhuman torture, for a crime of which it now appears at least one was innocent, should meet the hearty condemnation of every American citizen, and the law-abiding people of Oklahoma should leave nothing undone to bring to justice the perpetrators of this act of barbarism, in which humanity and civilization was outraged and the laws of our Territory violated and defied.

While having the utmost confidence that the officers of Pottawatomie County, where the crime was committed, will do their whole duty, I feel that the enormity of the offense, and the peculiar conditions surrounding the crime, which will make unusually difficult the securing of evidence to convict the guilty, calls for assistance and cooperation of the Territory.

Therefore, I, C. M. Barnes, governor of the Territory of Oklahoma, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the statutes of said Territory, will cause to be paid a reward of \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of the members of the mob who did torture and put to death Lincoln McGeesy and Palmer Martin, Seminole Indians, near the town of Maude, in Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma Territory, on or about Friday, January 7, 1898.

Witness my hand and the great seal of the Territory of Oklahoma this 13th day of January, A. D. 1898.

[SEAL.]

C. M. BARNES, *Governor.*

Attest:

WM. M. JENKINS, *Secretary of Territory.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 22, 1898.

SIR: I am in receipt of your favor of the 19th instant, informing me officially of facts well known at this office regarding mob action in the Seminole country on or about the 1st day of this month. This Department has made every effort within its power and within its line of duty to discover the perpetrators of the outrage referred to. The governor of Oklahoma has been communicated with and has issued a proclamation and has offered a reward of \$1,000 for the discovery and conviction of those engaged in the mob. The Department of Justice has also been very active in the matter, and for information regarding what has been done by the Attorney-General, I would suggest that you call upon him and inspect the reports that he has received from the Territory bearing upon the matter. I do not know of anything more that could be done at this moment, but I shall request a member of the Dawes Commission, who is about to return to the Indian Territory, to make such investigation as he may be able to do in regard to the value of property, if any, that has been destroyed by said mob.

Very respectfully,

C. N. BLISS,  
*Secretary.*

Hon. JOHN F. BROWN,  
*Principal Chief of the Seminole Nation, Washington, D. C.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 24, 1898.

SIR: I am in receipt of a communication, dated the 19th instant, from Hon. John T. Brown, principal chief of the Seminole Nation, officially informing the Department that on or about the first day of the present month a mob or band of citizens of the United States invaded the Seminole country and kidnaped and burned to death two young men belonging to the Seminole tribe or nation of Indians, and that said mob or band, during said invasion, also seized and tortured other members of the Seminole Nation, and burned and destroyed houses and other property belonging to the Seminole people.

The governor in his letter calls my attention to article 18 of the treaty with the Creeks and Seminoles, dated August 7, 1856, whereby the Seminole Nation were promised protection and guaranteed indemnity for all injuries resulting from invasion or aggression, and he asks that a suitable person or persons be appointed to ascertain and report the facts officially in regard to the brutal murder of the young men mentioned and the inhuman torture of the other Seminole Indians, and also the amount and value of the property destroyed or stolen by the mob, to the end that full indemnity may be made for all injuries resulting from such invasion to the party or parties injured.

In accordance with this request you are hereby instructed to direct Agent Wisdom, Union Agency, Ind. T., to proceed to the Seminole Nation and investigate and report as to the amount of property destroyed by the mob, enumerating the various items thereof, value in detail, and the names of the owners.

Very respectfully,

C. N. BLISS,  
*Secretary.*

The COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.