

note? the Ball at the St. Charles hotel on the 3 It was a proud affair for this new County. The Webster City people were all on hand.

*I wonder if I am always to live this cold half living life. . . . It is wrong*

Tues Feb. 9 1858 [At] home, if I have a home. I wish I had a good home and a good wife.

Wed Feb 10, 58 At Ft Dodge.

I like this cold winter weather, it is healthy and bracing

I wonder if I am always to live in this prison of monotony, without any home, without any wife or family, without any dear one to love, to live to let my heart dry up with selfishness

I wonder if I am always to live this cold half living life. If I am I care but little how soon I die. It is wrong wrong wrong

Thurs Feb 11, 58 In my office.

Feb. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 23. On 22 Joined the Masons

At home in my office most all of this time and but very little worthy of notice.

Wed 24 Feb 1858 J.D. Burkholder and I start for Fort Des Moines to prevent T. 90. being stolen from our County.

A hoar is sent off at the same time with us by some of the Fort Dodge hoar masters. I know her character and keep aloof from her. I never touched a leud woman or any other woman illicitly and by the help of Providence I never will. I despise them, and I love a virtuous woman above all living things on Earth.

Thurs Feb 25, 1858 We start from Boonsboro early. The hoar tries to become very interested with me but it is of no use. I am impurturable to such temptations

We arive at Des Moines after dark and Burkholder and I stop at the American house.

Sun Frid Feb 26, 1858, Feb. ~~2, 3, 4~~, 27, 28.

March 1, 2, 3, 4. I worked hard, had two real quarrels with Ed McKnight fought with words and election-eered my best for R.R. bills T. 90 and all other projects that I felt an interest in.

The tide is in our favor, but court is coming on

## “How much happier I should be”

When he arrived in Fort Dodge in 1855, John Duncombe was a heartbroken young widower. He had married Carrie Perkins in 1852 in Erie, Pennsylvania, soon after opening his legal practice there. Within two years of their wedding, however, his young wife had died, and Duncombe struck out for the West in hopes of beginning his life anew. In his first years in Fort Dodge, he was prone to miserable bouts of loneliness and depression. “I wish my heart was as happy as it once was,” he complained on April 13, 1856.

His mood brightened later in the year, around the Christmas holidays, when he met Ella Richards during a trip east with Bernhart Henn. Never given to understatement, Duncombe declared on December 27, “I am really in love with Ella,” noting in his journal that he had not seen such happiness in recent years. But this happiness proved elusive — Ella’s name does not appear again in the journal — and on August 16, 1857, Duncombe again found himself in a funk. “Oh, if I only had a pleasant home and a true hearted sweet wife, how much happier I should be!”

Historian Ellen Rothberg, author of *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America*, would probably describe John Duncombe’s feelings as typical of 19th-century middle-class

men in the United States. According to Rothberg, the mid-1800s saw the emergence of modern notions regarding romance as an essential part of courtship and as the basis of marital intimacy. Once considered youthful folly, romance had become socially respectable. “Everyone wanted to fall in love, and men especially seemed to feel a sense of obligation, even of desperation, about it.”

These were years of a widening gap between the spheres of home and work, Rothberg explains, when “middle-class men were becoming increasingly identified by their involvement in the world away from the home.” If marriages were to succeed, couples needed to establish the “mutuality, commonality, and sympathy” required to bridge men’s and women’s spheres. For this reason, men were well advised to find partners who brought to marriage an understanding of the world of work along with a commitment to establishing a peaceful refuge from its physical and mental demands.

Duncombe’s journal reveals that he too was looking for a “virtuous and lovely” woman who could be “the great source of all virtue” in his life, not only to “assist [him] to be happy” but also to protect his “taste for refined Society.” References to his high-minded romantic pursuits fill pages of the journal, and they in-



and I cannot tell what the result will be when we leave.

C B Richards shows himself a scoundrel.

*Frid March 5, 1858* I start with Burkholder for Fort Dodge.

*Sat 6 1858* We arrive at Fort Dodge

*Sun 7* Spend my time in my office writing letters in the evening call at Maj W[illiams]

*Mon. March 8, 1858* Spend my time in my office. A good deal of excitement about land office.

Pleasant weather It looks like spring. The roads are getting quite dry in Fort Dodge

*Tues March 9, 1858* In my office Very busy preparing for court

*Wed March 10, 1858* Spend my time in my office. We are to have a vote on erecting public buildings.

*Thurs March 11, 1858.* Beautiful day. Enter 920 acres in the land office

Very busy bringing suit for court as this is the last day of service Spent the evening very pleasantly at Maj Williams

*Frid March 12 1858* Beautiful morning. I take a walk before breakfast.

*Saturday March 13, 1858* Spent my time in my office. Attended one suit. Was successful.  
Beautiful weather.

*Sunday March 14, 58.* Beautiful day. I wrote a long Editorial after Breakfast & then went to church Went to Ruggleses Had a pleasant call. Went to Church. Went home with Miss Molly Williams. Had a very pleasant afternoon and evening visit.  
Rains in the evening.

*Mon March 15, 1858* Beautiful spring morning

*Tues 16, 1858* Spent my time in my office hard at work all day It rains in the evening. I go to the dramatic recitation. Learn that A J Humphrey and Miss Libby Jenkins are engaged to be married. Good if true Have pleasant time with Miss Molly Williams.

*Wed March 17, 1858* Cool wet morning A S White & wife start East

*Thurs. Frid. Sat. Sun* Spent my time in my office preparing for Court.

clude portraits of several young women Duncombe knew in Fort Dodge and in other cities. Emily Jannis, for example, who Duncombe met on a visit to Senator George Jones's Dubuque home, was "a very excellent girl in my opinion.... I really like the appearance of this young lady." Traveling with Jones's entourage on a sightseeing trip up the Mississippi, Duncombe wrote on July 20, 1857: "We find a beautiful country a delightful day, Splendid crops, and for myself, what was to me a thousand times better, a sweet girl of 18 summers, whom I find I am in spite of my hardheartedness beginning to love."

Two days later, however, John and Emily parted company, he for Fort Dodge, she to return to her father's house in St. Louis. Duncombe remained smitten, but in his journal he admitted, "I cannot reasonably expect her to leave her home 'Sweet home' and the pleasures of her old paternal residence for another in Iowa." Still, he was determined not to sink into self-pity. "I only think of her because I cannot help myself," he added. "My heart would be sad if I would give it time. But courage my heart! Better days are coming!"

"Better days" is a term not typically used to describe 1857 in frontier Iowa. A brutally cold winter, violence at Spirit Lake, and then a nationwide financial panic — which halted railroad

construction and slowed Iowa's commercial growth in general — combined to make 1857 a year of increasing uncertainty. As a lawyer heavily involved in railroads, townsites, and land sales, Duncombe no doubt felt the impact of these events.

Equally discouraging was his personal situation: "I wonder if I am always to live in this prison of monotony, without any home, without any wife or family, without any dear one to love, to live to let my heart dry up with selfishness," he wrote in February 1858. In despair, he considered a move to Pike's Peak, whose gold mines had already drawn Cyrus C. Carpenter and several other Fort Dodge men to the Rockies.

Duncombe stayed put, however, and within months he was again celebrating love's glories. Although he had given up hope that he would find another love and had grown hardhearted, by late summer he had found a way to "let my heart out of the iron cage in which it had been confined."

Her name was Mary "Mollie" Williams, and she was the daughter of Duncombe's close friend and business associate, Maj. William Williams, former sutler at the garrison and subsequently one of Fort Dodge's leading citizens. Mollie was "gay" and "full of fun," and she had already attracted several suitors.

— by Bill Silag



Beautiful weather. Roads fine and the grass starts

*Mon. Tues Wednes Thurs Frid. Sat. 27th March 1858*

Spent my time in Court Hon J D Thompson Judge. I was very successful. I had some 45 or 46 cases out of about 110 on the Docket.

A little more care would make me a little better lawyer Spent the evening with Mollie.

Sunday attend church. In the evening with Mollie

*Mon.* Beautiful day I never saw such fine weather in March.

*Sun. Mon. Tues Wed. Thurs Frid. Sat. Sun. 4th Apr 58* I spent all the week electioneering for the vote to erect county buildings with Mr Carpenter. Beautiful weather. Almost like summer. The flowers begin to show their heads. The prairies begin to look green.

*Mon 5th Apr 58* Election day. 652 votes polled in the county 200 majority for the Erection of Public buildings

*Tues Apr 6. Wed Thurs Frid. Sat.* I spent this week at Webster City Hamilton Co attending court. I have very good success in all my cases. I have a very pleasant time here. The people are warmly my friends. They take great pains to make me happy. A very fine dance on Tues evening — a party nearly every night

*Webster City is growing quite rapidly. The Public square has just been ornamented with trees.*

and all to make us happy Webster City is growing quite rapidly. The Public square has just been ornamented with trees. They are just about erecting a fine town hall. I like the people here. The ladies are very fine.

This week it is rainy and wet. The roads are getting almost impassible.

Judge J D Thomson is our Dis Judge and he is a very good man indeed for Judge for one so young.

I like Mr Skinner very much as a lawyer.

Saturday I get home to Fort Dodge. The sloughs are awful

*Mon Tues Wed Thurs Frid. Sat. 17th Apr 58.* This has

been a very beautiful week. I have been quite lazy, have been quite busy however in attending land suits in the land office. One for Heckert of Algona One for Hood of Wright County. I was successful in part of the cases and in part was unsuccessful.

The case of Hood I think was one of those cases in which I had a decision against me contrary to law, and equity both I believe fully that I will have that case decided in my favor at the Gen' Land Office

I rise early nearly every morning and before breakfast go out with my rifle to see "whom I may devour". I find game very scarce, but I go more for the exercise than the game

The Kansas question is still before Congress The Lecompton constitution has passed the Senate by 8 maj — but has not yet passed the house

*Sun Apr 18 1858* I go with Jas R. Strow and D.F. Elsworth to the Boone river to see about the county seat election between Liberty and Ontario. Stayed all night at D.[?]

The roads, on account of the late rains are almost impassible.

*Mon Apr 19.* Rise early. Start for Liberty. I[t] rained all night and Boone River is almost out of its banks about ten feet deep.

Strow cant swim and remains with Okeson. But Elsworth and myself swim the river. Elsworth's horse swims beautifully but my horse goes down so that I get wet nearly all over. It is a cold chilly day and I ride 8 miles to Liberty where I remain all day in my wet clothes. I wonder that I did not get down sick

The vote by returns showed for co seat Ontario 72 Liberty 69, but the canvass managed to make it stand Ontario 66 Liberty 68, and that Liberty was co seat

*Tues Apr 20 58* Started for Fort Dodge [Brassfield?] ferried us over Boon River. Strow strains his horses shoulder.

Get home just at dark. Go to the first public theatrical performance in Fort Dodge by our citizens in which was played "Raising the Wind, Box & Cox, The Irish Lion. The performance was very well executed. Miss Louisa White Miss Mollie Williams and Mrs M.A. Wilks were the performers who represented the ladies. The Brick School house was crowded.

*Wed. Apr 21, 58* Attended a preemption trial. Thurs & Friday in my office hard at work.

*Saturday Apr 24, 58* Went out to L.S. Coffins on the



Lizzard and defended John McLaughlin from the prosecution of Abner Bell for an assault I shall remember this case as one of the rich cases tried in my life. The

*Finally the justice gets  
Websters Unabridged  
dictionary to try  
to convince  
Mr Obstinate Juryman*

jury agree three times and I have them polled each time and every time one of them answers "not guilty".

Finally the justice gets Websters Unabridged dictionary to try to convince Mr Obstinate Juryman that when a man strikes another he is guilty of an assault and Battery. But it is of no use. Mr Juryman and I make a clear distinction where the man is justifiable in striking? Finally as a sort of a compromise they fine my client ten cents and he & Bell the prosecutor are each to pay one half of the costs of the suit  
Ha. Ha. Ha!!

*Sun Apr 25, 1858* It snows about two inches this morning. I attend church in the morning Methodist, in the evening Pres with Miss Morrison and hear Dodder preach a sermon

The incident of the evening was a crazy man who whistled just as the preacher had got out some tremendous "Idea", as much as to say that is a whopper

*Mon Apr 26, 1858* A little snow on the ground this morning.

*Tues April 27, 1858* I went out hunting this morning with Thos Sargent. I waded sloughs nearly middle deep Shot two ducks and a mud hen. Dear for the whistles.

*Wed, Thurs Frid. 30/58* Rather unpleasant weather Dul times. No money.

*Sat May 1, 1858.* A little snow falls in the morning. To me this is a very pleasant evening at Maj. Williams.

*Sun 2 May 58* Attended Church. heard Fairchilds &

Dodder Spent the afternoon with Miss L Vincent pleasantly.

*Mon. May 3, 1858* Rainy morning. I rise early build fire — wash all over, eat breakfast — read several chapters in the bible — read some time in a Missouri book — make good resolutions for the week — feel fresh and strong of good cheer — sweep out my office and then set about my business.

*Tues 4.* Pleasant day.


*Wed. 5.* Went on a fishing excursion to Hintons mill dam with several of our young ladies, including Miss Molly Williams Miss [Lersa?] Vincent, Miss Nelly Olcott, Miss Libby Jenkins, Miss Louisa White Miss Gardner & Miss Burkholder

We had a very lively time — a very pleasant time.

The trees are in bloom the flowers are looking finely and everything bids fair for a joyful season  
Spend evening at Mr Jenkins

*Thurs 5.* It rains, rains rains that is the fault of the season

*Frid. 6.* We have a pleasant time for dance and in the evening we enjoy ourselves very finely at the St Charles hotel [?] [Miss Lersa].

 The Lecompton bill has passed Congress.

*Sat. May. 7 58* Have great time trying Wisner for getting C.M. Whites horse out of his hands

*Sun May 8, 58* Beautiful day, but becomes a little cool towards evening.

I attend church three times — twice with Miss Molly Williams. I spend the day with her very pleasantly. I think she is a frank, wild good hearted, very sweet and quite pretty girl but a little to small. But I like her after all, & cant help it.

*Mon May 10th 1858.* It rains very badly this morning. The air is cold and it is quite disagreeable.

From this day to the 22d I have been about nearly all the time and except that I made a legal tender to H.D. Merritt for O.E. White on the 10th

I have been attending court in Wright Co in which there is a very bitter contest between Liberty & Ontario about the county seat

The sloughs are awful — never worse The mud is deep and almost impassible.

I had a very pleasant time at Webster City.



May 21st I returned to Fort Dodge. The only interesting incident was this. At the big slough at the head of Brushy creek I pulled off my boots, pants & drawers & put them on the saddle of my horse. I then waded in. The horse could not get through. I waded in about  $\frac{1}{3}$  across where the water was, about three feet deep & returned.

I found on my return to Fort Dodge that an article that I had written about Merritt had created very great excitement

Sat 22 May, 1858 Very busy in my office.

Sun 23, May 1858 Spent most of the day at Maj. W. house very pleasantly.

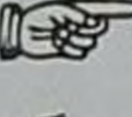
Mon, Tues — Wed — 26 We have had a very rainy wet spring — and it is quite backward


Thurs. Frid. 28, 58 Fine weather for the season


May 31, 58 I started in a skiff with B Grayson on the Des Moines river for Fort Des Moines.

The wind was down stream and altho we did not start until between two & 3 o'clock we got to Bellville that night, where there was a steam saw mill and two or three little houses. We stayed with Jacob Bell until about 1 o'clock when we got out of bed, got into our boat and put out.

June 1. By breakfast we were at Millford opposite Boonsboro, a little town with about a dozen dilapidated log huts, and a place for a mill. We took breakfast here. After rowing all the first part of the night we

*I started in the stage for Washington to  prevent the removal of the land office to Algona.*

were excessively hungry and the chilly dampness of the river gave us anything but a pleasant sensation. We did not feel first rate but on we went. The most  noted circumstance of the time was the wild gold excitement here. Every body was hunting gold — small particles were found in many places, but not enough worth digging for

About three o'clock we arrive at Elk rapids a little town opposite to Swede point. We had each rowed a half hour alternately and were very tired. Here we hired a man to row us into Fort Des Moines. We arrived in Des Moines after dark. We could see nothing and were within hearing of old Halls mill dam below us on the raging Des Moines. I felt a little tired as we all showed by our silence. Not a word was spoken by any one of our company for some time. Finally our rower brought us up against the shore among logs brush &c and terra firma felt good again. I stayed at the Des Moines house, where I found friends enough to keep me up until 3 A.M. and at 4 I started in the stage for Washington to  prevent the removal of the land office to Algona.

June 2, 1858. It rained awfully. The stage got sloughed and we had a very interesting time.

The roads were as bad as I ever saw them or ever expect to see them. The bottom land East of the Skunk was overflowed for near a half mile.

We left the coach and got a two horse waggon and succeeded in getting over in this. At night we came to Grinnell where we stayed as it was too dark to go on. It rained incessantly in the night and in the morning it still rained.

June 3 We started on in the rain — came to the first stream found the bridge off and a perfect torrent.

4 persons in the stage. I striped off to the shirt and waded in to the water to my shoulders, and found that crossing was utterly impossible — went back to Grinnell. Started out in a waggon after dinner to head the stream. Succeeded Stayed all night to night at a little town about 14. miles below Grinnell. Here [DeFore?] of Ft Des Moines and I built a skiff of lums to start in the morning. Worked until late at night. We had great fun in this. It was wild adventure and I loved it.

June 4. As soon as the morning opened the stage team took us to little bear creek which was anything but little bear this morning

It was as wide as the Mississippi and about the same depth. It rushed through the timber as if all the sloughs brooks, springs, and mud puddles were frightened and trying to see which could beat in a race to the Mississippi. [DeFore?] was a brave man and I had too much pride but to be as brave. We put our boat on the raging waters and left Judge McHenry and another on the shore. We got along better than I feared. A few plank were left in the middle of the stream and we landed one by one on here until we were all in the



middle and then tried the other side which was still more dangerous as the water was deeper and swifter.

*Perseverantia omnia vincit* [perseverance conquers all]. We were over safe and sound baggage and all.

We hired a new team here on our own account and on we went.

*June 5* We passed Marengo today and found it nearly all under water. From our view from the hills it appeared like a lake covered with arks more than a town

*June 6.* Stayed in Iowa City over tonight and Sunday 7 I never in my life saw such a complete flood.

*June 8, 1858.* The cars started early for Rock Island, and I for Washington City. I traveled night and day for three days and nights and on Thursday the 11 I was in the little corrupt city — the home of fashion vice, and greatness.

I saw my Dear friends Mr Henn and Senator Jones, and spent 8 days here very pleasantly, calling on President Buchanan and lots of beautiful ladies. Senator Jones was the great beau of Washington City. A universal favorite among the ladies.

*Friday June 19, 1858* I left for New York and on Monday I arrived at father's house, where I saw all my dear friends and relatives in fine spirits and glee, glad to see me of course.

I stayed here three days only visiting and on the 23 was off for Iowa.

Stopped over night with the family of my Dear friend Senator Jones and then went on for the R.R. election in Hamilton Co. where I arrived in time to find my R.R. friends beat by 14 votes

Went to Fort Dodge and on Sunday the 4th of July wrote an oration to deliver on the 5th

*Mon. July 5, 1858* Had the pleasure of being the principle orator of the day at the first Fourth of July celebration ever held at Fort Dodge.

We held this celebration in the little grove back of Williams Street — north — beyond the little spring brook near the big spring. We had a great crowd. The ladies sang great and patriotic songs, the gents smiled at the ladies. We all eat drank and were happy and are none of us dead yet. "So mote it be"

[*Undated entry*] The latter part of the summer and the fall I neglected to keep my Journal as I was absent and much of the time quite busy. I shall only give a few

items of interest to myself in the future as I am only writing for myself and for nobody else.

I became very much attached to Miss Mollie Williams daughter of Maj Wms. I found in spite of Myself I loved her. I was very doubtful for a long time whether I should not banish all thoughts of her from my mind believing as I certainly did — that she was far from loving me. I knew she loved Mr Grayson and I was too proud to speak to her until I gave her a full

*I found in spite of  
Myself I loved her.*

opportunity to show her preference to him. I visited the house of her father for a long time, constantly. I never gave her or her parents a right to demand any cause for my going. She was wild gay, full of fun, and treated me, as I thought rather cool and distant, which I was rather careful to return in the same kind of treatment to her, frequently taking a very sudden leave of her, as she frequently did of me. Mr Grayson was there constantly. I treated him in a manner that I do not believe he ever understood. I am satisfied that he never did. I frequently invited him to go to the Maj's house with me. This made him think sometime that I and Mollie had a perfect understanding

My pride was severely tried by the treatment I received from Mollie. But I had set out on the road, and I was after the end of it. When she was unusually cool to me, I took great pleasure in riding out with other ladies and in walking with them and visiting them, to try the effect. I also talked of other sweet-hearts in such a cool deliberate manner that she could not understand me. When I had leisure I always rode out with Mrs W, and called for her instead of Mollie. This was to show Mollie that I did not care for her. To pay me back when I did ask to ride out with her she was "Engaged" was "unwell" "Expected company" &c &c. So things went on. Ben Grayson, was engaged but intended to break it if he could get Mollie. He thought he could not, and set Dick at it.

Here was another rival. Mollie call them brothers, and once she gave me a keen cut by calling me father Duncombe, in her cutting manner. I was not fool enough to please her with the idea that I was mad — no, not I. For a time she made all sorts of sport of Dick He was homely. No doubt of that, but he was a good hearted Virginian He had time to court her affections



and I had not. My mind was bent on my business, and I had as Editor and Lawyer enough to do, not to spend my time in the Study of the floral language of love. I had been married. Life was diferent to me from what it was to another. The scenes of my boy-love had long since past. Experience had taught me many things that imagination once made me think was all joy. From the time I was 17, I had been engaged to one I dearly loved. My whole life was changed, after I had enjoyed all the joys of anticipation and of participation, and was in the zenith of pleasure and bright hope,


*A reckless life of three years in Iowa had cured the wound and left me entirely changed*

and in three short days everything that I held dear, everything for which I lived was taken from me — No one knows, what a terrible change this made in me. A reckless life of three years in Iowa had cured the wound and left me entirely changed, as diferent as the sun and moon. For this reason I could not let my heart out of the iron cage in which it had been confined, with that freedom of boyhood. In all this I had not the means of making Mollie love me, so I concluded to make her hate me and be kind to her. I did not believe she would marry Dick or Ben. G. In my judgment I did not believe it, but my fear made me think she would — for I honestly loved her — I loved her with a strong ardent affection and it required all my will to keep it concealed. Yet I acted like a stone — careless — and unfeeling. At my early acquaintance with Mollie at Des Moines I loved her, and that little Devil Cupid kept me as uneasy as if I had a flea on my person, all the time. I could not get rid of him. He made me write a letter — and then I tore it up — He made me go to the Maj's house. I loved to see Mollie happy with my rivals. I loved them because she did, and not for any real worth that I had seen in them. They were not proper persons for her and I knew it.

But I praised them to her for the reason that I knew if I said a word to her — she would resent it like a flash of lightning. So things went on. A perfect farce from the beginning — myself being the clown — and Mollie the manager; until, Graysons left. Dick thinking everything was fixed and Ben to get married.

Dick was perfectly burning with love. His face would shine like a coal of fire when I would speak to him of Mollie in my cool unconcerned manner. The little fox — she knew it well but she loved Ben far better than Dick. She loved truly and did not intend to act the coquette — natural as it was for her to do so. She hoped to marry him at one time, and was to proud to give him the least hope — That is so.

Such was the state of the case on the first of November. I do not think that the mass of the community believe that I would ever marry Mollie. I did not think so myself. I had gone to far however not to have an understanding, so I concluded to visit Mollie a short time longer, and then to tell her all my feelings, explain my conduct, and ask her pardon for being so mean, and in case she should refuse my proposition, to discontinue my visits, seal up my heart, explain my conduct to her father who was a Mason and my friend, as I certainly was his and had been from the first. I had gone to that point, and her very coolness had fired me with such ardent love, that by day and night I was getting really miserable and began to talk of going to Pikes Peek where the great excitement for Gold had become the cry of the day.

Through November and December I did as I had intended. I thought Mollie began to love me. She knew better than to try to coquette me. She would kiss Brother Ben & Dick, but I should have resented any of her fondling kindness if it had been extended, and she knew it. I did not intend to be led on and she knew it. About the first of December — I cannot state the day of the week, I think it was Monday, I proposed to go into a law partnership, giving her half the profits and I doing the work. She made me no reply. I then thought she would refuse me, and was preparing for it. I called at the time fixed for a reply, and she never mentioned the subject to me in any manner whatsoever. I went away with a sad heart. She treated me very kindly. I thought she rather pitied me. Of course I spurned pity and her kindness to me. I was in my mind preparing to turn into mockery, when on the fourteenth of December 1858,  I received her polite note stating that she knew I could make her happy and if I thought she could make me happy all she asked was for me to obtain her fathers consent. I received this note from my clerk from the P.O. from W W White.

Several persons were in the office at the time I read the note. I had too much discretion to let any of them see my feelings. I put my note in my pocket, and soon as possible called to see my Dear Mollie. I had used no endearing terms to her. I had never given her good cause to think I loved her, until I had boldly



spoken to her in plain English. I then loved her as I had never loved her before. I had not cooed her with flowers and presents. I had acted manly, except by the weakness of love I had been held to her like the needle to the pole, or magnet.

Such was the history of my courtship with My Dear Mollie, whom I expect to be my wife, to share my Joys, and for whom may I always have a thousand good thoughts for her welfare to one for myself. For whom may I redouble my exertion to be great and good, wise and true and by God's blessing, if he will hear the prayer of a wicked man, I pray that I may be to her an ever faithful friend, guarding her as a tender flower from the frosts of life, a loving kind husband, and one worthy of her brave heart, vivid, chaste Soul and true Spirit. God bless her and me for her. I have written the foregoing chapter in my life for the Eye of no one for myself only. I have only two fears in this life. One is that Mollie will be but short lived, as she is a summer blossom, and another is that I shall — not willfully — but heedlessly neglect to do her my duty — and that some silent hour she will weep over my hard heart. God is my judge that I do not fear that I shall do this intentionally. — no never — I only fear my thoughtless nature. I believe that my Dear Mollie will try to please me, and look to our mutual interests. I have no doubt of this — Her temper is quick — and I have only to guard my own, as I am occasionally fool enough to get mad, which is simply a kind of insanity or lunacy, just as fatal as any other. Not that persons should never have feeling — but that they should never have anything like madness, as dangerous in mankind as in the canine species, where it generally proves quite fatal

Dec. 24, 1858 I spent ~~Christmas~~ New Years Eve very pleasantly with my Dear Mollie at a Ball at the St Charles Hotel in Fort Dodge. This is our first ball after our Engagement.

Mollie was dressed the most beautiful I ever saw her. God bless her, may she ever be as happy as she appears to night.

New Years, 1859 Saturday ☞ As bright a day as I ever saw. The fall and winter has been most beautiful. But the roads were not good over two weeks all last summer

Col Wms came here about the [13th?] of the last Nov. and has been here since. The Town Company and laying out the R R addition for the purpose of dividing their property.

From the first of January to the 17th the roads are

beautiful No. snow, and delightful weather.

☞ Jany 17, 1859 I buy out a half interest in the Fort Dodge Sentinel and every thing connected with it and become publisher as well as Editor. I intend this shall pay up for itself. If it does not, I shall be mistaken

I have bot John Scotts farm Sargent is to have half, 160 acres \$1000. 175 down.

Jany 8, 1859 I am spending my days hard at work in my office and my Tuesdays Fridays, and Sundays in the evening with my Dear Mollie, whom I love, and by that love am made happy every hour.

Jany. 15, 1859 A fair prospect of trouble between the members of the Fort Dodge Town Company.

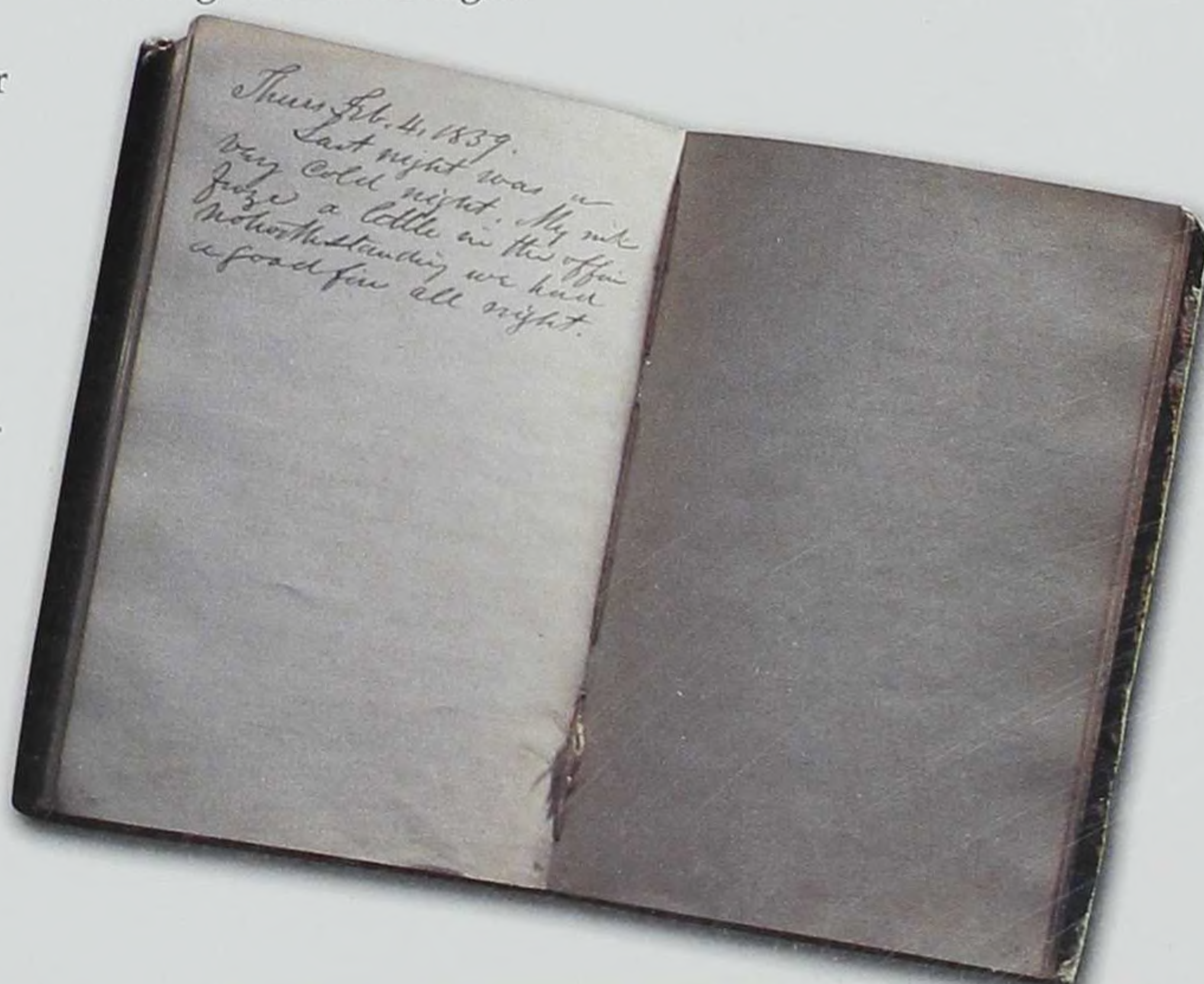
29 Jany I defend D McLaughlin for cutting river timber Great excitement. The whole south part of the county is here. Booker gets a terrible trashing by D McLaughlin.

This river timber question is bound to make trouble. My sympathies are entirely with the settlers.

Wednesday Feb 2, 59 I spend the day hard at work in my office and the evening with My Dear Mollie. God bless her.

Thurs Feb. 3, 59 Spend the evening at my excellent friends house, T Sargent with Col & Maj Wms & A S White playing Chess, Euchre, and drinking punch and eating cake

Thurs Feb. 4, 1859. Last night was a very cold night. My ink froze a little in the office notwithstanding we had a good fire all night.



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