
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Bureau of American Ethnology
Bulletin 164

Anthropological Papers, No. 55

LETTERS TO JACK WILSON, THE PAIUTE PROPHET,
WRITTEN BETWEEN 1908 AND 1911

Edited and with an introduction by
GRACE M. DANBERG

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction.....	283
Letters to Jack Wilson.....	288
	281

LETTERS TO JACK WILSON, THE PAIUTE PROPHET, WRITTEN BETWEEN 1908 AND 1911

Edited and with an introduction by
GRACE M. DANGBERG

INTRODUCTION

The Paiute prophet, "Wovoka," more familiarly known as Jack Wilson (1857-1932), of Mason Valley, Nev., was in 1889-90 first recognized as the leader of a widespread religious movement among the Indians of the Western United States. His vision of a happier day to come for the Indians was welcome to tribes as far east as the Indian Territory and as far north as the Dakotas, where it was interpreted by the Sioux as a promise of deliverance from the hard conditions of re-settlement then being imposed on them by the United States Government. The subsequent uprising of certain bands of the Sioux which came to a tragic climax on December 15, 1890, in the massacre of men, women, and children by a company of raw recruits at Wounded Knee (Pine Ridge Reservation, S. Dak.) gave impetus to studies of the phenomenon which the Bureau of Ethnology was already undertaking and led to the Bureau's authorization of an investigation of the condition of the Sioux, as well as of the religion which had been the inspiration and the rallying point of their resistance.¹ In its final form the exhaustive account of the movement of which Jack Wilson was the author was supplemented by histories of earlier manifestations of a similar kind which had in common with the one of 1889-90 the hope of reunion with the spirits of the departed and the return to the days when the Indian would again be supreme in his own land. The ceremony common to all was the round dance, hence these religious movements were designated "ghost dances."²

The investigation made for the Bureau of Ethnology by James Mooney covered the ground so thoroughly that it left nothing of importance to be added by later investigators to the account of Jack Wilson's life and teachings up to the year 1892. In the 40 years that

¹ James Mooney. *The ghost-dance religion and the Sioux outbreak of 1890.* 14th Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol., pt. 2, pp. 641-1136. Washington, 1896.

² Mooney, *ibid.*, p. 791.

followed Mooney's visit to him, Jack did not talk of his religion³ to anyone; his dignity and reserve were never shaken; these qualities made him, until his death, a man highly respected by both the white and Indian communities of Mason Valley. During these many years he continued to exercise some influence over tribes to the east. Tangible evidence of this influence is supplied by a collection of letters written to him between the years 1908 and 1911⁴ and by accounts by residents of Mason Valley of the two visits he made to the east and of the presents he received. Chief among those who recall these incidents are members of the J. I. Wilson family of Nordyke, Nev. It was in the family of David Wilson (1829-1915),⁵ father of J. W. Wilson (1857-1930), and J. I. Wilson (1859-1954), that Jack had grown up and from David Wilson himself, a strict United Presbyterian, that he received religious and moral training.

Apparently the first suggestion of a journey to the east originated with J. I. Wilson when in 1893, after Mooney's visit to Jack, he obtained permission from the Government to take him to the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago. It was expected that Jack's fame would make him an attraction at the World's Fair and that the venture would be a profitable one for all concerned. However, one month before the two men were to depart, Jack went into the hills and remained in hiding for 8 weeks, or until all thought of the journey had been abandoned. Later, between 1906 and 1916, Jack made two journeys to Oklahoma.⁶ On each of these he was accompanied by a boy 18 to 20 years of age who, he said, was his nephew. This boy had attended Stewart Institute near Carson City, Nev., and was thus equipped to manage the details of rail travel. Once Jack planned to take Mary his wife, with him; in preparation for this event he painstakingly instructed her in the art of eating with a knife and fork. Mary, however, soon grew weary of this unaccustomed exertion and decided to remain at home. When Jack was preparing for one of the journeys, Mr. Wilson asked him if he could go along; Jack's reply was, "No, Joe, you talk too much." On all of the journeys he was treated with great deference and entertained lavishly: he slept in feather beds in carpeted rooms and was served the choicest of food. Mr. Joseph W. Wilson⁷ (1891-1946), in a letter written in 1938, says:

I happened to be present at the time Jack returned from his first eastern trip. Jack was very much elated and my memory of Jack telling of his meetings with the Indians was that there were immense crowds; he said, "Me stand up from sun

³ For an account of his teaching, see Mooney, *ibid.*, pp. 780-785.

⁴ Jack received letters over a period of 20 years; these, however, are the only ones recovered

⁵ See Mooney, *ibid.*, p. 765.

⁶ According to Forrest R. Stone, superintendent of the Wind River Agency, Fort Washakie, Wyo., one of these visits was made in 1911 or 1912

⁷ Son of J. I. Wilson.

up until sun down, me shakum hands all day. Me pretty tired. Five big Indian chiefs layum \$20.00 [gold] in my hand. Me likum that way shakin' hands. Me think that a pretty good way shakin' hands."

The letters were written to Jack by men he met on his journeys east, by men who had heard his message from others, and, in some cases, by those who had visited him. The letters were found in a cellar on the J. I. Wilson ranch, near Nordyke; the cellar had been constructed by Jack for the purpose of storing vegetables and other supplies. Later, when he moved away from there, he left the letters, together with other things which he considered of no value. Credit for the recovery and preservation of the 20 letters is due Mrs. J. I. (Carrie Willis) Wilson (1868-1925), who with her son, Joseph W., and her daughter Genevieve (Mrs. Clarence Chapin) read Jack's letters to him and wrote the answers at his dictation. Letters came asking not only for spiritual guidance and for such reassurance as could be conveyed by generous supplies of sacred red ocher⁸ forwarded in discarded tomato cans and by eagle and magpie feathers,⁹ the symbols of Jack's power,¹⁰ but also for guidance in domestic crises such as the illness of children or wife, the necessity for limiting the number of children in a too rapidly increasing family, and other intimate concerns of family life. Occasionally, wearied with trying to solve such problems, the prophet, according to Mrs. Wilson, would say, "Carrie, you tellum, I don't sabbe that kind." Then Mrs. Wilson would prescribe Thomson's Eye Water for sore eyes, German Cough Syrup for a stubborn cough, and other suitable patent remedies; often for good measure she would counsel living in the open air and eschewing gambling and drinking.

According to Mr. Joseph W. Wilson:

The letters to Jack were from Indians who were always asking Jack to make it rain more and to cure their people who were ill with diseases or imaginary diseases. Therefore, when Jack wrote a letter to the patient he would always insist that his own letter close with the statement that, "We have lots of rain here and my people are all very well and happy."

⁸ "This is a bright-red ocher, about the color of brick dust, which the Paiute procure from the neighborhood of their sacred eminence, Mount Grant. It is ground, and by help of water is made into elliptical cakes about six inches in length. It is the principal paint used by the Paiute in the Ghost dance, and small portions of it are given by the messiah to all delegates and are carried back by them to their respective tribes, where it is mixed with larger quantities of their own red paint and used in decorating the faces of the participants in the dance, the painting being solemnly performed for each dancer by the medicine-man himself. It is believed to ward off sickness, to contribute to long life, and to assist the mental vision in the trance." (Mooney, *ibid.*, pp. 778-779.) According to Robert Dyer, who acted as interpreter for Mooney in 1892 and who was interviewed by the editor in 1920, the ocher brought Jack 20 dollars a can. On Dyer as interpreter, see Mooney, *ibid.*, pp. 768-771.

⁹ Dyer said that eagle feathers brought Jack 2½ dollars and magpie feathers, 1 dollar. Mr. James L. Long, of the Indian Field Service, Oswego, Mont., writes: "Jack Wilson also sent them eagle tail feathers at fifty cents each." Mr. Joseph W. Wilson wrote in 1938: "At one time I figured that Jack received about \$35.00 per month in either money, Indian gloves, moccasins, or other presents. One time he received a buckskin shirt nicely decorated with beads."

¹⁰ Mooney, *ibid.*, pp. 775, 778.

Mr. James L. Long wrote in 1938 that at no time did Jack Wilson send instructions in the dance, or in any way give advice concerning the religion. He sent his correspondents red paint with which to decorate themselves before a rain, and instructed them to stand out in the rain and let the drops wash it off. There were several kinds of medicine, roots, and herbs that he instructed them to use in treating the sick. Mr. Long also wrote that Jack Wilson was sent money and goods for his red paint and root and herb medicines. The Fort Peck leaders would solicit their neighbors and gather together money and goods to send to Jack Wilson, and he, in turn, would send them paint and medicine according to the amount of money and goods that he received. When the paint and medicine came, the leaders would call a dance, and during the dance, they would distribute the goods to those that paid. As in any other religion, poor people could ask for the paint and medicine and receive it for nothing, provided they made a small offering like a pot of chokecherry and juneberry jam or anything that could be used as refreshments during a dance.

One of the men who wrote frequently to Jack, but none of whose letters were found in this collection, was James P. Roberts, of the Fort Peck Reservation. This man, according to Mr. Long, was in 1938 about 68 years old and read and wrote English fluently. In 1902 he and Fred Robinson, the writer of the first of this series of letters, were instructed in the "ghost dance" religion by a Sioux named Kicking Bear from the Pine Ridge Reservation. Kicking Bear had paid a visit to Jack in 1902 and, together with a certain Short Bull, received a lot of credit, according to Mr. Long, "for introducing the dance here and they kept up a correspondence with this reservation for many years, receiving goods and money for their instructions and different kinds of things that are used in these dances." Later James Roberts received a bundle of medicine wrapped in a flour sack; on the sack was printed "J. W. Wilson & Bros. Flour Milling Co., Nordyke, Nevada."¹¹ Mr. Long wrote: "He [Roberts] said that he lost all interest in the religion from then on, because he thought that some white people were just sending these things to get money out of the Assiniboinés."

In 1920 Mrs. Wilson asked me to come to Yerington to assist in recovering the letters, to interview a number of persons who had known Jack for many years, and finally to meet and talk to the prophet himself. The first of these objectives was easily accomplished, the second was pleasantly realized: those interviewed in every instance gave information which served only to confirm the account of the prophet, his powers and his teachings as given by Mooney. Sev-

¹¹ J. W. Wilson and J. I. Wilson were proprietors of the Silver State Flour Mill, at Nordyke.

eral persons confirmed his claim to being endowed with power to predict and control meteorological phenomena; the same persons, however, smiled at his claims to being invulnerable to bullets. To have achieved the third objective of this visit, however, that is, to interview the prophet, would have been to succeed where all after Mooney had failed.

We went to call on Jack on a Sunday morning. Clad in trousers and undershirt, he was lying on a blanket spread in the shade on the north side of his cabin. As we approached he sat up with dignity, but also with a trace of embarrassment which I attributed to his lack of a top shirt; however, he regained his poise as he put on a wide-brimmed felt sombrero.¹²

He was gracious in his manner of receiving guests and inquired courteously concerning the various members of the Wilson family. We, at length, arranged for an interview a few nights later when, he asserted, he would tell me of his religion.

At the appointed hour, which was sunset 3 days later, I went to the ranch where Jack and his family were picking potatoes, and waited. I remained in the dooryard until dusk. At long last Jack appeared, coming around the corner of the barn; he walked across the yard with long purposeful steps, his head held high. When he was about 10 feet from me, he stopped suddenly and drew himself up to his full height, which was some 6 feet or more, and with the look in his eye of the man who could at will go to heaven by way of the Great Dipper and the Milky Way,¹³ he said, "No!"

The letters which follow remain the only substantial addition to the knowledge of Jack Wilson which resulted from this attempt to learn something of the last 40 years of his life.

The 21 letters and fragments of letters in this collection range over a period of 4 years, from August 1908 to December 1911; they were sent by 12 different men and 1 woman. Letters from each of the correspondents have been grouped together in chronological order; each group is preceded by a short biographical comment on the writer and any persons named in his letters; occasionally explanatory comments have been inserted in the letters in square brackets. The few facts which are known concerning the writers of the letters have been courteously supplied by the superintendents and officials of the various agencies under whose jurisdiction the individuals lived or were still living in 1938.

No attempt to restore words obliterated by action of dust and dampness on ink and pencil has been made.

¹² According to Mooney the wide-brimmed sombrero was an important part of his "spiritual stock in trade." (*Ibid.*, p. 775.)

¹³ This was one of Jack's claims to supernatural power, according to Robert Dyer.

LETTERS TO JACK WILSON

In many respects the most interesting series of letters are the seven which follow. Fred Robinson, the writer of the first letter was one of the group of prominent young Assiniboin men who received instructions in conducting the "ghost dance" in the autumn of 1902 from Kicking Bear, a Sioux who had visited Wovoka earlier in that year (see p. 286). Later, Fred Robinson went to Canada where he married; he still lived there in 1938.

According to Mr. James L. Long, Rufus W. Medicine, who wrote the remaining six letters in this series, died many years before 1938, apparently at Brockton, Mont. Nothing further is known of him.

Moose Woods Reserve
Dundurn [Saskatchewan] Jan 17/09

Jack Wilson

I thought I would write you a short letter today I will tell you who I am Oct 27th 1905 you send me paint 3 can full and some medicine too Jan 29th 1906 you wrote to me and send me (1 tomatoes can) full of paint. I tell you this so you can remember who I am I am staying with the news you tell me all the time till now I have been as far north to a place called Prince Albert and I am telling them about the news and till now I am staying here for winter I came to this place and I am telling every day what they ought to do father will you help me with the heart of the people where the prayers come from I want you to help to make the people straight thought. Help me too How can it be done to grow one church or prayer Help me father that I want them to know forwards the road of life Help me that I want the people on earth to think and go into the road of life The people think they would have their own way and have good time, I am always talking about the everlasting life

Another thing is pulling the people and you know that I am telling them about the good road and good life and I am telling them too on one side the Bad road and the evil spirit The last one I mention is a man have gone on that side you must hear that There were not many people but this man he divides them into two and he spoil the whole thing You know some people have good time. So he want it like that. He gave me some bad words and he send some to you, his name is Rufus Medicine. As it is hard to get the people in shape and I want you to quit them. The people here have raised \$37.00 and send them to you as you have it already now All the people that have paint have raised money for you as what they say, and this fellow is going back to (poplar Mont) I am going to Prince Albert as they want me over there to tell them of the News. I will be back in few days again you seems to forget me so long so I write to you You know me well so If you get this letter try and answer me

I am yours faithful worker

I shake hands with you with my Best thought

Fred Robinson

Dundurn, Sask,
3/17/1909,
Moose Wood, Reserve,

Jack Wilson, Dear father, I will now write to you again, I am now Came back from Poplar, Montana I went down there on Feb. 7, on March 12, I came back,

Well father you ask of me 25.00 dollars, but I send you \$37.00 on Dec. 7' Now if you received I like to know it if you are kindley, write me, the money order was to be Cash at Smith Nevada, \$37.00, I try to do right thing with you, I residing the money order at Dundurn Post office, I send you address money order \$37.00 Dereet yerington, Lyon Co, Nevada, Care Call Box 83, I send the money there, so now please kindley let me know if you get that money which I send to you, I waitting for your kindley Reply,
I shake hands with you father, I am yours son,

R. W. Medicine,

Dundurn,
Sask,
Box 122, 4/8/09

Jack Wilson, Dear father We have a praying meeting last night, And pray to you I stand here to day again praying to you to help this indians I give magepie feathers and medicine out last night, hear me father and look upon me as then own son, help, me, father, send on me good things that I may lived upon this earthes to do Gods Good Will And you, pray for me that I may know the Good ways towards Gods our father, I am going home on April, I like very much to hear from you before I lived this Reserve, Indians are all well, I must come close, by shakings hands with you, wish to hear from you
I am yours son,

R. W. Medicine.

Dundurn,
Sask,
Box, 22,
April, 6, 1909.

J. Wilson, Dear father I get three Packages, to day, I will go home again this month, and I dont think I will stay here at Moose, Wood, Reserve so I dont know, what to do, about that \$10.00 I have ask you to send soft red paint, and white earthe, last time, the peoples here are know that I ask for soft red paint so they are watching all time, all peoples here are all well, no snow now, I shakes hands with you
I am yours son,

R. W. Medicine

Awaiting for an earlyer Reply,

Dundurn, -----
Moose, Wood, -----
4/10/--

Jack Wilson of Nordyke, Nevada

Dear father I must drop ----- llnes to you again, and let ----- know that all this indians ----- well, I pray that this indians ----- well and be good peoples ----- to you father and ----- ags that ----- in right ----- am going home now -----, I let you know that ---- going to stay here no more,

I am come to close ----hanking hands with you,
I am yours son,

R. W. Medicine

all my hearts, I am trying hard to remember you ever day, I pray to you father as I am, remember me And answer my pary, I ask of you to gett you soft red paint, & feathers again, hear me father I stand befor you to day, I will send you \$2.50 a pices I am humble & pary to you that you will have a pity on me, I shake hands with you, please kindly answer me, yours truly,

Rufus Medicine,
Dundurn, Sask,
Canada, Moose Wood, Reserve,

[The handwriting is that of Rufus Medicine.]

--ple n--- --ray to da--- afternoon, I live [leave?] moose [wood] am way to my home no----- in this Reserve for two years and ----- now I am going home, I lived ----- Brockton, Valley Co, Montana ----- address, Well father I do best ----- in this Reserve, for this indians they ----- your medicine, & magepie feathers----- they were very glad to have it, they ----- praying meeting every Saturday & Sunday ----- hear them praying & help them father ----- this I ask of you, many times, father ----- wish to see you, many times I t----- to see you, father remember me ----- praying, hear my voice in praying -----

page two

which give you \$5.00.

Bear Comes Out (1858-1938) lived for many years before his death at the Bull Head Station on the Standing Rock (Sioux) Reservation in South Dakota. According to Mr. W. O. Roberts, superintendent of the Pine Ridge Agency, he was not an outstanding person but was respected by his tribe. At the suggestion of Mr. Roberts a letter was addressed to Mr. Andrew Knife of Pine Ridge, S. Dak., a nephew of Bear Comes Out and his only close living relative, inquiring for letters written him by Jack Wilson or for further biographical details; the letter was not answered.

Porcupine Tail Creek,
August 10 1908

Dear Father Jack Wilson,

Today I was doing and was very sorry and I was going to send you \$6 dollars and was going to -s use to sorry for that I wont to know that some medicine good for you peoples I like to see those medicine, soon as you could and I wont your to send those I send 4 beets belt working I like you to send me those medicine for myself how much it cost those medicine makes those pillis them it and send it to me when I was there and you give me some medicine give me some of those for the belt.it that is all wont to say for you I am glad to shake hand with you that is me your son

Bear Comes Out.

Porcupine S. D. Jan 31 1910

Jack Wilson, of
Nurdyke Nevada

Dear Sir or father—

I think about make through your children Moccasins you ask for me moccasin measure & send to me but another I received letter and I found in three moccasins you wanted Therefore Ill wait you long time and what you mean Also I didnt not [under]stand an English [when] my folks your [let]ter Read for-----
--lich way h-- ----- and for I think Best Way for answer for you I think you wants some money but I have not money therefore let you borowed for you now when you have this moccasins What you want give for me if you can sent to me now we have all my things we afraid of this year for therefore what you can tell us let me knowed. & one of this thing yours country above. The star* we afraid what he doing Let me knowed now That is all I shake hand with you this time

Bear Come Out that is me

[*Halley's Comet]

Fast Horse (1860-1919), a Yankton Sioux who lived in the Riverside district near Brockton, Mont., was, according to John G. Hunter, superintendent of the Fort Peck Agency, a medicine man and a "preacher."

Brockton, Montana

Jan. 1st, 1909.

Jack N. Wilson:

Father I am [staying] with all my son's [children] we all still well. am writing letter to you on this [very] [Ha]ppy New Year's day, [w]ell father I heard that ----- your things were burned [tell me] thats true. Write to [me] soon. Than with my boys [we all go] an Collect as much money [as possibly] can and I'll give it ----- you. Well that's all I want to say,

I am Your Son,

Mr. Fast Horse.

Brockton,

Montana,

Feb. 12th, 1909.

Mr. Jack Wilson.

Dear father:—

Father these money are yours. I hope you be glad to get them. When you get the money Please let me know soon. I put the money in two envelopes.

Your Son,

Fast Horse.

P.S.

There is \$32.00 in altogether.

Brockton, Montana,
Valley County,
Mar. 7, 1909

Mr. Jack Wilson,

Dear father:

Father I was very glad to get what you send it to me. So I wrote these few lines to let you know that I got all of them. I got them safe and give them out equally. This is all I want to say,

I am Your Son,

Fast Horse.

Cloud Horse (1851-1923) was one of a delegation of Sioux that visited the prophet in 1890. These men had set down for them in the Teton Dakota dialect an account of the visit which is given in full by Mooney (*ibid.*, pp. 796-798, and 819).¹⁴ A letter from William Gay, (1868- —), husband of Cloud Horse's daughter, is given in its proper chronological sequence with the letters of the older man. According to W. O. Roberts, superintendent of the Pine Ridge Agency, William Gay was half Indian and half white; he and his wife were still living at Kyle in 1938.

Kyle, S. Dak,
Oct. 9 10.

dear father Jack wilson

I am going to say a few words to you this morning and I wish you let me Know if you get that moccison and one dollar, which I send it to you last month of may and I want medicine for it so please let me Know I want medicine if you get them

now this is all from

Your truly son

William Gay
Kyle, S. Dak.

Kyle Post Office
March 17, 1911.

Dear Father:—

Just a few lines to you this morning to let you know something I wrote to you here lately and told you that I did not get something that you send me Well I made a mistake I did not open the package ever since you send it to me untill this moning that is on the 17 of March and when I open it and looked through the medican you send I found in it the pain that you send so I am very sorry I told you the wrong thing I said I did not get it but I hope you will excuse me for it I made a mistake so that is what I want to let you know that I got all you send me. I got a little scared for a while when I found the paint so I am going to send you money because I have foold you so bad and this morning I am sitting in a Mexican man's house and there is a young girl there she is my miece she is

¹⁴ See footnote 1, p. 233.

very sick so I want you to pray to the Lord to get here well again for me and when she gets well again I want to let every bod know it so that is why I want you to helpe me and you aske me to come over to see you so I think Im going to come over whith Red Star and he told me that he send you money and asked you something but you did not answer him so if you want me to come with him I want you to let me know soon so this will be all for this time so I shake hand with you and hope to stand solid by you

I am your son

Cloud Horse.

P. S. I would like to find out if you have any kind of rules for your medicans that you send me if so let me know too ----- the feathers let me know please.

Pine Ridge, So. Dak.,
April 29, 1911.

Jack Wilson,
Nordyke, Nev.

Dear Father: Why do you not write to me. I sit with you and I write to you this letter. I hope I will come to see you. I send you a dollar bill. Why dont you answer me?

When you get this letter answer soon, Father This man writing a letter for me but he lives far and this man write for me this letter.

This man a good man write for me this letter. I sit with Cloud horse and we write this letter.

Your loving son, I shake hands with you, Answer quick when you get this letter.

Cloud Horse

Address answer to Red Star
Pine Ridge, So. Dak.

Kyle Post Office
Dec 13, 1911

Dear Father:—

Your letter has been received and I was very glad indeed to hear from you dear father

Now I am going to send you a pair of mocissions but if they are not long enough for you when you write again please send me you foot measure from this day on—I will try to get the money to send to you. I wish I had it just at present I would send it wright away

I think I might get the money soon enough to send it so that is why I say that so. I will get it just as soon as possible and be sure to send it so if you get a letter from me I may have the money in that letter so dear Father this will be all. I can answer you so for your sake all the Indians out here make fun of me but I allways think dear Father that around me you would give me strength. so if you get the money I want that medican and some good feathers & that paint so that is what I want you to send me.

So this is all for this time I give a good & hard shaking of the hands to you I hope you have pity on me

I remain your son

Cloud Man Horse

Nothing is known of the John Short Bull who wrote the letter which follows. It is possible that he was a relative of Short Bull, the Sioux chief; this man was one of the delegates who visited the prophet in 1889-90 and later, in 1890, led one of the bands opposing the repressive measures which the Government directed against the "ghost dance" (Mooney, pp. 817, 843, 849-851).¹⁵ This John Short Bull may be the Short Bull who with Kicking Bear instructed the Assiniboin in the "ghost dance" in 1902 (see pp. 286, 288).

Allen, So. Dak.

April 27th 1911.

Mr. Jack Wilson,
Nordyke, Nevada.

Dear father

I send you five dollars from Allen P. O. for P. O. money order that time I think you were at Colorado State but the money order returned to me at Allen S. Dak. and I sent you another five dollars Cash and I never heard from you if you receive the five dollars or not so I want to know all about it. and tell me all about it the news and that we are people all sick. sick all time little fooks but now it all over by this spring and do you know what kind medicine best these sickness Cough and lungs sick and Melease and How we pray it, our god may mistake and tell me all about it these things.

Yours. poor son

John. Short Bull.

Answer soon as possible.

The fragment of a letter which follows was apparently written by an Arapaho Indian. According to Superintendent Forrest R. Stone, of the Wind River Agency at Fort Washakee, Wyo., the Sherman Sage, named in this letter, was still living in 1938 and said that he had letters from Jack Wilson after he returned from a visit to the reservation in 1911 or 1912. A James Brown and John Yellow Plume also had letters from the prophet at this time; these, however, have all been lost.

Lodge Pole, Mont.

March 31 - 1910.

My Dear Father,

I am so capable to answer your welcome letter I was very glad to hear from you again. My Post Office from my plow is about a quarter of a mile, I received the medicines you send me some time ago. When I got I make a pray meeting with a good-man who have repect of you, and also we have a fest over it. I give the

¹⁵ See footnote 1, this paper.

medicines and paints to the fellows crew of 13 and also give some to those who have ask me after I got the paint. I always have my own son to write letters for me but he has been out working about Two weeks he has just come home and he write this letter for me again Samon [Salmon?] Frist Shoot is also a good young man he some times writes for me my wife is The G[ir]
I cannot Trust no other man so this is reason I always ----- write for me. The older Indians are still praying for? what you know send I am so anxious to know how to used the medicines and would like to have advice in regards to the medicine The Arapahoe Indians some here about two years ago Their names are Shuman [Sherman] Sage and The Gun These two men claim to see you at your place when they come here they told me lot of news about what you have said I stayed with the two about seven (7) days They made me one hand game stick. Both of the men are my best friends they like me very well I like to know if you will send the medicine rest of the medicines what we ordered in our letter It was hard to get the money this winter that was reason I ----- send you.

American Horse and F. W. Antelope, who wrote the letter which follows, were Arapaho Indians; the superintendent of the Wind River Agency reports that both died before 1938. This is not the American Horse, a Sioux chief who was one of the council of men who, in 1889, appointed a delegation to visit the prophet (see Mooney, *ibid.*, p. 820).

Arapahoe, Wyoming,
Fremont Co. April 30-11

Dear Father in christ, Jack Wilson.

today I am thinking of you and I would like to Write you a few lines to you this morning and to let you know that I am well with my folks and also my wife was very Sickness for along time. But she go round now days and and she go down River to take a cold Bath in water and she Said she fells much Better after she take Bath. And rest of Indians are well. Some of Indians are Farming for oats and wheat and some out working for Shearing time. now I want to ask you some thing, my Brother came from Oklahoma and he want me to go with him to your country to visit you, he would like to see you very much. So I wish you Please tell us if is alright to visit you. my Brother he is waiting for his money from Oklahoma. But we would like to hear from you. before we start off. to your Place-and I wish you Please send us little Painted if you got to spare and tell us some news that is if any news from this spring, or anything go on - let us hear from you by return mail.

I am yours truly,

F. W. Antelope
and American Horse.

Nothing is known of the man who wrote the following fragment.
for ears, has been trouble ----- his sore ears in side for two years then he wants medicine for that.

William James Rope

A typewritten letter from a neighbor of Jack's completes the series.

Masonic, Calif., April 7, 1911.

Mr. Jack Wilson,
Yerington, Nevada.

Dear Jack:

How are all the indians getting along down there? Please write and tell me. I heard lots of indians died down to Yerington lately. Is this so? We are all well here. There is about four feet of snow in Bridgeport. At Uncle Tom's place there is about seven feet of snow, and the indians are hungry there as they can't get out. Tom's folks are all well only they can't get much to eat. Old man John Craig has been down to Mono Lake and there has been so much snow that he did not come back yet.

We all send our kindest regards and hope you will write soon again.

Daisy Bell.