

Reverend Edmund F. Ely Diary

Thursday 23 [March 23, 1854]

Left Chase's about 7 oclck having added to my original 30lb pack -- provisions for 3 days.

Am camped at the 28 Mile tree (from the lake) having come 27 Miles today -- a pleasant Camp My fuel all dry poplar -- fire on the East side of the road my bed on the west. A Cloudy Evening -- have reflected much today on the subject of honest with God and man.

Friday 24 [March 24, 1854]

A bright day -- arrived at the Entry at 5 oclck. Stopped with Mr. John Morgan. Dr marsh also lodges here but boards with Mr. Herbert. Geo W. Becker stops close by -- with Geo. Perry.

Saturday 25th [March 25, 1854]

Went up to see Slaughter and Bronson -- find all good claims taken up.

Sabbath 26 [March 26, 1854]

Clear but cool -- about 5 oclck. 3 miners arrived from St. Paul & reported 5 or 6 more stopped at the Range.

Monday 27 [March 27, 1854]

Came up to Slaughter & Bronson's before breakfast. B. pointed out to me a Quarter section - whh I concluded to take & went out -- found the corner & marked it -- Spotted a line on S. & W. lines as near as I could pace it off -- writing my name at the corners. After dinner, word was brought that Thompson & Stinson had sent 9 or 10 Frenchmen... -- on to Slaughter's Claim (already platted) to jump it. S. & B & 5 or 6 other -- arrived and went down -- ordering them to desist. The men retired on to Lefever's Claim on the other side of the line -- showing no disposition to fight -- said they would refer the matter to Thompson. S. & B. & Co. therefore returned to their business -- preparing logs for a large Shanty. I went to work with them Have arranged to mess with them Stinson & Thompson are hiring men. I am informed, to hold claims for them & are thus endeavoring to get all the land possible into their possession.

We have at this moment (10 oclck) a most Splendid Arch - completely Spanning the heavens from E. to W. apparently about 6 ft wide & bright & heavy as a cloud. Sky very Clear. The Aurora appeared Early - in the North.

Tuesday 28th [March 28, 1854]

Forenoon - assisted in putting up the body of a large Shanty for Messrs B. & S. - P. M. went out to the N. E. Corner of my claim, & marked my name on a tree. Cleared a small spot. Followed the Creek which runs through my quarter to its mouth in the small bay.

Stunts commenced his survey of a fractional township 49 N. Range 14 West. Including the land lying on the harbor. Messrs Stinson & Thompson followed by some 20 or upwards,...followed the Surveyor. When Lefever's claim, included in the town plot - of B. & S. - was Surveyed the men were ordered by Stinson & Thompson to put up a Shanty on it - which they did instantly.

Wednesday [March 29, 1854]

B. & Slaughter started early to watch their corners - (accompanied by 11 resolute follow[er]s --) The Surveyor was closely followed by Stinson & Thompson with about 25 men. They were armed with Pistols... They took Perry's & Barrett's, who have claims on the Mineral Range. Chase, who also has a claim on the range, had taken a [blank in MS] claim directly back of the townsite, remarked to me that he supposed he could not hold his without fighting for it. I told him if he would give it up to me, I would go on to it - as I presumed they would acknowledge my right to preempt it. He agreed to it. He is to have an undivided fourth - (or 40 acres) which he is to pay for, & help me put up a shanty - on it. I went with him immediately and commenced a shanty - while at work the Surveyor came - running the Section line - northward & on my East line. He noted every street in his field book - thus considering it a town site - Stinson & Thompson with their retinue - were close at hand. The North line of the section was then run out to the lake -- & the two parties marched out - side by side with the surveyor - who closed his days work at the Lake. The line is to be corrected back to the N. & S. line before the section is considered as surveyed - consequently no demonstration was made to take possession by the Messrs Stinson & Thompson & Co. The excitement was very great -- & very plain talk dealt off

to S. & T. B. & S. & party are determined -- & will fight terribly if encroached upon. Blood will most certainly be spilled.

Thursday 30th [March 30, 1854]

Began to snow last night. Has continued to snow heavily all day. About 8 inches has fallen - Equal to 1 foot dry snow. No surveying today - all quiet.

Friday 31st [March 31, 1854]

Forest loaded with snow. Went to work on the shanty. Have got up all the timbers. No Surveying - too much snow on the timber - considerable excitement among the Miners & other claim holders concerning the course of Messrs S. & Thompson. B. & Slaughter will receive some very important accessions, when the Survey commences again. We learn there is a party - close at hand - from St. Paul - feel rather impatient for their arrival.

[NEMHC S3045 Box 3 f3, Journal No. 20 page 2-4]

INFORMATION and FACTS ABOUT ST. LOUIS COUNTY

A state is divided into parts or districts called counties. Like states, most county boundaries or edges are "invisible" lines. Sometimes a county boundary can be a logical dividing feature like a river, an edge of a lake, or another natural land feature. Some counties are square or rectangle shaped, but counties are irregular with jagged edges, points, and curves. All of the counties fit together like puzzle pieces because they make up the familiar shape we call Minnesota, and Minnesota has its edges or boundaries because it "fits" into, or is surrounded by, its neighboring country, Canada, and states: Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota, and a tiny bit of Nebraska at the southwestern corner.

About 10,000 years ago, as the last glaciers that covered northern Minnesota melted away, huge animals roamed the country. People archaeologists call Paleo-Indians, or big-game hunters, came here. Early people did not feel they owned the land, nor did they divide it into parts.

For 150 years, fur traders and explorers came and went in what is now Minnesota. Most of them were not interested in changing the ways of Dakota and Ojibwe people or in owning land.

Minnesota has 87 counties now, but until 1851 there were only 9 counties. A county is divided into pieces called townships.

St. Louis county is bordered by Canada's province called Ontario on the north; Koochiching, Itasca, and Aitkin counties on the west; by Carlton county and Lake Superior on the south; and by Lake county and Lake Superior on the east.

Each county has one city that is the "county seat", or the location, of that county's government. Duluth is the county seat of St. Louis county. County government is overseen by 7 elected County Commissioners who each serve a 4 year term.

The county's budget in 2001 was \$246 million.

St. Louis county consists of more than 4 million acres of land, and 7,092 square miles. It is the third largest county in the United States. The next largest county in Minnesota is half the size, it is our neighbor, Koochiching county, with almost 2 millions acres.

St. Louis county has 1,040 lakes.

St. Louis county is bigger than Rhode Island or Delaware or Connecticut, and almost as large as the states of Massachusetts or Hawaii or New Jersey.

As the "crow flies" Duluth to St. Paul is 136 miles. If you are driving, Duluth to St. Paul is 150 miles. Duluth to the northwest corner of St. Louis county is 152 miles.

St. Louis county is larger than the COMBINED land areas of these Minnesota counties: Anoka, Benton, Carver, Chisago, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Waseca, Washington and Wright.

There are 25 cities, 70 organized towns and 80 unorganized townships in St. Louis county. The biggest towns on the Mesabi range are Hibbing (population 17,071), Chisholm (4,960), and Virginia (9,157).

Every 10 years, in years that end with a zero (1900, 1910, 1920, and so on), the United States government counts the number of people in each state. The report or product of this counting work, and the counting itself, is called a census. Sometimes the census count is not entirely accurate, but in 1860, 406 people were counted as living in St. Louis county, with 80 of those people in Duluth. In 1920 there were 206,917 people counted.

The largest number of people ever counted in St. Louis county was in 1980, when the total was 222,229.

In 1990, the population of St. Louis county was 198,213.

The most valuable non-renewable resource discovered in St. Louis county was iron ore. It was mined underground beginning in 1884, on the Vermilion range which stretches from near Tower and Soudan, to Winton near Ely. The ore was first carried away by trains to Two Harbors and then to Duluth.

Iron ore from the Mesabi range was mined mostly above ground and the ore was carried away by trains to Duluth and Lake Superior starting in 1892.

Duluth is the western most port on the 2400 mile St. Lawrence Seaway. It is one of the 10 busiest ports in the United States.

FACTS ABOUT LAKE SUPERIOR

It was named by French explores as "Le Lac Superior," meaning "upper lake."

Lake Superior is the largest lake by surface area in the world.

It has an average depth of 483 feet.

Its deepest point is 1,333 feet.

It contains 10% of all the fresh water in the world.

The average water temperature is 40 degrees.

Its water - if spilled out - could cover all of North America in water three feet deep.

If Lake Superior's entire surface froze, there would be enough room for every person on the earth to spread out a picnic blanket twelve feet square.

It holds 350 shipwrecks.

It is home to more than 1,400 islands.

It is large enough to contain all the other Great Lakes, plus three others the size of Lake Erie.

A FEW OF THE FAMOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE VISITED DULUTH

- Presidents: William McKinley (1899); Calvin Coolidge (1928); Dwight D. Eisenhower (October 4, 1952) campaigning for president; John F. Kennedy (September, 1963); Bill Clinton (1994), George W. Bush (2000, 2004)
- First Ladies: Abigail Coolidge (1928); Eleanor Roosevelt (1947); Hillary Clinton (1996); Laura Bush (2004)
- Harlem Globe Trotters Basketball team (March 4, 1936)
- Susan B. Anthony, women's suffrage advocate (November 8, 1889)
- Robert T. Lincoln, former Secretary of War and Minister to Great Britain (October 22, 1896) speech in defense of the gold standard
- Buddy Holly, rock singer (Saturday, January, 31 1959)
- Hubert H. Humphrey, vice president of the United States, UMD commencement (1966)
- visual artist, Andy Warhol (1968)
- Melvin Laird, Defense Secretary under President Nixon (October 9, 1970)
- singer, Elvis Presley (1976, 1977)
- author, women's rights advocate, Gloria Steinem (1979)
- Shirley Chisholm (1992), first African American woman in the U.S. Congress (1968), ran for president of United States in 1972
- Jack Dempsey (1962), former world heavyweight boxing champion
- Johnny Mathis, singer, (February 21, 1965), variety show at Denfeld auditorium
- Dr. Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe (January 23, 1999) Speaking on behalf of World Peace.
- in 1985 the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Wilma ManKiller, Center for Peace and Justice (January 16, 1996)
- teacher and activist, Maria Suarez Toro, keynote speaker for Latin American Awareness Month (April 8, 1998)
- Willie Nelson, singer, song writer (April, 1999)
- Bob Dylan and Paul Simon, singers, songwriters, (July, 1999)

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED OLD-STOCK AMERICANS

Sarah Burger Stearns (1836-1904) was a New Yorker who came with her husband to Duluth in 1872 by way of Rochester, Minnesota where Ozora had lived since 1860. Sarah Burger's application to the University of Michigan nearly turned the institution inside-out because very few colleges were admitting women at that time. Throughout her life, she was a reformer and a political activist encouraging temperance (no liquor), women's voting rights, and social justice for the poor. She was also a patent holder of inventions. She was also a mother of four children.

In 1863 Sarah Burger married a likeminded person, Ozora Pierson Stearns (1831-1896). He was a farm boy - the 10th of eleven siblings - who stumped for Abraham Lincoln in 1870. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, a lawyer, a Civil War colonel, district court judge, and University of Minnesota Regent, who served as Minnesota's U. S. Senator in 1871. The couple's wealth allowed Sarah to continue her political advocacy, philanthropy, and volunteer work in Duluth while she reared their four children: Susan (1867), Parker (1868, died as an infant), Victor (1870), and Stella (1872).

They moved to California in 1895, for Ozora's health problems, but that is where Ozora died just a short time later. His "Yankee characteristics" were named in his Duluth obituary, and many local leaders eulogized him with accolades for his accomplishments and praise of his integrity and common sense. Each of the Stearns' children graduated from college. Mr. and Mrs. Stearns helped establish the Duluth Unitarian church. All of the Stearnses are buried in Duluth's Forest Hill cemetery.

In 1881, Sarah Burger Stearns was the first woman to serve on Duluth's school board. In the same year she was president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association, and she was described as the "leading spirit" of the Minnesota suffrage movement in its early years. In the early 1880s she established a home for women "needing a place of rest and training for self-help and self-protection" -- what today would be called a battered women's shelter. In 1883, She founded the Children's Home Society, a privately endowed institution that began in modest rooms in a small needlecraft shop operated by one woman who cared for 4 children. By 1886 the number had grown and a group of interested women collected money to purchase a

double house between 16th and 17th avenues east and finally, a in the year of Sarah's death, 1904, a large building at 15th avenue east and fifth street housing 47 children. She was president of the Ladies Equal Suffrage League in Duluth founded by Sarah when she hosted visiting lecturer Susan B. Anthony in Duluth in November 9, 1889.

To read more see Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle Woman Suffrage, by Barbara Stuhler, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995, 323 p., illustrated.

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED OLD-STOCK AMERICANS

Freeman Keen (1831-1902) was born in West Sumner, Oxford county, Maine, a descendent of a Mayflower passenger. After going to Boston in 1851, he arrived in Duluth in May of 1854. His unexpected death from an accident was front page news.

Freeman Keen - sometimes spelled Keene - built the first log cabin on the original townsite of Oneota on the edge of the bank between 44th and 45th avenues west. When Reverend Ely asked for his land for Oneota, Freeman Keen moved to another nearby piece on 46th avenue west. He had no middle name or initial. He always gave his occupation as farmer, but was known as a logger and invested in real estate. He returned to Maine to visit his parents in 1860. On his way back to Oneota he spent a winter in Michigan logging. Again on his way to Minnesota, in 1861 he enlisted in Company A of the First Michigan Light Artillery (Loomis Battery) and served three years.

Freeman Keen married Mrs. Randall. The union resulted in three sons, Clifford, James Freeman (born 1875; married Pearl), and Daniel W., and two stepsons, H. B. Randall and William H. Randall, and two step daughters, Mary and Mrs. May Flint. Freeman's wife died in 1900.

He gradually "amassed a fortune from his real estate holdings and mining ventures estimated at \$200,000, which he in late years lost through ill-advised business deals..." He served as health officer for the city of Duluth, and was sidewalk inspector at the time of his death. At age 71, Freeman Keen died at a Red Cross hospital two hours after being "...struck by a west bound streetcar at a point almost within a stone's throw of his home..." Freeman Keen is buried at Oneota cemetery.

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED OLD-STOCK AMERICANS

Reverend Edmund Franklin Ely (1809-1882) was born at Wilbraham, Massachusetts where he was employed as a school teacher and clergyman. He had three younger brothers, one of whom - Albert Welles Ely - lived in Oneota (Duluth). Edmund was not a big man: he was 5 feet seven inches tall and weighed 140 pounds. He had brown hair and gray eyes.

In 1833, Edmund was sent by the American Board of Missions to northeastern Minnesota as a Presbyterian missionary to the Ojibwe Indians. He also spent time in northern Wisconsin among fellow missionaries and teachers. It was there that he met his future wife. Edmund, about 24, married the 17 year old Catherine Goulais Bissell, at La Pointe, Wisconsin in August 1835. She was a Canadian-born woman of French descent who was also a school teacher who had three brothers. She was five feet five inches tall, had black hair and brown eyes. She was photographed when she was 56.

Both Edmund and Catherine stayed in Fond du Lac until 1839, when his mission closed, and he was transferred. He also taught and preached at Sandy Lake, Leech Lake, Fond du Lac (not Duluth) and Pokegama, all located in the present state of Minnesota. He was at Pokegama until 1854. He struggled with the idea, but he finally decided to ask for dismissal from the mission work. In 1855, Reverend Edmund Ely moved to Oneota, a community later incorporated into the city of Duluth. At Oneota, he built docks and a sawmill with his friend Henry Wheeler, but the financial panic that swept the United States in 1857 devastated Ely's finances, and in 1862 he took his family to St. Paul. In this city of St. Paul, new to him, he was employed as the staff - actuary - of Oakland Cemetery until 1870. Thirteen children were born to the Edmund and Catherine, including twin daughters, between 1836 and 1863. Unhappily, but not atypically, not all of the children lived to be adults. The family again returned to Duluth, but they eventually moved west and settled first in Santa Rosa, California in 1873, and then moved on to the Seattle Territory in 1880. Shortly after getting to Seattle Territory, Catherine Ely had a stroke, and the decision was made to return to Santa Rosa. Catherine died on the way on April 15, 1881, at age 64. Edmund died in Santa Rosa on August 29, 1883, at the age of 74.

Their first child was Mary Wright. She was born in Fond du Lac (near Duluth) in 1836 and died in 1840 of measles in St. Louis, Missouri. Delia Cook Ely was born in Fond du Lac in 1838 and died of dysentery at the age of three at the town of Pokegama.

Their brother, Franklin Whiting Ely was born in 1840, and grew up to be employed as a bookkeeper. He married Mary Elizabeth Ray of Duluth in 1873

(daughter of James D. Ray). Mary Ray Ely died in 1875. Franklin Ely moved away, and he died of yellow fever in Florida in 1888.

Charles Milton Ely was born in La Pointe in 1842, and died in St. Paul when he was eight and a half of scarlet fever.

Albert Wells Ely was born in 1844 at Pokegama. He grew up and was a locomotive engineer for the Northern Pacific railroad. He married Ida Buel in Santa Rosa in 1880, and died in 1903 in Tacoma, Washington.

Henry Sisson Ely was born in La Pointe in 1847. He married Mary Abbott, and died in a Duluth hospital in 1908.

The twins were girls. Anna Day Ely was born in 1849 at La Pointe, the twin sister of Emma. Anna married Augustus Allen Mead, and died at the age of 42 in a Duluth hospital in 1891. Emma Catherine Ely was born in 1849 and died in St. Paul when only 20 months old.

Augustus Philander Ely was born in St. Paul in 1852, and moved to California with his parents.

Edward Neill Ely was born in Superior, Wisconsin in 1855 and died of typhoid fever in St. Paul a month before his 13th birthday. George Louis Ely was born in Oneota in 1858 and died in St. Paul in 1884 of tuberculosis when 25 years old. Lucia Amelia (called Minnie) Ely was born in 1860 in Oneota with fair hair and blue eyes. She died four days after her first birthday.

Sarah Eleanor Ely was born in St. Paul in 1863, and grew up and married Henry Lewis Bradley in 1885. She had three children: Minnie - probably named after her sister (1886), George (1888), and Raymond (1897), but Sarah Ely Bradley died young also, in San Francisco in 1904, of pneumonia at age 41.

The Ely children and family: Lucia, Edward, George, Anna Day Ely Mead, George Mead, and Augustus A. Mead are all buried in the Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul, Minnesota.

To read more about the Ely's see "*To Stand Alone in the Wilderness*": *Edmund F. Ely, Missionary*" in the Minnesota Historical society's magazine titled *Minnesota History*, volume 49 issue 7, fall 1985, page 265-280, by Roy O. Hoover, Professor emeritus University of Minnesota Duluth; and the book *Battle For The Soul: Metis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestants at Mackinaw Mission, 1823-1837*, by Keith R. Widder, Michigan State University Press, 1999, 254 pages, illustrated.

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED OLD-STOCK AMERICANS

James (1828-1866) and Harriet Evans (1827-1914) Peet

Harriet and James Peet were both New Yorkers. James Peet was born in Palermo, New York on November 18, 1828. Harriet was born on August 18, 1827. James and Harriet Evens were married on June 15, 1854. He came to St. Paul, Minnesota as a Methodist missionary in 1855. From 1856 to 1861 he was located in Superior, Wisconsin and Oneota (Duluth), Minnesota. He was a man slight in stature: he described himself in his diary as weighing 131 pounds in an overcoat. He continued his work as a Methodist minister, and Harriet was kept more than busy housekeeping and rearing children. At the same time he maintained his ministerial work in Oneota, he ministered to missions in Bayfield and La Pointe, Wisconsin which required difficult and repeated travel. James and Harriet Peet had two children, Olin F. (1856-1941) and Edoline. The couple only lived in Duluth for a few years.

The Peet's 1856 journey from St. Paul, Minnesota north to Superior, Wisconsin and Duluth took 9 days. Reverend Peet kept a daily pocket diary, and in it he chronicled that difficult trip. They would not travel on Sundays which added a day to the journey. There was an accident with their heavily loaded wagon that nearly killed Harriet and it is described by James, but he leaves out the fact that Harriet was expecting their first child when the accident occurred. The daily diary does include an entry that a little boy, Olin, was born four weeks after the almost fatal accident that pinned Harriet between the wagon and a tree. (Many of the 1856 diary entries are provided in another hand-out in conjunction with this exhibit.)

During the Civil War, James was a chaplain for an African American regiment, the 12th Louisiana Volunteers, which later became the 50th Colored Infantry Regiment. He was appointed

chaplain on November 5, 1863, was mustered in on January 18, 1864, and was mustered out on May 15, 1865. During most of his service as chaplain he was located in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

James returned to Harriet in Minnesota after the war and they settled in Anoka where he died on November 26, 1866, when he was 38 years old. His death came just ten years after the 1856 winter journey he and Harriet made to Duluth.

Harriet and her children remained in Minneapolis, and some time after James' death, widow Harriet married Charles Jones of Minneapolis. Harriet was again widowed. Harriet Jones returned to Duluth as an senior citizen in 1912, to a warm welcome from the local people who recalled her time living there and especially knew of that rugged trip when she and James Peet first came to Duluth in 1856. She died July 19, 1914.

(Biographical data was taken from the James Peet papers; and from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Minnesota Annual Conference. Session, Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Red Wing, Minn.: Gazette Book & Job Print., 1856-) and Peet, Harriet E., Memories of the Lonesome Trail (Minneapolis: W.R. Callaway, 1912).

BIOGRAPHIES OF FEATURED OLD-STOCK AMERICANS

Joshua Backus Culver (1829-1883) married Sarah V. Woodman. They were both New Yorkers. She died in 1873 in Duluth after bearing six children, including a son, Charles, born in 1859, in the family house back of the Culver dock near the foot of Lake Ave.

At age 13 Joshua left home for Iowa, then moved to Minnesota and soon afterward was employed with a mercantile business in St. Paul. The next year he was clerking for the Nettletons in their store in Superior, Wisconsin and helping to plat the village of Duluth. Culver was a promoter by nature.

Joshua Culver served in the Civil War in the 13th Michigan Infantry, attaining the rank of colonel by 1863. He fought in the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga. His service ended on July 25, 1865 and he returned to Duluth after which he was always called Colonel Culver. In 1871, when Duluth observed its first Memorial Day, Colonel Culver rode his horse as chief marshal of the holiday parade followed by his friend, Colonel Charles B. Graves. A Duluth veterans' group selected the name the J. B. Culver post in his honor. Culver served in many jobs including an appointment as the first land office receiver at Buchanan, and he was Duluth's first mayor in 1870. He served one term, but was pressed to serve again - which he did do - and he died in office in 1883, when on a trip to Buffalo, New York with his second wife.

Leonidas Merritt was the son of Hepzibah Jewett Merritt (1812-1906) and Lewis Howell Merritt(1809-1880). Lewis Howell Merritt was a carpenter who was born and reared in rural New York. Leonidas traveled from Pennsylvania to Superior, Wisconsin in 1856, with his mother and four brothers to join his dad and older brother, Napoleon (age 20), who had made the journey to Minnesota a year earlier. Leonidas had nine brothers and one sister. He and seven of his brothers lived to be adults. Lon (1844-1926) was the sixth child, the fifth son, and he had four younger brothers. He grew up and lived his entire adult life in Oneota. He served in the Civil War. His dad, he, and two brothers explored for iron ore. Lon was a land surveyor, a logger, a businessman responsible for launching a railroad and ore docks, and was later involved in Duluth's government. He was a Duluth city commissioner of public utilities and finance. The Merritt family was large, and appears to have been close-knit. Lewis was in frail health in 1870, and he, Hepzibah, and sons Jerome, Lewis J. and Andrus moved to Missouri near the home of Napoleon who had moved there in 1866. Lewis died in Missouri in 1880, and Hepzibah returned to Oneota.

A LETTER FROM LEONIDAS MERRITT TO HIS DAD

Feb 5, 1861

Dear Father it is with a gush of joy that I grasp my pen to answer your very kind letter of Jan 24th it is with a great deal of gratitude that I read your more than kind letter & dear dear father I love you & my home more evry day I am very sory to be absent from home yet I think it eminently is the best I am truly glad to hear that you were geting along so well I hope you will have easier times now. but these encourageing news shall not lessen my efforts to help you yet do not depend to much on me for the times here are to fluctuating that I can not depend on any thing I will say I have good comfortable times here. The folks are all well. I saw Granpa & Granma the other day they are well.

I was up to uncle asas Jewetts the other day they are well they live about 45 m- from here feel their Oats Prety well Got a

big farm 5 horses 28 cows sheep & Gurnsey catel Till theirs is no rest - & yet they cant not refrain from mentioning that Debt of Sam's Rather cool never Disstress your self as family to pay it that is my mind.

now Dear Father write often to me I will be more Punctual in writing to you after this do not worry about me I have a good home. Mary is just like a mother to me I will come home as soon as it is Possible

Take care of your self & don't work hard. Take the world as easy as possible & God be with you - this from yours I am,
Leonidas yours in the Bands of Love

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 1]

Leonidas Merritt was the son of Hepzibah Jewett Merritt (1812-1906) and Lewis Howell Merritt(1809-1880). Leonidas traveled from Pennsylvania to Superior, Wisconsin in 1856, with his mother and four brothers to join his dad and older brother, Napoleon (age 20), who had made the journey to Minnesota a year earlier. Leonidas had nine brothers and one sister. He and seven of his brothers lived to be adults. Lon (1844-1926) was the sixth child, the fifth son, and he had four younger brothers. He grew up and lived his entire adult life in Oneota. He served in the Civil War. His dad, he, and two brothers explored for iron ore. Lon and Alfred were land surveyors, timber cruisers, businessmen responsible for launching a railroad and ore docks, and Lon was later involved in Duluth's government. Lon was a Duluth city commissioner of public utilities and finance. The Merritt family was large, and appears to have been close-knit. He was very close to his brother Alfred - Alf - who was three years younger. Friends describe Alfred as a quiet, logical man. Lon died six months before Alf, and they are both buried in the Oneota cemetery in Duluth.

A LETTER FROM LEONIDAS MERRITT TO HIS BROTHER

In Camp

Sioux City

May 24th 1864

To B. B M B..

Dear Brother Alfred

I am just in the humor now to write you an answer to your very kind letter of the 9th instant I am glad you saw fit to write to me oh dear brother how know I miss your company you can even take all the excitement and amusement in the world could not keep me from thinking of you and my dear friends at home. I am thankful now for one thing and that is health I feel first rate and I have enough. When we have to graze our horses from 6 untill 8 and drill on foot from 8 till ten oclock then in the afternoon from one to two and late our horses from 2 till 5 the rest of the time we have to ourselves. When we are to leave this place is as impossible for me to state probably in the course of two or three weeks

Sioux City is a pretty nice place it is built on a splendid plain hemed in by a rise of ground with here and there a growth of hard wood The Missouri

is the muddiest stream I ever saw it is as red as the water along the shores of the St. Louis is after a Northeaster. But the bugle is sounding for roal call. So Good Bye for the present

Apr 25th 1864

Alfred when I last left off it was to attend roal call but you see another day has past and I find myself again writing to you although we are in camp yet time flies swiftly and I begin to look forward with light heart and high hopes to the time I may again be permitted to join again the home sircle but still it will perhaps a long time before I can have that inestimable pleasure .

Ayres did not come out very well I believe it was a good thing I did not send money by him for there came as I expected we did Good Bye write soon

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 1]

Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt grew up together in Oneota. They were married May 8, 1873, and had three children. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM LEONIDAS MERRITT TO HIS WIFE

11 Nov 69

Thrs Nov 11/69

To my only darling Lizzie I can not think you don't want to tell me evry thing Some time you will tell me evry thing I now you will.

Since you have asked me about joining the church I will tell you what I think about it. If the church is any safe guard to christianity as we love Christ we ought to be amongst his people unless you have a very great prefferance for some other church. I would join this one. At least untill some other is started where you may live. I do not know when the six months is up but I will find out and let you know.

And now Deare one heed not the advice of one but look to him that hath Loved us he can not be mistaken.

I am glad darling you wrote to me I am thankfull that you love me you may write to me again

Oh Lizzie I do love you

Good by my own love

Lonny & Lizzie

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 1]

Hepzibah Jewett Merritt (1812-1906) married Lewis Howell Merritt in 1831, and traveled from Ohio to Superior, Wisconsin in 1854, with three young boys to join her husband who had made the journey to Minnesota earlier.

Hepzibah was born in Massachusetts as the seventh child of Samuel and Hepzibath Andrus Jewett. She and her husband had ten children - nine boys and one girl. Eight of the boys lived to be adults. Leonidas (1844-1926) was the sixth child, the fifth son, and he had four younger brothers.

A LETTER FROM HEPZIBAH MERRITT TO HER SON

Cincinnati Feb the 7th 1872

Leonidas Merritt

My Precious Child

To morrow will be your Birthday Born in 1844 as I cannot see You I though I would write you hoping You may get time to read a few lines from me I think of you and how buisy you are and how much need of rest and how little you get I do not feel like taking up your time but you never will know how much good those too letters I had from you have been to me One I received in the Deaps the day I started for Ohio and the Other when you were in NY I answered the last but perhaps you did not get it I have not much news to write we are all well it is a very pleasant place where we live but there is not any place like Oneota for me but I enjoy being here for a time Eugens have come and it seems] mor Home like I see by the papers which I have watched with much interest that you have a hard time in youer business maters You need much grace and wisdom to direct you in the affars of life I trust and pray it will be all right How is Ruth it must be very lonely without Her are the boys well and Lizza what a good time I will have when I go back My love to all May the Lord gather us all in His fold is the prayes of Your Mother

Mrs L H Merritt

Please write soon

The 20 al just received from Lewis much better feels like a new man

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 2]

Ruth Merritt (1875-1963) was the oldest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM RUTH TO HER DAD

Oneota Minn Jan 25 [1885]

Dear Papa

I received youre letter last night I would like to see you very much I have forgotten St. Paul when you come home if you have got time bring us home some picture cards. Wee are getting along very nicely in school.

to day is Sunday the sun shins bright the wind dont blow any Friday was just like summer almost. saturday waas a nice day to. I went to literary - society and spoke a piece they elected new officers.

Mr. Himbough is president and Emma Hall is the secretary. Carry Thonphon has got a baby. it is a girl. she is getting along very well.

Good bye

From Ruth Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

Ruth Merritt (1875-1963) was the oldest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM RUTH MERRITT TO HER DAD

West Duluth, Minn., Dec 23rd 1888

Dear Papa;-

It seems a long time since you went away and left us alone. but it has not been but a short time. I suppose you found Uncle Luciens folks well and surprised to see you. Our school is now closed for two weeks holidays. The boys are happy because Christmas is so near & so am I. We are sorry that you are not here to spend a Merry Christmas with us. we will hang up your stoking for you. We have been practicing for the concert we are giving to have at the Christmas tree. We still have good skateing. I don't think we are going to have any winter it seems to get warmer every day. I thought may be it would rain to day it looked so much like it.

I must now close my letter

Ruth Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

Harry (1882-1970) was the youngest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Harry had an older brother, Lucien, and an older sister, Ruth. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family of three there as well. Poly, a nickname, whose real name was Lewis Napoleon, was their cousin who was two years younger than Harry. Poly was the son of Lon's younger brother Lewis. The three children were young adults, 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Their widower father married Cordelia R. Sprague.

A LETTER FROM HARRY TO HIS DAD

Oneota Apr 17th 1889

Dear Papa,

The coat has gone off of my tongue and I can go down stairs to morrow. Johnny came here this morning and told me to go to bed but I didn't go.

Poly came over here after school this morning to play with me we are going to have a great play with my soldiers Ruth is going to write to Gussie Ertel to day and tell her that the things came all right

I am tired of staying in the house and I guess mama is getting tired too. Poly is going to eat dinner with me. Aunt Nettie has been over here this forenoon she has gone home now. I guess you will send me a great big letter now in answer to this one Wont you Papa

I wont write any more this time

Good bye

Harry Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

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