INTRODUCTION
The collection contains correspondence, abstracts of letters written by George Bent to George E. Hyde, and a photograph of Bent with his wife.

DONOR INFORMATION
The letter was part of a transfer from the General Library of the University of Missouri-Kansas City on 10/24/1980 (KA0054). The letter is believed to have been collected by Robert M. Snyder, Jr. and sold to the University in the mid-1940s.

COPYRIGHT AND RESTRICTIONS
The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor’s works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
George Bent was the son of the noted Indian trader, William Bent, and his Cheyenne wife, Owl Woman. The elder Bent, along with his brother Charles, traded with the Indians on the Plains from the early 1820s, and built the first Bent's Fort on the north side of the Arkansas River (in what is today Bent County, Colorado). George and his younger brother Charles were born at the fort and raised there until they were sent to Westport and St. Louis for schooling. When the war came, George and his brother joined the Confederate Army, serving under General Sterling Price. However, they tired of the “white man's war” after the Battle of Pea Ridge. By 1863, George Bent returned to his mother's people, the Southern Cheyenne, just as the Indian wars in the Plains began. Cut off from white culture, Bent was in a unique position to observe the hostilities from the Indian perspective and to report his experiences.

Years later, after the Indian wars ended, Bent assumed the role of facilitator, informant and interpreter for a culture and life that was fast disappearing. Working for such noted scholars as George Bird Grinnell, Bent gathered together groups of Indians for interviews and translated answers to Grinnell's questions. During this service Bent became acquainted with George Hyde, one of Grinnell's research assistants. Hyde and Bent began a lengthy correspondence about 1905 and continued the exchange almost until Bent's death in 1917. Together they conceived a manuscript that would document Indian life on the Plains before about 1875. Hyde wrote the book from Bent's material, and apparently provided Bent an opportunity to review the work. Publication did not occur, however, until nearly 50 years later when Savoie Lottinville, then director of the University of Oklahoma Press, rediscovered the manuscript, and, with the support of the
aged Hyde, edited and published *The Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters* in 1968.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection contains correspondence, abstracts of letters, and a photograph. The correspondence consists of letters received by George Hyde from George Bent recounting his memories of Native Americans living on the Great Plains. Also among the letters are a note by Hyde referring to the ca. 1867 photograph of Bent found at the end of the collection and a letter from John Van Male of Denver, Colorado, to Robert M. Snyder, Jr. detailing part of the transaction by which Snyder obtained the materials.

The collection includes abstracts of letters written by George Bent to George Hyde reporting his memories and those of others he interviewed concerning the activities and conditions of Great Plains Indians from roughly 1860 until about 1875, when the warfare between the whites and the Indians on the Southern Plains had effectively ended. The abstracts reflect two numbering sequences apparently established by Bent and Hyde to index the nearly 240 letters.

The collection also contains a ca. 1928 reproduction of a ca. 1867 photograph of George Bent with his wife, Magpie, niece of Black Kettle, taken on the Kansas frontier.

Though only a few of Bent's original letters are included in this collection, most may be found in the Western History Collection of the Denver Public Library and the Coe Collection at Yale University.

**PREFERRED CITATION**

Specific item; box number; folder number; *George Bent (1843-1917) Letters (K0201)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

**FOLDER LIST**

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1906-1928
- f. 2 Abstracts of George Bent letters, ca. 1907-ca. 1916
- f. 3 Photograph, ca. 1867 (reprint ca. 1928)

**LOCATION NOTE**

The collection is stored offsite (062870) and will need to be retrieved before viewing.

**SUBJECT TERMS**

Great Plains – Description and travel
Indians of North America
Snyder Collection of Americana