

Cumook Alta  
Jan. 20, 1911.

Dear Mother: -

Mother I am so glad that you have heard that we got the box from the Kiddle. Your last letter, dated Dec. 31, 1910, is the first time you had told us that you knew whether we had it or not. We have written already concerning the Christmas boxes. We got everything all in pretty fair conditions, but I will thank you again for everything so that we won't need to write every time about it for four months!

As you say, the mails are not very regular now. Today is Friday & the mail won't be in until Saturday or Sunday night & it should be here on Wednesday. Last week the stage got in on Friday night. There is quite a lot of snow and a democrat is hard pulling. More mail comes in now, too, than in the fall and there are four horses on the stage whereas there were only two, small horses on it all summer. Last week Wednesday and Thursday it was 40° below zero. I went over to mail my letters on Thursday and on the way over I froze my right cheek. It scared me pretty badly but it isn't a bad freeze. It peels off just like the sunburn

and itches besides. Nearly everyone around here has frozen either their cheeks, nose or ears and no one thinks much of it. Last week the stage-driver froze both cheeks, I think. He has a nasty job anyway. Neither love nor money would get me to take his job! You needn't worry about either of us. We are both very careful. I always take extra clothes along, even when I just go for the mail. We have plenty of coal and are getting along finely.

There are people within ten miles of here however, who are just about out of coal, & hay for their horses, because they didn't look ahead far enough. They won't suffer any, tho, because everyone is very hospitable around here.

You asked in your letter what Will and I did at the social at Chinook. It was not an all night thing as was planned, altho Will and I stayed there over night. It was on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. There wasn't such a crowd as was expected because there was a blizzard on the morning. It was a chinook blizzard, tho, with the thermometer at almost melting point. Anyway there were about thirty people there. Will and I sang five or six popular songs with the guitar, at different times. Each woman

brought cold meat, bread butter, pies, cakes, or something. There were an awful lot of pies & cakes. I made a lot of fig candy and chocolate nut fudge. Everyone thought it was fine. At the party we all decided to have more parties so a sort of neighborhood debate club was formed, and the next Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> we had a debate & general program at Dore Stewart's. The question was, Resolved that women should have the franchise. Will was on the affirmative which won. Both before and after the debate each person spoke, sang or read something and late in the evening we had a lunch of tea & cookies & cakes, after which we played games. We walked home (3 1/2 miles) by moonlight & got home about two o'clock, I think. This week the social was to be at Gustavson's but it was about ten below zero and blowing rather hard so we didn't get there, it being about seven or eight miles. We went as far as the Stewart's from where we intended to go in a sleigh, but the sleigh didn't go so we had a little party at the Stewart's. There are six of them, so with us two we had quite a crowd. We played games, sang and had a fine time. Ended up with hot chocolate & cake & then the snow had come up & the wind stopped

4

so we came home, I was on the debate-to-be  
this week & Will was on the opposite side,  
but of course we didn't have it. I expect we  
will next week if the weather is good. The  
question was Resolved that country life is  
preferable to city life. I had to have the affirmative.  
You asked if we have C.E. or S.S. Of course  
we don't have C.E. but we do have Sunday-  
School. The last two Sundays have been cold  
& windy, however so that we couldn't go. The  
S.S. is at 2.30 P.M. & Church at 3.30 but the  
minister can only come to Chinooh alternate  
Sundays because he has several other places, so  
we only have church once in two weeks. Yes,  
the "church" is the diningroom & kitchen, living  
room & library or whatever you would call the  
one room at the Neff's house, which is "Chinooh".  
You ask if Will & I play & sing in "our" shack.  
Yes we do, but all in my shack. We play ~~quite~~  
a great deal. I am learning on the mandolin &  
Will plays on it, the guitar & on the flute. We  
never get up until about twelve o'clock because  
we have nothing to do & because we won't burn  
so much coal by staying in bed. Then we go to  
bed not too late. Lately we haven't been  
reading much because we only have about

one gallon of kerosene left and cannot afford to buy any at Chinoch at sixty-five cents per gallon & we cannot go to Casask to get any. So we sit by the stove & talk & try to decide how many horses we can buy in the spring, how much land we can break, and lots of other things. Of course we hardly ever agree on anything so if I take one side of a question I will always take the other. We have both argued on both sides of every question pertaining to horses or how much we can earn or ~~spend~~ have to spend or whether to get horses or oxen and many other things. Our good provisions are pretty low now. We have no meat, nor potatoes, nor butter, nor eggs. All we have now is beans, rice, dried prunes and peaches, evaporated cream & tea, cornmeal, flour, & four cans of tomatoes which we would only think of as a luxury. Last week about the only thing we ate was bean salt pork & gravy made from it. Two meals a day. The salt pork is all gone now so we are living on beans & bread mostly, with prunes or peaches. That's an awfully unsatisfactory diet! I wish we had some meat & potatoes! Next winter we will have plenty of potatoes & vegetables anyway.

6

You ask if the stage carries passengers between  
Bassano & Chumook. Yes, it does but you  
are not coming that way. Either Will or I  
will go to meet you with the democrat,  
either at Brooks or at Alsask. If you  
come by Alsask you will only have one  
day's drive after you leave the railroad  
but you will have to change trains several  
times, while if you come to Brooks you  
will not have any changes from Toronto  
to there but you will have two days or  
probably two & a half days drive across  
the prairie. If you came by way of Brooks  
you could stop over night at the Kidds', if  
they would let you. They live about one  
day's drive from Brooks. You might write  
and ask Mrs. Kidd about it. I should think  
that she & Julia would like to see you. It would  
be nice for you to write a nice friendly letter  
to Mrs. Kidd, anyway, telling her that you are  
coming to spend the summer with us. Her  
address is Mrs. Charles Kidd, Steeville, Alta.,  
I think. I don't know which would be easier  
for you to do, change trains three or five times &  
have only one days drive or change trains twice  
and have almost three days drive. Which do

7  
you think would be easier for you? Personally I think it would be easier for you to change trains & have only one days drive. You might have to sleep on the prairie, if you came out by way of Brooks.

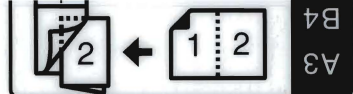
I want you to get me a pair of high shoes from Mr. Person's shoe for riding. The ones I have are almost worn out. Please be sure to get them tan not black. They cost \$3.50 and I wear size seven. You may have to pay duty on them but it won't be much and the same shoes here would cost about twice as much. Be sure to get them tan. You can buy them any time or tell him beforehand & he will get them. I want also, my acetylene bicycle lamp which I left in Berlin, accidently. I can hardly get along without it. It would be of use to me almost every day if I only had it here.

Mother I haven't any tooth-brush here and I can't get one and my teeth get awfully dirty. Could you get me one sent here by mail? I would be awfully thankful if you would.

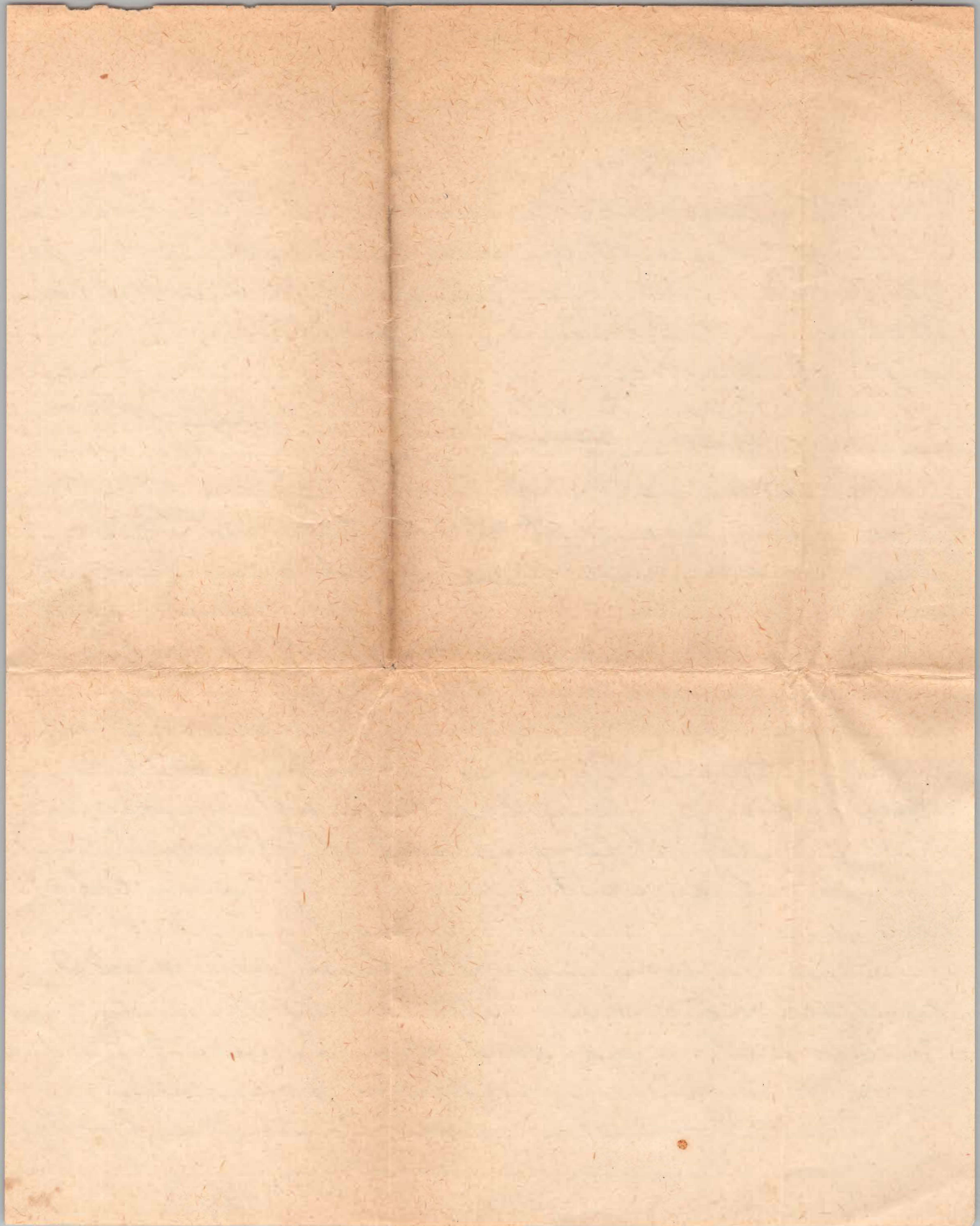
Well I must stop writing now so goodbye

Lovingly

C. S. Belden, Chinook, Alta. "Teddy"



FRONT ↑

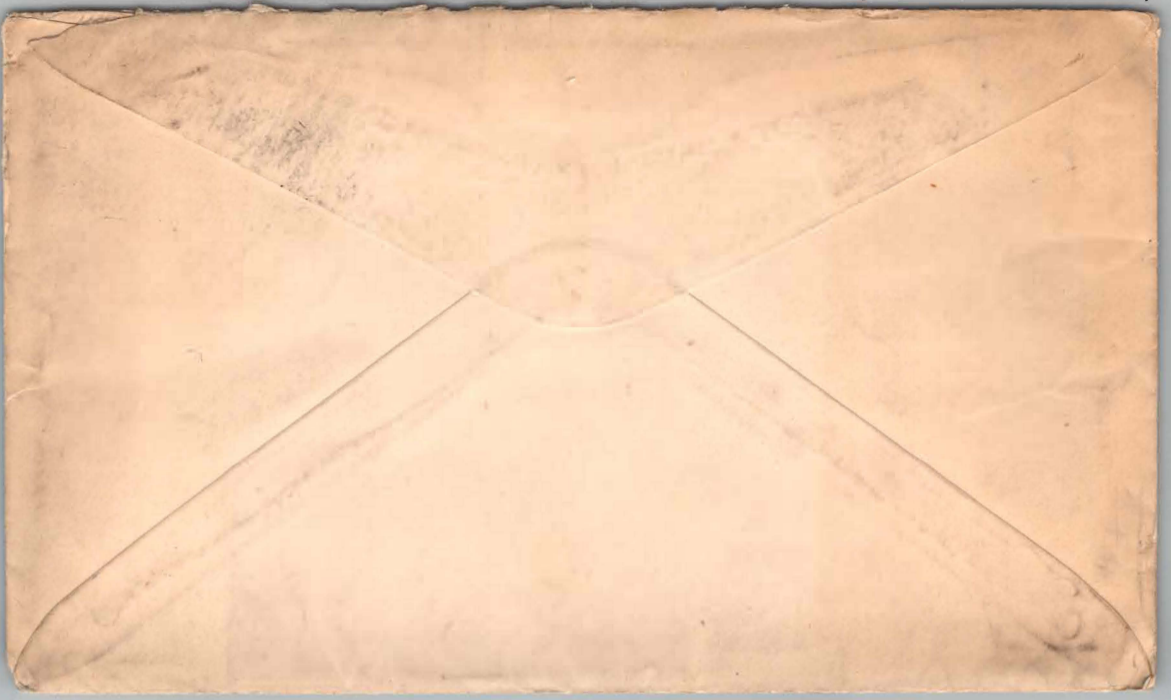




1/20/11



Mrs. William Henry Belden  
287 West College St.  
Oberlin  
Ohio.



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B4/B5

B5

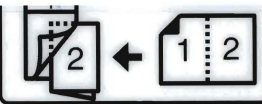
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FRONT  
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B4

A3



A3/A4

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