

Letters

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LETTERS

LOCATING A NEW HOME

Wisconsin Territory [Iowa District] June 18th 1836

We are well at present hoping those lines may find you all enjoying the same. We started from Warren County on the 16th of May and arrived here the 23rd we had some considerable difficulty in getting here we waited at the ferry about five days before we could get across the river they being so throng at the ferry our turn did not come any sooner. The emigration to this part of the country is still increasing explorers are through here daily hunting land but it is nearly all taken up claims are selling very high here George Humphrey sold his claim about a week ago for three (hundred?) dollars and has got another nearly as good and has made considerable improvement on it. I am living in Uncle Joseph Craws house until I can get one built for myself We have got 23 acres of Corn and potatoes I have got a house nearly built Evan[?] Lewis Joseph McCaughey & George Humphrey has got claims and houses built on them I expect to get five acres of prairie broke this week which I have to pay three dollars and acre which I expect (to?) sow in wheat this fall I received a letter from you the 7th of June in which you thought bad policy in coming here but I don't apprehend any danger as the Sauks and Foxes are too few in number to do any harm. You likewise stated that Bayless is a going to collect the judgment against us and is a going to send here to collect of it from me I want you to tell Bayless that I disregard him as there is neither law nor gospel here and I am at his defiance [I want] you to write me whether there is a governor appointed [of this territory?] or whether it is struck off into a territory or not [and] who the governor is for we hear no news here I want you to send [me?] the papers after you are done

reading them put them in the office and send them to New Boston Mercer County Illinois for we are like the old woman in the hollow in perfect darkness in respect to knows either foreign or domestic therefore no not neglect to send me the papers. I wrote to Brother George that I thought it would be good policy for [?] him to fetch a small stores here but I understand there is two or three stores coming here this seasons and I think he had better come with you this fall and see the country and then do what he thinks best he can come with you this fall by land as it will be the cheap-est way you can come. Wm Humphrey & Robert came to this country on sixty dollars and it cost me that to come by water therefore it is much the cheapest way to come by land for you can buy your horse[?] feed by the bushel and can sleep in your wagon and buy your provisions so cheap that it will not cost you but very little to come here. Do not forget to fetch some kind of fire works that you can make fire at any time as the prairies are often on fire and it is dangerous travelling through them in the fall season without some way of making fire and if you see the fire coming set fire in the grass behind you and then drive in the burnt prairie and wait until the fire is past. I want you to fetch me a dozen or so of good grafted apple trees and likewise some pair and cherry trees about 18 inches long box them up and pour water over them daily likewise bring me lots of fruit seeds of all kinds likewise locust and all other kinds that you may think I shall need. You must be certain to come this fall and fetch the articles I have wrote for as I shall not procure any of them here and shall depend on your bringing them therefore be sure not to disappooint me as I cannot farm without them I would give you a description of the country in general if I could have got time to explore it but I have been so buisy that I have not seen much of it what I have seen is very beautiful and good soil the timber here is sufficient to fence all the prairies. The distance between the musketen and loway is about seven miles I live about two miles from the Indian Reserve which extends 40 miles up the Iowa & ten miles wide 5 on each side of the Iowa if you hear of this being bought by govern-

ment try and come immediately and take a claim there as there are some first rate places on it the Purchase is all taken and the claims are very high people that have got claims in this neighborhood are asking five hundred to a thousand dollars I want you to send me by water three or four barrels of flour if you have any chance by any person coming here as there is no wheat scarcely in the three adjoining states Missouri and Indiana nor Illinois and flour and wheat will be very dear here; likewise bring me a first rate set of large harrows teeth if you have a chance of sending me the flour forward it to New Boston Mercer County Illinois I received a letter from Brother Joseph on the 12th of June dated the 22nd of May and was very sorry to hear that he has been to an Irish wedding if he had [illegible] him and took a claim by this time he might have sold it for five hundred dollars [?] if he had stayed it would enabled me to have got along much better as I have to pay [?] for help again which makes me make but slow progress in opening a farm I have taken a claim in the prairie nigh to the claim that [illegible] Humphrey sold it is a beautiful place the most of the prairie high rolling surrounded on three sides by timber wich is as good as is common in this part of the timber is well watered it joins with G Humphreys on the one side and Evan Lewis on the other about a mile south [illegible] George Humphrey claims are worth about five hundred dollars each Joseph Crow was offered a hundred and fifty dollars for his claims and did not take it. I have got corn and Potatoes enough to do me and I want you to writ if you are coming and how many horses you will bring so that I may be prepared with hay and stabling sufficient for them you may bring two or three which ever you please I have a notion to buy cattle and hogs and go to raising stock as I think there is as much money to be made by that as raising grain here when you write let me know your opinion about the [?] matters I want you to bring some money if you will have it to spare as I will want some more if I go to raising stock or whether or not I shall need some more I think if I had about two or three hundred dollars a year as bacon is worth fifteen cents

per pound and will no doubt remain that for several year yet as the Emigration is still great and still increasing that every thing will [?] still demand a good price milk cows is rating at from fifteen to twenty five dollars and the cost of raising them is but little to what it is in Ohio. I am much better pleased with the Country than I was the longer I stay the better I like it and I make no doubt that a person can make money fast and easier there than they can in Ohio on the same capital as there is such an extensive range for cattle and hogs the cost of raising them is but small to what it is there and they raise as good grain here as there generally the wheat this season is all killed by frost but that is not common I think after you see this country and stay a while that you will like it as well as Ohio and no doubt you will take a notion to sell out and come here but be sure you come and see the country first. The gres difficulty I see here [?] now is milling as there is no mills nigher than thirty or forty miles at present but there is a prospect of having mills this fall or next spring nigh at hand so that by the time [illegible] where raised there will be mills enough to manufacture it I have had a notion of buying one half of a prairie team as breaking is very dear I think that it would be better for me to have a team of my own and break thirty or forty acres next season than to pay so high for breaking and the more I can get broke the better as one hand can do more in this country than two in Ohio after they have a farm opened; hirelings is very dear here so there is none to be hired scarcely we have to pay one dollar per hundred for making rails The reason that I want so much prairie is that I may raise corn enough to feed my stock as I want to buy about one hundred head of cattle and I want you to join me [?] when you come in buying them the cost of keeping stock here is but [illegible] extensive [?] meadows belong to Uncle saw that a person mow [?] as much hay as he wants for nothing? Make no doubt that if you come here and like the country that there are some good claims to be [?] found that will please you or you might buy some cheap and if you should like the country enough to sell out and come here I think we can make

money faster here than we could in Ohio.....at present
but I remain your most affectionate brother

Abram McCleary

John McCleary

EDUCATION

St. Mary's Landing [Missouri] Feby. 15, 1838

Dear Sir

I recd with very great pleasure your esteemed favor of the 28th Ut. I am delighted with your favourable opinion of Mr. Webster. I believe I told you that I thought myself the Oldest admirer of Mr. W. on the west side of the Mississippi & who had lived on the West Side as long as I had—I shall be very much pleased to receive a Copy of the Preemption law with Mr. W.'s remarks on it. I still am not satisfied with the law—I do honestly think it would be better for Congress to legislate prospectively on this Subject. & LEGALIZE WHAT THEY CANNOT HINDER; the SETTLEMENT upon the PUBLIC land BEFORE it is brought into market—I would give to Such Settlers the right of preemption, but would make them pay for it—They should only have the right upon paying an advanced price say 75 or 100 pr. cent. for the land. This I think would do comparative justice to the owners of the land, the people, & the Settlers—I am not aware that this course has been proposed. It seems to me it would be just all round, I do think, there is Something wrong in this preemption law business, as it has hitherto been regulated and although the course I propose would not be entirely free from objection, I think it infinitely better than the one hitherto pursued—I will not trespass upon you by illustrating my Idea. If I did I should make a very dull Speech elsewhere than in Congress, which you know would be wrong—I have had the boldness to suggest this thing to Mr. W. I have not given him my name for fear he might think I wanted to intrude upon his attention.

In regard to Schools in Wisconsin—and your Queries? I do not think we are yet in a Situation to engage a Teacher, Some preparation is wanted—But I shall be anxious this

preparation shall be made with all practicable Speed—I do not Suffer my self to think half as doubtingly upon going to Wisconsin as you seem to Speak about it. I expect to be established there, before your return—After getting there the Sooner I shall be able to get my children to School the better I shall be pleased—If a Teacher however was engaged, his salary would of course commence at once & if the house was not properly prepared & any difficulty in making up a school, he would not feel agreeably situated—It will probably be better to postpone an absolute engagement until these PRELIMINARIES can be Settled—

In regard to the character of qualifications of a Teacher, I do not feel myself competent to Say much, in addition to my observations in my former letter to you. It used to be the Case & I presume yet is, in New England, that a good many young men, obtained their Education, by their own exertions, & with Small assistance from their parents—They frequently would resort to School Teaching as a means to raise funds to get along & even after graduating at college, would have recourse to this to assist them in getting a profession—Young men who get along in this way are GENERALLY of the VERY best MATERIAL for any thing—In getting a Teacher, I should almost Consider it absolutely indispensable that he should not be the Son of parents considered by any Means WELL OFF, or rather RICH—Sons of rich parents would not probably be applicants for Such Situations—If however they should happen to be I Should Consider it a disqualification. If Vandoren (?) Shall Succeed I Shall endeavor to get a pretty good library & have a comfortable office at Dubuque. I Should have no objection to a young man who Should desire it, having free use of it & it might be an inducement—I Should judge at present, that if a young man of good character, & sufficient Education, who might otherwise be qualified, even if he Should not look to School Teaching as a permanent employment, could be engaged at first, it would be as much as would be desirable in the present State of things whenever a college Shall be organized the getting of professors, will be quite an AUTRE

CHOSE. At present my ambition would be Satisfied by having a good COUNTRY School at Dubuque in a house well appointed for that purpose to which we could send our DAUGHTERS as well as our sons—In proportion to my means, I will do as much towards this as any person—And it Seems to me there must be a Sufficiency of Material, at Dubuque out of which to organize, a first rate & Constant Elementary School—Now I should Suppose the most you could do at present would be, to So arrange with Some of your acquaintance, that when you Should be ready to receive a teacher at Dubuque, they would enable you at once to refer to a proper Source to be Supplied—Mr. Powell, the young man who went to Wisconsin on our joint account, writes me, he has found a place to Suit him. "Just eight miles above Dubuque & 1½ miles from the river." From his discription I should think he has made a judicious Selection—He Says the gr. he has Selected is well timbered, & rich ENOUGH—Saw & Grist mill within 1½ miles—I am arranging to get there as early as possible—(17th

We have had a week of very cold weather—Snow at present about one foot deep, river not closed, expect to be able to send over this evening or in the morning.

Our acquaintance generally well . . . Charles Gregoire I believe has made arrangements for Spending the Summer at Mine Lamott—Rosamond Pratte the Whig Candidate for State Senate—Robert T. Brown, on the other Side—The Election will excite considerable interest, but I have very small hopes of Missouri—No whig Candidate for the Legislature in Ste Genevieve yet—There will be one & a try to elect him.

Our Side expect all the assistance to the Whig Cause, from Congress that body Shall be able to give—If the administration have Sent Prentice & Word home to Mississippi & will pass the Sub-Treasury bill they may consider they have completed their labours & make a windup with the present Session of Congress—

Whenever you can find time & disposition to let me hear

from you, I shall receive it as a favor, & will promise not to "Bore" you again with so long a notice.

Mrs. D. desires her best wishes & respects—

G. W. Jones Esqr.²

Your friend
Timothy Davis'

St. Mary's Landing Decr. 30. 1837.

Dear Sir

I have not, since I have seen you had any intelligence either from my Brother or from Mr. Powell, who went up to Wisconsin. This provokes me, as my arrangements here depend some little upon what they may be doing up there—I am arranging however to go up by the earliest oppy in the Spring. It gives me some uneasiness about SCHOOLING my children when I get there— They are yet hardly old enough to send East to an Academy or College. But they are too old to be roaming at large—Now it does seem to me that we ought to be able to put up a good School house at Dubuque & keep up a good School. Such a one as would be most appropriate for your & my children—I am sure there are quite a sufficiency of Children in Dubuque to furnish a good School. I shall have three, Mr. Lorimer has several & yourself some. For us three alone to join in putting up a School House & employing a Teacher, would be Cheaper than to be sending abroad, but I am sure we should find others willing to assist by joining us—In regard to a Teacher, I cannot believe there will be any difficulty in getting one—You spoke of Mr. Uertick. I did not encourage the Idea of getting him— He is entirely too old, Beside his family are, as well as himself, altogether habituated to Slaves, & could not with convenience or facility accommodate themselves to a Situation where they could not have them. They would be entirely too helpless in Wisconsin.— I have had Lewis with Mr. Uertick two years, & from what I learn & to the best of my judgment, he has not command &

¹Born in New Jersey, 1794, moved first to Kentucky then to Missouri, a former neighbor to G. W. Jones. Removed to Dubuque in 1837. A lawyer, was elected to Congress in 1856 as a Whig.

²Delegate to Congress from Wisconsin Territory, a strong Democrat, made his home at this time in Dubuque.

influence over Schollars which I think a Teacher ought to have. Again, I am very much in favor of young persons, that is those rather advancing than receding from the prime of manhood, for almost any business—There is an energy & boldness about such which I hold to be one of the elements of success in almost every pursuit or business— If we can prepare a house I have very little fear of being able in Dubuque of procuring both Teachers & Schollars— There is an association of gentlemen in Philadelphia, for the purpose of affording facilities to those who wish to employ, as well as those who wish to be employed as Teachers— Mr. Horace Binney is the President— Now if you are acquainted with any of the Phia. Delegation in Congress, they could put you in the way of getting precisely the information and assistance you might require in getting a Teacher— You spoke of Wanting one for Belmont— We are not yet prepared for one at Dubuque. I do not recollect the Style of the association I have alluded to in Phia. I am not sure however, but a BETTER ARTICLE in the line of Teachers might be procured FURTHER EAST than at Philadelphia—My prepossessions are rather that way— You may I think avail yourself of your acquaintance at the city to get such information on the subject as will be useful hereafter. . . .”

Very Respectfully Yours

Timothy Davis

Washington, 11th May, 1838

Sir,

I take the liberty of addressing you, on the subject of an advertisement which appeared in the National Intelligencer of yesterday; in which applicants are referred to you "for particulars."

Will you have the kindness, Sir, to inform me, 1st, How far the school, mentioned in the advertisement, is from a Roman Catholic church? 2ndly, What the yearly rent of the place may be; and what is the smallest number of years, for which the place would be leased? 3. What is the am't of stock on the farm; and what furniture in the house? 4.

Is there a probability that the lessee would immediately get the same number, or nearly the same number, of pupils mentioned in the advertisement, at his entering upon the discharge of his duties? 5thly. What are the terms, p. year, or p. quarter, for Board, and for Tuition? 6. Is that part of the country REALLY healthy? and how far is the school from a Market town, and the name of the nearest market town?

I should like to be a little more in my inquiries; (for I have a large family;) but I fear I have been too troublesome already. After I shall have had the pleasure of hearing from you, I shall do myself the honour of waiting upon you, to obtain some further particulars, and to submit my credentials to your examination, at any time and place that you may think proper to appoint.

I have been engaged for upwards of twenty years, in the laborious business of teaching the Latin, French, and English languages, Natural Philosophy, History, Geography, &c. I commenced my career of teaching, as a tutor, in George-town College, in this District, in 1816; and for the last two or three years, I have been and still am, Principal of a flourishing academy in this City. But my family, as I have said before, is large; and I wish to try our fortunes in the West.

You will please to address me through the City Post-office, as soon as convenience may permit.

Very respectfully, Sir,

Your Most Obt. Servt.

D'Arcy A. French

[Endorsed]

"Answered Instanter"

Hampton R. I. County Ill. Dec. 7th 1840

To the Hon. Laurel Summers

Dear Sir,

It gives me pleasure to reply as soon as my engagements have allowed me, to your favor of the 26th ult.

My bill of prices or day Scholars in the English branches including mathematics varies from two to four and one-half Dollars for the Summer Session and from two and one half to

five for the winter Session. Those are the prices for the quarter of eleven weeks varying with the number and nature of the studies pursued by the Scholar. To be more definite, the price for the three fundamental and most important branches, reading, writing and calculation is \$3. per qr., in the summer and \$3.50 in the winter.

When boys under 16 yrs. of age board in my family and furnish their own beds bedding and towels, I charge them at the rate of \$100 per year, to be paid quarterly in advance, and this sum pays for board washing fuel lights and tuition in all the English branches. They are then subject to extra charges only for clothing, mending books and stationary and medical advice when these are needed from me, or if the payments are not made in advance 20% is added to the bill.

For further information I would refer you to my prospectus published in the Rock Island Banner a copy of which will be forwarded with this letter.

But you will probably agree with me, Sir, in the sentiment that the prices of tuition are, in some respects, of very small import. A good school in this country is a cheap school at any price that is not manifestly exorbitant. As I should set much value on your favorable consideration, allow me to give you some description of my views and practice. In the government of my school, I use very little punishment. I have not had occasion to punish one Scholar since the opening of the present Session. It is very seldom that any of my pupils need it. A teacher, who governs himself, and manages right, Can always secure the Cooperation of a large majority of his pupils and these overawe the remainder into subordination. There always will be a few very bad boys, and when these govern the School, as they often do, the administration is wretched indeed. In a school properly managed, such boys become powerless. Punishment is sometimes necessary to sustain and demonstrate authority, but I find it seldom called for. When I meet my school at the commencement of the session, I look upon my pupils as individuals endowed with reason & sensibilities like my own. Instead of irritating their feelings

I win them; instead of overlooking their judgments, as unworthy of my notice, I seek an unequivocal expression of their views in relation to all those plans, in which their happiness as well as my own is so much involved. Some teachers, when they commence a school, appear to expect that their scholars will all do right of course, but in that case, the Scholars do wrong of course, and then come wrath and blows. A better way is, to anticipate both the errors and the blows, and substitute improvement and happiness.

Next to the proper government of my Scholars, I set a high value upon their improvement in the three fundamental branches, reading, writing and arithmetic. These form a Class of studies distinct from all others; they are roots, not branches of the tree of Knowledge; when I teach a child to read, I may be said to furnish him with a useful instrument like an axe, that will fell the forest; when I teach a lesson in Geography, I only cut down a single tree for him. Thence I regard that part of my school, that are pursuing these first studies, as altogether the most interesting and important. If my school fails in these departments, I shall consider it entirely undeserving of any popularity it may enjoy.

Still I would not undervalue the higher branches of study in their proper place; and I am prepared to teach them. Philosophy and the natural sciences are valuable to the English student. I have an excellent collection of foreign and native minerals; the wild lands and the coal beds and the rocky shores and islands of the river furnish an abundance of specimens in Minerology and Botany of which I avail myself in my walks with my scholars; and a boy boarding with me for a season would hardly fail to acquire a valuable habit of observation, as well a multitude of names and facts, that would be of some importance for him to learn. But I fear your patience is exhausted. I am very respty. &c.

Samuel S. Samberson

P. S. Scholars can enter without inconvenience at any time. The next vacation will occur in the month of August.

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