1858 habits and domestic comforts:-

Versailles N Y Sept. 26th 1858

Respected Friend

Your kind and interesing letter of the 24th of last month came to hand, and I take great pleasure in responding to your enquries in relation to our neighbors the Seneca Indians. I am informed there was a meeting of delegates from several of the different tribes residing in this State, held at Cattaraugus, about the middle of the summer, to consult in relation to Kansas lands, and that it resulted in a resolution to send a delegation to Washington each band appointing its own delegate.

In their moral habits and social comforts the Indians at Cattaraugus are making decided progress and improvment. There is less intemperance, and less evidence of licentiousness among the masses of the people, though in some instances men from whom we expected better things have relapsed into their former intemperate and licentious habits. Many of them have built for themselves comfortable houses, furnished them with cooking-stoves, chairs, tables, beds table-furniture &c. make good bread cakes and pies: keep good cows, and make good butter, some of which sells in the market at highest prices. Their howses wagons and farming implements are much improved; they are also making decided improvement in their wearing apparel.

The number of schools at Cattaraugus including the school in the Orphan Asylum is seven, and the average number of children in attendance during the summer term was in all the schools 240. Two of the teachers are Indians, and all the teaches are well qualified. They teach all the branches taught in the common schools in this State. In the progress they make in their studies, and in their manners and deportment in and about the schools, they would compare favorably with those in the white settlements in their neighborhoods.

In answer to your inquiry in relation to their crops, I have to say that their hay was good, wheat of which a large amount was on the ground, is less than half a crop on account of the ravages of the weevil in some fields

and rust in others. Corn is very good, though some fields are injured by grasshoppers. Potatoes a large crop but beginning to rot. Beans and garden vegetables promised well, but suffered from the grasshoppers. Oats entirely failed.

In industry there is a decided improvement. The women work more in their houses, and the men on their farms, and some of them as mechanics. John Hudson with whom I believe you are acquainted took the jot to build a school-house at Newtown. He and other Indians are doing the work in a very satisfactory manner.

Respectfully your sincere friend

E. M. Pelt.

In another communication which we have received, referring to a late public examination of the Indian children at School on the Cattaraugus Reservation, in the presence of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, under whose charge the Indian Schools of the State are especially placed, the writer says "The education of those sons of the forest is no longer an experiment. The readings with which spellers were solved in arithmatic, and especially in fractions and the close and correct analysis which was given of each solution by children of ten or twelve years of age, shewed conclusively the thoroughness of the instruction, and the capability of the pupils to grasp and explain even intricate questions in science &c. The spelling was admirable, and with one or two exceptions correct. Words were spelled orally and by writing with commendable despatch."

Signed on behalf of the Committee

Philip E Thomas

Dinah H Haller

The Minutes of the last Yearly Meeting were read.

The following Friends were appointed to propose to a future sitting the names of suitable Friends to constitute a meeting for Sufferings for the ensuing year, viz:

John Nicholls	Cyrus Guest
Isaac Tyson	Asl Hilliard
Edward H Haller	Reuben Haines
Thomas P Haller	Elijah Holmes
Nathan Smith	Nathan Parkins