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danger of draft. I was out on drill day before yesterday, the first time in six weeks.

The cabins are nearly done and I shall be glad to get out of the hotel with the boys although I like things here. The commissary building is full of beef, pork, and flour and good things to eat. The company will be divided into squads with a cook for each squad. Obed Hilliard is the cook for our squad, Obe and I are in partnership in trapping. The lakes and the Sioux River that runs by our camp are full of mink and rats. I found a big black mink in a trap of one of the other boys last night just below camp. His hide was worth \$8. I was half tempted to take him out. The boys are playing just these tricks every day on each other. I nearly forgot to tell you I had bowel trouble the other day and Sergeant McKay gave me a dose of burnt whiskey. It was the first whiskey I ever drank. It helped my bowel trouble and I suppose from what the boys tell me it made me do some strange things. Men Bump and Chet Ide of Mondovi have been laughing at me and telling me that I was a shame to old topers that I talked stuff and got out Bill Hill's drum and pounded it. Anyway I am alright now. I have no more news to write this time. Mr. Ball sends his respects to Mr. Cartwright, and Mr. McKay sends his regards to father.

I was just closing this letter when one of the boys came into my room and told me the Indians were burning Paynesville, where the other four companies of the left wing are posted. I went to the window and sure enough there was a big light on the sky in the direction of Paynesville. I have been waiting a half hour for later news. If it meant Indians I knew we would be notified by courier. As we have heard nothing it means just a prairie fire, so good night mother.

Your loving boy,  
CHAUNCEY.

RICHMOND, MINN.,  
Nov. 20, 1862.

DEAR PARENTS:—

I had no letters the past week but look for one this afternoon. Things go on rather quiet most of the time. Our log shanties are

all finished and I am now with the boys. I'll tell you, I am keeping a diary and I will give you a copy of it for a week in this letter:—

Nov. 10>Took a shave today. One of the boys said my beard made me look like a goat. Had my first dinner at the shanty, Obe is a good cook. Supply train loaded with provisions went by for Sauk Center and Paynesville. Some men, trappers I guess, from the Red River country went toward St. Cloud, they stopped for dinner. Said all was quiet in the up country. They wore leggins like Indians and their stories if true, made them out more savage. According to their talk all Indians are red devils.

Nov. 11—A nice Indian summer day, a smoky, hazy, dreamy day. Took my gun and went rat hunting. Shot five but got only four. Came back to camp hungry as a dog. Had a glorious supper of beef, bread, potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pie.

A big supply train bound for Fort Abercrombie pulled in for the night. Gen. Pope has ordered all infantry south. We may get to see Dixie yet. Hurrah! Snow all gone and big prairie fires to the east tonight.

Nov. 12—No letter from home today, plague on it. Wrote one to George Wooster. Beautiful weather. Men Bump just from St. Cloud reports another one of the boys dead from measles. I believe I am all right except my wind ain't quite so good on a long double quick. Nothing to do, went out and shot a rat. Some of the lakes are covered with rat houses thick as hay cocks and as big. Sold my hides for 10 cents a piece. Boys trying their guns at a mark, found a great deal of fault with them. I found some papers at the hotel called *The Dacota Friend*, that I have been reading. They were left by a woman who had been stopping. This paper was a missionary paper for the Indians and had letters in it from Bishop Whipple. He is certainly a good man. I read some of his letters about the honesty of the Indians when the white man was honest with them. It made me think of good old One Eye and his band that came so many times to our place. I spoke of Bishop Whipple to the trappers and what he said of their honesty, but they said Whipple was an old woman in breeches.

Nov. 13—I dreamed last night of One Eye's band, of the boys that I played with, and when we got hungry how we went to Chief

Charley's tepee and found his mother cleaning the entrails of a beaver which she intended for soup. The boy talked to her in Sioux and she unfolded some buckskins and a robe or two and gave us a big hunk of elk steak. We put it on the fire and she went back to her job of dressing the beaver guts. In my dreams I saw the beautiful buffalo robes we lay upon while our steak was roasting. I could even smell them just as they smelt four years ago.

In this miserable Indian war I often wonder what has become of Lightfoot (father gave him that name because he could beat me in a race) and of his brothers and of Owena. They promised to come back in the fall of 1860 when they broke camp the spring before two miles below us but they never came. I haven't lived long, but long enough to think this is a strange world. When I think of the Indians and remember how good they were to me and my father and mother, and reading in this *Dacota Friend* paper how the traders have made them drunk in order to cheat them, and how the government bought 35,000,000 acres of them and has been owing them for it against their promise for thirty years, and because they were starving and broke into a warehouse for food, and this brought on a war. I am for the Indians as much as the whites.

Nov. 14—Cold and freezing this morning. A cannon from Fort Abercrombie came by this morning. They fired it a few times just for fun. Obed Hilliard and I went hunting, shot five rats, one partridge, and one rabbit. On return to camp found a supply train in corral near us and 300 cavalry as guard. The fife and drum were out tonight, in honor of our guests I suppose. The visitors have some big fires going tonight and the crowds around them are very happy. The cavalry men who have been on the frontier are full of Indian yarns. I don't like their talk. If half they tell about their own rascally tricks is true, there is plenty of reason for the Indians to fight and fight to the death.

Nov. 15—There was quite a wild time last night. Some beer was stolen from the saloon and farmers came in this morning claiming soldiers stole their chickens. The cavalry did it. Our boys denied it and I am sure they told the truth. The cavalry made quite a show as they dashed off after the wagon train. I

went to church today, the first time in a long while. Cold and freezing tonight. I nearly froze my fingers on dress parade.

Nov. 16—Everything froze tight this morning. This has been a lonesome day. Molasses was rationed out, the first since we came. It run awful slow. Drilled this afternoon. Snow began falling while we were drilling. The Colonel arrived from Paynesville. I have been reading all the evening in Bishop Whipple's paper, *The Dakota Friend*. I have made up my mind the Indians are not to blame for this war. It is the traders, the contractors, the trappers, and the Indian agents. O, the injustice of the strong against the weak in this world.

Nov. 17-18—Went hunting deer, no luck at all. I shall let the deer go to grass hereafter and hunt for rabbits only. Late this afternoon had a tilt snowballing. The boys had a lively time dodging my balls. They didn't know I had kept a pile of stones at every fence corner for years for blackbirds, and that a blackbird's head at ten steps was an easy mark. The ice on the Sioux is fine. Bought a pair of skates and had a little fun on them. There is a big farmer, a Swede, three miles up river with a nice family of boys and girls. If the ice is good, will go up there in the morning.

Nov. 19—Was on the river skating all the forenoon. Ice not quite safe on the rapids. Several of the boys on a drunk. Had quite a scrap but no one much hurt. Had a spelling school tonight. Word came late tonight that we were to go south in a week, hope it is true.

Your boy,  
CHAUNCEY.

Nov. 21—Went out to visit my traps and found several of them frozen in. Found four rats in the traps set in the houses. Most of the traps in the run ways except in springy places were frozen in. Caught a mink near the bridge over the Sioux in a little spring.

This afternoon skated three miles up the river to the house of a Swede who is one of the first settlers in this county. He has a big family of boys and rosy-cheeked girls.

I ate a late dinner with them. He was a great talker and told me a lot about the wild times he saw when he first struck the country. He was a friend to the Indians. They always camped near his house when trapping up and down the Sioux River, in the fall and spring.



This man told me the war began by a dog biting an Indian. The Indian shot the dog and the whites shot the Indian and a band of the Sisseton Sioux hearing of this and nearly starved for government rations that never came, broke into a government warehouse and from this the war started that has cost the nation, so the papers say, round 40 million of dollars. This man told me he never lost a cent by a sober Indian. He had a room in his house called the Indian room where he always put them in the winter when they called. They preferred to sleep in tepees in the fall and spring when they came to trap for furs and to gather wild rice. They were the Santee Sioux, the band that One Eye and Chief Charley belonged to. He showed me a buffalo trail on a steep hillside leading down to the river, which he said had been worn for a hundred years.

He said the Indians never killed a friend if they knew it. The whites were more revengeful, they shot at every Indian, good and bad. He told me a lot more I can't write down. When I left for camp tonight it was dark. I looked at a few of the traps I had set but found nothing.



I believe I am as much of an Indian, as the boys say, as white man and I can't deny it. I am awfully tired tonight.

Nov. 22—I heard this morning that Little Crow, Chief of the Sioux had committed suicide. If it is true it is because he has lost faith in the great "white Chief" at Washington and the broken promises of the government. There are some things in this war that make me feel that I am an infidel. Why does God crush all these poor Indians and give it all to the white because he has wealth. They owned this land from ocean to ocean by the best title on earth given by God himself and yet because we are stronger we drive them away from the homes of their fathers and the graves of their ancestors and claim that Christ is on our side.

I have been studying the *Dacota Friend* the woman left here in the hotel, and I believe there is something terribly wrong in

this war. I know the Indians have been wronged and mistreated. But what can a fellow like me do? I could not eat any supper tonight and I dared not tell the boys what I was thinking about. I knew they would joke me and make fun of me. I feel that Obed Hilliard is nearer to me than any of the boys and yet he says the Indians ought to be shot. I seem to think different from any of them. I may not be right but I can't help it. I know I think as Bishop Whipple does that all the wrong in this war is on the side of the whites. I am sleepy and it is ten o'clock.

Nov. 23.—The landlord of the hotel gave me to understand this morning that I could not use any more of his writing paper, as I had left the house for the camp. Of course it's all right but it bothers me because I can't write where the boys are bothering. We had a drill this forenoon. The captain said we would get pay tomorrow and I am glad. I have two pages in my memoranda of debit and credit accounts to be settled.

Nov. 24—Marching orders to be in readiness to start for Fort Snelling, I guess it's a go this time. The notice came last night and all my traps are set miles away on the river and lakes. Obie said when the moon comes up tonight if you will gather in the traps I'll do the other work.

It was after midnight when I got back with all the traps and my light is the only one burning as I write this last word.

Nov. 25—It was a lonely trip I made last night up the river and over the lakes picking up traps. I thought of so many things on that trip and I was not quite satisfied that Obe asked me to get the traps alone but I made the trip just the same. In the woods between the lakes where the moon shone in spots under the pine trees I thought I saw figures of Indians but I would brace up and walk right up to them and I always found them stumps or trees. I can't say I was really afraid, but I was miles away in an Indian country and sometimes my heart would pump a little hard.

Final orders to begin our return march to Fort Snelling near St. Paul came late last night. We were up bright and early. Some of the boys said they were fixing all night to get ready. I was hard to wake, because I had gone to bed so late after my

night's jaunt gathering in my traps. I had paid a dollar and a quarter a piece for the traps, and the merchant said I had had such bad luck, he would take them back at cost and charge me \$2 for the use of them. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart as I had expected a much harder deal. Some of the fellows, one or two from Mondovi had spent a good part of the night at one of the saloons just across the Sioux River and they were singing "Dixie" and "Johnny comes marching home" long before the morning drum beat. I was scared for a moment thinking that the march had commenced when I heard them singing, but hearing my chum snoring at my side, I went to sleep again.

All the forenoon its been Dixie, Dixie. A lot of the nearby settlers came in to see the boys go away. Some of them said its all right for us to go south, they weren't afraid any more the Indians had been scared away, others wished we would stay. I think there were four or five pretty girls from the Sioux River that felt sorry for reasons of their own to see the boys go away. It was near noon when we started out in hit or miss order for St. Cloud. We straggled into St. Cloud late in the evening. Every fellow looked out for his own sleeping quarters. It was cold. The Captain said, "Get the best quarters you can." I slept under the flap of a tent between barrels rolled up in two blankets with a freezing west wind like so much cold water pouring over my face all night. I was awakened in the morning by that song so dear to the south, Dixie. I would think more of what the song means, if the fellows had their heads.

We have been late this morning, November twenty-sixth, in starting. I have put in the time writing my notes.

Nov. 26—I am tired tonight; marched all day with heavy overcoat, haversack, gun, and two big blankets. I made but 18 miles and when it began to get dark I dropped out of the squad I was with and went to a private house where I saw a light shining among the trees. A young woman and child were the only persons there. She told me her husband had gone to the war and she was carrying on the farm alone with a little help her brother gave her who came once in a while. She told me she had but one bed in the house but I was welcome if I could sleep on the

lounge in the kitchen. I asked to sleep on the floor, but she said, "No." I told her where I slept the night before and she just looked at me without saying a word. She asked me why my mother let me go into the army when I was so young. When I told her I tried to get my mother's consent a year before, she said, "O, you must be a crazy fellow."

Nov. 27—I was up and on the road this morning by daylight. I was anxious to catch up with the boys I knew were ahead of me. To tell the whole truth, I shed a few tears because I could not keep up with the crowd. Obed had told me and Sergeant McKay that I was not over the effects of the measles and that I should take it easy. Father wrote me too, before leaving the hotel at Richmond, "Be patient and not try to do too much, you will need to save your strength for months." Just the same I am mad that the boys are going to beat me to St. Paul.

Nov. 28th—Fort Snelling, Minn. Arrived this noon. A few of the company still here, most of them come and gone. The right wing of our Reg't came down the Minnesota some days ago bringing with them 1,700 captured Sioux, wives, children, and old men and women of the hostiles. They are camped on the bottoms just below the Fort at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. They are a broken-hearted, ragged, dejected looking lot. They have a million dogs almost, and you can hear them barking for miles. There are 156 tepees. A Minnesota Reg't is in charge of them and no soldier is allowed inside the tepees. Papooses are running about in the snow barefoot and the old Indians wear thin buckskin moccasins and no stockings. Their ponies are poor and their dogs are starved. They are going to be shipped West into the Black Hills country. Like the children of Israel in the Bible story they are forced to go forever from the homes of their childhood and the graves of their fathers to dwell in the mountains and on the barren plains of a strange land. I lifted up the flaps of a number of their tepees and looked in. Every time I looked in I met the gaze of angry eyes. Nearly all of them were alike. Mothers with babies at their breasts, grandmothers and grandsires sat about smouldering fires in the center of the tepee, smoking their long stemmed pipes, and

muttering their plaints in the soft guttural tones of the Sioux. The white man's face was their hate and their horror and they showed it by hate in their eyes and their black lowering brows. Why shouldn't they? What had they done? What was their crime? The white man had driven them from one reservation to another. They were weary and broken hearted and desperate at the broken promises of the government. And when they took up arms in desperation for their homes and the graves of their sires they are called savages and red devils. When we white people do the same things we are written down in history as heroes and patriots. Why this difference? I can't see into it. I often think of what father said of justice in the world. That is, that it is the winning party the lions of the earth, that write its history. He said, "Cataline, had anybody but his bitter enemies written his history, might have been shown to be a good man." I have been fooling around the Indian camps all day and my company are all gone home. From where I sit writing these notes in a little niche on the side of the Fort overlooking the camp below I can see the sentinels pacing their rounds and hear the yelping of hungry Indian dogs. My fingers are numb. The cold west wind hits me here and I must quit. I must look for a warm place to sleep tonight and start for home in the morning by the way of Hudson and Eau Claire.

(*To be continued*)