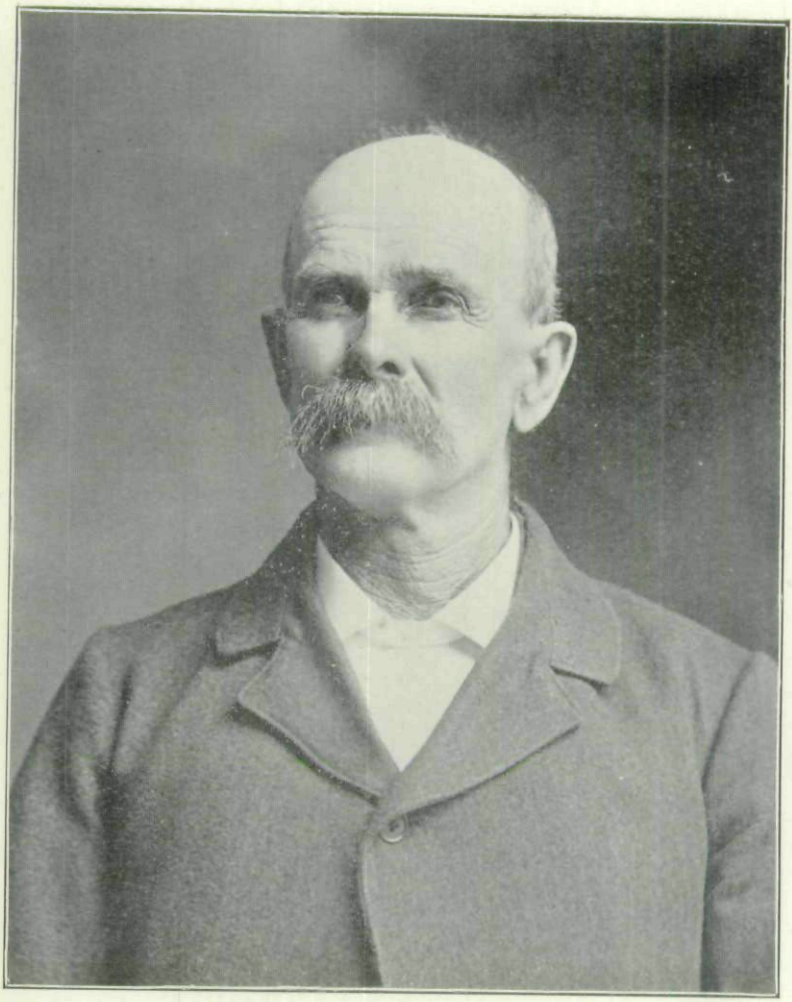


John N. Maxwell

JOHN N. MAXWELL, FIRST LIEUTENANT CO. C.

THE ADDRESS OF JOHN N. MAXWELL.*

About the middle of March, 1857, Orlando C. Howe and R. U. Wheelock of Newton, Iowa, went to Spirit Lake to look after some land they had taken up the year before. They arrived at the Lake in the night and found at the first two houses they reached the families murdered, the household goods scattered and the stock driven off—plainly the work of the Indians. They started back to Fort Dodge, arriving there on the 22d of March, and gave an account of what they had seen. Major William Williams, who had authority from the Governor of Iowa in case of trouble with the Indians to raise and equip troops to protect the northwest, proceeded to call for three companies. A messenger was sent the same day to Webster City requesting the people of Hamilton county to organize one of these companies. A meeting was held immediately and notice was sent to Homer and to the settlers on the Boone, to meet early the next morning at Webster City. The call was responded to with a will by old and young. Many of the settlers of Dickinson county having removed from here, the interest was intense and everybody seemed determined to drive the redskins from the State. At the meeting the next morning it was requested that all who were willing to go to the frontier should step out and stand in line. All stepped out. It not being necessary for more than thirty to go, the young men pushed forward claiming the privilege of going as they had no families to care for. In this way the company was made up of young men. It was at this time that our brave comrade, John C. Johnson, stepped forward and glancing down the line noticed that nearly all the states were represented. He remarked to a friend that Pennsylvania's sons should not be found wanting.

*John N. Maxwell was born near Paris, Ill., April 20, 1835. He removed to Iowa in 1854, settling three years later on his farm, a few miles southeast of Webster City, where he still resides. He was chosen 1st Lieutenant of Co. C in the Spirit Lake Expedition, and served three years as 1st Sergeant of Co. A, 32d Iowa Infantry. His address was read to the audience in the Court House, and also to the out-door gathering on that occasion.

After the thirty men were selected by my father (John D. Maxwell) and Ammon Moon, the citizens of this little town went to work at once to provide us with food, extra clothing, arms, a wagon and two yokes of oxen, giving freely from their scanty stores everything that could be of use to us. Johnson, who lived up at Bach Grove, happened into town while our meeting was in progress, and catching the spirit of the hour volunteered, sending word back to his mother, who was destined never to see him again. I would like to name all who supplied us with our outfit, but the names which come back to me with most vividness after the lapse of thirty years are those of W. C. and S. Willson, A. Moon, the Brewers, Chas. T. Fenton, S. B. Rosenkrans, the Funks, E. W. Saulsbury and B. S. Mason.

Making all necessary preparations in the forenoon, we left Webster City early in the afternoon of March 23d, and arrived at Fort Dodge in the evening, where we were welcomed by the citizens of that county who were already organized into Companies A and B under the command of Capts. Charles B. Richards and John F. Duncombe. We then proceeded to perfect the organization of Co. C by electing officers—the officers whose names you have caused to be engraved in durable brass. The three companies now numbered nearly one hundred men. Maj. William Williams was unanimously chosen our commanding officer. He was an old man, being then about sixty, but active and vigorous. He understood the habits and nature of the Indians and had good ideas of military life and affairs. By his suggestion we elected George B. Sherman acting commissary, and Dr. C. R. Bissell, surgeon—both citizens of Fort Dodge.

We left Fort Dodge March 24th, but owing to our commissary being hindered in procuring transportation, we were obliged to camp at Beaver Creek not more than four or five miles north. We now began to realize that we were soldiers. Cold, wet and hungry, we built up large camp fires, provided a hasty meal, dried our clothes as well as we could, and without tents lay down and slept soundly.

On the morning of the 25th we resumed our march, crossing the east branch of the Des Moines without difficulty and camped at Dakota City. The 26th the road became more and more difficult, in some places the snow was so deep that it was necessary to break a road before our teams could pass through. In other places it had drifted in the ravines to the depth of eight or ten feet. The only way to proceed was to wade through, stack arms, return and unhitch the teams, attach ropes to them and draw them through; then perform a similar operation with the wagons. This performance took place every mile or two, and by such slow progress that we were two days in reaching McKnight's Point on the east bank of the west branch of the Des Moines river, twelve miles from Dakota City. On the 27th we camped at McKnight's Point.

On the night of the 26th the command camped out in the prairie, but a detail under Capt. Duncombe had gone ahead to look out the road to the Point. Duncombe had been ill during the day, and became so exhausted that he had to be carried into camp, running a very close risk of losing his life.

Resuming our march on the 28th we camped that night at Shippey's. We reached the Irish Colony, Emmet county, and were well cared for by the inhabitants, who had assembled for protection in case of an attack, but were greatly relieved when we came in sight. The morning of the 30th found the command greatly refreshed, having butchered a cow that had been wintered on prairie hay. The beef was not exactly porterhouse steak, but it was food for hungry men. We left our teams which were nearly exhausted, and impressed fresh ones. We camped that night near Big Island Grove. At this place the Indians had kept a look-out in a big cedar tree that grew on an island in the middle of the lake and their camp fires were still burning. A platform had been built in this tree forty feet from the ground, from which one could easily see twenty miles. The place had probably been deserted several days, but the fire was still burning. One Indian doubtless kept watch here alone, leaving in a northwesterly direction when he abandoned the place. The

morning of the 31st the command moved out early. Ten men were sent forward as scouts. When about eight miles out we met the Springfield refugees—the Churches, Thomases, Carver and others. We went into camp and our surgeon dressed the wounds of the fleeing party. On the morning of April 1st, Major Williams sent an escort with the Springfield people back to the Irish Colony, and proceeded northwest with an advance guard ahead. We camped that night at Granger's Point, near the Minnesota line. There we learned that the United States troops from Ft. Ridgely were camped at the head of Spirit Lake and that the Indians had fled to Owl Lake, some eighteen miles away. As we were on foot and the Indians supposed to be mounted, there would be no chance of overtaking them. A council was held and it was decided to return the main part of the command to the Irish Colony and wait for the rest to come in. Twenty-six men were selected, including those having friends at the Lakes, to cross the river, proceed to that point to bury the dead, reconnoiter, and see if there were any who had escaped the Indians. I was one of the party.

On the morning of the 2d of April, under Capt. J. C. Johnson, we crossed the Des Moines river and took a south and west direction. The traveling was much better than it had been since we left Fort Dodge. It was warm and clear. About 2 o'clock we struck East Okoboji Lake on the southeast shore. The first cabin we came to was that of Mr. Thatcher. There we found the yard and prairie covered with feathers. Two dead men were lying at the rear of the house, both bodies being murderously shot in the breast. They evidently had been unarmed and everything showed that there had been no defense. From here we went to Mr. Howe's, where we found seven dead bodies. There were one old and one middle-aged man and five children—all brutally murdered. It seemed that one man had been killed by placing the muzzle of a gun against his nose and blowing his head to pieces. The other adult had simply been shot. The children had been knocked on the head. We divided into parties to bury the dead, camping for the

night near the residence of the Howe family. Old Mr. Howe was found on the 3d of April, some distance from the house, on the ice, shot through the head. We buried him on a bluff southwest of the place, some eighty rods from the house.

The next place was Mr. Mattock's. Here we found eleven dead bodies and buried them all in one grave, men, women and children. The ground was frozen, and we could only make the grave about eighteen inches deep. It was a ghastly sight. The adults had been shot, but the children's brains had been knocked out, apparently by striking them across their foreheads with heavy clubs or sticks of wood. The brains of one boy about ten years of age had been completely crushed out of his head and lay upon the ground. Every one shrank from touching them. I was in command, and feeling that I would not ask another to do a thing from which I myself revolted, I gathered the scattered fragments upon the spade and placed them all together in the grave. About forty head of cattle had been shot at this place, the carcasses split open on the back and the tenderloins removed—all that the Indians cared to carry off. The house with one dead body in it had been burned at the time. At this place it seemed to me that the only man who fought the Indians was Dr. Harriott, who formerly lived at Waterloo. He made a heroic defense, probably killing or wounding two or three Indians. He was falling back towards Granger's, evidently defending the women and children when he was finally shot himself. He still grasped his Sharp's rifle, which was empty and broken off at the breech, showing he had fallen in a hand to hand fight. I have little idea that any other man about the Lakes fired a gun at the Indians. It was simply a surprise and butchery.

From here we went to the Grangers, and found the dead body of one of the brothers of that name. He had been first shot and his head had been split open with a broad axe. He and his brother had kept a small store and the Indians had taken everything away excepting some dozen bottles of strychnine. We buried him near his own house.

The next house was Gardner's. Here were the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, one grown up daughter and two small children in the yard and a babe in the house. We buried this family in one grave, about two rods from the house.

Tired and hungry we went into camp in a small grove at the rear of the house, with nothing to eat but potatoes. Some of our party had visited the Lake in the fall and had seen Mr. Gardner bury two bushels of potatoes in a box under his stove. These we found and roasted in the camp fire. They lasted two days.

On the morning of the 4th we completed our sad task, and without tasting food, turned our faces homeward, taking a southeast course, hoping to reach the Irish Colony the same day. In the forenoon it was quite warm, melting the snow, and consequently traveling was very difficult. We were obliged to wade sloughs waist deep, or go miles around and run the risk of losing the course. We were wet to the shoulders, and while in this fearful condition the wind changed. About four o'clock a blizzard was fairly upon us. In a short time our clothes were frozen stiff. Many of us cut holes in our boots to let the water out, and several pulled their boots off and were unable to get them on again. Up to this time the detachment had kept together. About sundown we came to a township corner placed there a year before. Laughlin and I wanted to be governed by the pit. While we were talking part of the detachment came up and passed us some distance to the right. Those who happened to be with Laughlin and myself stopped on a piece of dry ground close to the township corner, determined to remain near it all night, lest in the night we should lose our course as shown by the corner. We marched back and forth all night long. When a comrade would fall others would help him to his feet, encourage and force him to keep moving as the only hope, for no living being could survive an hour in such a storm without hard exercise.

Capt. Johnson's party, led by a trapper, became a little separated from us by a slough, where they found a dry place

and commenced pacing back and forth as we were doing. They were within speaking distance of us. They stayed there all night, but in the morning took a southeast direction, while we went east. They seemed to have perfect confidence in the old trapper's knowledge of the country.

During the night some of our men begged to lie down, claiming that it was useless to try to keep up any longer, as the ice on their clothes gave them fearful annoyance. But the more hopeful would not consent to any one giving up. In this distressed condition we traveled up and down that path all night. One man by the name of Henry Carse, from Princeton, Illinois, had taken his boots off in the evening and wrapped his feet in pieces of blanket. He succeeded in getting along as well as the rest during the night, but in the morning when we went on the ice to break a road, his feet became wet and the wraps worn out. I stayed with him until within three or four miles of the Des Moines river, when I became satisfied that he could not get there as his mind had failed. Every time I would bring him up he would turn away in another direction. Finally, Henry Dalley came along and succeeded in getting him to the river, which was three miles from the Irish Colony. We had no matches, but some of the party succeeded in striking a fire by saturating a damp wad with powder and shooting it into the weeds. Henry Carse was now unconscious and the blood was running from his mouth. We cut the rags from his feet and the skin came off the soles of his feet with the rags. As soon as the fire was well going, Laughlin and I being the least disabled, determined to try and cross the river and reach the settlement for help. We walked to the middle of the river, laid poles over the weak ice and crawled over. We reached the Irish Colony, and sent back help to the rest of the party. I went to sleep soon after entering a warm room and did not awaken until the next day, when I took some nourishment and started on to overtake the command under Maj. Williams, which had been detained at Cylinder Creek. In the morning C. C. Carpenter tried to get a guide to go and help search for Johnson and his friend Burk-

holder, but failed. As we left the Colony I looked back and saw Carpenter going down the river to see if they had struck it anywhere below.

At Cylinder Creek the party broke up into squads, each reaching his home as best he could, and all of us more or less demoralized. Laughlin and I came by the way of Fort Dodge, while Frank Mason and some of the others came across north of here. Most of us had our ears and feet frozen, but we only lamented the loss of the slain settlers, and of our comrades Johnson and Burkholder, whose precious lives had been given for the relief of the helpless. It has always been a wonder to me that we did not leave the bones of more of our comrades to bleach with theirs on those wild and trackless prairies.

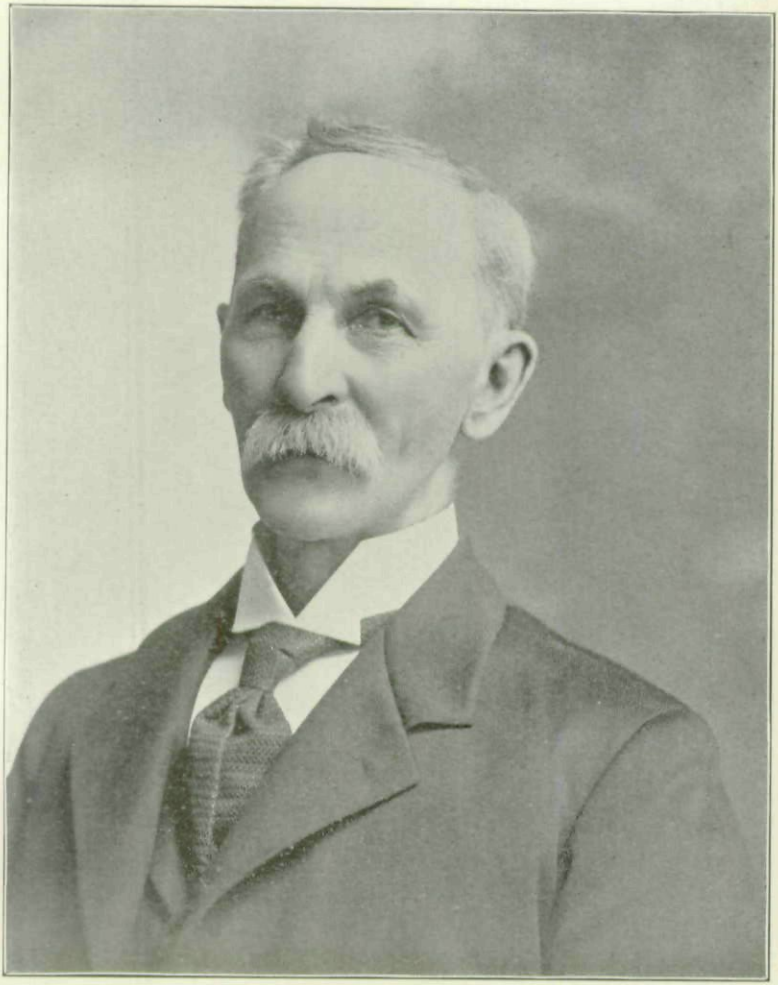
FRANK R. MASON'S* RECOLLECTIONS.

The following paper, prepared by Mr. Mason, was not read at the time, but was published a few days later with the "Tablet Day" proceedings, of which it forms a proper part.

The morning after arriving at the Irish Colony, Maj. Williams selected ten of the strongest men from the company to scout the country north, northeast and northwest for Indians and Indian signs. Our stock of provisions consisted of about forty pounds of coarse corn meal and twenty pounds of flour. I was one of the ten men selected. Lieut. Maxwell, Messrs. Church, Thatcher and Hathway† were also of the company. I do not recollect the names of the other five. Maj. Williams ordered corn bread prepared for us. Each man was allotted a piece about the size of a common skimmer, and not much thicker. This was to be his ration for three days. Being very hungry when my portion was given me, I resolved that the easiest and most convenient way of carrying it would be to eat it, which I did with a relish. We took our departure from the command about six o'clock in the morning, and a beautiful morning it was. The snow at that time was more than two feet deep. We took a northeasterly direction, and

*Frank R. Mason was born in Cummington, Hampshire county, Mass., March 27, 1836. He removed to Webster City (then Newcastle, Webster county) Iowa, in Nov. 1855. Upon the organization of Co. C of the Spirit Lake Expedition he was elected 2d lieutenant. He is still (1898) a resident of Webster City.

†A. N. Hathway was born in Windsor, Mass., in 1834. He came to Webster City in 1855 or '56. Upon the organization of Co. C of the Spirit Lake Expedition, he was elected corporal. These papers show that he bore his full share of peril and suffering. He visited his native state in the winter of 1860-61, and in the spring enlisted in Co. I, 15th Mass. Infantry, "for three years or during the war." He was with his command in many severe battles and was killed at Gettysburg.



Frank R. Mason

FRANK R. MASON, SECOND LIEUTENANT CO. C.

traveled about twelve miles that forenoon, when we reached a hill and Lieut. Maxwell ordered us to halt. We scraped the snow from the hill-top and there the boys dined. Having eaten my dinner for breakfast, I could only look on. Lieut. Maxwell, with his natural tact, suggested that I act as sentry, while the others ate; accordingly I stationed myself a few rods from the men. Looking directly north I discerned an object in the distance, which at that time appeared a mere black spot on the horizon. After observing it closely for several minutes I became satisfied that it was a moving object, and called Lieut. Maxwell's attention to it. We put our ramrods in line with it and sighted. We soon concluded that it must be a band of Indians. A consultation was held immediately, and it was decided that we should meet them as quickly as possible. The band of Indians (as we then supposed the object to be) must have been about two miles away. About half-way between us and them there was a small creek bordered with willows, which we wished to reach before they did, as we did not want to give them the advantage of ambush. Therefore it was a race, long legs coming into active service. Church and Hathway being short and somewhat stocky did more rolling than walking. We succeeded in passing the bushes, and as we ascended a knoll we beheld what appeared to be red-skins. After a hasty examination of our arms and ammunition, we made ready for a fight. Presently the band opposite halted, and prepared to defend themselves. We remained in this position a few moments, awaiting Lieut. Maxwell's order to fire. Every man was eager for the fray, some of the boys expressing their surprise that our worthy commander did not give the order at once. We were ordered to advance until we were within twenty rods of the party and then halt. Suddenly, Mr. Church (whose station was next to me) sprang forward and exclaimed: "My God, there's my wife and babies!" We then discovered our mistake. The supposed redskins were white refugees. Such a heartrending scene as was then presented, I never witnessed. The relatives and friends of those refugees had supposed they were dead, and this unexpected meeting was one never to be forgotten. It was at this time that Mr. Thatcher was told of the probable fate of his wife and child. A number of the party were wounded and in terrible condition. Mr. Thomas was traveling with his hand dangling by the cords of his arm, having been shot through the wrist. It now began to rain.

Lieut. Maxwell ordered me to return to the main body as quickly as I could and inform Maj. Williams of our discovery. I ran every step of the way, about eight miles, and was seen by the company when two miles from them. Captains Duncombe and Richards came to meet me. Maj. Williams soon came up and I told him my story; a brief consultation followed, and the Major ordered me to return to the refugees, in company with Captains Duncombe and Richards and the surgeon. It was now about four o'clock. We made a quick march, arriving at the camp at nine p. m. The remainder of the company came up at twelve o'clock. When we reached camp it was storming furiously, and the scene that greeted us was terrible to behold. Men, women and children, some wounded and all in a starving condition, with no fire, no covering except wet blankets, and worse than all, no food. We were a sad company. Every man was as silent as the grave. Many of us were then feeling the effects of exposure and hunger. The next morning we started without breakfast and marched until about four p. m., when we went into camp and had a scanty meal prepared from a small quantity of flour which we found buried in a stable. We started on our march the next day about daylight and continued until sundown, expecting to see Indians at any moment, as their camp fires were burning where we camped last. We halted that night where now stands the town of Estherville. As we were going into camp a mounted horseman approached us from the north, who proved to be one of the U. S. soldiers

from Fort Ridgely, Minnesota. He informed us that the company to which he belonged was at Springfield, Minnesota, and that the Indians had killed or taken prisoners all the settlers at the Lakes, and had left the place two or three days before. Hearing this a noble band of men volunteered to go forward to the Lakes and bury the dead. Lieut. Maxwell has given an account of this march.

The next morning we began our homeward journey. Many were sick, snow-blind and nearly naked, with no boots or shoes, and some were barefoot. I well remember my comrade, Mr. Brizee, on that day's march. We were far behind the rest of the company, and he was discouraged and somewhat deranged, while I was so fatigued and sick that I could hardly move. We plodded along until about three o'clock in the afternoon, when a blizzard set in from the northwest. Brizee begged of me not to leave him on the prairie alone. I assured him that I would stay with him and if it came to the worst we would perish together. Darkness came on, and we had not seen our company for some hours. My comrade was determined to lie down, but I urged him to keep moving, which he did for a time, but finally sank down exhausted. Not being able to carry him, I lay down also, wrapping our blankets around us and never expecting to see the sun rise again. Some time after, I was aroused by being shaken. I could hardly believe my senses on awakening. Not finding us in camp, our lamented friend, Newton Hathway, had come in search of us, facing that dreadful storm. He found us about two miles from the company and I fully believe that nothing less than Divine Providence directed him to us on that awful night. We arose and he guided us to camp.

Next morning we started for the Irish Colony. The day was fine and the snow thawing rapidly. We got on very well until we reached a creek which was much swollen by the thaw. It was very deep and about ten rods wide. At this time there occurred the first insubordination among the men. As neither the Captain nor Lieutenant was with us I was in command of Co. C. I was driving the team, which consisted of three yokes of oxen. When we came to the creek we found the water deep and cold, and every man wanted to ride across; but the team was already heavily laden, and feeling sure the oxen would have to swim, I refused and the boys plunged in and got to the other side someway. I managed to get the oxen into the water, and when I reached the middle of the stream where the oxen had to swim, the middle team turned around so that four oxen were going one way and two the other. I called for help, but no response came; therefore I was obliged to get out into the stream, take the yoke from the oxen and get to shore without assistance. We resumed our march and that night camped at the Irish Colony. Many of us slept in an abandonded hog pen, the rest sat around the camp fire. Maj. Williams had asked me that evening if I knew of anything in our supplies to cook. I answered "yes," as I remembered having a small amount of flour. About four o'clock in the morning I put the kettle on the fire and heating the water to the boiling point, stirred in the flour and boiled it continuously for two hours. About the time I took it from the fire, Comrade Howland came crawling out of the hog pen and asked for something to eat. I told him that this was all the food we had or were likely to have for some days, and that it must be equally divided among ninety men. The poor boy burst into tears, saying, "Frank, I'm starving to death." I could not refuse him after this, and I gave him his plateful of this villainous mixture, worse than melted lead—the stomach of a mule could not have digested it.

The morning was bright and warm and the snow melted rapidly. About nine o'clock, however, the rain began to fall in torrents and continued until late in the afternoon. We arrived at Cylinder Creek about four o'clock. This ordinarily, was a small stream, but the descending rain and melting snow had swollen it to the dimensions of a large river. We were now

drenched to the skin and as the wind had shifted to the northwest it rapidly grew cold, and before many minutes our clothes were frozen stiff. We were very scantily dressed—few of the men having more than an under shirt and a pair of pants. I fared as well as any of them and all I had to brave that fearful storm with, was a flannel shirt, a pair of pants with one leg torn off at the knee and the seam in the other ripped from top to bottom, and one boot with the leg cut off, the mate having been burned a few days previous. We began to look around for a place to sleep. Some of the boys spread their blankets upon the ground and arranged themselves "spoon fashion." Brizee, Howland, Hathway and myself lay behind the hind wheels of a wagon. We got through the night, but I hardly know how, as the mercury was over 30° below zero. We were all glad to see daylight, but many did not dare to crawl out of their blankets that day. The poor boys were almost freezing and some of them were becoming delirious. I think we were all more or less insane during a part of that terrible night. Brizee would frequently put his face to mine and beg me to "go down the creek, only half a mile, where there was a big hotel, where we could get a warm breakfast with hot coffee." When I would tell him it was only a dream he would sob like a child and still insist that we must go. After daylight I fell into a doze, and dreamed that I was at my dear old mother's home, that I had been away and had come home hungry, and that she and a favorite sister prepared some toast for me. I can see them now as I saw them then.

The next morning was still and bright. Mr. Howland and myself concluded to cross the creek. We staggered to our frozen feet and arm in arm hobbled toward the stream. All eyes were upon us as we went out upon the ice. We began to feel encouraged but when we neared the center of the creek we found a space of open water, about thirty feet wide and very deep. We had resolved, however, never to return to that camp again, and looking up the stream we saw a clump of willows and went up to them. Here we found that ice had floated down, lodged against the willows and frozen there, thus forming a complete bridge. After passing the channel we signaled back, when a truly joyous shout went up from those poor half insane boys. I will here state that there was not a man among our number—about 80—who had strength enough to reach the opposite shore. I do not understand why they were so affected, the trouble seemed to be weakness and a shortness of breath. Every man's mouth was open wide, his tongue hanging out, and in some instances blood running from nose or mouth. Shippey's cabin, where Major Williams, Captains Duncombe and Richards and Private Smith had been during the storm, was two and a half miles southeast of the creek. Howland and I kept together until we reached the cabin, and were among the last to arrive. He being the stronger, had rendered me considerable assistance, for which, I now after thirty years, thank him most sincerely. Maj. Williams met us with great tears streaming down his furrowed cheeks, and those who had remained at the cabin rendered us all the assistance in their power.

We soon devoured the provisions given to us and all sank down in the warmth of the sun and slept. We were allowed to sleep till about three o'clock p. m., when we were aroused from our slumbers and a consultation was held. It was decided to disband, separate into small squads, and strike out for the nearest settlement. Every man was ordered to leave all baggage except blankets. We all did so except my friend Hathway (brother of George and Miss Hathway, of this city), and he being deranged left his rifle, blanket, &c., but gathered up a lot of rubbish which was useless to him and everyone else. As I had been as far north as the head timber on Lot's Creek the summer before, I was detailed to pilot our Webster City men across the prairie to that point, about eighteen miles from us.

After bidding adieu to our comrades we took up our march in a south-

easterly direction. Immediately after starting, our friend Hathway took the back track. When we were about half a mile from him I went back to where he stood and putting my hand upon his shoulder urged him to come with us, but his eyes fairly flashed fire as he resolutely refused. I signaled for help and John Gates came to my assistance—a tower of strength and manliness, a man who never flinched from the performance of a duty. We approached Hathway, the fire had disappeared from his eyes, and he fell into our willing arms nearly helpless. John and I carried him almost every rod of the way by taking turns. Occasionally he would arouse from his stupor, at such times we would cross our hands together, forming a seat for him, but when he was too weak to sit erect we would take him in our arms or upon our backs. About dark the boys all complained of hunger and exhaustion, and often asked me how far it was to the timber. I admit I prevaricated some, telling them the distance was much less than I really thought it was. I had learned that a person could imagine seeing anything he wished at night on the prairie. I looked to the southeast and asked the men if they could not see the timber; they looked also and in a few moments all exclaimed, "Frank, you are right!" But this was merely imagination. We struggled along until about 11 o'clock, when we reached the timber. Then came the question I had so much dreaded: "Frank, where is the house you told us about?" I was somewhat confused as no house could be seen. We ascended a little elevation about eighty rods south of the grove, scraped away the snow and otherwise prepared to remain there during the balance of the night. We had nothing to eat and were nearly naked. Exhausted and discouraged, heart-sick and freezing, the boys lay down upon the snow-clad ground to rest and sleep. I was blamed for not leading them to the house. I lay on the ground also, with my hand supporting my head. I felt that I had assumed too much, but that the reprimand was uncalled for, and I cried like a child. I thought I could never forgive those who said the many unkind things, which pierced my heart like a dagger. But thank God, I did forgive them, and that too, before another day. Yes, comrades, all of you, I do not in my bosom entertain any feeling toward you except brotherly love!

We were there on the ground probably an hour when I heard a woman's voice. I feared my senses were leaving me and that it was only a delusion, but she spoke again, asking who we were. I told her and explained our condition and asked her name and where she lived. She proved to be a Mrs. Sarah W. Collins, and lived only a little way north of us. She and her husband had been to a neighbor's and in returning home had accidentally found us. I asked if she would give us something to eat and a place in her house for Hathway and Emery Gates who had given out two hours before. She answered me in these words: "We will do all we can for thee!" God bless these Quaker wives! I have one myself.

After we arrived at their house, a fire was soon started, and as the room began to warm, Hathway and Gates fainted. Mr. Collins put them on the bed and ministered to their wants. Mrs. Collins' larder seemed to be well supplied with flour, meat and molasses, and she immediately commenced to bake biscuits and fry meat. The biscuits and meat with molasses, made the grandest meal I ever ate. After we had satisfied our hunger, Mrs. Collins turned her attention to our sick comrades, nursing them until morning. We slept in the loft of the cabin that night and rested well. The next morning we were out early, but Mrs. Collins had already prepared our breakfast. We ate heartily and were then in joyous spirits, as our hunger was appeased and we were only forty miles from home. We made arrangements with Mr. and Mrs. Collins to take care of Gates and Hathway until they were able to be moved; but these good people were unwilling to accept any compensation for their services. In behalf of my comrades—some living and some dead—I thank Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Collins, and may God bless them always!

We spoke a few cheering words to Hathway and Gates and then started on our homeward journey. We pushed rapidly forward until we came to the east fork of the Des Moines river. The ice had broken up and had partly gone. But the water was so deep along the edges, that we were unable to reach the ice that had not been carried away by the current. We went south (we were now between Lot's Creek and Bloody Run) and waded Bloody Run, but found no place to cross the river. We retraced our steps and went north to Lot's Creek, which we waded. We then found a place in the river where the ice had come down and formed what is commonly called "a jam;" we quickly crossed and I cannot describe our joy after getting safely over. We were now getting hungry. In our haste of departure from the Collins house we had forgotten to take a lunch, which I know Mr. and Mrs. Collins would have gladly given us.

We again resumed our march and about four o'clock came in sight of Boone river timber. It had never looked so good before and we felt that we were at home. We were now about two miles from the Cosort farm and our progress was very slow. We ascended a knoll and made a halt for rest. Darkness came on. Candles were lighted in the farm house and we mustered our courage to make another effort to reach this refuge. I told the men one of my best stories, of which, in those days, I had a goodly supply. It seemed to stimulate us and we pushed on with all our energy. We walked and crawled on our hands and knees, and in this manner succeeded in reaching Cosort's house about 10 o'clock. The family were all in bed. We aroused them and the first person who came to the door was Mr. Wesley Camp, of this town, who was spending the night there on his return from a trip to the north. He seemed to be much surprised and did not recognize any of us, though in a lighted room. He at once went to the stable and mounting his horse rode to Webster City, aroused the people and told them that he had seen the survivors of the Spirit Lake Expedition; that all but nine were dead, and who these nine were he could not tell. Of course, all who had friends in the Expedition feared they were lost.

Mrs. Cosort prepared supper for us, and after eating we went to bed, but not to sleep, as our frozen limbs pained us so we could not lie still. We arose early next morning, and as Mr. Cosort was coming to town with his team and wagon, we paid our bill and started, feeling as well as circumstances would permit, and arrived at the Willson (now the Hamilton House) about 11 o'clock a. m. Mr. Cosort demanded from us the sum of $14.50 for the twelve-mile ride. Most, if not all, of the men borrowed the money to pay him. This climate soon after became distasteful to him and he left the country. Our friends met us at the end of our journey, and with hearty good-will welcomed us home again.

A PAPER BY MICHAEL SWEENEY.

Michael Sweeney of Webster City, while temporarily residing in Colorado, wrote and forwarded this paper to the committee in charge of the programme on "Tablet Day." It was read by Hon. Wesley Martin. Mr. Sweeney was born near the town of Rathkeale, Ireland, in 1828; he died suddenly in Fremont township, two miles from Webster City, May 12, 1888. He had acquired a handsome fortune and had served as sheriff and treasurer of Hamilton county.

It was the 22d day of March, 1857, that one of the two men, who brought word of the massacre to Fort Dodge, came to our little town and reported things as they found them at Spirit Lake. A meeting was called

for that same evening, at our schoolhouse. The people turned out generally, and at the meeting the messenger stated what they had seen at the Lake, a description of which would require more time and space than this sketch will permit me to give. It was decided at once to call for volunteers to form a company to go to the relief of those yet living on the frontier, and bury the dead bodies still lying on the ground, and, if possible, to overtake the perpetrators of those atrocious crimes. It did not require any persuasion to find volunteers. That same night quite a number enrolled themselves, and by nine o'clock next morning—the 23d—the company was prepared to start as far as the men were concerned. But the next undertaking was to equip us with a team, provisions and camping outfits, all of which were furnished cheerfully by the few inhabitants of our little Webster City of that day. And let me say right here, on behalf of our people—that each one seemed to try, if possible, to outdo his neighbor in furnishing provisions and "comforters," and to do all in his power to give the boys a "good send off." It was my good fortune to have been spending the previous winter in the family of Mrs. W. C. Willson, and this kind-hearted lady did as much to fit me out comfortably as if I had been a brother.

At one o'clock on the 23d of March, 1857, all was ready, and we left for Fort Dodge, where we arrived that night. There was great excitement at Fort Dodge, as there were two companies organized in that town; Co. A, commanded by Captain C. B. Richards, and Co. B, by Capt. John F. Duncombe—both residents of Fort Dodge. On the morning of the 24th we organized Co. C, by electing J. C. Johnson, captain; J. N. Maxwell, 1st lieutenant; Frank R. Mason, 2d lieutenant; Harris Hoover, orderly sergeant; A. N. Hathway, corporal. The names of the "high privates" you may read where you have caused them to be engraved upon the durable brass. George B. Sherman was acting commissary of the Expedition, and Dr. C. R. Bissell surgeon. We had enrolled in the three companies about one hundred men, and as commander of the Expedition, Major William Williams, who was then sixty years old, was unanimously chosen. As events afterwards demonstrated, this was the best selection that could have been made. The Major was very active for a man of his years, very courteous to his men, but he enforced his orders with military discipline. He was always with his men, and endured the same privations as the rest of us.

So, being finally organized, we left Fort Dodge March 24th, in the afternoon, and camped a few miles above on Beaver creek, our baggage wagons having been delayed for some cause. This was our first night camping out, and our first experience playing soldier. As we were near a settler's place we got along comfortably in hay stacks and cattle sheds, as shelter from the freezing cold of the night. On the morning of the 25th we resumed our march bright and early and made Dakota City that day, some eight or ten miles, where we camped for the night and fared pretty well, having labored hard all day, wading deep drifts of snow to break the roads for our teams. Sometimes we were compelled to pull our teams out of snow-drifts, by hitching a large rope provided for that purpose around the horns of the oxen, and pulling them over one at a time on their sides. After pulling out the teams, we then pulled the wagons through the snow! It took the whole brigade to do this. So, by repeating such performances several times a day, when night came the boys were exhausted and slept well.

We left Dakota City on the 26th for McKnight's Point. There were no signs of a road having been traveled that winter. The snow was getting much deeper, so the command to "stack arms" was more frequent. We formed in two files, each file walking so as to break down a place for the teams to travel. But for all that, we were compelled to pull the teams

through by main strength. Our progress was very slow from Dakota City on the 26th, owing to the deep snow—so that it was deemed advisable that Capt. Duncombe and Lieut. Maxwell go ahead of the command and select the best route possible. There was no difficulty in following their trail, as at nearly every step they broke through to their knees. About sun-down we were not more than half way to McKnight's Point, where there was a grove of timber. The Major called a halt, and put it to a vote whether we should camp where we were, or still persist in getting to the Point. A majority voted to camp where we were, although several preferred to keep on, fearing we would freeze to death anyway, and that it was as well to keep moving. We were on the bleak prairie, with no fire to cook anything, and had had nothing to eat since our breakfast. We had no tents to shelter us; so, to many the outlook was extremely forbidding, but all acquiesced in the will of the majority. Our company went by themselves, piled our provisions out on the snow where the cattle couldn't get to them, chained our oxen to the wheels, took off our wagon top from the box, and turned it on its side to break off the wind. We took our wagon cover and stretched it from the box to the running gears of the wagon and then piled in under that cover between the box and running gears. We put our oil-cloth coats on the snow, placed what bedding we had over the coats, and took off our wet boots and put them under our heads. In that way I slept as soundly as I ever have, and not one suffered seriously from the cold. We ate for supper crackers and raw ham, and had the same for breakfast. In the morning early we broke camp and reached McKnight's Point in the afternoon of the 27th, where we found our guides, Capt. Duncombe and Lieut. Maxwell, who had come very near losing their lives through sheer exhaustion.

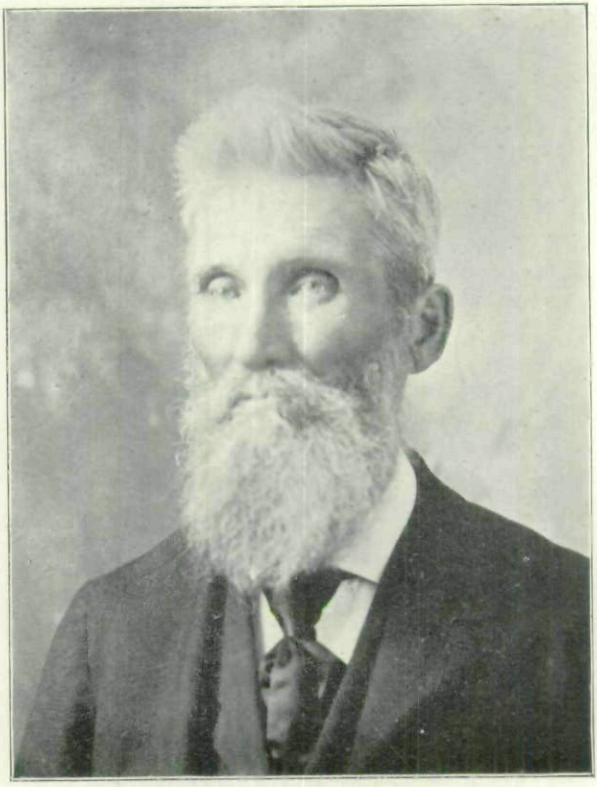
While at McKnight's Point we camped in an unfinished log house, where we cooked and ate to our heart's content. It was here that our worthy 2d lieutenant, who also acted as cook, is said to have performed a wonderful feat, "on a bet," that, in baking pancakes he could throw one off the spider out through a hole in the roof of the house, so high that he could get out of doors and catch it right side up on the spider; but somehow the cake never appeared, and Frank declared it was "going yet!"

On the 28th all answered roll call, and the Major was among the nimblest. He made a short speech, saying he had heard some mutterings of dissatisfaction; that he was well aware that the trip so far was a hard one, but that a soldier's life was a hard one anyway, and that they should take that into consideration. He also told the command that all they had gone through was child's play compared to what was ahead of them, and that he would now give all who did not cheerfully desire to go through to the end an opportunity to return home. At a word of command some nine or ten stepped out and started for home, but I shall omit their names. The command then started on northward. We reached the mouth of Cylinder Creek on the night of the 28th, where we camped. On the 29th we reached "the Irish Colony," some dozen families, who had moved in the fall before and settled together in a grove on the east side of the Des Moines river, about a mile north of the town of Emmetsburg. Here our forces were augmented by volunteers to the number of 125 men, and we also exchanged our worn-out ox-teams for fresh ones. On the morning of the 30th, we started north, but went only six or seven miles when our advance guard, who were a mile or so ahead, saw coming toward them what they took to be a party of Indians. But very soon it was evident they were fugitives—men, women and children fleeing from the scene of butchery and bloodshed. Among these fugitives were Mrs. W. L. Church and sister, and Mrs. Dr. Strong, with a young babe, whose husband deserted her in the night-time by escaping through an opening in the roof

of the cabin that was besieged by the Indians—where Mrs. Church showed such coolness and courage. We met Dr. Strong at the Irish Colony, but he did not volunteer to go with us, which was very well for him, as the men who were with the fugitives were aware of his treachery and arrant cowardice. If they had met him with us, in the frame of mind they were in, I am sure they would have shot him on the spot. His wife refused to live with him again. Among the fugitives some were badly wounded—Miss Swanger had been shot through the shoulder, and all were hungry and suffering. These scenes can never be forgotten by those of us who saw them out on the bleak, snow-clad prairie. These people also mistook our scouts for Indians, and thought their time had come.

We camped that night near the place where we met the fugitives, and provided for their wants. The next day, the 31st, we started north and the fugitives went on to the Irish Colony. We fully realized that we were now in the Indian country, and Major Williams, with his long experience among the redskins, took every precaution to guard against a surprise. We camped at Big Island Lake, where we found fresh signs of Indians. We reached Granger's Grove, on the Des Moines river, close to the Minnesota state line, that night, where the disappointing news reached us that the Indians had left the place some five days before, and that a detachment of United States mounted troops, sixty in number, were then quartered at Springfield. Our whole company was sorely disappointed. After having undergone such privations, we hoped that even though we were not in time to relieve the distressed settlers, we might be able to mete out to their murderers and torturers the justice they so richly merited. Our provisions by this time were running short, from the fact that owing to the deep snow all the way, it had taken us longer to reach our destination than was expected. The men were so eager to follow the Indians, and leave the teams where they were, each man taking what provisions he could carry, that Maj. Williams offered twenty-five dollars a hundred for a few sacks of flour. But the settlers had only a part of a load of flour, and did not know when any more could be had. The Major refused to exercise military authority and take it by force, and on the morning of the 2d of April he sent twenty-five men under Capt. Johnson to bury the dead at Spirit Lake. Capt. Johnson and Comrade Burkholder most unfortunately perished while returning after performing this sad duty.

After the party started for Spirit Lake the remainder returned to the Irish Colony. This occupied two days. We were to meet the Spirit Lake detail at this place, but they had not yet arrived. During the night we were at the Colony it rained very hard, so that with the melting snow all the small creeks overflowed their banks. The third day of our return trip we traveled through a drenching rain from the Colony to Cylinder Creek, which was dry when we went up a few days before. It was now more than bank full and had the appearance of a very large river. In some places it was eleven feet deep. It was about two o'clock p. m. when we reached the place; the rain had ceased, and the wind changed to the northwest. The first move suggested was to improvise a ferry-boat out of the lightest wagon-bed. A "comforter" was torn up and the cotton batting used for caulking —the work superintended by Captains Duncombe and Richards. When completed the craft was launched with the above named captains and a very few others, but it was not "seaworthy," and soon showed signs of swamping, so that with the wind blowing hard and the vessel leaking, it was plain to the rest of us that we could not cross that day. There was nothing left but to take off the wagon bows and the wagon sheets and fix for camping. There was scarcely anything left to eat, so we had no use for fire. Neither could we get any fuel, for we could not reach the timber on the river. In most places the water spread out a mile from the river. All were glad to see the craft land safely on the other side, though it was well



W. K Laughlin

PRIVATE WILLIAM K. LAUGHLIN.

settled down in the water. It was now about four o'clock p. m., and Major Williams detailed the writer and a few others to go back to the Colony to make some inquiry for the Spirit Lake party. We reached the Colony that night, but there were no signs of the boys arriving. The next morning the Major purchased a beef, ordering me to take charge and dress it and go to cooking, so as to have it ready to feed Johnson and his men when they should arrive. These orders were carried out by staying up all night. No flour was to be had in the settlement, and no groceries, so that meat was all there was to eat. Along towards morning of the second night we heard dogs barking and human voices coming through the timber. The night was very dark. Among the comers were William K. Laughlin, Elias Kellogg and John N. Maxwell—all nearly stupefied from cold and hunger. Mr. Laughlin seemed more collected than his associates, and requested that a squad of men be sent out to meet the others who were behind, but could not travel. We secured all the help that could be mustered and went out, with very little success. Some were lost in the timber farther south. Years afterwards the bodies of Capt. Johnson and Burkholder were found some eight miles south of the Colony, on the west side of the river while the Colony was on the east side. When the whitened bones of those two brave men were at last found, they were identified by their guns and powder flasks. All of Co. C that could be mustered attended their funeral at Fort Dodge, which was conducted in part by Major Williams. The remains of Capt. Johnson were taken charge of by Angus McBane and sent to Pennsylvania to his mother for burial at his old home. After the comers had rested a little we started for Cylinder Creek. The command had all gone. They had remained in camp until the water froze over so the stream could be crossed. Some were badly frozen while in camp here. The command was badly demoralized after leaving Cylinder Creek. Some of our boys struck southeast for home, and reached Boone river at the Okeson place ten miles north of Webster City, while the rest of us came home by way of Fort Dodge. We were gone in all some eighteen days. . . . In conclusion, allow me to say that I regret sincerely my inability to be present on the 12th of August to help celebrate the event which brings you together. I thank you most heartily and sincerely, both for myself and Co. C for this truly magnificent memorial.

THE NARRATIVE OF W. K. LAUGHLIN.*

On Sunday evening, March 22, 1857, news came to Fort Dodge from Webster City that the settlers at Spirit Lake had been massacred. A meeting was called at once to form a company to go to their rescue, if any were living, and to protect the intervening settlements. At noon on Monday our company was organized, fully equipped, and we started for Fort Dodge to join another company forming there. A wagon drawn by two or three yokes of oxen conveyed our provisions and camp outfit. We

*William K. Laughlin was born near Paris, Illinois, Dec. 25, 1831. He settled in Newcastle (afterwards Webster City, Iowa) in Nov., 1855. Aside from his service in the Spirit Lake Expedition, in which he was one of the most active and efficient men, he enlisted in Co. A, 32d Iowa Infantry, Aug. 11, 1862, serving a few days more than three years. He held several non-commissioned offices. On his return from the army he settled near Fort Dodge, but removed in 1894 to Thayer, Mo., where he now (1898) resides.

reached Fort Dodge about nine in the evening. Twenty miles without a halt was good marching considering the roads; as all old settlers will remember the snow was deeper than has ever been known since and had just thawed enough to give way under foot. At Fort Dodge we found two other companies in readiness. Major Williams, notwithstanding his age, was chosen commander on account of his experience in dealing with the Indians on the frontier.

By noon on Monday we were all on the move up the Des Moines, but our progress was very slow and we did not reach Dakota in Humboldt county until about sunset Tuesday. From Dakota our line of march was on the east side of the west fork of the Des Moines river. Here we were soon on a trackless prairie, with snow from two to three feet on a level, to five and ten in drifts and low depressions. Our best men were placed in front ranks to open the way, being relieved at intervals by others. Through the deepest drifts and ravines we had to attach cable ropes to the wagons and the whole command join if necessary to pull them through. I well remember at one deep cut, so many were at the ropes that a pair of oxen attached to one of the wagons was nearly suspended by their yoke swinging on the cable. The afternoon of that day was cloudy and a storm threatening and we failed to reach McKnight's Point as expected, and had to camp on the prairie without fire or shelter, where we took our cold supper and snow beds without a complaint. Next day about noon we reached McKnight's Point. Here we found deserted houses, and Co. C, soldier-like, took possession of one. We spent the rest of the day here, and had warm meals. E. W. Gates was our chief cook and an expert in that line of soldiering, and to correct a little bit of history, I will say it was of Gates that one of our lieutenants told the story that he was such an adept at turning griddle cakes that he could throw one out through an opening in the roof of the cabin run outside and catch it the other side up on the griddle; and I will say further, that if this was done Gates was the man who could do it. Well, we had cakes at any rate and a grand, good time.

From here to Shippey's next day we found better traveling.

Sunday, the 29th, was a beautiful, clear day; snow melted until long stretches of bare ground could be found, and we made the longest march of any day since leaving Fort Dodge, reaching the Irish Colony sixteen miles from Shippey's. Here all the settlers for many miles above and below the river had collected for company during the long, tedious winter. They knew nothing of the massacre at Spirit Lake until after the news was received at Fort Dodge, though they were only about thirty-five miles away; they were living in little log cabins and dugouts and seemed very destitute; most of them had only been there since the summer and fall before and had raised nothing.

The Monday following we moved up near Big Island Grove. Tuesday Major Williams sent out scouting parties to reconnoitre among the many small lakes there, and discovered the first signs of the Indians where they had been cutting holes in the ice and taking out fish, but judging from the decomposed state of the fish it had been several days since they had been there. Late that afternoon we met that heroic band of refugees from Springfield, Minnesota, where they made a gallant defense, drove the savages back and were fleeing from their homes, destitute, having left everything but the clothes they had on. Their only conveyance was a sled drawn by a pair of oxen, and they were nearly starved. Here we camped and did all we could to make them comfortable.

The fight at Springfield was on the Thursday previous and Maj. Williams was sure we could overtake the Indians, so the next day we went on to Granger's and there learned that the U. S. regulars from Fort Ridgely had given them a short chase and let them get away. Here our supplies

were almost gone, and all streams were at their highest stage, so Maj. Williams decided it was useless to go farther. He called for a volunteer detail to go over to Okoboji settlement to bury the dead, as the U. S. troops had failed to do this. Our detail comprised twenty-three men under Capt. Johnson and Lieut. Maxwell. Capt. Richards started with us, but his horse could not get over the river. The rest were to go back as far as the Irish Colony and wait until we returned. We separated from the main column with rations for two days, on the morning of April 2, and reached Mr. Thatcher's house on east Okoboji about two p. m. We found the door shut and only cook stoves and bedsteads inside, feathers were strewn all over the prairie, that had been emptied from beds as a useless luxury; behind the house we found the dead bodies of Messrs. Noble and Ryan, full of bullet holes; we buried them by a large oak tree near the house. Some of our men went to the Howe house and there found seven dead bodies in a promiscuous heap inside. Among them was Mrs. Thatcher's little babe. Mr. Thatcher was with us; he was away after provisions at the time of the massacre, and had joined us to find his home destroyed, his young wife missing, and if not dead, probably sharing a worse fate than death, and nothing left but the mangled remains of that baby. We spent the night at Thatcher's house. Next morning we found another dead body (a boy twelve or thirteen years old) at Howe's, near a fallen tree not far from the house, with an ax by his side; he had evidently been cutting wood and was killed at the same time as those in the house, none of them suspecting their danger. The oldest son had a horrible cut diagonally across the face from the corner of the mouth on one side to the temple on the other. Here we buried nine.

We then went to Mattock's across the Lake; found the dead scattered all around in the woods and on the Lake shore and the house burned; here was evidence of a desperate struggle. Dr. Harriott lay behind a large tree, grasping his broken rifle; Mrs. Mattock and her little daughter lay near each other by the Lake, the little girl's brains had been dashed out and lay in the snow beside the body, a most sickening and heartrending sight. We collected and buried eleven bodies in one grave. Carl Granger's body we found near his house and close by his faithful dog; he was horribly cut about the head and face; we buried him where we found him.

Finally we reached Gardner's and found six, some outside and some inside, and we buried them all together. By this time it was late in the afternoon; we had finished our sad task; our rations were about gone. Mr. Wilson, of our detachment, who had been at Mr. Gardner's during the winter, knew they had some potatoes buried under the cook stove (the only floor their cabins had was the ground) the stove was in its place unharmed, and we found about a bushel of potatoes and had them for supper and breakfast, thus helping out our slender rations.

In the ashes where the Mattock's house was burned were some charred bones, but we could not positively identify them as human bones, and I did not think they were. From the history of the massacre I believe all persons that were known to be there have been accounted for. We buried twenty-nine, and Mr. Clark Luse and old Mr. Howe were found afterwards, but the Indians made thorough work, not one was allowed to escape alive. It was a remarkable thing that none were scalped. The wretches must have been ashamed of their bloody work.

Saturday morning, April 4, we started for the Irish Colony, leaving Messrs. Howe and Wheelock, who had left a load of goods some distance out on the prairie at the time they made the discovery of the massacre, also Mr. Thatcher and Mr. Wilson, who had interests to look after in that vicinity.

Our course lay over a trackless prairie in a drizzling rain. Jonas Murray, of our party, had been at the Lakes the year before and pretended to

know the way, but he proved to be a poor guide. By this time the snow was nearly gone and every stream was a raging torrent and ponds were overflowing. About noon we came to a large stream and had to follow up and down some time before finding a crossing. Two of our men, Robert McCormick and Owen Spencer, went far above and crossed and separated from us, but succeeded in getting through to the Colony in safety. We soon came to another large stream we could not cross. Some distance down we could see some scattering trees, and had been told that we would pass some on our course. We followed down the stream, but to some of us it seemed that we were bearing too far south. Late in the afternoon we came to some small lakes with some scattering trees on the opposite side. By this time the wind changed suddenly and began to grow colder, the sun would occasionally show through the breaking clouds in the west. The lake was apparently between us and the course we ought to take and we followed close around the shore. Off to the west side lay a large marsh covered with tall grass; those in advance passed between marsh and lake and succeeded in getting around, when we discovered that Capt. Johnson, Burkholder, George Smith, Addington and one other, five men in all, had dropped off in the rear and were going around the marsh. We expected they would return to us when they got around, but as it was growing dark and we could still see them on high ground beyond, we thought best to try and go to them, as Maj. Williams' parting advice was, "stick together, boys," but they soon passed out of our sight into the darkness. We then retraced our steps, passed the south end of the lake and traveled directly east; the moon was full and would gleam out through the rifts in the clouds occasionally. We traveled until about nine o'clock, when we halted, finding we were making little headway, having to meander ponds and wade streams that were fast freezing, and decided to go no further until morning. Soon the most of us were tumbled down in a promiscuous heap, lying close to keep one another warm, on the naked, burned prairie. Our pants were a sheet of ice. Some had blankets, but many only their wet clothes. Lieut. Maxwell and myself did not lie down during that terrible night, but kept tramping around and occasionally rousing the sleepers and making them stir around to keep from freezing. I expected we would all be frozen before morning. I had taken my socks off the day before, wrung them out and carried them in my pocket, and as soon as we halted I pulled off my boots, replaced my socks and put on my boots again. I thus saved my feet and got through without the freezing of any part. The following morning the sun was clear and we were in sight of timber directly east eight or ten miles, and every one felt able to travel. I was among the last to leave our camping ground; I remember picking up our empty provision sack and following on. I soon overtook Mr. Carse, the oldest and best clad man in our party, having double Mackinaw blankets and a fur overcoat. He was on the sunny side of a gopher hill, trying to put on his boots, which he had pulled off at night. I passed him without a thought that they were frozen so that he could not get them on. The ponds and also the streams where there was not much current, were frozen so they bore our weight. Most of the men made a bee line, wading streams running slush ice, but I was more fortunate, being long and light, by seeking places that were iced over and crawling at full length I got over without getting wet. Elias Kellogg and myself were first getting to the timber; he had waded every stream and his clothes were a coat of ice. I immediately went about making a fire, but had no matches, nor had any of the others so far as I knew. My gun was empty and my powder dry, so I put a charge of powder in my gun and loaded with some cotton from out of my vest lining. I discharged it into some rotten wood, which caught and by pouring on some powder and with vigorous blowing I succeeded in starting a fire. Lieut. Maxwell was among the first to get to timber and by the time we got our fire well

started most of the boys had straggled in. Mr. Carse came in last led by John Dudley, a mere boy, poorly clad, whom Mr. Carse had befriended by taking him under his double blankets that night. Carse had his boots in his hand and was ill and delirious—the soles of his feet worn out walking over the frozen ground. Kellogg was the next object of attention. He had seated himself by a tree and was helpless and almost unconscious of his misery. We had to arouse him and cut his frozen overalls away; had he been left alone he would probably never have risen from his condition. With a big fire we were soon warmed.

The next question was, where was the Colony? It was the belief of those who had carefully noted the deviations of the timber line along the margin of the river that we were at the first bend, two or three miles south. The river had to be crossed; it was high, and floating ice, but we got some long poles and with this help crossed from one cake of ice to another, and two or three volunteered to go on through the skirting timber, knowing that if we were where we thought we were we could see the Colony at the high point above. No sooner was the advance party over than the others all followed and when we gained the open ground on the other side we could see the Colony as was conjectured, and foot sore and weary as we were we soon made the distance.

We found Major Williams and part of the men there waiting for us with much anxiety. The Major had made preparation for us, fresh beef, from the poor settlers' poorer oxen, was cooked and ready. This was the first and only meal since noon of yesterday, and to us who had fasted over thirty hours was a luxurious feast.

Major Williams dispatched runners down the river at once to look after Capt. Johnson and those with him. They returned that evening and reported having found a fire at a cabin a few miles below; they concluded the men had been there and after warming themselves had gone further down. The next morning Smith, Addington and Murray came in. They had been to another cabin further on and finding some provisions had stayed there. They stated that they had separated from Capt. Johnson and Burkholder early the previous morning, that they had taken their boots off at night, and they were frozen so they could not get them on, and that while they were cutting up their blankets and tying them on to their feet they had disagreed as to the course to be taken. Pulling off their boots was a fatal mistake. To reach the place where their bones were found eleven years afterwards they must have traveled all that day and part of the next night and have lain down together in that sleep that knows no waking. Thus perished two brave and true young men in the very flush of their early manhood.

I had no acquaintance with Mr. Burkholder, and had only a short acquaintance with Mr. Johnson, but enough to know he was worthy of the confidence reposed in him. His upright character and sterling integrity won the esteem and admiration of all his associates. Here, after two weeks' campaigning the command broke up into squads and detachments, the wagons carrying those unable to walk, while those able to help themselves had to get home as best they could and in most cases did so in three or four days.

I remember that Michael Sweeney, Thos. Bonebright, myself and one or two others walked from Fort Dodge to Webster City on our home stretch, in just four hours. We were still in good trim for fighting Indians. This ends my recollections of that ill-fated campaign.
