

time until he falls into the fire and burns his hand badly and this rather seems to quiet him. Towards morning my ear broke on the inside and ran quite freely, which greatly relieved the pain, and I got a very little sleep which greatly refreshed me.

Thursday March 26th 1857 We leave Dacotah early in the morning. It blows and rains, a very dreary looking morning. We have an almost awful hard days work to day. The snow is very deep.

Yesterday Byer and one or two more deserted us. On account of hardships To day we are compelled to drag our cattle horses and heavy waggons through snow banks, almost without number. I go ahead and look out the roads until I find one of these bad places and then wait until the men come up, and assist them

over. I am not with the Co B when they get their dinner and consequently get nothing but a cracker or two. The high points of lands are free from any snow, while the low places are covered with old snow from a foot to 5 and six feet in debth. The snow is hard. So that in some places it will hold a horse In other places, it will hold a man, and in others it would not hold a child. This makes the hardest kind of traveling. Like going up a high flight of stairs where the stairs are very high separated.

About 2. oclock P.M. when we were within about 10 miles from McKnights point and surrounded with deep snows John N Maxwell, Lieutenant of Co. "C." and myself started ahead to put up lights at the point, to direct the Company, as it became quite evident that they would not reach the timber before dark. We

The Spirit Lake Relief Expedition

In March 1857, as unseasonably cold temperatures gripped northern Iowa, a band of Wahpakute Dakota Indians led by Inkpaduta entered the white settlement at Spirit Lake in search of food and shelter from the pounding blasts of Arctic air. Not all of Spirit Lake's settlers were willing to open their larders for the visitors, and by the time the Indians departed a few days later 33 settlers were dead and 4 white women were in captivity.

In the immediate aftermath of the killings, community leaders in central Iowa raised companies of armed citizens to track down the kidnappers and to secure the Spirit Lake settlement from further attack. In Des Moines, for example, young lawyer Jefferson Scott Polk called his neighbors to arms in order to protect life and property in northern Iowa from further depredations. In Boone County, Judge C. J. McFarland joined a group of his neighbors and headed north toward Spirit Lake. Greeted by the "entire populace" on their arrival in Webster City, where the Boone County men stopped to rendezvous with other companies, the always voluble Judge McFarland spoke for his comrades. "The Boone Tigers are here," the judge declared. "Bring on your Indians, and we will lick hell out of them."

In Fort Dodge, William Williams, John Duncombe, and others pulled together about 100 men, including some from Webster City and presumably Boone County as well, and on March 25 set out on a relief expedition to Spirit Lake in deep snow and frigid temperatures. Travel was slow and taxed the strength of most of the men. Many of them collapsed into a deep sleep at the end of each day, often without eating. In her biography of Cyrus Clay Carpenter, who rode with the Fort Dodge men, Mildred Throne wrote, "the hardships that this group of men underwent called for the last ounce of stamina, and had it not been for a good core of tough frontiersmen,

who kept the men together, many of them would never have survived the experience."

An advance party sent out by William Williams to survey the situation in Spirit Lake returned with word that U.S. troops from Fort Ridgely in Minnesota had secured the settlement and were now pursuing Inkpaduta's band. In response to this news, Williams sent a small detachment north again to Spirit Lake with orders to bury the dead before returning to Fort Dodge. With supplies running low and the weather showing no sign of letting up, Williams himself and the other men turned south toward home.

Hardships continued all the way home for Duncombe and the other men who traveled with Williams, according to Mildred Throne. "At one time the men were marooned for thirty-six hours in the midst of a blizzard, with no shelter except a wagon cover and two tents stretched across the wagon bodies to provide some protection from the storm," she wrote. "Many became crazed with the cold and the lack of food; feet and hands were frozen; clothes became tattered rags."

At least the men who traveled with Williams could rely on each other for help, and eventually the group made it home. The burial party did not fare as well. Separated in the stormy weather, many wandered aimlessly for days before finding a route home. Two became lost altogether and presumably died somewhere in the unsettled territory between Fort Dodge and Spirit Lake.

Many years later, in 1894, John Duncombe and Cyrus Clay Carpenter joined Abbie Gardner Sharp — who had been taken captive in March 1857 by Inkpaduta's band and released unharmed a few months later — in dedicating a memorial to the Gardner family, their Spirit Lake neighbors, and the frontiersmen who in 1857 had hurried to their aid. — by Bill Silag

travelled about six miles through a low flat piece of ground which was filed with snow, that would break through about every other step and let us in to the hips. Some of the time I would lie down flat and roll over and over like a log to get along.

We were then within about four miles of the Grove and we overtook a Mr Wheelock who had started ahead about three hours before us. After I had travelled with him a short time he took out a little bottle of medicine, took some and told me to take a little. I did so. After a little I began to grow dizzy, and I laid it to my extreme fatigue. I took a little more a few spoonfuls, thinking that the brandy in it would resuscitate me. In five or ten minutes I could not walk a step, and the instant I would sink down in spite of biting my lips, to keep up my grit until they were sore and raw, and in spite of my friend Wheelock telling me that I must have a "little pluck", I gave out in body completely. So that I could not make a loud noise, or halloo, in the least, although I have an indistinct Recollection of trying it. Wheelock called until he was heard by Wm Church and a Mr Evans, who lived at the point and had now put out lights, it being now night. They had come out a mile to meet us. I put my arms over their necks, and with much difficulty managed to hold on until they got me to Evan's house. Here they gave me a cup of strong tea and I vomited freely. They then put me to bed, and that is the last I recollect until late in the morning of the next day when I jumped out of bed, got a cup of cold water, vomited it up, went to bed again, and lay abed all day. I felt weak and dizzy headed.

Maxwell got within about a mile of the Grove and had to be dragged in. Wheelock could not walk in, but managed to crawl and roll in.

The company was the next day in getting in and to night they lay out on the cold snow and frozen damp ground.

I came a little nearer the Locker of Davy Jones this time than ever before. On examination I found that the medicine that I had taken was one sixth part Laudinum. The surgen, Dr Bissell, told me that it was almost a miracle that I had not been killed as it would have killed 99. out of a 100. That I owed my escape to being stirred and vomiting so freely.

I felt perfectly sure that the Indians would not kill me on this trip after this.

Friday March 27th 1857 To day I lay at the house of Jeremiah Evans on my back. The company get in about 2 or 3 oclock. Several of the men tried to get in last night, but lay out on the prairie, without any

cover. It rained a little today. Sent men ahead to Carters to kill a beef

Saturday March 28th 1857 I go out in the morning I am well but rather weak. I find several of the boys quite discouraged and ready for desertion.

Oscar E. White, John Heffley Stephen York — Richardson, Wm. Tihlman and one or two more deserted. An old crazy woman went off with the battalion of deserters, and we gave them three groans for a farewell Although I had "fainted" my pluck was as good as ever if not better, and I told my men that I would go on if I knew I would be killed, and Captain Johnson of Company "C" agreed with the sentiment (poor fellow I have fear for him) and the brave boys responded with cheers.

We start, and go on, as before, collecting a few hardy volunteers to fill the places of the effeminate crazy battalion of deserters, over snows & difficulties to many to mention until we reach a place near Cillinder Creek, where old Shippy lives, where we encamped for the night. Here we had to drag our wood a long distance I slept in a waggon box, on a sled. My blankets were covered with frost. My feet and legs are wet &c.

I am careful of my strength to day and am gaining

Saturday March 29th To day we march to the Irish Colony about 10 miles. We are now about 60 miles from Fort Dodge at, a little huddle of temporary shanties where about 8. or 10. families have wintered.

We are now about 60 miles from Fort Dodge at, a little huddle of temporary shanties where about 8. or 10. families have wintered.

Their cattle and horses look very nice indeed. Some of our teams are tired out, and we leave them here. They furnish us with nearly all the teams we want, and we are compelled to take only one by four which we do, with a little swearing by the owner.

Generally they did for us all that was possible.

Today one of the teams horses tires out and I put my horse in, as it is impossible for me to ride but very little on account of the bad places.

This settlement is on the West fork of the Des Moines river about, 2 or 2¹/₂ miles above the center of Palo Alto Co where Baggs Pollock McBane & C C Carpenter have laid out a town already. It is a little South West of the [Medium?] Lakes.

Monday March 30th 1857 We start from the settlement north, up the Des Moines River and pass over a beautiful ridge of land, with broad flats along the Des Moines river valley. We send a scout of 17 men ahead to day, to scour the country and look for Indian signs. Shortly after noon the Scouts meet a body of eighteen persons who have been on the road from Springfield Minnesota (about 8 miles north of the state line) Since Thursday night last, past on which day Springfield was attacked by the Indians and six persons killed found, viz. Stewart, wife and two daughters, a little boy escaping aged 8 years, by hiding behind a log until the Indians left. Wm Wood (his brother is missing, supposed to killed and burned in his own house which was burned) and a son of Mr Thomas with whom I was well acquainted while he lived in Webster County.

In this company was Mr Thomas who had his house at Springfield attacked, with himself, Mackhan Culver & Bradshaw in it

Here they had a very severe fight and finally whipped the indians killing about a dozen of them Mrs Wm Church one of the company loading the guns, (of which they had about 12) and shooting an Indian. Here Mr Thomas Son himself, Mrs. Church's sister and Culver, hearing a whooping at the door, of an old Indian running through the road past the house rushed out, and, the instant they came to the door were fired on by a large party of indians in the woods close by them. And Mr Thos son was instantly killed or rather he lingered at the door about two hours before he was entirely dead. Mr Thomas had his left arm shot all to pieces below the elbow. Mr Culver was shot in one arm and in the side. The ball passed through the case of his lungs and he will not probably live. Mrs Church's sister was shot through the shoulder and is doing very well.

There are several small children in the company, one or two babes, I think two, several weakly women & children. The little Stewart boy, before named and a Miss Gardner aged about 16 or 17 years, is in the company. She is an orphan Her fathers entire family having been killed by the Indians at the Spirit Lakes.

These people have travelled, without a mouthful of food, except about a bushel of boiled corn, all the time since Thursday night, a distance of about 30 miles, through snows with two ox teams, and how they did it, to me is inexplicable God only knows. There there never was a harder case in Indian warefare They were wet all the time and in the snow and slush some of the time to their hips. The mind will carry the body through a great many difficulties. This is illustrated in the remark of a brave soldier who noticed that his

They were wet all the time and in the snow and slush some of the time to their hips. The mind will carry the body through a great many difficulties.

legs shook just before going into an action, when he said, "You would shake worse than that, if you knew where I was about to carry you," and marched on.

After our scouts had come up with this company they brought us word, and after our usual days toil we reached a small grove on the ~~lakes near~~ river a few miles from Big Island Grove, South West from that grove. It rained hard and we built a good fire and divided our food with the poor sufferers and set out 12 Guards who wached, 4 at a time, all night as we expected very likely the Indians would follow these refugees, and come on them when they would be most likely to catch them off their guard.

I lay to night on the frozen ground, which had thawed a little by the rain, and with my head in the mud and water, and slept soundly. I think a number of this band of Refugees must have perished if Providence had not directed our path to their assistance.

Tuesday, March 31st, 1857 This is a dreary, foggy, chilly wet morning, and the boys look a little sober, but no one grunts, or complains, except now and then one who thinks that his supply of Slap Jacks is rather short. (A Slap Jack with us is a composition of Indian

meal & flour wet up in water sometimes eatable and sometimes as hard as a brick bat)

We send a few men back with this company and the balance of us get on our way. We have a hard day to day and only travel six miles. We have an awful

Quite fresh Mocacin tracks. An unfinished canoe left but a short time since, a tree on a high peak trimmed and topped so that a man could see for miles around

time crossing Prairie Creek, and have very severe toil as the distance is about 80 rods across the flats when we have to draw our waggons. This is the last day I will leave my horse in the team. He is not large enough for the heavy work

We send a scout of 25 men ahead to day who scour all the Groves around big Island Grove and find many signs of Indians. An ox killed by them within two or three days. Quite fresh Mocacin tracks. An unfinished canoe left but a short time since, a tree on a high peak trimmed and topped so that a man could see for miles around and other signs.

We encamp to night at the Big Island Grove, and again we set a guard of 12. out

I sleep on the ground again. Quite cold tonight. I have recovered my strength and feel well. Our boys have some pretty sore feet, and many of them are compelled to rip their boots in pieces so as to enlarge them. As for me I spoiled as good a pair of boots as I ever owned the two days after I started and bought a new pair at Dacotah, which now resemble a piece of raw hide. I have lost all the socks I had when I started, have now two pair of womens stockings which I bought at Dacotah. No, I did not steal them although the boys thought it would be evidence if I ever got back that I had caught a Squaw.

Wednesday April 1st 1857 Today it is pretty cold. We have some very bad places to cross. We have travelled so

far that we dont think anything of wet feet and wet legs.

We send a scout of 25 men ahead to day.

I ride to day a good part of the way on my horse. About noon we hear a firing of guns at a little grove near a lake about 2 miles ahead of us and about three ahead of the company. Shortly after I see several men, (so far it is impossible to tell an indian, and these indians are dress in broad cloths from the plundered houses on the Little Sioux River) running out of the grove and others after them. The first I conclude are Indians and, the latter our scouts. I thought from the position of the ground that very likely three of the men running were out of the sight of the scouts, and were skulking to escape. I had left my rifle, but my Revolver is in capital order and I had an excellent double barreled Shotgun and plenty of double sized Buck shot. I put in a good load of powder and 14 buck shot in each barrel in a moment and concluded, as much as ever a man believed any thing that he did not know that I would have the gratification of getting a shot at "big game"

I thought if these rascals were armed with Rifles I could get near them by dismounting and placing my horse between me and them.

With these reflections I put my horse under the fastest gate possible and hurried on to what I supposed would be "honorable warefare" such as would not in the least disturb my conscience, after seeing the sight and hearing the story that I had seen and heard.

But I was doomed to disappointment, and found that the cause of what I had seen was simply this. We had several old trappers in our scout, and when they

We had several old trappers in our scout, and when they reached the lake they saw seven or eight beautiful otter on the ice

reached the lake they saw seven or eight beautiful otter on the ice and could not restrain their old custom and habits, and although under strict orders not to shoot at anything but Indians and to kill every thing of that kind that they could find, they let loose,

and then some of the otter ran and the men running were men after them.

I found when I reached my company they were not less anxious than myself and were all prepared for

I always doubted whether I had the real grit. I always thought my caution led me close to the verge of cowardice

action having loaded their guns, and some of them being so sure that they saw indians that they declared that they could plainly see their blankets, which every one knows would be quite difficult for a long sighted Western pioneer accustom to look miles, instead of rods, like an Eastern man

This is the first time in my life that I honestly had a chance to have my courage tried, by a prospect of a deadly fight, in which I really thought I was about to be engaged.

I always doubted whether I had the real grit. I always thought my caution led me close to the verge of cowardice but this time I would have given all I was worth to have had the three men I saw been Indians. If they had not killed me I should have killed them — I know

There is a strange fact about this whole matter. It is the first day of April!

We travel about 12 miles to the place of one Gardner who had deserted his house. Here we met messengers who came from Springfield, about 10 miles above who said that 50 mounted infantry from Fort Ridgely had arrived at that place on Friday immediately after the attack of the Indians, and had rested over Saturday and had started in pursuit of the Indians, who left the day ~~after~~ the soldiers ~~left~~ arrived in the morning. They followed the indians within a half day of them on Sunday, as shown by their camp fires, and then returned.

I have no doubt that if they had not sent for the Soldiers, which the Indians knew, we should have got hold of the red rascals.

But chagrin marked every countenance when we heard the news. We could not possibly follow the Indians as they had to much the start of us to give us

any fair chance, as we should soon run out of provisions.

We camped here over night rather crabed and cross. I lay on the ground.

Thursday April 2d 1857. We sent a company of 23. men under Captain Johnson to bury the dead at Spirit lakes. A few ~~of us~~ went on to Springfield and the balance a large majority of our 110 men turned for home. Our company who started back with the waggons reached the Big Island Grove about night. Here we encamped for the night. I slept on the ground It snowed a little and blowed hard. Very disagreeable. Gave my Bowie knife to [?]

Friday Apr 3d 1857. We reached Prairie Creek today I took the saddle off my horse and he wallowed through with water to his back & sluse the same debth We had an awful time crossing this stream I believe the worst I had seen anywhere. The snow & water nearly ran over the top of our waggon Boxes as we dragged them through. We arrived to night at the Irish settlement.

Saturday Apr. 4 1857. Started in a severe rain with our company towards Fort Dodge We got to Cillender Creek about noon, wet and cold. Here the rain had raise the Creek so that it extended or overflowed the entire flat about two or three feet up to four & five, and in the channel 10 feet deep. This Creek brought us to a dead stand still. Some went back to the Colony Some tried to head it, but failed. Two waded and swam acrost it. Several got some of the waggon boxes together and nailed them and tried to raft. Solon Mason only reached the other side and was dragged out by three men who were there getting a beautiful ducking. Wm M Koons rode my horse back to the Settlement. Mr C B Richards, Gurnsey Smith Malcolm and myself, corked another waggon box and crossed over, thinking to get back and bring others over but a strong wind — an awful wind blew from the other side and after laboring for a long time to get over we found at last that it was utterly impossible and gave it up. We went three miles to old Shippys, and staid all night. In the night it turned very cold & snowed

Sunday April 5, 57 This morning, when I first went out, I was very much afraid that many of our men must be frozen to death, as it was an intensely cold frosty windy snowy morning.

Richards, Smith Mason & myself went down to the creek to see what could be seen of our boys.

We found our boys had tented as we supposed. The distance was too great to see or tell a horse from a

man. The ice had frozen so as to hold nearly — the half mile except where the wind had blown so that it could scarcely freeze if it had been at the North pole. We took our waggon box, hitched a long rope to it, (That is Smith and I did, Richards being a feminine man, and Mason, from the severe ducking of last night was so chilled that he could hardly get back to the house) and then attempted to cut our way through. The cold was so severe, that my beard was covered with ice, as bad as when the thermometer is 20 degrees below zero. We found finally after working about two hours that it was utterly impossible to reach the other side, as the ice would freeze to our boat as fast as we could cut it away in front making it a perfect drag and we feared after we would get about half across that it would freeze the channel back of us and put us in a "fix". So we went back. In the evening we came back and I crawled over and found

Our boys were all right. . . . They had blankets, but nothing to eat, but a little cold raw rice and raw pork.

that our boys were all right, and succeeded with boards, in getting two of them across, with the help of Smith & Malcolm. They had blankets, but nothing to eat, but a little cold raw rice and raw pork.

I felt very bad to day for fear our Spirit lake boys would all be frozen to death

Such a day as this I never saw in April

Monday April 6th 1857. This morning it is very cold But the wind has gone down and the sun shines brightly. ☞ Let it be remembered that last night and yesterday the ice froze over the body of water in Cillender Creek notwithstanding the wind blowed nearly a hurricane and the waves roled a foot or two high, so thick that today Richards brought his horse over and we drew a loaded waggon over; the balance having gone back. One or two of the boys were slightly touched with frost, but slightly. To day I, with part of the company, went on the McKnights point where I stoped about noon to wait for the balance. Smith & Malcolm & Johnson went on a head.

I stayed at Evanses all night

Tuesday April 7th 1857 To day I wait at Evanses for my [company?] to come on. I go down and wade to my hips in Bridge Creek & carry little John Stewart, the orphan boy, on my back, we having left the balance of our company of invalids at the Irish Colony. The women came with us to Cillender Creek but when they could not cross they returned back again. We begin to hear from our Spirit lake boys. Some of them came up with us to day. Some of them got in to the Colony on ☞ Sunday laying out on Sunday night wet to the skin and some of them are badly frozen. Hardly expected to get along without loosing some of their toes and fingers. Some did not get in until the Monday following. They were out of their heads on the day they arived, many of them

These men give the following account of their expedition, which I took from Lieutenant John N Maxwell.

The party burried A. Noble wife and child E Ryan, Mrs Joel Howe and five sons, child of J.M. Thatcher, man unknown found at Granger's and supposed by some to been a Granger, WW Mattock, wife & four children, eldest 14 years old Robt Clark of Waterloo, J H Harriott, Joseph Harshman, a man supposed to be Granger or Cropper, Man unknown Rowland Gardner, wife & child 12 years old, Mrs Mary Luce (wife of Harvey Luce) Albert and Amanda Luce, The bones of two persons found in the ashes of Mattock's house.

At the house of Mattock there had evidently been a severe battle, as the bodies of the men were found around, mostly by the trees to the number of seven

Fourteen large tepees were found about 16 feet in Diameter which would indicate that there were at least 140 warriors present according to their customs on a war party.

The cattle were all killed, and the only living thing found at Spirit lake was a chicken and a dog.

The murdered were terribly mangled, some of their heads were cut open, some were hacked up, but none Scalped

Thus, the Settlement at the Lakes which consisted of 43 persons was entirely destroyed

The party buried 29. The bones of the two burned made 31. The soldiers found and burried 1 making thirty two with six at Springfield made the No. known to be killed 38. With the missing 12, makes 50 in all, killed & missing and 3 wounded before described

The whole history of the settlement of the country has not given a more bloody record of the hellish nature of the Indian, who has been praised in a Thousand Hiawathas. One of the men, Howe I think,

had a book in his pocket in which he had poetry about the songs of the Red Man — devil, it ought to have been, to rhyme with his true character.

Wood, who was killed, was frequently heard to say, that the Indian had more honor than the white man and when he was killed they owed him quite an amount. The villains came into the houses of the whites

My horse is at the Irish Colony. My buffalo robes and the blankets of my bed have been distributed in every part of the land to the brave boys

and spied out everything professing the kindest feelings until they go ready, then they took women out and brutally abused them by forcing them to satiate their brutal passions until finally they got ready to kill, and then they did kill, taking advantage of the time in which they supposed no person could reach them.

Two of the persons sent to the lakes have not been heard from, Capt Johnson and Wm Burkholder. Fears are entertained that they are lost, frozen or starved & frozen.

I stay tonight at the Evanses

Wednesday Apr. 8, 1857 I start from the Evanses. Most of the boys have come up. I walk 20 miles to Dacotah, in about 4½ hours. I am the first through except McCarty & Baker of my company, who are with me. Our company scatter in. I stay here all night. It is quite cold weather yet. The River is not fordable. The water is pretty high. The ice is gorged in some places.

Thursday Apr. 9th 1857. We start today for Fort Dodge it being 17. days since I left there today. We are ferried over the West Fork by John Miller. Mr Miller gives us our dinner and will take nothing. He treats us very kindly.

He sent his teams down to deer Creek and brings on our way to that point. Here I met W O Ruggles my old friend whom I am happy to see. He treats me very pleasantly. He has just brought back his new wife from Vermont.

I go back with him to his house and then he brings me on down to the Ford where a New Ferry boat has just been constructed for the benefit of the travelling public.

To night I sleep at my office. My friends congratulate us

Friday April 10th 1857 I spend my time in my office trying to look up my matters. I find I have spent in cash about 39. dollars, which is out of course. My horse is at the Irish Colony. My buffalo robes and the blankets of my bed have been distributed in every part of the land to the brave boys that are with me.

Last night we had a Military Meeting in which we were applauded by the citizens and commendatory resolutions passed for our special benefit. All for our Indian Excursion. Our men are all dismissed tonight.

I go home feeling that I have done one [good?] act in my life at last, whatever I may have done wrong. Am vain I fear in this. I deserve no praise. I did my duty only

Saturday April 11 I spend my time in my office writing letters. I have a great no. to write. I think I write about 25 today. It will take a little time to catch up my business. I call this cold weather

Sunday Apr 12th 1857 I spend this day in my office, writing letters and am glad to hear a sermon. I spend the afternoon at N.B. Morrisons very pleasantly.

Monday Apr 13th 1857. Cold weather for the season. The ice has just left the Des Moines and the frost is

I spend my time in my office writing letters. . . . about 25 today.

just leaving the ground. The nights are cold and a cold North wind is blowing from the North.

Tuesday, Apr. 14th 1857 The weather is very cold. Today the votes for County Judge are canvassed, and Notwithstanding the Southern portion of the County [Runs?] Cole, Rees was elected. Rees, Dem. 155, Pease Repub. 123, & Cole Independent 149. We have carried the election and I have accomplished two objects with which I set out and had a hard fight to get it fixed right viz.

To defeat Pease and Messervey I did it and no mistake.

Wednesday Apr 15th 1857 The weather is very cold for the season. I think as cold as I ever saw. A cold North wind.

Thursday April 16 1857 The weather is very cold. I spend my time in my office

Friday April 17th 1857 I go with Mr M S Wood over to Webster City. Oh what a joyful thing once in a while

*I find Mr & Mrs
Willson at home. They
have lost their child.
They seem quite lonely.*

to get rid of eating at the Wahkonsa Hotel, in Fort Dodge! Long to be remembered, place of dirt & dry meat farewell for a day or two!

I find Mr & Mrs Willson at home. They have lost their child. They seem quite lonely. I have a pleasant evening here.

The weather still continues quite cold.

Saturday Apr 18th Mr. Wood and I go up to Wm Frakeses to get him to accept of service of a notice to appear at the next term of the Court to answer a petition by him as exc of the Estate of A J Brewer in favor of W C & [?] Willson. Frakes accepts of the service of the notice. We return home and cross Boone River in a skiff. The river is very high.

It froze quite hard last night So the ponds will nearly bear up a person

Willsons are in the hotel at Webster City.

Berkley says it is the practice and that deeds can be properly executed by an admr for land sold by a decedent without an order of Court. I deny it, and I know I am right

Sunday Apr 19 I spend my time at Willsons, and in the afternoon attend the funeral of two small children. Cool but pleasant day

Apr 20 Still at Webster City. Try to find coal on [Brewer farm?].

Tues April 21st 1857 Beautiful day, but a cold wind blows from the North. I go over to Fort Dodge in Beaches lumber waggon. I really suffer with the effect of the cold winds


Wed Apr. 22, 1857 I spend my time in my office writing. The weather still continues cold.

Thurs Apr 23 57 Cold wind. No appearance of grass as yet.

In my office.

Friday, Apr 24 57 Very cold chilly wind. Need an overcoat.

The roads are good and have been all the spring except the sloughs which are passable.

Saturday Apr. 25th 1857 ~~Spend my time in my office~~ A number of Strangers come to town, to attend the land sales. Yesterday evening I went to Webster City and  I never saw such an excitement among rational men. Towards night the whole town was roused up by the cry of Indians. A man by the name of Gray and one by the name of Gleason rode their horses on the full run for 8 miles or more and brought the news that they had been chased into town by three Indians on horse back. The great mass of the people believed the report, but I offered them and every other man \$25. a piece for every man that had seen an Indian and for every Indian they had seen

After a short time Messrs W Church J N Maxwell & Bradshaw came riding into town but there was no signs of Indians and it turned out that they had rode up so near to the said Gray & Gleason that they had recognized them and had called to them but they Swore that they all wore blankets and were armed

*I never saw such
an excitement among
rational men.*

with rifles and had chased them and were mounted on Indian ponies.

This is an illustration of the way a scared man will see. The truth was not a man of them had a blanket, not a man had an Indian pony But large horses but one man had a rifle.

The people were so anxious to be scarred that in spite of what I could say, and all the other cool headed men they had no doubt of the truth of the story until

Some fled so rapidly that they left their meals half eaten and their doors wide open. Some rushed across the prairie, Some started for Ft Des Moines and some for Iowa City.

these three men rode into town and I believe some of the women and I don't know but some of the scary breed of men actually believed they were Indians after they were near enough so that I knew them.

The Report had gone over to Webster City that Fort Dodge had been attacked by the Indians numbering 70,000 and it is a fact that a great many people had no doubt of it. I believe the panic was so great that the people from the head of Boone River to the mouth with two or three exceptions, fled from their homes. Some fled so rapidly that they left their meals half eaten and their doors wide open. Some rushed across the prairie, Some started for Ft Des Moines and some for Iowa City. The last night Webster City was guarded by 24 armed men.

Not a man has been seen as yet who has seen the sign of an Indian. There is not the slightest danger from them. But there is some excuse on account of the late Spirit Lake Massacre.

The people at the Irish Colony have all come down to Ft Dodge and the people at Lots Creek. The people of Algona & Irvington up the East fork of the Des Moines river have built forts, for their protection, but I don't think they will need them.

This is another illustration of the power of Humbug.

I have never been more disgusted in my life! To see men whom we would call sensible get so terribly excited that they really don't know which side up they are. It does seem to me that it is the most perfect farce I ever saw. Some of the people in the suburbs of the

Town of Fort Dodge & Webster City actually moved into the central part of the town for protection.

We have sent guides & scouts out to the very head of the River to see what the real danger is, but have not as yet been able to hear anything like danger.

We hear reports about the depredations of Indians in Minnesota but if the rumors are as false about that just as here, probably it is all false.

I go to Fort Dodge

Sunday Apr 26th 1857 Cold chilly day. I am in my office nearly all day reading and writing.

Apr 27 57 Court sits here this week. I have twenty two cases on the Docket.

Judge McLong Whiskers alias McFarland presides Court in the School house.

Rather an interesting court! No whiskey drank by the Court! (?)

Apr 28. Rather a pleasant day. This is really the first Spring day ☞ that we have had. This is a real pleasant Spring day.

Apr 29 To day I make a speech in defense of Wm Gibbons tried for shooting Barney Caligan or Calihan with intent to kill him.

The case was tried and decided in favor of the State. The verdict was that "We the Jury find the Deft guilty of the offense of ~~doing~~ a shooting at Barney Caligan with intent to do a great bodily injury. The sentence was 50\$ fine. The second offense or rather penalty was one weeks imprisonment in the county jail. He gets off rather easily although I did defend him.

In the case of Buterworth Et Al Defts. & the State of Iowa Plaintiffs, the Judge refused to allow "Old Timber" or myself appear in this case. Court adjourned today.

Thurs Apr. 30, 1857 Beautiful day. This is the second beautiful day this year.

In the afternoon the rain comes which we really need.

This has been a very remarkable spring. The papers state that on the 14th [?] the snow was 3 feet deep in the western part of New York, and Oneida County.

May 1st 1857 Beautiful day. The rain has given a slight appearance of grass. The first of the season.

Saturday May 2d Beautiful weather. At home.

Sunday 3d Beautiful day. At home.

Monday May 4th 1857 This is a fine day. The land sales commence at the Fort Dodge Land Office. This is the first "Land Sale" of public lands I ever attended. The lands are "offered" as it is called for two weeks, before there can be such a thing as private entry. Then you can enter with Land warrants or otherwise

The lands are sold in 80 commencing with the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ East half. So through the Section going west. Then beginning at the E $\frac{1}{2}$ S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$.

These lands are all North of the South line of Town-

I shall be wonderfully disappointed if the purchasers do not get soaked a little. . . . If I live 20 years I shall not see these lands settled.

ship No. 94. and sell from 1.25. to 2.50 per acre. I shall be wonderfully disappointed if the purchasers do not get soaked a little in their purchases. I may be mistaken. If I live 20 years I shall not see these lands settled.


Tues May 5th 57 At home Beautiful day. The grass begins to sprout nicely. Very.

Wed. May 6 57 A home. Very fine day I tip my stove out of my office.

Thurs. May 7th 57 Pretty day. I go over to Webster City in the Stage.

Friday May 8th 57. I sell a lot in Webster City for \$200. Gold to P.H. Smith & Edward Clements of St Augustine Fulton Illinois. The lot is oposite to Judge Maxwells house

I trade another with a man by the name of Kinsman of Oskaloosa for a very nice gold watch and chain worth \$125 cash, & get \$50 to boot. I trade with Willson the same rig & boots and get another lot worth \$50 more than the one I sold.

 A remarkable day for a South wind — terrible.

Saturday May 9th 1857 I go to Fort Dodge facing a very cold chilly West wind. Yesterday morning at

sunrise I saw a beautiful rain bow across the entire Heavens that indicated a storm. We get it in wind and no mistake the old saying of "Rainbow in the morning Sailors take warning" is true in this case

Sunday May 10th 1857 Last evening I put up my stove again in my office It is quite cold. The wind blows hard.

Monday May 11th 57 Col Jesse Williams arives The weather is rather cold and windy. I begin to let my horses run out without feed or grass.

Land still sells at a high price. Very high for the kind of land. I mean at the land sales.

Jesse Williams brother is here from Cincinatti.

Tuesday 12 I spend the day in my office. I am quite busy, writing articles, leases &c for Col Williams.

No particular news

Wednesday May 13th 1857 This is a cold windy day It rains quite hard in the morning. I feel a little discouraged. I fear we are to have another cold season. If we do it will give us a hard hard time and no mistake. But it is soon enough to take trouble when it comes.

John Shaffner sells out his lease to O.K. Johnson today & the Wahkonsa house has a new set of proprietors

Thurs May 14th 1857. In my office, doing business. Very good weather. The Spring is quite backward.

Friday 15th Pleasant day. Quite a crowd, at the Land office.

Col Williams here. We talk of discontinuing the firm of Williams Henn Co

Saturday May 16th 1857. Fine Day. At home. The Land Sales are closed and adjourned for a week.

Sun 17th In my office reading until the afternoon I am ashamed to say I went out to see a party fish although I did not fish any myself

A very fine day.

Monday May 18th In my office. Quite busy writing &c

Tues. 19th In my office. Pretty day I read the Westminster Review

Wed. 20th In my office. Beautiful day Subdivided Dipperts Block

Thursday, May 21st 1857. I rose early this morning.

Did my mending, and went to my breakfast Board is \$4.50 per week without lodging.

Provisions are very high. Fodder is dear all through the Country. The Spring is very late. The grass is just up enough to make it passibly good. Politics are quiet. This State has gone Democratic by about 500. Majority, all except one officer, the Register of the Des Moines [Impt?]. He, the Republican was elected by about 300 majority. This is a democratic gain of about 7 or 8000.

To day has been the warmest day of the season

Friday May 22d 1857. Beautiful weather. The grass is high enough for good feed Wm M Koons says there is quite a heap of old snow on the other side of the Des Moines. On the night of the 15th inst. it froze $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in thickness at fathers. We have about 500 land agents in town. We meet to make some arrangement about entering land.

Saturday May 23d 1857 Beautiful day. We meet again to arrange matters for entering lands. It is agreed that every body who desires 1000 acres of land shall be permitted on Monday next at 7 oclock A.M. to draw lots for the first chance Col Williams is still here.

Sunday May 24th 1857. A Beautiful day. The weather has been very fine for a week or ten days.

I spend my time in my office reading Blackwoods Magazine

Monday May 25 1857. It rains a little this morning A

*Beautiful weather.
The grass is high
enough for good feed*

great crowd collects around the land office door. 376 ballots are drawn for chances. We have 9 chances but are exceedingly unlucky

Tuesday May 26th 1857 It rains. The weather is rather cold.

Wednesday May 27th 1857 A very little rain. Rather cold I go out to look at the land up deer creek to see the best way to survey it

This evening there is a beautiful rain bow, and if

the Sailors signs prove true we shall have some beautiful weather.

Thursday May 28th 1857 This morning is rather cool but the sun shines brightly.

I rise early at 5 oclock and read a long article

*A great crowd collects
around the land office
door. 376 ballots are
drawn for chances.*

entitled "Sidney Smith" in Blackwoods Magazine before breakfast. I am engaged in laying out some out lots on the N $\frac{1}{2}$ N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 29,89,28.

Friday May 29th 1857. Beautiful, warm day. I spend my time surveying out lots as yesterday. Col Jesse Williams leaves to day for Fairfield to return in two weeks.

Towards evening the wind blows severely.

Saturday May 30th 1857. Today I spend my time in my office plating the land I surveyed for the Fort Dodge Company.

It rains nearly all day slightly. The trees are in pretty full leaf & the grass is up pretty finely.

No news in particular. Money is a little tight.

Sunday May 31st 1857. It rained nearly all night. The morning looks a little gloomy but it brightens as the day advances

I lock my office to keep old "humbugs" and "disipations" [out?] so that I may have a little quiet on Sunday

I spend the day in reading and reflection. I am now ~~wright~~ writing about half past ten o'clock. I have read an article in the April No. 1856 of Blackwood on De Bazancourt's Narative of the Campaign. One on "Allisons History of Europe" and one on "The Laws Concerning Women", all of which are excellent. The one on the Laws Concerning Women is beautifly written and contains my sentiments on the Subject with an accuracy of Expression far beyond my power of communication. I really enjoy life more in reading the learned articles on various subjects contained in the Brittish Reviews and this Magazine than all my

intellectual reading put together. It is a feast to me although bodily I cant boast of the feasts that I have these hard times when it is impossible to furnish physical food for the body. I love to live for no other great reason as my honest sentiment would express it than because I desire to fill my mind with useful

*I really wonder if I was
born to live and die
without leaving a name?*

knowledge. Today ends the Spring of 1857, which counts for my life twenty six springs I have past. I look over my life now with really pleasant feelings I have seen a great many events for so short a life, but really I have no great reason to complain, and if I will only put my shoulder hard to the wheel I am not so old yet, but that I may make my mark. I really wonder if I was born to live and die without leaving a name? Is it possible that more than one third of my probable life has passed without my doing one single act that will mark my memory, after the present race is dead? Yes, it is even so? I say it in sorrow. But I am determined that it shall not be so in the future

I will at least make the attempt by aiming high.

Monday June 1st 1857 Rather cool in the morning but grows pleasant through the day

I spend the forenoon in the land office in trying to keep a little [?] in order. He promised to enter 480 acres of land for me but only entered 160. I went over the Lizard River and took dinner with W M Koons on his preemption.

I wrote a good many letters and made out a large No. of papers for Mrs Bridget [Fahy?] in the County Court. In the morning I read a piece in Blackwood Magazine entitled "Fish ponds & fishing boats, which gave me a number of interesting ideas as to the best kind of fishing boats and the best method of arranging ponds Also the particular power of taming fish as you can any other animal an instance of which is given by the writer

Tuesday June 2d 1857 Cool cloudy morning. I have read an articles from the June No. of Blackwoods Magazine entitled the Scott abroad which gives me an excellent moral sentiment given by Col Monroe that

when demanded to capitulate he answered that he did not find any such language in his commission

I spend my time in my office and do a little business.

Wednesday June 3d 1857 Rise early and read a little in Blackwood. Cool day.

Frank Reno & Winters have a real sharp fight in front of my office. Frank whips. I would not have seen him whipt for \$50 as he was from my native county, and has not at pride of his native land? I go to Tolmans with [?] Williams. The country looks beautiful indeed! He admires it. The farmers are planting [?] this spring.

Thursday June 4th 1857 Cool morning. Almost need a fire. I rise early and bathe myself all over and read an article in the Edinburgh Review.

Friday June 5 1857 Rise early, read an article in the Edinburgh, and take a walk before breakfast. Warm pleasant day. I survey out lots in the forenoon In the afternoon spend my time in the office and got down to see the beds of iron ore which is dug out amounting to [150000?] tons I think

Saturday June 6th 1857 Warm morning. looks a little cloudy and the wind is blowing

Sunday June 7th 1857 Beautiful warm pleasant day. Spend my time in my office reading.

*I go and hear Elder Dodder
preach. He said that Religion
was not popular here. . . .
I must confess that I lost
the string of his discourse
on account of a short nap*

Monday June 8th 1857 Beautiful warm pleasant day. I enter 1000 acres of land warrants on land that I cannot recommend as first rate.

Tuesday June 9th 1857 Spent my forenoon in my office.

In the afternoon I went to Sargents with J P Williams & Frank Reno Had a delightful ride, and a pleasant visit

This has been the warmest day of the season thus far

Wednesday June 10th 1857. Cloudy morning. Rained a little last night. Warm, good weather for corn. Rise early. Sweep my office, take a walk, write a little, read an article in Blackwood before breakfast Spent most of my time in my office it is a delightful day. I read a long story in Blackwood "[?]." In the evening I call on W.O. Ruggles. Have very pleasant visit.

Thursday June 11th 1857 Beautiful morning. I rise early take a walk, black my boots, read considerable before breakfast in Blackwood, find a Dutchman stealing sand, for [Ferrel?]. Straighten up my accounts and then go to breakfast

Friday June 12th 1857 I spend the day in going with A S White his wife & sister in going to Webster City. Underdown keeps the big hotel in Webster City. Willson and his lady are just ready to start for the East to remain a short time. Mrs Willson thinks of spending the summer at Saratoga Springs.

Saturday 13th Start for Fort Dodge via Homer. It rains. Have a pleasant ride Eat dinner at Homer. The weather is quite pleasant ride. Rather cool day

Sunday June 14th 1857. Beautiful hot day. The warmest of the season. It would be almost insufferably hot if the wind did not blow. I go and hear Elder Dodder preach. He said that Religion was not popular here. He did very well. But I must confess that I lost the string of his discourse on account of a short nap that I took out of sight of anybody while he preached.

I spend the balance of this day in my office very pleasantly. I take one good nap and write a letter or two & read a little

Monday June 15th 1857 Beautiful day. Today a notice is placed on the Land office door stating that all persons who desire shall have the privilege of pre-empting the even sections of land alternating with the odd sections.

This raises quite an excitement

Tuesday June 16th 1857. Rather a cool damp day. It rained quite severely last night I go over to Boots to see that he has some person on his place as soon as

possible He attends to it and gets Michael Cavanaugh to do it for him. He is to get the title of the land and if Boot wishes to buy after he has got it he is to have the land at \$5. per acre & is to furnish the purchase money making \$7.50 per acre

*So that by the time I am
45, if a kind Providence
spares me so long,
I shall have a little income
to work on in old age.*

Wednesday June 17th 1857. It is really a cold gloomy day. One of the coldest I ever experienced this season of the year. I consummate my trade with Elizabeth H. Colburn for $\frac{1}{8}$ interest in her farm lots 3, 4, & 5 in 30, 89, 28 for \$3460. At the rate of \$200 per acre. I tremble over this trade but I rather hope it may be the means of making my fortune. It will or else it will come very near breaking me. One note for \$700 is due 19th Nov. 1. \$600 / 2. yers from date 1. 600, 3 years. 1. 600, 4 years. 1. 660, 5 years from this date all with ten per cent interest per annum. This is the most speculative trade I ever made in my life. And I candidly think my chances are about equal whether I win or loose. I really hope to win. If I make anything out of this trade, if I dont absolutely loose on it I shall make not less than \$20,000 in 20 years. So that by the time I am 45, if a kind Providence spares me so long, I shall have a little income to work on in old age.

My heart feels a little faint, but time will develop the whole thing and will show me whether I have done wisely or foolishly.

I cant see into the future, but I am in for luck good or bad, accordingly as I have coal or no coal which it is impossible for me to determine as yet, or rather how it may turn out

Thurs June 18th 1857 Cool day. It rains a very little. I spend my time in my office. I do a little business. The corn is rather stunted by cold weather

Friday June 19th 1857. Cool day. A few sprinkles of rain.

I spend [my day?] in office in writing. I go over

the River in the afternoon to visit N.B. Morrison or rather his wife, or more particularly his Sister. I am sadly disappointed. I meet all three coming into town and they take me across the river in their light buggy. Morrison rides one of the horses, while I take his place in the buggy. Pleasant! riding by the side of the lady.

Saturday June 20th 57 Beautiful morning! I spent last night with Morrisons family on the West side of the Des Moines River. I slept on the floor with my friend

Senator Jones is a most admirable travelling companion.

while his wife and sister slept in the same room in a bed. I spend the day quite pleasantly visiting, riding on foot over the prairie, splitting fence posts, catching horses and finally wind up the day by all going over to Fort Dodge to take me home.

I find that Genl Jones Gen Booth, Col Mason Mr Morris Mr Denton and several R R men have been all day at the Fort. I spend the evening with them, at Maj Williams.

Sunday June 21st 1857 By agreement I rise at four in the morning and take Genl Jones with Merritts horse and buggy over to the Lizzard to try to catch Dr Wright who was to wait for the Genl about six miles out of town. We drove about 14 miles and found that he had gone on. So we turned back. On our way back Genl Jones was determined to get into a crowded waggon with strangers to go to Sioux City. I would not let him go but restrained him by telling him I would take him with great pleasure with my own horses and carriage.

I bought a carriage of Morrison for that purpose and gave him \$200. for it.

Genl Booth Mason Et. al. R.R. men all leave us about two o'clock delighted with our place.

Monday June 22d 1857 I start today in my carriage with Genl Jones to go to Sioux City in company with B Grayson J P Williams & Wm M Koons who are to go with us to the twin Lakes, twenty five miles from Fort Dodge. The day is most delightful and we enjoy ourselves very well.

Senator Jones is a most admirable travelling companion.

We stay all night at Graysons at the Lakes. I tie my horses to my waggon or rather to Graysons waggon Sweetly sleep. It rains during the night.

Tues. June 23d 57 Rains this morning. One of my horses gets cast by his rope and is thrown down. He gets the rope under his hind shoe and we try to get it out in vain. Finally he gets up and gets away from us. Genl Jones advises me to catch him immediately as he suggests he might run off. I have no fears and do not attend to the matter. After breakfast I go out to the door and see my horse about 2 miles away on the keen run.

I look rather blank for a short time. Finally [?] W M Koons goes to Fort Dodge after him. We wait all through this long day before we find him. Finally we don't find him but we are all right, as Koons will bring him tomorrow.

It rains quite rapidly all day. The Genl. & Self give a fellow who was leaving the country [perfect "Jesse"?] for his course. Don't know whether he stayed or not, I think not, however.

Wed. June 24, 57 Beautiful day. Koons returns with my horse from Fort Dodge and we leave the beautiful twin Lakes almost with regret. The Genl wrote a strong letter to J.S. Willson relating to W.M. Koons Preemption. We ride all day until night and find ourselves at

Sac City has just had the dictum of Judge McFarland that it is not a county seat. Whether the cause will be taken to the Supreme Court I do not know.

Sac City. We stay here all night with one Mr Chris.

We have rather a pleasant time. Here I see a curiosity worth attention. A deep ravine near a steam saw mill was filled with snow last winter. This snow was covered with the saw dust of the mill and is now