

LEWIS FRANCIS HADLEY:
"THE LONG-HAIRED SIGN TALKER"

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

According to the *Handbook of American Indians* the sign language is a system of gestures used by the Plains Indians for communication among tribes speaking different languages and who live between the Missouri River and the Rock Mountains, and from the Frazer River in British Columbia to the Rio Grande. The sign language appears never to have been used west of the mountains except among the Nez Percés and other Indians who were accustomed to periodic hunting trips on the plains.

Tribes of many different stocks within the area of the vast plains were constantly moving about in pursuit of buffalo herds and were thus brought into friendly or hostile contact with different peoples; the necessities of nomadic life resulted in the development of a system of gesture communication, which for ordinary uses almost reached the perfection of a spoken language. The wild denizens of the upper Missouri found no difficulty in talking on any subject with Comanches or Kiowas from the border of Texas. The Crows, Cheyennes and Kiowas are considered the most expert in the use of the sign language and "In fluent grace of movement a conversation in the sign language between a Cheyenne and a Kiowa is the very poetry of motion."

Several officers of the United States Army who were experts on the Indian sign language published works on that subject. In 1881 a philosophic and comparative presentation, written by Colonel Garrick Mallery, was issued in the *First Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*.

Mallery wrote that "in no other thoroughly explored part of the world has there been found spread over so large a space so small a number of individuals divided by so many linguistic and dialectic boundaries as in North America." Colonel Richard I. Dodge says in a letter:

The embodiment of signs into a systematic language is, I believe, confined to the Indians of the Plains . . . almost all of the Indians east of the Sierras have some little smattering of it. The Plains Indians believe the Kiowas to have invented the sign language. . . . Kiowas were general go-betweens . . . they held an intermediate position between the Comanches, Tonkaways, Lipans and others of Texas, and the Pawnees, Sioux, Blackfeet, and other northern tribes.

In 1880 he thought the Kiowas were the most proficient:¹

The Comanche acquired it in Mexico, taught the Arapahoes and Kiowas, and from these the Cheyennes learned it.

It is asserted that some of the Muskoki and the Ponkas now in the Indian Territory never saw the sign language until they arrived there. Yet there is some evidence that the Muskoki did use signs a century ago, and some of the Ponkas still remaining on their old homes on the Missouri remember it. . . .

Major General Hugh Lenox Scott became the greatest authority on the sign language during his years of service among the western Indians. From the time of his graduation from the Military Academy in 1876 he was engaged in Indian expeditions or duty among the red men of the Plains, where he settled many serious troubles among the Indians by diplomacy. In 1897, while serving at the Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, he wrote a book on the sign language.

Oklahoma can lay claim to an expert on the sign language, although he had very little support from the government in his undertakings. Lewis Francis Hadley was engaged in compiling a Modoc dictionary in 1876.²

In August of the following year Hadley compiled a long vocabulary of the Quapaw and Ponca languages. The lists of words are arranged in three columns on the pages headed English, Quapaw, and Ponca, which cover seven pages.

In 1882 Hadley wrote, "A Quapaw Vocabulary and the Quapaw and Ponca Compared. Also The Mystery of the Ponca Removal and the troubles Quapaws were subjected to on account of the mystery underlying the Removal of the Poncas, by Ingonompishi, late Clerk of the Quapaw Nation, 1882." This document consists of a number of historical notes concerning the origin and sad fate of the Quapaw Indians. In this connection Hadley wrote:³

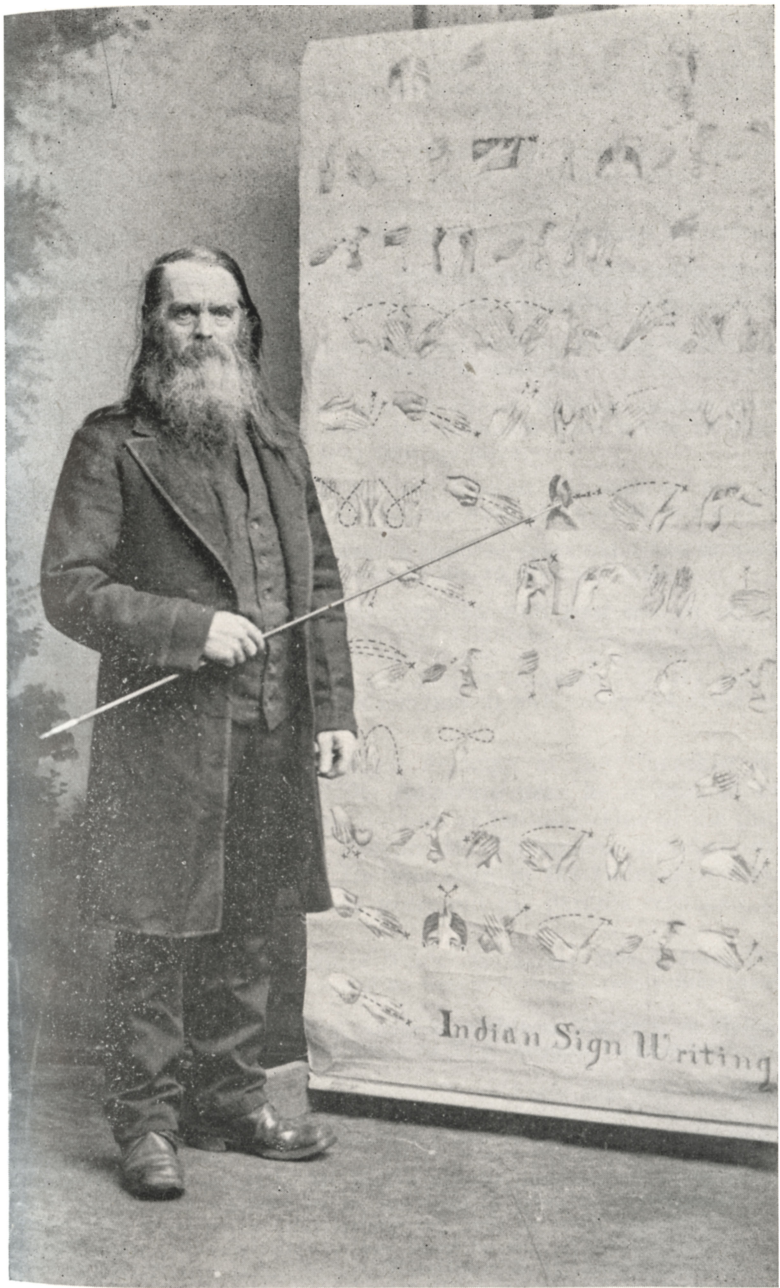
It was to aid the good Quapaws in making their grievance known to the government, that I was adopted into the tribe and became their clerk. I remained in that capacity until the matter was fully settled, and

¹ *First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1879-80 (Washington, 1881), pp. 263, 311, 316, 319. It is said by authorities that the best practical treatise on the subject is Captain W. P. Clark's *Indian Sign Language*, Philadelphia, 1885.

William Dunbar, the celebrated naturalist who settled at Natchez, was interested in the sign language of the Indians and attempted to connect it with the Chinese (John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley*, [Washington, 1911], p. 355; Harnett T. Kane, *Natchez on the Mississippi* [New York, 1947], p. 50).

² This vocabulary is contained in three copy books, a total of sixty-nine pages, and in Manuscript No. 551 in the Bureau of American Ethnology.

³ Bureau of American Ethnology, Manuscript Vault, *Catalogue No. 918*; James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of the Siouan Languages* (Washington, 1887), p. 30.



LEWIS FRANCIS HADLEY

the assurance given—that they should be no longer disturbed—That the remnant of the Tribe should hold their land. I came out of this fight so poor that I have not been able to take time to write up this vocabulary until now. L. F. H. —Commissioner Schurtz straightened this matter out I. E. "put his foot on it."

Hadley did not confine his efforts to making a Quapaw vocabulary, but also compiled seven pages of Uchee words, and in 1882 he filled thirty-one foolscap pages with Shawnee words. Both of these works are to be found in the Bureau of American Ethnology.⁴

Hadley became involved in a matrimonial venture with Mi-ti-ti and in 1882 he wrote the following letter regarding the affair.⁵

Mititi was probably the oldest and best looking woman in the tribe, had buried all of her family and wanting to marry.

Your humble servt. was an adopted citizen fighting against certain schemes against the Quapaws, while the schemers were trying to dispute my rights as I was not married (*sic*) into the tribe.

Hence Mititi was working for my interest as well as her own, she knew I was in the market and sent me word she wanted to marry me.

As I did not want a woman near a hundred years old I had to decline the tempting offer and in such a way as not to give any offence.

Hence the following letter was prepared with *great care* on my part after which it was submitted (*sic*) to the interpreter, and we both worked at it until (*sic*) he pronounced it *correct*, and as it is probably the best idea I can give of the structure of the Quapaw language I hereby sacrifice my pride, and disclose the anxious longings of two lonely old souls upon the holy altar of Science.

In 1882 Hadley was teaching drawing at the Cherokee Male Seminary in Tahlequah, and the following year he is said to have taught at the Cherokee Orphan Asylum at Salina.⁶ One of his pupils at the Male Seminary was Joseph M. Thompson, member of a prominent Cherokee family. He was born in the Chickasaw Nation in 1865, and when he was three years old his parents returned with

⁴No. 1005 Uchee; No. 29 Shawnee Words. In January, 1894, J. Owen Dorsey collected from Lewis F. Hadley, assisted by George Redeagle, twenty-three pages of Quapaw words.

⁵From the Kiowa Indian School, Anadarko, Oklahoma Territory, on March 18, 1891, Superintendent G. P. Gregory wrote to T. J. Morgan, Commissioner Indian Affairs:

"I carefully examined the paper placed in my hands regarding the adoption of Louis Hadley—the long-haired sign talker—into the Quapaw tribe.

"I find them to be only an account or record of a council formally adopting Mr. Hadley and his wife.

"This report was written by Mr. Hadley and the signatures are all in his hand. There is no evidence whatever except his word to prove the genuineness of the document. He asked me to delay writing you until he could procure further and more satisfactory evidence. This he has failed to do." (The National Archives, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C. Letters Received, 1891/10688).

⁶Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives Division, *Indian-Pioneer History*, Vol. 46, pp. 489-92.

him to the Cherokee country, where the lad was educated. He had a talent for drawing, but did not pursue that art after his graduation until he retired as a physician in 1937, when he painted portraits of Sequoyah, the outlaw Tom Starr, the famous Sioux Red Cloud, and General Stand Watie. Judge J. T. Parks of Tahlequah was a student in the Male Seminary from 1882 to 1884, and he recalls Hadley as a teacher of drawing there. Judge Parks states: "All teachers at that time were Professors, and to maintain that dignity they wore Prince Albert coats and derby hats."

From Arkansas City, Kansas, October 19, 1885, Hadley wrote to James Constantine Pilling in Washington regarding his different vocabularies in answer to a letter from Pilling. In his letter Hadley wrote:

In reply will say, in regard to the Cherokee vocabulary &c that it is *imperfect and unreliable*. But is waiting opportunity for correction. The bulk of the work was given by intelligent pupils at the Cherokee High Schools. Yet much of it is valuable grammatical matter (Copied from manuscript now lost) Original in Cherokee Characters these are and have been copied *erionously* one character being mistaken for others &c.

After learning more of the matter and trying to correct the same I found that which I valued most needed to be thourally overhauled by some Cherokee Schollar of more than ordinary learning therefore I can make an entire new collection *cheaper* and in view of my experience *much better* than to try to doctor the old one.

Hadley gave a long description of the vocabulary and mentioned additional grammatical matter copied from a manuscript found in the Vann Library which he said was lost. He also promised to send to Pilling a large Quapaw vocabulary which was to be returned to him on demand. He added:⁷

. . . . I have a great deal of matter in my dialects and am constantly getting more. . . . For instance I have a Choctaw Dictionary of several

⁷ Bureau of American Ethnology, *Catalogue No. 1353*. In 1878 the first steamer, "Aunt Sally," arrived at Arkansas City on June 25, amid wild excitement among all of the citizens (*The Traveler*, [Arkansas City, Kansas], July 3, 1878). Eight years later a cargo of flour was landed at Fort Smith, direct from Arkansas City, aboard two barges towed by the "Kansas Miller." The distance was 570 miles. This steamer, built at St. Louis, passed up the river in July, 1885, and this was her first trip down. The boat was owned by Bliss and Wood of Winfield, Kansas, Searing & Mead and the Arkansas City Roller Mills, and was built expressly for the flour trade in the upper Arkansas. That was the first cargo ever brought down by steamer, and Captain E. S. Bliss thought it fully demonstrated the feasibility of upper Arkansas navigation (*Fort Smith Elevator*, July 2, 1886). T. M. Finney (Wahshowahgaley), *Pioneer Days with the Osage Indians West of '96* (Bartlesville, Oklahoma), 1925, pp. 45, 46, 48.

hundred pages But Mr. Allen Wright published a like work before I put mine out.⁸ It is tied up in two packages and in my Boat.

So lately I collected perhaps two hundred Potawatomie words, "just to be doing" Such small collections seem to me of little or no value as no object was in view. But I did copy about three 3 lines of the usual Heading of Friendly letters one to another among intelligent Indians it is in Chepewa (which is understood by Potawatomies Ottawas &c.) This I will send to you in another letter. (I value such myself.)

I do not wish to intrude worthless matter for the sake of seeing a long list of my labors in print. But such as you can use I will gladly send. I am absent from my books &c now (They are on a Boat on the way to New Orleans) therefore I *cannot* enter into details. . . .

I have also many vocabularies which I copied from the U. S. survey of Roads to the Pacific. All of which you can, or may have obtained long ago. But allow me here to tell you that I found the *Pani wholly erroneous* it is in two dialects neither of which was recognized by pawnees a few weeks since and I had to rely on the sign language.

I visited the *Tonkawas*. 2nd Chief Charley had me write out a list of *Indian* names I kept a copy, this I showed to the first Chief. Now it seems that this making known of *Indian* names is sacrilege so to speak, and 2nd Chief Charley wanted me to tell "all the *Tonkawas* in Council" that I did not know who gave me the *Indian* names to clear him; as I could not do it, I called on the Sub Agt and told him about it and that I had promised Charley I would not tell the Council who gave me the names. I would give him (charley) the slip, and so along in the night I went away, leaving Charley to face the Council without any "Liar" to help him out.

I have written you this to inform you of the superstition in regard to white people knowing *Tonkawa Indian* names. The Sub Agent was himself surprised But showed me a Ration list wherein the column headed "Indian Name" was blank. *Tonkawas* deny their *Indian* names. Agt told me that when any person dies among them they drop that name out of the language, and Charley said I "must never repeat any *Tonkawa* names" He gave me the name "Mi-nau-wa-tce-li" Deerfast and I found it quite appropriate on the night when I waded the *Chicaski* River leaving him to face the angry *Tonkawas* without the aid of one to tell a pack of lies to clear him of an indiscretion in a matter of that nature.

My address is *uncertain* Being on a Steam Boat, often laid up away from any Post office But at present on Steamer *Kansas* Millers, *Arkansas* City *Kansas*.

From *Anadarko*, *Indian Territory*, on September 1, 1887, was issued *A List of Primary Gestures in Indian Sign Talk*:

Only 19 copies of these proofs are printed, one for each o (*sic*) my Patrons. None will be sold. They are for corrections additions (*sic*)

⁸ Allen Wright, Choctaw scholar, preacher, and statesman, was born in Mississippi in 1826. He immigrated during the Choctaw removal to Indian Territory in the winter of 1833-34. He graduated from colleges in the East and on returning home, served his people until his death in 1885. The Rev. John Edwards described Mr. Wright as "a man of large intelligence, good mind, an excellent preacher. . . . No other Choctaw that I ever met could give such a clear explanation of difficult points in the grammar of the Choctaw." He made a translation of the Chickasaw constitution and laws, published in book form in 1873, and in 1880 he issued his "Chahta Leksikon."—(Frederick Webb Hodge [ed.] *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, [Washington, 1912], Part 2, pp. 975-6).

improvements, and criticisms by Indians; after which extended works, and A Magazine in Hand Talking (*sic*) may be expected. Titles are omitted (*sic*) for want of sufficient type.

To those who have aided me with money; I tender herewith my sincere thanks. A Magazine in Sign-talk will obtain a wide (if not large) circulation among the Curious in all lands. The Diagram can be reduced and transferred in any size or color. Shall We control it? As you say. I am ready to serve you. Yours Respectfully, Lewis F. Hadley.

This small book, which the writer discovered in the Library of Congress, is now preserved in the Rare Book Division of that institution. It is made up of several hundred crude designs in white on a black ground on paper which has printed on the back "Number of Vouchers" and which Hadley probably secured from the Indian Agency. While the book is crude it must have required unlimited patience to make it.⁹

The following advertisement was printed in the *Muskogee Phoenix* April 19, 1888: "Indian Hand Talking [3 black picture of signs] (Wild Indians read the above on sight.) The inventor of the sign diagrams needs philanthropists to help him give reading matter in sign language to 207,000 Indians who can never hope to read our letters. . . . For particulars address L. F. Hadley, care U. S. Indian Agt., Muskogee, I. T."

In November, 1889, Hadley was living in a tent between the Red Store and the old hotel in Anadarko. The front of his tent displayed a strip of canvas bearing a notice in the sign language.¹⁰

Israel G. Vore, whose life was spent among the Indians of Indian Territory and the Plains, wrote that he had been investigating the sign language at different times for four years: "I know exactly how expressive and inspiring it is. It does not represent letters or words, but things. It is very meager—God's truth can neither be proclaimed or illustrated in it. The very idea to those who understand it is absurd. I am no missionary—No Minister of the Gospel—No Writeist, — . . . the fault of my education. I graduated among the Indians of the Indian Territory — my studies never reached grammar. . . ." For an account of Vore see Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Israel G. Vore and Levering Manual Labor School", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1947), pp. 198-217.

On December 31, 1890, when Judge C. Ross Hume, at the age of twelve, reached Anadarko with his parents, he recalls that Hadley was living in a cave in the side of a hill near the old Masonic Hall and Mr. Robert L. Boake, a former Indian trader, informed him that Hadley was still in the town in 1893, and that he remained there perhaps another year. In a letter dated January 7, 1947, Judge Hume wrote:

Mr. Boake had been a trader's clerk at Cantonment, among the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, among whom the sign language was court language for intertribal conversations, and is now probably the best sign talker of all white men now living here.

⁹ Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Oklahoma Imprints* (Norman, 1936), p. 254.

¹⁰ Authority of Mr. Ralph Cleveland who arrived in Anadarko in November 1889.

He told me that he and another clerk visited Hadley often, and did talk to him in the sign language. Many of the signs of Hadley were wrong, and his delineations of them were from the view of the Speaker rather than that of the person spoken to; i. e. the front of the hand would appear in gesture where the back of the hand appeared to party spoken to.

That Hadley had wide interests is suggested by an article in the *Cherokee Advocate* (Tahlequah) on October 27, 1880, copied from a Fort Smith newspaper saying:

There is a strange looking craft now afloat below the wharf, under process of construction, by equally as strange a looking genius. At his request we boarded his vessel and listened to the explanation of its object. He (Hadley) has some new theory of propelling appliances, which if ever put into successful operation cannot fail to work radical changes of a very economical, safe and useful nature.

The present vessel, although designed in the main to improve and illustrate his plans for more enlarged and extensive application will answer for a trading boat, a pleasure trip boat, or a transport in low waters. Mr. Lewis F. Hadly (*sic*) the owner, builder, inventor, mate and pilot of this 12 by 30 foot craft, has lived on this frontier for over thirty years. He seems to be an inventive genius and a natural draughtsman, and has taught drawing in the schools of the Cherokee Nation. He has spent a season or two in the survey of the Arkansas channels above this point and has complete charts hundreds of miles above here.¹¹

And he now desires to put his inventions into practice. He has studied upon it for years, and has worked to accumulate means to effect that purpose. His accumulation have (*sic*) been so slow that his impatiences has (*sic*) got the better of him, and he has invested every cent of his earnings and has deprived himself of the comforts of life to get it thus far along, and trusts to find in this community some monied friends to assist him in completing it. We would commend his undertaking to the serious attention of any one interested in useful and profitable invention, and we think the inventor can demonstrate its feasibility. It was ever thus with genius. . . .

An interesting picture of Hadley was furnished the writer by an early resident of Fort Smith:

He was thick-set rather than "stout"—and had let his hair grow so as to be received among primitive Indians without suspicion I recall well his first call. It was in the evening, and my brother and I had gone to bed. Presently my mother came up and told us we might dress and come down stairs to hear Mr. Hadley's stories. . . . My mother brought him a cup of tea, and some apple pie and cheese, and watched him—with horror—put the cheese into his tea and stir it as he talked. Then he took a sip, looked a little queer, and set down the cup. My mother said "Mr. Hadley, I'm afraid you didn't mean to put that cheese into your tea—Let me get you another cup." "Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought it was sugar—You see on the reservations we have only brown sugar. . . ."

¹¹ Although a search was made in the files of the Corps of Engineers, Washington, D. C., nothing was discovered regarding Hadley's survey of the Arkansas River. Mrs. Louise Cook of the Newspaper Department, Oklahoma Historical Society checked the *Fort Smith Elevator*, the *Cheyenne Transporter* and the *Cherokee Advocate* for material about Hadley. Mr. E. R. Dabney of the library staff of the University of Texas made a thorough search in the great newspaper collection in that institution without results.

[Mr. Hadley] had first become interested in the sign language as a philologist while he was traveling in the West, and was so interested in trying to find the origin of the different signs that he gradually gave up one after another civilized customs and tried to identify himself more and more with the Indians. As he did so, he also came to realize how inadequate to their needs the Indian schools were. They taught the children Christianity; they also taught them all the complexities of "civilized" life, so that when they returned to the hogans they had nothing in common with their parents and either relapsed into "Savagery" or left home altogether.

Mr. Hadley's passion was to Christianize what we then called the "blanket Indians"—He believed that if the sign language could be reduced to writing, our Lord's parables (which strongly appealed to the Indians) and the elements of Christian faith could be spread among the most primitive tribes, those who never came near the Agencies. He began experimenting with the pictures, and as he had no writing materials he used margins of newspaper—or bits of brown paper—anything he could get hold of.

He purposely made his drawings as simple and crude as possible, as a child would draw them, so that no line or detail would distract from the idea. Then he would go to the agency, or to any Indian gathering, get into talk with one of the men, and show him, say, the parable of the Good Samaritan. He would explain that the dotted line was the road, that X was the place the hand was walking to—and in a minute the Indian would pick up the scraps of paper, laugh, and begin to talk the whole thing off on his fingers. Then he would laugh again, say, "That good talk," and there you were.

Mr. Hadley wanted most to print small paper fliers that could be easily distributed—but he had no money. The Reverend George F. Degen, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Fort Smith, and Mrs. Degen set themselves to provide a fund for him, and Mrs. Degen spent one whole summer traveling in New England, speaking to various missionary societies in an effort to collect funds. She aroused great interest and secured enough to print Hadley's dictionary. But such a project needed a sustained drive and a convinced body of people to keep it up, and Mr. and Mrs. Degen, devoted as they were, could not spare time or money to keep the crusade up year after year, so Mr. Hadley had to give up his scheme and take to teaching.

To our minds, he was potentially one of the great missionaries of all times, like those famous names associated with India and Africa—but he did not have a national missionary society behind him. He had traveled all over the West, out to the Pacific coast, and I think into Canada—always on foot, going from one tribe to another. He spoke twenty or more different languages, and had discovered for himself that Indians from Alaska to South America used substantially the same sign language, and that members of tribes who had not one spoken word in common could communicate by the signs. He had been formally adopted into at least one tribe, and could introduce himself by his Indian name, In-nom-pa-she (accented on the first syllable).

He told us how repugnant it had been to him to adapt himself to Indian customs, how he had gagged when he ate with the primitive tribes and saw . . . the stew handed about in a chamber-pot though he knew it had been distributed from an agency and that the Indians thought it a very convenient dish, and had no idea what it was intend for. How each one put his hand into the stew and pulled out what he fancied, and

if he did not like it tossed it back into the pan for someone else to sample.

Mr. Hadley's explanations of some of the signs were interesting:

. . . . the sign for an Indian, indicating that his skin was dark; for a white man, a straight line drawn horizontally across the forehead ("he wears a hat"), and for a Negro, the two signs combined "he has a dark skin, but he wears a hat"); there was the liar ("he has two tongues"); and there were the three personal pronouns as he interpreted them, the "I" with dignity, perhaps a little pomposity, the "you" gestured with courtesy and empressment, and the "he" just a toss of the thumb over the shoulder, very casually, "the other fellow," nobody to bother about. To look at the dictionary and watch him translating it was an education itself. He had been much puzzled by the sign for a horse, the Indians could not explain it, and it took him months of travel and observation to come across the Canadian Indians' hand travois and conclude that it had finally been adapted to horse-hauling; but the old sign for the dragging travois had been kept, to serve for transportation.

Mr. Hadley lamented that he never expected to get his hands really clean again after his years with the Indians. They were seamed with fine black lines, like a mechanic's, and he wore with indifference such clothes as were given him. His tent stood on a vacant lot on Fourth Street—or possibly Third—between Sycamore and Garrison Avenue in Fort Smith.

Another informant who remembers Mr. Hadley very well, although he was only a lad when the man visited his parents' home in Fort Smith. He recalls that:

He was a very unusual character and I imagine that he made a lasting impression on all who met him At that age I was naturally impressed by the fact that he always lived in a tent when he came to Fort Smith. The tent was always cluttered as, in addition to his living equipment, he had a printing press and a large stock of wood blocks for the making of cuts for his sign language pamphlets.

Mr. Hadley's ambition was to print the New Testament in sign language, starting with the Gospels. I have no idea how far he got. All that I remember seeing are two pamphlets containing the Lord's Prayer¹² and the Sermon on the Mount. Mr. Hadley cut the pictures and lettering in the blocks himself, and I remember him saying that a high degree of artistic skill was not only unnecessary, but probably harmful. He reasoned that the Indians themselves made crude drawings and that they would accept crude drawings by others more readily than more finished work. He said that he never visited a new town or encampment that his pamphlets did not arouse the greatest interest. The Indians would crowd around, and as soon as he handed them a pamphlet one would hold it while another read it off to the group in signs.

One of his difficulties was the necessity of paraphrasing biblical English into terms the Indians could understand, and then arranging it for transposition into signs. Mr. Hadley worked almost entirely among

¹²In the magazine *Twin Territories* for October, 1902, there is a copy of the Lord's Prayer in the sign language, "arranged by Prof. Hadley, who labored for many years among the wild tribes." This pamphlet consists of 12 pages, illustrated (including portfolio), Jesse L. Rader, *South of Forty* (Norman, 1947), pp. 141-42.

the "blanket Indians" of the western part of the Indian Territory, who were not reached by the missionary or educational services of the more settled east. . . . He believed that to gain the Indians' confidence it was necessary to live with them and as much like them as possible. For that reason he wore his hair long, but he thought the adoption of Indian dress an unnecessary affectation. He found his greatest trial in the Indians' lack of sanitation, particularly in the preparation and serving of food, but to achieve his objective he schooled himself to avoid any outward sign of repugnance. I think that by the time we knew him he was more at ease among Indians than among white men. During his occasional visits to Fort Smith he was usually busy in his tent carving new woodcuts, setting them up for his press and printing more pamphlets. . . .

A lesson in Sign-Talk, designed to show the movement of the hands in the "Indian Gesture Language", written by In-go-nom-pa-shi [Lewis F. Hadley] was issued at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1890.¹³

Hadley's most ambitious work was issued at Chicago in 1893. The title is: "*Indian Sign Talk. Being a Book of Proofs of the Matter Printed on Equivalent Cards Designed for Teaching Sign Talkign Indians as Much English as can be explained through the Medium of Their Almost Universal Gesture Language by In-go-nom-pa-shi Author of Several Vocabularies of Indian Languages Copyright secured by Lewis F. Hadley.*"

In the preface to this book Hadley wrote that when the Bureau of American Ethnology issued its voluminous report on the sign language in 1880, he became interested and determined to drop the collection of Indian words on which he had worked several years and devote himself to the investigation of the gestures called Sign Talk. He considered that by such means the adult Indian could be educated in any matter that could be explained in their sign language. Hadley wrote:

After having engraved the first crude diagram of the gestures while yet among the Indians, printing nineteen copies of the 684 cuts each with a paper knife (writing their equivalent with a pen), I saw they were entirely too large and too poorly executed to become practical or acceptable.

Therefore, I determined to try to find friends who could furnish the means while I could do better work. Then it was that I went to Fort Smith, Ark. This was the beginning of the interest shown by Rev. George F. Degen and his wife, Mrs. Edith M. Degen.

They advanced the money to purchase blank types, on which I engraved nearly 4000 diagrams which are known as BLACK TYPE. These were the first practical font, enough to print the "Sermon on the Mount" at one impression. The above parties also made a way for me to pay expense while at work on this second set of wooden types. When the black type

¹³ Hadley stated that sign talking Indians numbered about as follows:

"Arapahoes and Cheyens in the Indian Territory 6,500

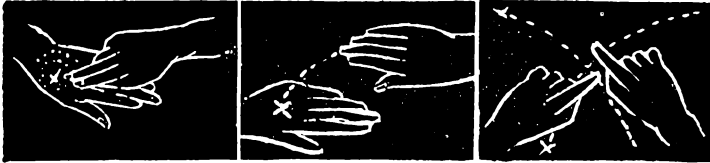
"Kiwias, Comanches and Apaches at Wichita, I. T. (sic) 2,923.


"Wichitas, Caddoes and Delawares at Anadarko, say 600


"Ponchas, Otoes, Iowas near Ponca, I. T. 800


"Pawnees, Sac & Fox, Kaws and Osages, I. T. 4,500."

INDIAN HANDS TALKING.



TALK. In a general sence. Snap-

 ping the fingers from the mouth, and at the same time throwing the hand forward as shown by the diagram. (The movement is shown by the dotted line; stops: by an X).

TALK-ed. Snapping the words towards the parties addressed, or refferd to. As talk-ed to him, to them; told him, or them, to tell another to talk,


TALK-ed, to , told me, tell me. Also, (with a little licence) tell, or show me how, the way, &c. Snaped towards the heart, signifies an impression on the concience. **Talked to my heart.**


INDIAN HANDS TALKING. 2.

TALK-ed-ing. The open hand palm up, in front of lips, thence outward, on a level, and a little to the right. is a northern, or prairie sign; and suggests the freedom of such, having no obstruction in sight: and nothing to be restrained.



TALKING in council, has a similar conception. The open hand palm up, near the lips, being carried to the left, thence in a jerky manner, on a level curve to the right; as shown above.



TALKING, as in conversation. This comes from the same source, and suggests a free interchange of ideas, back and forth.



TALKING with the Hands. See Title.



I canont give the conception having run out of sorts. I give one more talk.

PRIVATE TALK, such as I would like to have with my Patrons, is indicated by snapping the fingers and thumb of the right, under the extended open left hand. *SAMPLE PAGES.* By L. F. Hadley.

were ready, two ladies (who are still my principal helpers) advanced money for type, and printing, with which I had quite a quantity prepared. But my friends were not pleased with the general appearance of black prints.

Then I had some pieces printed by photo process, and the consequence was, that both whites and Indians preferred the ordinary style of diagrams, and the black prints were never well received.

. These are simply books of proofs, and only 75 copies are saved. They are not for sale, being reserved for such as have been or may become interested in the development of the sign language.

Without doubt, Gesture Language is older than intelligent speech and exists to some extent, among all nations.

My idea is that the Indian Sign Language is of a natural growth; a creation of necessity. When we recognize the hundreds of their distinct languages, to say nothing of the numerous dialects of each, we must perceive that no one Indian tongue could be very widespread.

And the circumstances of the Western plains and mountain Indians who followed Buffalo from one feeding ground to another over vast regions of country would tend to bring different tribes into the same locality, and as they could not understand each other's words, it is but natural to suppose that some means of communication would grow to become intelligible.

The *Indian Sign Talk* contains 268 large octavo pages of designs or positions of the hands with dotted lines showing movement of the hands, printed on one side only of each sheet. This is followed by examples of Black Type and other styles of sign talk. One page is devoted to the Indians' Little Star, another to Wolf and White man. The Nineteenth Psalm and the Lord's Prayer cover several pages of the volume and the whole displays an enormous amount of patience in compiling the work.

A published biography in the Bureau of Ethnology states:¹⁶

Lewis F. Hadley, who has adapted the Indian Sign Language to print, for teaching wild adult Indians, is of Quaker parentage. He was born in the town of Salem, Massachusetts, about sixty years ago. His mother was sister to the widely known preacher Saphronia Page, a woman noted for womanly loveliness, as well as for her quiet, persistent energy and earnestness in Christian service. L. F. Hadley became one of the earlier stenographers of the country, and when in the prime of manhood became interested in the investigation of our wonderful Indian Sign Language. His friendly heart discerned, in this remarkable invention of our savage countrymen, the road to a noble field for his life work. "I never for one moment doubted my mission," he writes. "The moment it dawned upon my mind that I was making pictures of gestures that wild men could read, I raised my eyes and my thoughts heavenward, and vowed solemnly that if God would permit me to live long enough I would yet give them reading matter in these signs." He gave himself up to a life of privation, hardship and exposure of all sorts, living among the wildest Indians while he studied their use of their sign-gesture language, and collected the signs and gestures in his truly graphic pictures from both northern and southern tribes (and it is important to note that he found the same signs and used gestures for intercommunication among them all). His method of drawing the first position of a sign and indicating any second position or gesture by a dotted line ending with a star, was quickly understood by the sign

talking Indians, and by faithful tests he fully proved that even the wildest of them recognized their familiar sign and gesture language thus presented to them. While among the wildest of the wild Kiowas he printed his first book of pictured signs and English equivalents from blocks he had made and cut with a common knife.

Words would fail to describe what these years among wild, hunted, poverty stricken savages signified to a gentleman like L. F. Hadley. But the complete success of his invention for teaching the Indians, with the Indians themselves, has made all that seem enduring. His difficulties have not been with the despised Indian.

When his work was brought to that point where the sympathy and help of civilized, enlightened philanthropists and Christians were needed to perfect it, so that it should become practically available for wide use by other workers among the Indians, his troubles began. Of these days of struggle he says: "My effort to earn the needed funds was a failure—an attack of malarial fever left me ten years older than I ought to be. From that time to this I have existed—how I cannot tell. . . . I have not gone hungry, I certainly have not gone well clothed. . . . I have not sponged my keeping. . . . I said truly I have existed by some manner of means, not as I would, but as I could."

Yet during these years of wearing struggle with extreme poverty, still working upon his manuscript for a sign point dictionary, while trying vainly to reach the hearts of Christ's people in behalf of the ignorant heathen, untaught adult Indian; this man, now growing old, has developed his work to perfection. After twelve years, full of thrilling vicissitudes, sustained by marvelous self-devotion and an indomitable aim, Lewis F. Hadley now holds in his hands, revised and corrected, the complete manuscript of seven hundred signs and gestures (all that are known to the Indians) with their English equivalents, arranged in dictionary order, ready for stereotyping and publishing, in a shape that will make the practical use of the Indian sign language, for civilizing and Christianizing purposes possible to white teachers and missionaries among any of the wild tribes.

He has also prepared a set of charts with corresponding cards, containing drawings of each separate sign with English equivalents. These he has tested and finds perfectly successful for the special purpose of teaching the Indians the meaning and pronunciation of English words and phrases. The Indians especially welcome the charts and cards. The next step, dependent upon the generosity of those interested, is the preparation of the Sign diagrams in electrotype.

This done, the charts and cards could be printed in any needed quantity, and, funds permitting, the dictionary, essential for the preparation of religious and other instructive matter in the signs, could be published.

The word, education, has been perhaps unwisely used to indicate result hoped for in the use of the sign print for aiding in the civilization of the wild adult Indians already far beyond school age. It is indeed late to educate them by any method.

The house, owing to our criminal negligence in the past, is already built up in barbarous style. But we may open windows admitting fresh light and air to the stifled groping souls within. In other words we may by this method, the only one that promises any success with this class of Indians bring them to the practical use of the English language, and convey necessary religious and civilizing instruction to their darkened minds. Can we afford to do less for these, our heathen, whom in their

pliant youth we defrauded of the schools and churches pledged by treaty with their fathers?

L. F. Hadley writes: "I have brought the work I was called to do to the point of successful completion: God must, and will supply the next man or woman who will carry it forward according to His appointment. . . . I am old now and do not feel it safe to attempt much more on my own responsibility But I long to be away among my red friends teaching them through this clear, flexible, comprehensive medium the hope of eternal life. . . . But further work waits for the means to print. I am trusting in God and in his Christian philanthropists to provide what is needed to accomplish this."¹⁴

In *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians*, by James Mooney, he mentions " . . . a few words and sentences printed in phonetic type in a little paper called 'The Glorious Sun', published at irregular intervals in 1895 at Anadarko by Lewis D. (*sic*) Hadley. . . ."¹⁵

Ernest Thompson Seton became interested in the sign language and on December 16, 1916, wrote Dr. Frederick Webb Hodge of the Bureau of American Ethnology that he was sending him "the Hadley Sign Language Dictionary or as he calls it the 'Book of Proofs'" Mr. Seton said further:¹⁶

I suggest that you get the originals from the Library of Congress to see just what was contained in the two small books. Last night I called on Miss [Alice] Fletcher and Francis LaFleche. LaFleche did not wish to undertake the editing, said he was not competent, though he gave some evidence of accurate sign knowledge then and there. He strongly advised me to focus on Chenenne code, which he considers the best and said that a Cheyene (*sic*) Indian named Cleaver Warden, a full blood, living at Cheyene Agency, Oklahoma, is amply qualified to correct my Sign Language, if I either go to him in Oklahoma or pay him to come to the East, Washington for example. It would be a week or ten days hard work, but I certainly do like the idea of sticking to the Cheyene code, particularly as they had made it almost entirely a one-hand code. . . . If I brought young Warden to the East, I think it would be best to work with him in Washington. . . .

A letter from Seton to Hodge, dated December 20, 1916, written at Greenwich, Connecticut, contained a bibliographical note on Hadley as follows:

HADLEY INDIAN SIGN PRINTS. About twenty-five years ago there lived in Anadarko, Indian Territory, an enthusiastic missionary named Lewis F. Hadley, known to the Indians as Ingonompashi.

He made a careful study of the Sign Language in order to furnish the Indians with a pictigraphic writing, based on diagrams of the signs;

¹⁴ From *Friends Review*, Vol. 45 (1891-92), pp. 533-34.

The Indian Sign Language and the Invention of Mr. Lewis F. Hadley, as applied to the Speedy Christian Civilization and Education of the Wild Adult Indians was written by Miss Axtell and printed by the Western Label Company, Chicago, 1891. This small brochure consists of eleven pages. Pages eight and nine were written by Mr. Hadley on the subject of Indian Education. Pages seven, nine and ten contain illustrations of Hadley's method of sign talk.

¹⁵ *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* . . . 1895-96, Washington, 1898.

¹⁶ Bureau of American Ethnology, *Catalogue No. 342A*.

and meant to be read by all Indians, without regard to their speech. He mentions the Chinese writing as a model and parallel.

He was backed by Mrs. Harriet T. Platt, of Lake Forest, Illinois, and her sister, Miss Juliet L. Axtell, who supplied the financial support and worked for many months on the cuts, the types and the printing of the various publications.

In pursuance of his plan, he published the following:

1887 List of Primary Gestures in Indian Sign Talk.

Only 19 copies were printed. . . . It was intended as a prodrome to "extended works and a magazine in Hands-talking." It consists of 63 pages with 684 crude woodblocks of white lines on black ground, illustrating signs alphabetically arranged, but without captions or text of any kind, except the explanation on the title page, abridged as above. He refers to the following as his councilors; Rev. George F. Degen, Rector of St. John, Fort Smith, Ark., and Edith M. Degen, same address.

He made a Sign Language font of 4000 types for use in his projected work. He maintained that 110,793 Indians were at that time sign-talkers and proposed to teach them by Sign Language publications.

1890. A Lesson in Sign Talk, designed to show the use of the line showing the movement of the hands in the Indian Gesture Language, by In-go-nom-pa-shi, Fort Smith, Ark., 1890. Copyrighted by Lewis F. Hadley, 12pp. A portrait of him by himself is on p. 11, inscribed "In-go-nom-pa-shi, Drawn by himself at 60 years."

It devotes 3pp to general discussion of Sign Talk. . . . with 12 poor illustrations in white line, also a Scripture text with 15 signs drawn, The Lord's Prayer with 55 drawn signs and on p. 12, the Indian Little Star, a novel version of "Twinkle Twinkle" rendered in 97 drawn signs.

1893. Indian Sign Talk. Being a Book of Proofs of the matter printed or equivalent cards designed for teaching sign Talking Indians as much English as can be explained through the medium of their "Universal" Gesture Language, by Ingonompashi, copyrighted May 15, 1893," only 5 copies are saved.

Mr. Seton says only four of the last mentioned books are so accounted for. This book of Hadley's is an elaborate dictionary printed on one side of 268 octavo leaves. It has nine pages of preface and there are a total of 577 signs; about 800 illustrations, two pages of appendix. The story of "Wolf and the White Man", texts, and the Nineteenth Psalm.

Seton wrote:

This is the most ambitious work extant on the subject of Sign Language, but seems to be quite unknown to most ethnologists, and is not in any library, so far as I can learn, except the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library. . . . Cards comprising the dictionary were issued to the extent of 100,000 in sets of 571 each, and the reading matter on cards to the number of over 27,000.

Hadley also issued eight sets of cards in envelopes on Biblical subjects. These cards number 87 and have over 1000 illustrations of signs.¹⁷

¹⁷ Bureau of American Ethnology, Catalogue No. 3424.

William Tomkins, in the introduction of his book *Universal Sign Language of the Plains Indians of North America*,¹⁸ wrote that "Next to the work by Capt. Clark, this is the foremost contribution of the study of Indian Sign Language, particularly as it contains several hundred graphic illustration."

Although a diligent search was made by the writer, no further mention of Lewis Francis Hadley was discovered.¹⁹ Where he spent the remainder of his life and where he lies buried must remain a mystery until some one comes forward with more information on his life.

¹⁸ San Diego, California, 1929.

¹⁹ The author has been greatly helped in her research for this article by Mr. Lester Hargrett, Curator of the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Miss Anna B. Hewitt, Assistant Curator, Quaker Collection, Haverford College, Pennsylvania, graciously copied Miss Axtell's article about Hadley in the *Friends Review*, and cited several other places for possible material concerning him, for which the writer wishes to express her sincere gratitude. Miss Minnie M. Rumsey, Chicago, Illinois, was particularly helpful in allowing the writer to copy various papers from the effects of her late aunts, Mrs. Harriet Platt and Miss Julia L. Axtell of Lake Forest, Illinois. Research about Hadley was made at the Library of The University of Chicago by Mrs. Elizabeth O. Hogg, Jr., Reference Librarian; by the librarian of the Free Library of Philadelphia; by the Chicago Historical Society; by Miss Nell Steele, librarian of the Lake Forest Library, Lake Forest, Illinois; Miss Elizabeth G. Weeks, secretary to the headmaster of Moses Brown School, Providence, Rhode Island, and Mrs. Charles L. Gladding of the same institution, were most kind in searching the records of the Meetings of New England and suggesting other places for research. Miss Esther Usher, assistant librarian to The Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts, searched the files but failed to find the record of Hadley's birth. City Clerk Augustine J. Toomey, Salem, Massachusetts, wrote May 11, 1948: "We have combed our records thoroughly from 1658 through 1840 and can find no record of" Lewis F. Hadley.

One informant believed that Hadley was a graduate of Cambridge University, but a thorough search by the librarian of Pembroke College disclosed that no person of his name had ever matriculated in Cambridge. To all of these kind persons who gave of their time and strength to help in locating material concerning Hadley the writer is most grateful.