



EBENEZER ALDEN, Jr.  
1819-1899

A Member of the Congregational "Iowa Band"  
One of the Founders of Grinnell College

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## The Ebenezer Alden Jr., Letters From Iowa Territory

MEMBER OF "IOWA BAND" AND ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF  
GRINNELL COLLEGE IN YEARS 1843 TO 1847

Iowans are familiar with the beginnings of the Congregational church in the state. Dr. William Salter's voluminous writings appearing through the years in the ANNALS, and the many addresses delivered by him during his ministry have sufficiently illuminated the pages of Hawkeye historical publications to well acquaint all with the heroic struggles of the noted Iowa Band at Denmark and elsewhere, in the establishment of the early churches of that faith in Iowa.

One of the young ministers who at age 24, came west from Amherst college and early located in Iowa was the Rev. Ebenezer Alden, Jr. He first landed at Solon in Johnson county, Iowa Territory, in the fall of 1843. Later he was placed in charge of the church organization at Tipton, in Cedar county, and from that place wrote interesting letters to his home folk at Randolph, Mass.

Copies of the Alden letters, written for the most part to his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Ebenezer Alden, Sr., have been added to the manuscript collection of the Iowa State Department of History & Archives through the courtesy of C. C. Clifton of the *Des Moines Register* and H. M. Harris, a retired Grinnell and Des Moines banker, now of Moline, Illinois.

Mr. Harris had the Alden letters typed and placed in order and has made copies available through his son, Mayo Harris of Moline, Ill., superintendent of the John Deere Plow Works. Mrs. H. M. Harris, who was Louise Alden Brown of Plainfield, N. J., died in December, 1954. She was a descendant of Ebenezer Alden, Jr., who was descended from John Alden, one of the pilgrims who founded the Plymouth Colony.

From these letters, Mr. Clifton relates that Grinnell College was started on a \$2,400 shoestring at Davenport in 1846, as Iowa College, by a dozen Congregational minister members of the "Iowa Band," whose purpose was "to found a church and all a college." Each of the Iowa Band undertook to raise \$500 in the east for running expenses of the college in its early years.

All but \$400 worth of land in the site was donated on condition that a \$2,000 building be erected within 18 months. The pioneer ministers raised the money; got the building completed in 1847; started instruction with one professor and two students in 1848.

How frail the college was in its infancy is described in letters of Ebenezer Alden, Jr., one of the Iowa Band. The letters have been preserved since Alden wrote them from 1843 through 1847. They correlate college founding costs to living costs in territorial Iowa.

Young Alden returned east in 1850. He was pastor of the Congregational church in Marshfield, Mass., until his retirement a few years before his death in 1899. He was in poor health most of the time he was in Iowa, but he lived to be 80. Daniel Webster was one of his parishioners in Marshfield, Mass. Alden preached Webster's funeral sermon in 1852.

Aside from depicting the struggles of the early Iowa churches which are portrayed in excellent manner, these letters include much interesting in-



formation regarding the upbuilding of struggling little communities and their citizens who brought civilization to the prairies of the Hawkeye state.

The ANNALS deems them of such character and quality to justify bringing them to its readers, the first group to be published appearing herewith, just as they were written and without editing in any manner whatever:

Buffalo, Oct. 9th, 1843

Ebenezer Alden, M. D., Randolph, Mass.

My dear father, The last time I wrote home I was in Albany. Now I have advanced to Buffalo and have my passage engaged to Chicago. I left Albany on Friday morning at 8 o'clock.

There are now but two trains through in a day and I thought it best to keep directly on. I arrived at this place on Saturday about noon and took lodgings at the Western Hotel, where I have remained the whole time. I found the names of those who left Boston on Wednesday booked for Friday at the Western Hotel & on inquiry the barkeeper told me they had left for the West. He was mistaken however—they had gone out to private families. I had given them up, but on stepping out into the street met them all & 3 more.

On Sabbath morning I found Hutchinson at breakfast who had come in about 2 o'clock in the morning. Yesterday I attended meeting—a communion service in the afternoon only, the forenoon being rainy. Mr. Turner preached on Home Missions in the forenoon in the same church. Last evening there was a general missionary meeting. The brethren are all quartered in Mr. Hopkin's society except myself. I think I did wisely in coming here as I had a quiet Sabbath, a fire in my room. There are a number of other students here going out to Wisconsin.

Mr. Hopkins has made a contract with the steamboat company to carry us out for \$10.00 and perhaps



he will get it down to \$7.00. I have not much opinion of the beating down system, but still I have no objection to gain \$4.00 and perhaps \$7.00 if some one else will do the business. I have a good berth and also a chance to be in a state room if I wish it, but probably I shall be more comfortable below.

. . . I go out in the Missouri. We think it best to go entirely on to Chicago in the boat, rather than across Michigan.

. . . It is now about noon and after dinner I must embark the boat, leaving at 4. . . .

Your affectionate Son,

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Solon, Johnson Co., Iowa T., Feb. 3, 1844

My dear Father, It is now 6 weeks since I wrote home last and it is high time that you should hear from me, though I have yet had but one letter from home. I may, however, have letters today before I go down to the city, as this is Solon mail day, or I may as before get letters there. . . . I am well enough here up on the prairie, but when I go down onto the rivers I have to be a little careful of my diet. . . . I have a fine horse & can ride all day without getting particularly fatigued. . . much of my time is spent on horseback & I am my own hostler.

Since I last wrote I have more fully organized the Cong. church here. It consists of 5 members. I have thus far been devoting a part of my time to the city church—not my own. This is important. Still my great object must be to get permanently located myself. Solon was “staked out” for a town, but it never certainly was named after its proprietors. By a town we mean here a little plat of ground, divided up into lots, laid out by authority of the legislature. The lots in Solon were bid off but never paid for and the town stakes will this winter be pulled up. “Big Grove” contains the “heaviest settlement” in Johnson Co. perhaps out of the city. A church may by and by be strong, but at

present Solon must command only a portion of a minister's attention.

Cedar Co. lies within my diocese. I have just returned from a visit to it & from a most delightful week's visit at Bloomington, where I preached for Br. Robbins last Sabbath. His situation is much like that of a young minister in a New England village only a great deal harder as he has not such opportunities as a New England pastor for Exchanging. He is the only one of our number that I have yet seen. I hope before I write again that I shall be situated at a convenient distance from Bloomington, among a more densely settled people, with brighter prospects than at present. I preached in Cedar Co. on my way to Bloomington & have made an appointment a week from tomorrow to preach at Tipton the county seat.

If I can work along prudently & promptly I think I can form a good church in the southern part of Cedar Co. & establish myself at Tipton with good prospects of success. There are two considerable towns in Cedar Co., Tipton & Rochester. Tipton is in the centre of the county on a prairie, a fine healthy location. It is 3 years old, has 12 or 15 frame houses *painted white*, 3 lawyers, 1 physician etc. The merchant there is a Massachusetts man, an excellent man & the only individual in the place to stand by me.

A mile or two E. are two families who will come into an organization. 6 miles S. 3 ladies, one a wife of an ex-Cong. minister, a Mr. Church, who is now a sort of a nationalist, deranged somewhat, I presume. There are a number of Penn-Dutchmen whom I hope to unite with us. I thus hope Br. Hummer O.S. minister, who formed the church here & one in Red Oak Grove of Scotchmen a few miles from Tipton N.W. a year or two ago, will not be able to get a foothold in Tipton or from there to Bloomington if he should ever desire it. The Methodists are num-

erous in Adam Co. I presume they will be jealous of me, & already I think I have perceived they do not wish to encourage me. But I expect of course to encounter them as they occupy the whole country with their superficial system. I presume we shall get a house up in Tipton to answer a temporary purpose, in connection with them. If I can get the start of Br. Hummer I am not afraid of any Methodist storm. Thus you see the true state of things. . . . I am not the only one in the territory who is obliged to meet O.S. prejudice & opposition. I hope I shall not be driven to sectarianism myself, but still it is of no use to openly proclaim all my intentions, for I do really feel that if Br. Hummer . . . knew of my plans in regard to Cedar Co. he might anticipate me—though I hope in charity he might not. However, I mean to preach in Tipton next Sabbath week & tomorrow two weeks form a Cong. church if I can get things arranged to my satisfaction.

By the way, my box has yet only reached Chicago & in its absence your "Upham" "Ratio Disciplinarian" has done good service, as well as "Gastons Collections" a present from Mr. Rogers & a few sheets of sermon paper of which this is the last sheet, etc. etc.

There has been a strife as to the location of the county seat between Tipton & Rochester, which probably has impeded the growth of both places. Rochester is on Cedar river 7 miles from Tipton, has been very sickly and probably does not contain more if as many people as Tipton. I think it is too near Bloomington ever to be much of a "seaport." The frame of the courthouse is up in Tipton, but the seat of government will now be removed back to Rochester I think. If I locate in Tipton I hope I shall be able to preach by & by after New England fashion thus avoiding those intellectual dangers which you & Uncle Edmund & I too fear.



I shall have physical exercise enough too if I preach in Rochester & especially here, etc. I shall have more society of an intellectual character, be near to Bloomington, which is, I think, to be the great "seaport" of Iowa. . . . Tipton is a "right smart" of a place & in the summer must be beautifully situated. . . .

I have also been introduced to a considerable number of the "big bugs," if mother is afraid that I see nothing but prairie chickens and wolves. As to wolves I saw a black wolf of the largest kind trapped & shot this week, the first one ever killed in that part of Cedar Co. The prairie wolves are small, very much of the nature of a fox. . . . Mother need not fear that I am in any particular danger, especially on a horse like mine. As to hardships, those who live in Bloomington, Iowa City, are like city folks everywhere, a "little stuck up" above the country people. As to myself, I have enough to eat, cooked well enough too, as I do not patronize "hoosiers" if I can help it. My life is more of a western life than that of Brs. Robbins & Hutchinson, but still it is all nonsense for me to talk of privations when I compare my situation with that of the first settlers upon the last purchase. My trials are certainly of a different kind . . .

I see that Profs. Edwards & Park are soon to commence a new periodical—one truly valuable to any minister, but especially of advantage to me. I wish you would send it out. . . .

I shall this week go to Tipton & not have opportunity of hearing from home this 3 weeks when I shall return to Solon . . . love to all.

Feb. 5

Solon mail brought me papers, etc. . . . The city mail brought me your long lost letter forwarded from Burlington & Mary's letter. . . .

Feb. 22d, 1844, Tipton, Cedar County, T.I.

My dear parents: You perceive by the date of my letter that I have moved. It is now three weeks since I directed a letter home. I write now because I have made this place my home and wish papers and letters directed to this place from this time & I suppose too you are wishing by this time to hear from me again and learn what my situation is.

The Sabbath after I wrote home I came over to Tipton & preached twice. In the morning I had an audience of 120 probably, in the evening perhaps an 100. It was a fine day & fine sleighing & I was a new preacher. Much anxiety was felt to hear me. This was the largest audience I have ever preached to in my field of labor and in the territory, unless perhaps you except one evening just before my ordination.

The Methodists seem to favor my coming & at the invitation of a local preacher I preached in a school house 3 miles off on Tuesday evening after the Sabbath and passed the night at the preachers house & the next day rode in company with him nearly to Iowa City. I preached twice last Sabbath at 11 o'clock at Sutliff's Ferry on the Cedar River in the N.E. corner of Johnson Co. & in the evening at Solon.

On Monday last I moved my residence over from Solon. A day or two before I had had an opportunity of sending over my two trunks, my stove, my dung fork & umbrella. I had brought over my valise previously. So much for particulars. I am glad I have got over as it has been warm weather last week & this. The snow is gone—mud abounds—my pantaloons have been tucked into my boots for two or three days & the Cedar must by this time have broken up. The man foundered his horses so my trunks have not yet got entirely here—though they have arrived within 2 miles. I am to occupy for my room a snug little room in an adjoining house

till the 1st of April. After that time I am to have a snug little room in this house the Temperance Tavern in which I board. The "Tipton House"—the "Centre Hotel" has a bar. The room in which I am now sitting is the office of the house—bar room were it a rum house—& also Post Office & office of the County Clerk. . . .

The people of the house are Methodists & Pennsylvanians. The man is the only man in town who is a professor of religion except the one who keeps store & will belong to my church. There are about 75 individuals in town, 25 men, almost all professed infidels & Universalists. A hard place, isn't it? 2 miles E. is a good man & a little farther a good woman—& 6 miles S. several individuals who will join my church. Tipton is at the geographical centre of the county on a prairie with timber in sight on all sides nearly, healthy if any place is in the West.

I shall be more by myself here than in Solon—and more amongst people too when I wish it. I shall be in a healthy location & my only danger will be in going off upon the rivers to preach. I shall have good audiences to preach to, I think, though of course they will not always be as large as on Sabbath before last. There is a Town house to be put up in which by next fall I can preach perhaps sooner—but we move slowly in this Western world. 215 dollars have been subscribed to put up this building—\$8.00 in cash, the remainder in work, produce, timber, etc. You see how much money is in circulation. 250 dollars subscribed in this way will put up the building 24 ft. by 30. The frame of the court house, a two story of 40 ft. square is up. I hope this building will be completed this season but I fear not. We shall hire a private home to preach in at present.

The circuit rider is here once in 3 weeks. I shall preach next Sabbath & the Sabbath after I think & then 2 weeks from next Sabbath we intend to cele-



brate the communion at Solon. I do not know whether I shall go down to the city again or not. I hardly think Dr. Woods will be at home for 2 or 3 months although his family are now expecting him. I shall get things along as fast here as I can.

I had a visit from Br. Turner of Cascade last week. He has formed a Temperance Society there of 70 members—along church of 12. Cascade is about the same in size and the character of its inhabitants as Tipton. These places are generally pretty wicked at first. But as the country grows older a new class of people moves in, 2 years may put an entirely new face upon things here. I hope God will change the place before that time.

My box I hope will be here soon—then I can go to studying. This morning I had quite a still time here & endeavored to sketch out my plan for next Sabbath's sermon. Yesterday afternoon I wrote to Mrs. Cornelius—the day before to Mr. Badger to get assistance from Am. S.S. Union at Philadelphia which they have proffered. I wrote to Springfield to Mr. Chapman to get the Mass. So. Lib. which he promised me. At present we must unite with the Methodists to get a Sabbath School in a place. But still Methodists have no very deep interest in Sabbath schools and cannot be depended upon for any length of time. If their class meetings come in conflict with a school, the school will be abandoned. The best way to preserve peace is to be complaisant, courteous, yielding & unite sometimes, but still you must be as independent of them & all other sects as you can. This is no place to keep your eyes shut.

You want particulars—I always try to give them. You cannot see my situation so well as if I could draw pictures or you would come out to see for yourselves. I am looking for some of the family out this summer & for more to come ensuing years.

I was troubled week before last with a blindness & sick headache. I have ceased drinking coffee &

shall not eat so much meat as I have. I have not been sick in this way since I quit drinking coffee. The amount of coffee & tobacco used here would be incredible to you. The spitting here at singing schools especially would be a caution to those who have to clean up the next morning.

Mr. Hebard brought his wife & "Gussy" to the city & has now returned home. I was *right glad* to see them & they to see me. Mr. Hebard has a frame house story & a half, painted white, a piazza is to extend nearly around, situated 11 miles from Burlington on a prairie on the edge of a little timber on a creek. He has a fine frame barn. The country there is in advance of what it is here. More frame houses & barns. In the n. part of Johnson Co. I know of but 4 frame houses—Solon is one—2 frames not covered of barns. Wheat, oats, etc., are stacked out. Corn stalks are not cut. The corn is "shucked" or husked in the field with a husking peg & the cattle turned in to eat the stalks. We have log stables for horses—the prairie hay in a heap on top which sheds the rain. I have cut up my wood all winter right front of the house on the prairie.

Eggs are now only a picayune a dozen—6½ cents, 5 cents today—any quantity.

*Tipton*—Mostly 1 story houses, 2 or 3 two story houses, frame houses mostly, 12 perhaps—frame stables—courthouse in the centre that is to be, on one side of the actual buildings.

*Food*—buckwheat cakes often, pork fried fresh, sausage meat, eggs boiled or fried, warm cakes sometimes thin & flat, sometimes round, shortening or saleratus in them, a good deal I reckon—coffee, sometimes sugar, sometimes not & ditto of milk, sometimes honey, ditto molasses, sometimes tea. At Solon & here I am boarded well with a room here at \$1.50. In one or two places I have seen "high living." Always enough to eat. People eat too

much, never heard of anybody's being starved. The first year there is want—on the New Purchase people are living on water & corn bread. I know nothing of what people had to undergo here 6 years ago, except by their account. Physical sufferings have not injured me yet. You know nothing, however, of prairie winds, nor I of such a winter as they experienced here a year ago. Mild winter—winter broken now probably though some more cold weather in March.

But the paper furnished by U.S.A. to a representative & given to me by him with whom I passed a day or two at Swan's Hotel the "Tremont" of Iowa City—first rate eating there—is out. I must close my letter . . .

Kit had the cholic on a prairie the other day & I feared I should lose her, but she has recovered. The way people give horses corn here would scare Mr. McCrea. Kit has always been used to it, but I think she must be more careful in future & perhaps adopt oats.

Please give my love to all—prepare to come out soon—write often. . . .

*Feb. 26* My letter missed the mail last week, hence will be a week later home. I preached once yesterday—very muddy—good audience, some came to the door & went away for want of seats, not so many as before.

Raining today—rivers have been closed 5 or 6 weeks. The Mississippi will not break, I should think. Spring weather cold & strong winds are from N.W. It is a good deal of wind from the S. Not so muddy here as in Ohio & Indiana. A new doctor thinks of coming here, 3 lawyers now, 1 doctor now.

*Feb. 28* Went a visiting yesterday in the southern part of the Co. Preach here at 11 o'clock next Sunday & at 3, 8 miles south. . . . Mississippi broke up Sunday.



March, 1844, Tipton, Cedar County, Iowa

My dear Father: You suggested to me in your last letter that it would be well for me to bear in mind the Norfolk Conference. I have no doubt it would afford pleasure to the members of that body to receive intelligence from this distant corner of the Lord's vineyard. It is also pleasant for me to meet in the only manner in which it is now possible for me to do so with those to whom I have looked up as my friends and my Father's friends, and with whom I have been present at so many of those semi-annual meetings.

It is not the easy thing it once was for me to meet ministerial brethren and members of the churches in meetings like that of the Norfolk Conference. When you look at Iowa on the map and compare it with the other Western states, it appears to cover a small extent of territory. And so it does in this comparison. But compare the situation of a minister of the gospel here with that of one in New England. On the South my nearest ministerial brother is 25 miles from me. On the North there is no one nearer than 50 miles. In other directions at the distance of 25, 30 & 35 miles there are those who were here before me, of the Congregational and Presbyterian denominations.

Next week I am intending to take a trip to the Southern part of the territory to attend a meeting of the Congregational ministers of Iowa. My nearest route is 100 miles and I shall meet those who have come 30 and 40 miles from the other direction. I have as yet seen but two of those with whom I came out last Fall. In the Southern part of the territory there is a denser population, and the ministerial brethren are at a less distance from each other than in this region.

The particulars of our journey out, our kind reception in Buffalo, the ordination of those of us, who were not previously ordained, at Denmark, the resi-

dence of Father Turner, the pioneer and patriarch of Congregationalists in this territory, I suppose are known to the members of the Conference.

Since that we have entered upon our labors here, there has been formed a Congregational church of 12 members in Cascade & a Presbyterian one in Jackson Co. The Presbyterian church of Burlington—New School—has resolved itself into a Congregational church, & the Old & New School churches of Bloomington have united, for the most part, under the same organization. As to myself, I have completed the organization of a Congregational church, partially organized last summer. And a year from the day in which I preached my first sermon in Andover Chapel, I had the happiness of administering the Communion to that little band of 5 members. I am now endeavoring to prepare to form another church in this County. I am here occupying a new field, that is, new for any one of our denomination. It should be remembered that there is no lack of "preachers" here. The great difficulty I have met with has been so to arrange my appointments for preaching as to not conflict with some of them. In this county it was a new thing for the children to see the minister *stand* when he prayed, and some of them returned home as their parents informed me from my first meeting, quite surprised at the innovation.

There have been in this region two "preachers" who have endeavored to found sects of their own, the one an outcast Mormon and the other a species of Campbellite. Their followers were called by their name, but the day of both of them is past. And Abner Kneeland who was in the Southern part of this territory could not this winter get a school even to teach, and has departed to Arkansas. Many of the towns, as I understand, are vastly more moral than 3 or 4 years ago. There are frontier inhabitants of an inferior order who first people the country, and

move out on the approach of a more industrious and upright class of community. And why should we not expect at the outset to find the apologies for preachers who have, I trust, had their day here? And why should not also a purer religion take the place of those superficial notions of truth and duty by which the inhabitants of this part of the country have been governed?

There are in the territory 17 ministers of the Congregational denomination, 7 New School Presbyterians, and 9 of the Old School order. There are in existence a N.S. Presbytery & 2 Associations of Congregationalists—more properly, however, they would be Consociations. Measures were taken last fall to unite these bodies upon a plan like that adopted in Wisconsin. Whether this plan shall succeed or some other one be adopted yet remains to be determined.

In conclusion, I would ask for myself, the brethren here & these little churches the prayers of God's people in the older & stronger churches. We need wisdom. The members of the churches need the reviving influences of God's spirit. We desire so to adopt plans & organize institutions religious & moral that God's glory will be here promoted. But all these external means will be useless unless God's Spirit gives them life. Brethren, do not forget us, especially during this summer.

Your affectionate Son

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May 29, 1844, Tipton, Cedar County, Iowa  
Henry B. Alden, Esq., Randolph, Mass.

My dear Uncle and Aunt: I suppose you will be gratified to hear occasionally from the other side of the "father of waters." I have, too, recently returned from a tour in which I saw some scenes in nature which I know you would have been delighted to have witnessed, and which you will take a pleasure in having described.

Within a few weeks past I have made two trips



on horseback over the territory. The first was to the South. In fact I crossed the Missouri line. I did not, however, visit the New Purchase. The second trip was to the North as far as Dubuque.

I do not know whether I gave Mary any account of the remains of ancient fortifications which I saw at Black Hawk at the mouth of the Iowa river. They cover an area of about 12 acres on most beautiful prairie, as rich as any I have ever seen. The fort is situated upon the bluff of the Mississippi about 3 miles from the river with a low bottom, covered with timber between. I walked about on the walls which were, before the prairie was ploughed up, about 6 ft. above the surface. Underneath them is a rock foundation over which the plough has scraped. They are constructed as we might suppose civilized men to have constructed them. There was a well inside of the fort and three gateways, leading to springs of water. There are 6 mounds in which there have been many buried—something more than single graves. Inside of the fort on the very edge of the bluff are 7 or 8 mounds, either natural and used as burying places or artificial, I hardly know which. I picked up in the fort pieces of crockery, rims of crocks, scoloped, & bones, flints appearing like gun flints; arrowheads are also found. Whether this fortification was the work of the French, 100 or 150 years ago, or of a former race of Indians, it is left to conjecture to tell. The present race of Indians can throw no light upon the subject.

About 2 miles from this place stood a short time ago Black Hawk's "wickiup," as the Misquakies, or Sacs & Foxes, call their lodges.

The county seat of Louisa Co. is named Wapello from a chief of that name and is most beautifully located on the Iowa on an extensive bottom, though of course the beauty of these river towns has its offset in the sickness that always prevails more or less in the summer and fall.

In my tour North I went into the "diggings." "Booth's diggings" about 2 miles back from Dubuque were those I visited. Here is the cave of which such an extravagant account was given in the Eastern papers, as I have understood. We were let down on a rope about 30 ft.

Here we came to the cave which is about 1000 feet long. There is a very low passage after you have gone about two-thirds of the distance through, through which we crawled on our hands and knees and one fat man became wedged in and was obliged to get out of those diggings the best way he could. The farthest part of the cave—toward the East is the finest—about 20 or 30 ft. in height and the space is not so much broken off, though still it is small. Below the cave "shafts" are sunk, and "leads" are followed out in long passages. I went down about 90 ft. The owner, Mr. Booth, takes out \$1600 of lead every 3 weeks and will realize at least \$70,000. There seems to be no end to the mineral there at present. But his case is one out of a thousand. More ruin their fortunes than make them in the business.

The greatest curiosity yet remains. This is "Burt's Cave." Cave Creek, a very small tributary of the S. fork of the Makoqueta runs through it. I preached at Makoqueta, & on Monday went up into the forks 6 miles to the house—a log house as neat as wax—of a good lady. Mr. Holbrook & his lady & Mr. Salter came up in a short time & here we passed the night. The next morning Mrs. Holbrook rode her husband's horse on a side saddle, one of the young ladies of the house rode my horse on my saddle & the other Mr. Salter's on his saddle, & the way they can ride gracefully here on men's saddles is a caution to Eastern girls. My saddle, however, has a horn, so that it is more like a woman's saddle than your Yankee "fixings" in general. The rest of us proceeded afoot, the young man taking his rifle with him for we saw panthers' tracks before we got back.

We went 4 or 5 miles from the house and found all that was to be seen down in a ravine.

There is a natural bridge 35 to 40 ft. in height, and 100 ft. each way. A most magnificent arch, the cave very low, 600 ft., then an opening up and then extending on 100 or 200 more ft.—a most wild ravine—mouths of other caves which we did not explore as we had blown out our candles, in one of which we saw tracks, fresh, of a panther or wild cat. 2 panthers were killed in the neighborhood last winter. The sight was most magnificent and if you ever come to Tipton I will pilot you up there, as I presume there is no finer natural curiosity in the Territory than this.

I hope, however, I shall not lead you as I did myself last Saturday. I had a 12 mile prairie to cross & could save 4 by going straight—it was cloudy & instead of going straight I went in a circle, passed the house I had left without knowing it & discovered my mistake when I arrived at the next. This is the first time I have been fairly lost in the day time—though of course I have sometimes gone out of my course.

But my paper is used—I cannot tell you of the live gopher I saw the other day, the large black wolf I saw the last winter trapped & shot, the prairie wolves I have often seen, the deer & smaller animals of various description. Neither can I do justice to the prairie at this season of the year—the beautiful flowers.

Navigating these prairies is very much like being on the water. In this part of the Territory the prairies are more rolling—farther north still more so—the mineral region is “broken” and rocks—limestone.

*May 31.* We have had a great deal of wet weather lately & severe frost last week. . . . Please give my love to all at home & believe me

Your affectionate Nephew.



June 7, 1844, Tipton, Cedar County, Iowa

My dear parents, brothers and sisters, and all my friends: This is the day for mammoth sheets of all kinds. As it is so common to do up things on a great scale, and as I am now a citizen of the "great West," with its "amazing capabilities," you will not be surprised to receive from me a great letter. I begin in good season, so as to get through in season to send this sheet sometime before the end of the month.

We had a great tornado here day before yesterday. I was writing a letter to the Society of Inquiry in Andover, when it became so dark, a thunder storm having arisen, that I was obliged to suspend writing. This was about 5 or 5 & ½ o'clock in the afternoon. The storm passed away, but in about an hour a young man came riding into town post haste for the doctor. He informed us that one man had had his house blown down in a whirlwind and that the family were terribly injured. Yesterday morning I mounted my horse and in company with Mr. Fleming, with whom I board, and a number of others went down to the scene of desolation. And ruin and desolation there was enough certainly.

The course of the tornado was from West to East, and the track was about a quarter of a mile in width. The clouds gathered on the prairie the other side of Cedar. The tornado passed about 3 to 4 miles south of us over the Bloomington road and the fury of the whirlwind was spent after passing a mile or two across the Bloomington road. I think the map I sent Mary will give you an idea of things. The whole course must have been 8 or 10 miles. The oak trees were snapped off 12 or 15 feet from the ground. I saw hickory trees 2 or 3 feet through twisted about like a withe. 8 houses were blown down, in some cases not even the lowest logs were left.

One family escaped by going down the cellar and drawing the puncheons over them. I suppose you

do not know what a puncheon floor is—it is made of split logs. The house which I visited and where I worked all the forenoon laying up rails to keep the crop was inhabited by a man, his wife & two children. They were all blown out of the house. The woman found the man, lying senseless. She threw water in his face and recovered him. She is, however, terribly bruised and injured worse than he is. One child had its leg broken. Some others were injured, not dangerously as I have heard. This house was blown entirely down to the lowest timber in all directions.

I saw a large timber that had been carried a number of rods and stuck down into the mud a number of feet. The grounds appeared as if a deluge had swept over them. Nine cattle on the prairie were blown along, one ox about three-fourths of a mile, rolled over and over till they were killed. A hog was blown quite a distance and killed. I saw a dog lying covered with mud, stiff, with its leg broken I suppose. I saw chickens with their feathers stripped off, and their heads knocked off too. Wagons were taken up and blown away—nothing was found of one but the hubs of the wheels and the iron tires. One tire was found which had been blown probably a number of miles.

There was perfect darkness in the tornado, which probably was not more than a minute or two in passing over a place. Those a mile or two off saw the dark cloud passing. I believe some saw the trees whirling, but in the whole region was a violent thunder storm.

Crossed also at Camanche—blew away Prophetstown on Rock River & killed 6 there & wounded a number also.

June 8th: I last evening received a *Puritan* which was published two weeks ago yesterday and was mailed at Randolph a week ago last Monday. This

seems to be the next thing to being at home—only 11½ days coming.

Father once asked who is Dr. Woods, & I can tell you. He is a native of Virginia, and was formerly a physician in Indiana and a minister afterward. His wife is from Tennessee. He has been in Iowa City about two years, I believe. He originally organized partially the church at Big Grove. He has a fine church of about 25 members. He now has charge of the church at Big Grove. As I have as much as I can attend to in this county & besides Solon is naturally connected with Iowa City and out of the way from Tipton, I do not go out of Cedar Co. now. He has a large family. The oldest girl is 16, the next 14, and so down like all western families, some 8 or 10. He mentioned to me that he wished I would suggest to some of the Eastern people that a box of clothing would be very acceptable to his family. If either of the Associations of Ladies in Randolph or vicinity, or a number combined feel any disposition to send out such clothing as would be suitable to the family, they will be doing an act of kindness to Dr. Woods, and will assist in building up the truth in the Capital of this Territory.

The church is poor; they have collected funds in the East and I hope will have a building by and by. In the meantime Br. Woods has built a house in which meetings are now held, which he will by and by occupy as a dwelling & Br. Fiske from Black Hawk, now gone east, will occupy the present dwelling of Dr. Woods & preach in the vicinity and teach probably.

We hear of still more damage done by the hurricane and tornado. One woman 12 miles perhaps south was killed. I have heard of two towns that were blown away and of buildings struck by lightning.

*June 13:* Day before yesterday Mr. Fleming was intending to go down to Bloomington with a two



horse wagon. I jumped in and went with him, passed the night there & returned yesterday. . . .

We hear of more damage from the tornado—it crossed the river between Davenport & Bloomington, passed into Illinois & report says killed 10 or 12 people in Knox Co. It did injury on Rock River.

We have had a remarkable rainy & wet season thus far. This is inconvenient for me in one respect. The roof on my room is leaking & I am obliged to stay in the other room rainy days & sleep in the other part of the house rainy nights. If it were not for this, I should have a very pleasant little room—though there is no plastering overhead & the outside of the old house is one side of this addition.

I preached last Sabbath upon the observance of the Sabbath right straight at the people. The jail is a two story building. The lower part consists of two dungeons with an entry between, three thicknesses of logs composing the walls. The upper part has a log floor, but the sides are built like other houses. The room is used as a carpenter's shop, though it was fixed up to hold courts in & I occupy the judge's bench. We have to clear out the shavings Saturday afternoon. The man who works there boards here & is an atheist, though he attends meeting & never says anything about religion. The people sit on timbers and boards laid along for seats. As long as I have such a good place to preach in, I am very well contented at present.

Mrs. Church's house is a double log cabin—two rooms in it. I stood in the doorway last Sabbath & preached there at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3. Next Sunday I shall preach here at 11 & at Clines' Schoolhouse at 4. For 2 or 3 Sabbaths we paid for a house—private house here 50 cts. a Sabbath. This is the only case in my experience. I am under no such necessity now, as I can preach in the jail this summer & I hope the court house will be finished by & by—a two story frame building about the size of our own house.

Answers to questions: The S. S. Libraries for me came to Burlington, from thence were forwarded to Bloomington 3 weeks ago. The gentlemen in Burlington & Mr. Robbins in Bloomington will be on the lookout & I hope yet to receive them as they are probably aboard the boat, undelivered. I have postponed commencing my S. School in order to commence with a Library.

I have no doubt I can use the Andover books to great advantage. I do not definitely know as to the distribution of Bibles here, but in Muscatine Co. a number of families were found without a Bible.

I had some tracts with me in my box & have just received 5000 pp. more. I use the Methodist hymn book—a miserable thing—because the people have no other and are generally Methodists. I sing Old Puritan tunes just as much as the people can. By and by I hope we may have better hymn books & something besides patent note music.

. . . By the way, Mr. Lyman Hott is soon going to the East, a merchant in Iowa City. He lives in North Reading. If Dr. Woods' box could be got ready this summer, Mr. Hott might ship it with his goods.

I receive the papers regularly. My prospects as to pecuniary matters are very well as far as this year is concerned, even if a third of my salary shouldn't come. I receive quarterly a draft of \$100. I take no paper in the Territory. I thought I would send you as many specimens as I could & then if you wish to subscribe for one, you will know what one to take.

I have seen no log church built after the plan proposed & had a hundred times rather see a frame or brick one, especially as in this country they would cost no more & where there are people who will put up a church at all, they will put up a frame. I have eaten, slept, preached, attended funerals & married folks in log houses & have not the objection to them

I had before I knew a little something about them, but still the plan of building a log church I do not conceive to be particularly brilliant. In a heavily timbered country in the back country & not in towns it may do. I hold no prayer meetings, class meetings & the time has not yet come. When there are enough of our people to hold such a meeting without a minister—there a minister must preach *every* Sabbath unless on some extraordinary occasion, or in answer to some very urgent call.

The Northern Association met at DeWitt, Clinton Co. May 23. President Holbrook of Dubuque, Salter of Makoqueta, Emerson of DeWitt & myself then joined the Association. Absent Turner of Cascade, Hitchcock of Davenport, Robbins of Bloomington. The church at Makoqueta is Presbyterian & is under the care of the Association. It is an Association of ministers & churches. The Congregationalists here at first were of the Connecticut stamp. Our Association is a division from the "Denmark" one, which now extends only to the Iowa. Our constitution is to be remodeled. Perhaps the Congregational & Presbyterian bodies will unite as in Wisconsin. Some measures were taken last fall towards such a result. Perhaps it will be the best course.

We are obliged to use common plates & tumblers for communion service. I wish we had some suitable furniture here at Tipton. It must not be on an extensive scale, nor costly.

*Physicians in Tipton*—Dr. Whitlock, formerly a Mormon preacher in Missouri. A Yankee—once smart man, unprincipled, bad, makes Temperance speeches, hasn't firmness enough to restrain himself from drinking. Some education probably—has resided here 2 or 3 years—40 or 45.

Dr. Hall, hoosier—35—came in this spring. Good citizen—hardly know whether he is a good doctor or not.

*Rochester*—Dr. Grubbs, died last fall, dissipated



man but an educated physician I suspect. Dr. Ricke—quack & ignoramus. Dr. Meredith appears like an intelligent physician—just came this spring—all young men.

Tipton will never be a great business place, but it's situation would be just the thing for an academy. I wish the right man would come here and start one. Mr. Wetherell's experience would give him a great advantage—still like the founding of a church it must be a prospective work. We want a minister at Charleston on the Mississippi—Black Hawk—Benton post on the Des Moines. Br. Hill & wife have arrived destined for Turkey River. That is right—I hope another single Home Missionary will never come out—or at least it will not be supposed to be the wisest course in ordinary cases. The Eastern people made a mistake in their calculations last fall as some from Iowa will tell them this summer when they return. We are all doing well but some are doing better.

*June 14—Friday:* Today has been a rainy day, and I have been sitting in this room all day. I am writing upon the dinner table—at my right hand stands an open cupboard with plates, cups & saucers upon shelves—just by me is the young lady who does the cooking, who goes to school when it is not rainy, and behind me is the cradle with the baby in it, and its mother sitting in the rocking chair; who, by the way, is one of the kindest, best hearted, excellent, Christian women in this part of the country. We have some good people here as well as in New England. Front of me is the common room, Post Office, etc. Behind me are two bed rooms & off in one corner is the cooking room. We cannot yet do without fires.

I have intended to write once a month, & as long as I wrote to Uncle Henry just at the close of this last month, I thought I would not send this until toward the close of the month. But my sheet is full and after the next mail comes in, I believe I will

send this home and calculate to write about the beginning of the month.

June 21—Last week's mail did not come till today. So much rain & the streams are high.

Your affectionate Son,

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June 21

My dear mother: Your letter written June 1st has just arrived. I must say that when I read over to Mrs. Fleming about the pies and cakes, the privations and hardships, etc., we were so wicked as to laugh. Do not give yourself any uneasiness about the roof of my room as there is a first rate carpenter who boards here equal to Mr. Moulton—besides Fleming was originally a carpenter & I know of 3 more regular ones in town who would hear me any rainy night if I should go out of doors and "holler" to them. No, my health is good and this kind of trouble is a very small matter.

If I was only a better Christian, I should be doing very well. If I had a home of my own, it would be much better for me than to live as I do now. I am by no means certain that I must go East, of course, before I can have a home. I love my home but still you must keep in mind that I have not *lived* at home since I was 16, & excepting Edward and Mary the rest of the family have been in the same place all the time.

P.S. The musical instrument would be most acceptable. I did have a "fiddle" which I played 2 or 3 months ago, but I am in such circumstances now that it would be altogether too undignified still to scrape on it. I "cut up extra" enough without taking any pains to appear unclerical.

Ann: There is a little wild cat at the next house which the people are raising for a pet. Perhaps you would like him instead of the little dog. I have taken up the wild cat and played with him.

But again good-bye & love to all—wet weather still continues—uncommonly wet.

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Tipton, July 22, 1844

My dear Father: Since I wrote home last I have received one letter, and that was yours of the 1st inst. . . . The mails have been somewhat irregular for a few weeks past and the *Puritan* has arrived a number of times quite yellow from having been soaked in the creeks. The mails are carried on horseback and the streams the last 2 months have been very high. There is a great deal of distress on the Missouri and Mississippi bottoms on account of the high water. There has not been so much rain for 2 or 3 weeks past, still we have showers every 2 or 3 days.

Last Tuesday Mr. Clark accompanied by Mr. Robbins came out to Tipton from Bloomington. They stayed over night and returned the next day. I accompanied them a few miles and showed them the tornado track. They found me not dressed up to receive company, but rather Westernized, I presume, they thought. Mr. Clark did not receive any letters to bring out for me. They were very much pleased with the appearance of Tipton & of Cedar County. Mr. Clark had quite an opportunity to see my diocese whilst here. It is a very pleasant thing to see Eastern friends. I was gratified to see the Secy. of the Mass. Branch of the H.M. So. but after his horse's head was turned one way and mine the other, in a few moments I was the same Western man as ever, plodding my lone way along the same old paths and roads, prairies and groves.

July 23 Yesterday afternoon after writing the above, I and one of my fellow boarders went out into the timber and picked a water pail full of blackberries. Today I have read a Psalm in Hebrew, and have been trying to get prepared for next Sabbath a little. I have written out a very few ser-



mons, & have the skeletons of all that I have preached with a little meat on some. I never preach with notes except down at Bloomington or some large place. A week ago last Sabbath I preached all day in the open air under a grove of trees.

Next week I shall make out my 3rd quarterly report. The next after that will be my last under my present commission. There are a few members in my church who will do next year what they can for me of course in *produce*. My deacon is raising his first crop in Iowa. Now there are two or 3 courses before me. The true plan is for the Society to own a parsonage. That would be impracticable at present. I then might build a house and have an acre or two of land somewhere about town. The people might furnish *wheat, oats, etc.* & the H.M.S. the *cash* necessary to fill up the balance of the salary.

If there should be a deficiency here, I might teach. There should be the germ of an Academy wherever there is a Home Missionary.

I might enter 80 acres of land and rent the farm and work some, and have enough to live on. After a man has a place and a start here, he can live, that is have enough to eat & drink. This plan would not be the one to draw out the benevolence of the people. All local Methodist preachers support themselves, however, & many other preachers. It would seem too much too like giving up the ministry, which I do not wish to do, though I do not seem designed for a student. When a man does not sit down 5 minutes over a book without getting asleep, it seems rather a hard case to make a book worm of him. At the end of this year I shall have \$200 in my pocket if the H.M.So. does not fail. \$400 to \$600 will place a man in a comfortable home here. You see I am looking ahead and wish to know what is best to do. I am tired of living in a tavern where everybody is just as much at home as you are. My

disposition is not of the right kind for it. I am pursuing my work successfully as could be expected to all human appearances. I hope to do more after the busy time of harvest is over. The sickly season is coming on too and it would not be best to be travelling about everywhere if there was nothing to gain by it. My health is very good. I am used to horseback riding and can ride about as well as anybody does. It does not affect me as it used to. My work now is a regular business & is not so much of a novelty as formerly. I can usually return to Tipton after preaching as I am in the centre of the county.

I thus have answered your inquiries and informed you of my situation & am endeavoring to learn what is best as to the future. I am getting Westernized probably & perhaps appear a year older than when I came out, though perhaps not. We all of us grow old pretty fast here.

July 24 Br. E. Adams passed last night with me on his way North. There is too much Old-Schoolism South to suit him & he thinks the Northern part of Iowa the field for our people. Br. Hutchinson & H. Adams are now in the East or on their way there.

July 27th I received the *Puritan* yesterday and today the mail goes out & send my love to all.

Your aff. Son.

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Tipton, Sept. 30th, 1844

My dear parents: It is now nearly two months since I have received a letter from home. The mail did not come the last week . . . Since I last wrote I have received \$50.00 worth of books from the Am. S.S. Union. \$25.00 were contributed by Mr. Hank's Society in Lowell and the remainder was from London in England. Last but not least in importance came the package which I have been so long expecting. In this were the books which you sent

from Randolph and the three dozen Testaments from South Bridgewater. They had been forwarded from Burlington but carried up & down till they were stored away somewhere and then again shipped & directed to Bloomington. I am now well supplied for one or two years. A few books I use here and a small library I have taken over to Solon. Next Spring I hope to fit out other schools with libraries.

The agent for the Am. Bible So. was here a few weeks since. We have reorganized the County Auxiliary of which I am Secretary and have something to do in distributing Bibles. Within two weeks I have attended three funerals of infants. I have also married one couple. This is the second time I have been called on upon an occasion of the kind. Last Thursday I attended a pleasant wedding party after the old Virginia fashion and to-day at the next house I have attended the funeral of an infant, which its parents had with them at the wedding last week. The day after the wedding the groom had an entertainment at his house. I mention some of these things for the benefit of anybody who may suppose that the people of Iowa are savages.

Since I last wrote I have received six individuals to the church, two of them by profession, all heads of families. We now number 10 and there are several more who will soon join I hope. It is by no means so easy as one might at first suppose to gather up old professors and form them into a church, especially when they live miles away from each other. I have had but one communion season and cannot do up things exactly as Congregational churches can in an old country. Still I endeavor to be as regular in my operations as possible and have my principles understood.

There is not one of my present members directly from a Congregational church, though two have



been so connected at some former period. A congregational family from Pennsylvania, not New England, has moved in who are not yet connected with us. So true it is that it is possible to establish Congregationalism in the West. I am sure we labor under some peculiar disadvantages here, but I hope we shall yet have a good Congregational church. I believe the present members are worthy and without occasion for reproach.

I had intended to start today for the General Association in Brighton. *But* I had a funeral to attend this morning, my horse's back is sore, I have a slight touch of a cold and it looks like rain tomorrow—it is three days' ride. I rode to Marion to attend a Presbytery there for nothing—still I may go if someone from above comes down this evening.

There has recently been an offer made to Mr. Woods of land in & about Columbus City for a college. The proposal was at first for an exchange of land in that place for Mr. Woods' place in Iowa City. Some money has been raised in the neighborhood for the College. The matter will be brought up at the Assn. We may perhaps have an Institution after all.

I hardly know what I shall do for a meeting house this winter, but hope to have some sort of a place to preach in.

Oct. 1 The mail has arrived and brought nothing for me or anybody else. . . .by next Friday I shall probably hear from home. . . .I have not gone to the Gen. Assn., perhaps I did right & perhaps not. At any rate it is too late to start now. I shall have to go up to Cascade in 2 or 3 weeks to the Northern Assn. But I must close—my love to all.

Your aff. Son.

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Tipton, Nov. 2, 1844

Ebenezer Alden, M.D., Randolph, Mass.

Dear Sir: I am now where I wish you could be

for one hour—in your son's study sitting at his table. I arrived here on Tuesday night—took him in my buggy & took a trip around a part of his diocese—up to Linn on the West—in the whole a circuit of about 80 miles.

The weather has been very pleasant, the traveling good, and I think you would have enjoyed the first view of our new work, especially with such company.

The land in Cedar county is very good, but the central & northern portions of it are almost destitute of timber. The southern part is well supplied from the Cedar & its branches. Tipton is beautifully situated on what may be either the division between the Wapsipinicon & Cedar, commanding an extensive prospect on all sides. Here is a desirable spot for immigrants—& a few of the right stamp from New England would strengthen the hands of your son much. There are many good locations for farms at good prices that can be obtained near towns & think that might be had at a small advance. The place is decidedly healthy—soil good for wheat & corn—convenient to water power & market. Many of our friends at the East might benefit their condition by coming here & be of lasting aid to the cause of Christ. Perhaps you can direct some here. A shoemaker is needed in town. You have of them & to spare.

Your son is well & happy. He seems perfectly consecrated & devoted to his work. Would be unwilling to exchange places with those who are laboring in the favor of land of New England. So far as I can learn, he gives universal satisfaction to the people. And I think is laying the foundation of many generations to come. I expect to stay with him over the Sabbath—meeting tonight & tomorrow, can tell you better how things appear after the Sabbath. I should be very happy to hear from you & to be more purposefully informed about those libraries. A letter from your daughter says some are on their way to Bloomington.

Was the appropriation on which you spoke at Andover made and was the one from the Society in Boston made of which Deacon Scudder is one of the Trustees? Should you be in Boston wish to be remembered to him. I am just about completing a tour among the churches. At its close I shall have traveled 750 miles with my horse & buggy since the middle of September. By the way, your great coat has visited most of the counties in the Territory and perhaps might be instrumental of introducing its former owner to the attention of the people if he should favor us with a visit. Please accept my gratitude for your friendship.

Yours in affection, Asa Turner, Jr.

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Tipton, Nov. 4, 1844

My dear Mother: Since my last letter home I have received one letter from you and Mary together, one from Father, both of them on Oct. 7 & one last week from Mary. For the last two weeks I have been on the constant move. I went 10 miles south on Saturday, preached on the Sabbath & returned home. On Monday two weeks ago today I started for Cascade with Br. Robbins to attend the Northern Association of which I was the Moderator & licensed a young Welshman to preach. We had a very pleasant meeting. Br. Robbins stayed in Cedar County & preached on our return whilst I proceeded to Bloomington to fill Br. Robbins' appointments.

I stayed till Tuesday noon, got me a fur cap, a pair of buffalo skin shoes & had my teeth fixed to last through the winter. I met Br. Asa Turner Tuesday night at Tipton & Wednesday morning started North again. We found materials to organize a church of which one of the members will be a Mrs. Booth who used to be acquainted with Dr. Storrs in Long Meadow when he was a young man. We returned Friday night.

Br. Turner preached once Saturday evening &



three times yesterday. We admitted 6 individuals to the church yesterday, one by profession so that our membership is now 16. 3 of these are new professors & partook of the sacrament yesterday for the first time. We had a large congregation yesterday but there was a good deal of confusion on account of the number of small children present & in the evening someone set the prairie on fire close by so that we were disturbed by it. The prairie is on fire now right out a half a mile before my window.

Br. Turner did not enjoy the day much & was a good deal disconcerted in preaching so that we did not see so great results as we had hoped for & as he saw up at Br. Salter's place a week before. Still I think good was done and I hope we shall see much more before winter is out. This morning he left me for home by way of Iowa City.

I must now make out my last Quarterly Report & the church must raise what they can for me, I hope \$50 in wheat, etc., & write on for a new commission. We begin now to feel a little like a church. I do not know when we shall begin to build a meeting house, not before we are able to ourselves. One of your school houses would make a very respectable meeting house for us. I do not have much confidence in a minister's going East to obtain funds. It is doubtful whether he will get them and if he does, the people are either dissatisfied as to the mode of his using them or the cause is injured by his absence more than the funds are worth. If a Western minister goes East, he ought to go as quick as he can, the shorter he stays the better, & come back at the rate of 40 miles an hour. But when old gentlemen & ladies who have children in the West come out to see them or any Eastern people come out to visit their friends, they need not be in so much of a hurry.

But to be more personal, I should enjoy the journey East & back very much, & I should enjoy a stay of a number of months at home still more, provided

I was doing enough to feel that I was not throwing away time. And I presume after I had preached my 6 sermons that I have written out in full this summer, Dr. Hitchcock would set me a writing more or could if I was very desirous of it. Then again if my visit East should unsettle me here, would it not have been better to have been shorter? There seems to be objections to a long visit & what could I do, or what use would it be to be gone from Tipton only 3 months?

You ought, too, to ask yourself sometimes some such questions as these perhaps. Which has the Lord treated with the most kindness, me or Mrs. Bancroft? Is it harder to have a son, collecting together church members forming churches, the means of converting sinners we trust, although I do not see him from day to day, or to have him cut off, possessed of piety & of those natural talents & those acquirements which would have made him no ordinary minister had he lived?

Is it better to have a son with such endowments & qualifications for usefulness as Henry Bancroft dying at home, or to have a son useful & happy on the other side of the Mississippi? It is best for the Lord to order our steps & not for us to be unnecessarily solicitous as it regards ourselves or our friends.

Your aff. Son,

Mr. Turner complains of my ink & of my steel pen. I presume you will be able to read this letter. Your two old coats went round in the buggy together.

My box from Chicago has not yet arrived. I have written to Dr. Woods. Wish you could start out some emigrants of the *right kind*. I do not think however that our town & church in Randolph furnish the best field for such an undertaking.

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Tipton, Cedar County, Iowa, Dec. 24th, 1844

My dear sister Sarah: . . . On Dec. 11th I received

the joint letter of you and Mother. Your other last spring I received, but the long letter in the box has not yet arrived. Perhaps I may hear something respecting it before I conclude and perhaps I may lose the box. It would not be very strange, nor any greater disappointment than a great many other people meet with every day. Still it would be very pleasant to get it. But I have ceased to look after it. If it comes, I shall be very glad and if it does not, I am just as much thankful to my friends & to the Ladies' Society and shall try to get along without it. . . .

*Dec. 27:* I suppose you look upon this Western country with great interest and have many romantic notions about it. I have given so many and particular descriptions of the natural appearance of things here and of the manners of the people and of my own situation that I think your ideas ought to be tolerably correct. There are many things that would appear strange to you that do not to me because I have become accustomed to them. . . .

If you could get a glimpse of me riding through the streets of Randolph as I appear here, I have no doubt that you would run to the window very quick. My Indian pony which I now ride would be an object of great curiosity. And then the horn to the saddle, my leggins, the saddle cloth & all would indicate a visitor from some other region. I can dress up and appear pretty well. I generally try to look respectable. But for a man that takes care of his own horse, that rides through mud puddles of such kind of mud as you know nothing about, to brush his boots, etc., etc., is rather discouraging. How many times have I started for an appointment with the Day & Martin shining and driven head foremost into a "slue" and spattered me all over before I have gone half way. Mrs. Robbins was laughing at the tattered appearance of my outside coat the last time I was down in Bloomington. I told her I would fix



up the next time I came down so as to astonish them for I had good abundance of materials to do it with when I was at home. By the way, the old coat is mended now.

In the towns there is a great deal of extravagance in dress, just as there is in their suppers when they have a party. You can see all kinds of dress in Cedar county even. The Scotch plaid thrown over the shoulders, Eastern ladies dressed well enough not to attract attention in any congregation and hoosier bonnets of all descriptions. There are all kinds of people with a great many different kinds of ways. There is a great deal more familiarity here than in the East. People don't take off their hats so much when they go into a house and do not always put the Mr. before a man's name.

Mr. Culkins wrote to me last night that he did not get my box from Chicago with his goods as it was not directed to him. He offered to send for it for me if it is there and perhaps I may get the box by and by if it is in Chicago, which I know nothing about.

. . . I suppose you have enjoyed a pleasant Thanksgiving. Christmas too has passed which is much more observed here than in New England. Before this leaves Tipton the season for wishing you a "Happy New Year" will have passed too. This wish I send to you and all at home most heartily. . . .

Your aff. Brother,

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### Judge Gardner Honored

Iowa attorneys joined in a meeting held October 5, 1956, Fall Legal Institute of the University of Iowa at Iowa City, to pay tribute to Federal Judge Archibald K. Gardner of the appellate court, oldest in service in the United States. Judge Gardner is 88 years of age and a native of Newton, Iowa. He is a chief judge of the United States court of appeals in the Eighth circuit with headquarters at St. Louis, Missouri, having enjoyed a long honored service in that capacity.

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