

BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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Jessie Buchanan

[Letters]: Correspondence from a Utah School Mistress 1910-1916

Utah: 1910-1916

\$950



A collection of 13 letters from 1910 to 1916 written by a school teacher in Frisco, Utah, Jessie L. Buchanan, to her dear friend "Agnes Hoffmann". All items are near fine with some creasing and age toning, all letters have envelopes except for the first letter dated Sept. 11, 1910.

The letters to Agnes are from “Jessie L. Buchanan,” who had moved to (the now ghost town) of Frisco, Utah to work as a school teacher. Frisco was established in 1875 when the Horn Silver Mine was discovered and had produced over \$60,000,000 worth of ore by 1885. With 23 saloons, Frisco was known as the wildest town in the Great Basin. Unfortunately on February 13, 1885, the Horn Silver Mine caved in completely and many of the other mines in the area closed within the next 20 years.

When she begins she is elated to be teaching and living with a separate family far away from home. “I tell you it feels good to be independent and more than that, to feel that I am in a place where I can be of some use.” As the correspondence continues the letters express the sadness she feels being without her dear friend, Agnes. Many of the letters go into the deep longing and almost fervent admiration that Jessie feels for Agnes. In a letter dated November 17, 1916 she writes, “I think I would be perfectly happy if only I could have you with me the rest of my life.” She continues, “You poor child, I wish I could have been there to pet you,” when discussing an unpleasant situation Agnes found herself in. She also writes about her disapproval of the town’s lack of churchgoers as she states that, “they work on Sunday’s like they do any other day of the week.” Even her suitor, Don, claims that while he is Mormon he is not very religious. While her religion is not stated she does talk about the town’s Mormon church, which she decides to attend but later goes home and reads her own bible so that she can stay true to her religion. She expresses her desires to entertain herself socially without going to the masquerade balls and frequent dances, as she does not dance herself, which she finds troublesome; “the temptation is so great and there is nothing to help me keep strong but my own efforts and god’s grace. I hope I am not disappointing him.” Her final letters express the love for the students she teaches and her hopefulness to see Agnes and have one of their “talks” that she so desperately needs.

A look back on the intense friendship between two women and the little town of Frisco in 1910s. [BTC#401877]