

LETTERS OF HENRY DODGE TO GEN. GEORGE  
W. JONES.

EDITED BY DR. WILLIAM SALTER.

## I.

The following is marked "Received June, 1832. Attended to in person." It was written in the midst of the Black Hawk war, four days after the battle of "Horse Shoe Bend," in which Col. Dodge with a small force had utterly routed and destroyed a murderous band of Sacs. It relates to a previous request from Col. Dodge "to become his aide-de-camp." Fort Union was near Col. Dodge's home, now Dodgeville, Wisconsin. Thomas McKnight was U. S. Agent of the lead mines at Galena, Illinois; afterwards a member of the Council of the First Legislative Assembly of Wisconsin Territory from Dubuque county, and voted to make Dubuque the capital of that Territory; in 1846 was Whig nominee for Governor of the State of Iowa, and defeated by Ansel Briggs, Democrat. Captain Stephenson commanded a Galena company.

FORT UNION, June 20th, 1832.

*Mr. George W. Jones, Sinsinnewa Mound:*

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor yesterday. I was much pleased to hear that Mr. McKnight would attend to your business in your absence. An express from the Blue Mound that is now with me states he left there at 9 o'clock; he came here, a distance of 16 miles in about 2 hours; he states he saw with all the people of the Fort from 50 to 100 Indians.

I have ordered all the mounted companies to this Frontier and have asked Capt. Stephenson to accompany me with his mounted men. It will give me much pleasure to have you with us. Excuse great haste; the express is in waiting.

I am with much regard and esteem your friend and obedient servant.

H. DODGE.

## II.

Henry Dodge was appointed by President Andrew Jackson, Colonel U. S. Dragoons, and conducted the first U. S. Military Expedition into the Indian country west of Missouri

and Arkansas in 1834, and the first to the Rocky Mountains in 1835. Major Richard B. Mason, Lieut. Jefferson Davis, and other officers of the regular army were in his command. This letter refers to Colonel Dodge's sons, Henry Lafayette and Augustus Cæsar, to his half-brother Lewis F. Linn, United States Senator from Missouri, after whom Linn county, Iowa, was named, and upon whom Thomas H. Benton pronounced an eloquent eulogium in the United States Senate, December 12, 1843. Wm. H. Ashley was member of Congress from Missouri, 1831-3, an enterprising fur-trader in the Rocky Mountains, a man of distinguished character. William J. Madden married Louisiana, second daughter of Col. Dodge. He was a member from Iowa county of the First Constitutional Convention of Wisconsin.

CAMP JACKSON, NEAR FORT GIBSON,  
April 18th, 1834.

*Col. George W. Jones, Iowa (County), Michigan Territory:*

DEAR JONES:—Your letter dated on the 3d ultimo I received yesterday; the letter you mentioned previously written has not yet come to hand. You are the only friend from whom I have heard except one letter from Augustus and one from Henry. I have neither had a line from Lewis Linn or Gen'l Ashley; their silence I am at a loss to account for; the mails have been badly managed in some way.

I am much gratified at the course taken by my friends in the mining country, and feel confident your activity and exertions have been greatly instrumental in obtaining this honorable testimonial of my fellow citizens and fellow soldiers, and should I not be appointed Governor of the new Territory it will not lessen the debt of gratitude I owe them. I will exert myself, and I flatter myself that my standing with the President is good. I know I understand the wants of the people of the mining country as well as their claims on the justice of the General Government, and that I understand the true character of the Indians on the Upper Mississippi as well as any other individual. What the policy of the Government may be I do not know; it may be considered that I am already provided for, and as there are many hungry applicants who have influential friends that may succeed, I am determined to return to the mining country at all events.

The profession of arms is a dull one in a time of peace, and suits those who have been for many years on a peace establishment. I find more treachery and deception practiced in the army than I ever expected to find with a body of men who call themselves gentlemen. My situation is unpleasant. Davis, whom I appointed my Adjutant, was among the first to take a stand against me. Major Mason and Davis are now two of my most inveterate enemies. The desire of these gentlemen appears to be to

harass me in small matters. They don't want to fight. If Mason would say fight, I would go to the field with him with great pleasure. Unless harmony and good feeling exist in a corps the public service cannot be promoted, and to undertake an expedition with such men I should run the risk of losing what little reputation I have acquired. There is no prospect of a war with the Indians. The Pawnees are a distant roving nation, without any fixed place of residence, and the greater part of them within the limits of the Mexican Government.

I am convinced the climate will not suit my constitution. For the last six years I have breathed a pure healthy air, and a change of climate I am sure will be unfavorable to my health. \* \* Was the United States engaged in war, I should prefer my present station to any that could be selected for me.

I hope you will succeed in your business as well as Mr. Madden to whom I desire to be remembered as well as your lady and family.

Most truly your friend,

H. DODGE.

### III.

FORT LEAVENWORTH, October 1st, 1834.

*Col. George W. Jones, Iowa County, Michigan Territory, (Via) Galena, Illinois:*

DEAR COL.:—I arrived at this Military Post on the 27th. I was detained at Fort Gibson four weeks after my return from the expedition, holding Councils with the Indians who accompanied me from the Pawnee Pick country, and the Friendly Indians on our Southwestern Frontier. At the Councils the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Osages, and Senecas were represented; the wild Indians that attended were the Kiowas and Pawnee Picks. I have no doubt I have laid the foundation of a lasting peace between those Indians, as well as with the U. S., if the proper steps are taken on the part of the Government.

Perhaps there never has been in America a campaign that operated more severely on men and horses. The excessive heat exceeded anything I ever experienced. I marched from Fort Gibson with 500 men, and when I reached the Pawnee Pick village I had not more than 190 men fit for duty; they were all left behind sick, or were attending on the sick. The heat of the weather operated severely on the Dragoon horses, at least 100 were killed or broke down by the excessive heat. The men were taken with fever, and I was obliged to carry some of my men in litters for several hundred miles. Men of northern constitutions are not able to bear a march through the open country we marched over in the heat of summer. I was determined to effect the object of the Government, if possible. My orders were entirely of a pacific character. I was ordered not to fire on the Indians unless they fired on me, and to pursue that course best calculated to conciliate and make peace with them.

On reaching the Comanches I found I was not far from the residence of the Pawnee Picks. On leaving their village I found they were unwill-

ing to furnish me with a pilot, and I determined to go without one. When about to start, I fortunately met with an Indian from the Missouri that agreed to act as my pilot if I would give him a gun and some small presents that I was able to procure for him. My provisions were exhausted, and I was encumbered with near thirty sick men, a part of them I was obliged to carry in litters. I found I never could reach the hostile Indians with my sick, and determined to leave them, and make a forced march with my remaining disposable force. I ordered a breast-work of timber made, and left my sick under a guard of well men, and pushed forward with my command, intending to travel on my horses as long as I could and then to dismount my men and subsist on my horses until I found the Pawnee Pick Indians. I found them the third day after I left the Comanches. I succeeded in getting the son of a Judge Martin who had been recently killed near the Red river.

I hope the Government will be satisfied with my efforts. I have not heard from Washington since I made my official report. I should be glad to hear from you. I have thought of you and my friends in the mining country often. My attachment for that country is great, and at one time I thought it was doubtful if I should return. I had a severe attack of the fever; it lasted but three days on me, and I never left my horse except at night. During the continuance of the fever I took about 60 grains of calomel at two doses in succession, which broke the fever on me, but operated severely on my throat, and I am still debilitated; but my health is improving fast. I hope to see you all in the spring. Give my best respects to Mrs. Jones and my friends, and for yourself accept my best wishes for your health, prosperity and happiness.

H. DODGE.

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INTEREST VS. COMMON SENSE.—There are none to be found save those who live on the proposed route, and seek for personal advantage, at every cost to the rest of the State, who will now urge so Utopian a project, as the "Dubuque and Keokuk railroad." The improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi obviates all necessity for such a road, and if built there would not be transportation sufficient on it to keep the grass from growing on the tracks.—*Iowa Democratic Enquirer, Muscatine, Oct. 20, 1849.*

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