

6 1857-07-01: Letter

From DMC: I do not know who Geyda(?) Cook, Mrs. Spenser, and Mrs. Martin are.

Grinnell, July 1, 1857

Dear Sister,

It is with pleasure that I now take my pen in hand to let you know how we get along we are well and hope these few lines will find you the same. Dear Sarah, it has been more than three weeks since I recieved your letter and now just sit down to answer it. I thought you wold bee the more pleased to here from us if I let you look for a letter some time before you recieved one from us your letter I see was filled with questions for me to answer such as how do we like hear and so on well I am happy to tell you it is much pleasenter hear then I expected to find it. It is a pritty place hear and I am very contented hear I would not come back to Meriden to live again if I could I think that we shall do well and never have caus to regret the step we have taken you wished to know how far we have to go to Church well I can tell you it is just about as far as it is from your front door to the end of the garden we can se into the church from our window. You wished me to write all about the West when I answer your letter well I will tell you all I know and that wil not be much as to Churches

? ???? George can tell you much better than I can you wished to know if there is eny trees hear yes, there is but a very few houses hear that have not got trees around them you wished to know if there was eny Cherry trees or apple trees or Currents or eny thing green but our selfs yes there is plenty of Green hear you would not wish to go back to Meriden to live again especially on the east side Sarah there is lots of good girls hear going to school and then you could ride horse back as much as you pleased for there is not a day when it is pleasent that we do not see the girls out riding and the old ladys like me ride as much as eny of them. Well I shall not apologize for geting of [off!] the track but will try to go on with telling you about the West—the most of the gardens have got Current bushes in them and there is frute trees set out hear so you see we shall have frute hear in time and there is now a plenty of plum trees in the grove and there is peach trees hear and strawberrys hear and ?????? bushes you see there is green here. now I will tell you what wh have to eat well we have pork: ham eggs and lamb ???? pigon ????? and ???? hens peach ????? is it not as much as we had in Meriden well I have told you what we have to eat and now I will tell you about trip making wel thear it goes I have not got up that sign yet but have had work to do I have been sewing to pay for a lounge you know I told you I would have one and so I shall have one that is nice I can tell you. Have you got one yet plus write and let me know I have cut 8 Dresses that I have had cash for and then I have paid for milk in anything thare is is Millinor (?) and 3 dress makers hear in Grinnell so you see that I cannot have all the mending (?) to do myself o Sarah you ought to come out hear and go to school you would like it much they are now at work on the Grinnell Seminary and expect to go into it in the fall and then you would be handy to school you could have your music teacher your rides on horse back and all the good times you want I will not write eny more this time I will let my good boy write now please tell Geyda? Cook if she will write to me she shall have a letter from me kiss Mrs. Spenser and Mrs Martin for me tell them I want to see them tell them I am happy in my new home and I wish they were hear to give my love to all and take a part to your self now good by for this time this from your pritty sister

Electa C Cook to Sarah E Cook

7 1857-07-04: Letter

From DMC: I do not know who Abba, Bixby, Norris, three Bailey brothers, a merchant named Bailey, and Fred H. are.

Grinnell, July 4th 1857

Dear Sister,

Your letter was long since received but have delayed answering it until I could give you more particulars about our affairs. We boarded 4 weeks, then boarded ourselves where we now live and slept at night for 3 weeks at Mr. Ford's when our boxes arrived safe and sound except a 2 or 3 old tumblers and blue plates, glass pitcher, wash bowl and the cambric (too bad). You ask what do you eat. A plenty of flour can be had for \$5.50 per 100 lbs, 2 months since for 3.50 to 3.75 but in about 6 weeks enough can be had at a fair price. Rise at 10 to 12 1/2 cts per lb, which I make take the place of potatoe and meat this not weather. 12 lbs pork will last this summer. Lard can be had at the store for 20 cts per lb so I have no pies but plenty of peaches at 18 to 20 cts per lb which I eat in peach sauce as you would bread and milk but not quite as much. Butter 15 to 20 cts lb. Enough can be had here to eat or wear as cheap I think as in Meriden. How does the country look around us? A small grove lies 5 miles north of the village, one of 120 acres 3 miles north west and a large one called 9-mile grove 8 or 9 miles east with one continued line of timber stretching all along the N.W.=West.S.W and South with one very large grove 16 or 18 miles to the S.E. towards Montezuma the county town (lying in the S.E. corner of Poweshiek Co and wes in the N.W.?) (For our 4th of July see Abba's letter).

The railroad is located and staked to this place and will be let for contract within a year. It can be easily built for 5 miles east of town. Then for 20 miles it follows little Bear Creek costing about \$1000 per mile for grading ready for the rails. The remaining 40 miles to Iowa City as easily mad(e) as any other road.

You see that this will be a fine country in a few year, the region around here is but 3 years settled except a few Hoosiers in the groves. No fear of the fever and ague for no one thinks or speaks of it. Concerning Boonsboro, there is a plenty of first rate timber and stone and water as good as here which is about as good as it will average with you. With coal and first rate prairie. Society is more mixed than it is here and reports says it is somewhat liable to fever and ague but of this I know not but think I shall go there before cold weather.

Tell father if he could dig one summer in this soil he would not dig among stone heaps till he became richer than he is now. Tell Mother if she wished to live easy or become rich she would not live there with 4 cows, 14 acres of land and five or six thousand dollars lying idle. Tell Collins there is a more profitable way than to job by the day or loan money at 6 percent. Men are making their thousands by selling land. One young man from Ohio 3 years since entered \$7000 worth of land now has sold for \$27000. Three or four by the name of Bixby took land 3 yrs ago close to the village are now selling at \$50 to \$100 per acre. Grinnell is doing the same, he having several thousands acres both timber and prairie. Norris from Illinois 3 yrs since entered 160 A close to the village costing \$200 sold out to the Rail Road Co last summer for \$8000 in cash. Three brothers by the name of Bailey entered five 80 acre lots close to the village 3 years since about 100 A broken and fenced with 2 houses for which they now ask \$16000. The same holds everywhere in a good place. A merchant here by name Bailey has a brother who bought a lot in St. Pauls, Minnesota for \$1100, sold 1/2 for \$1600. The other half will bring him \$3000. He has asked \$11000 at interest in the same place at 40 per cent. Thousands of dollars are loaned here at from 20 to 25 percent, mostly at 25. All these things I know to be true for I have loaned \$250 at 20 per cent, all I asked, which will pay for \$500 at 10 percent or \$833 at 6 percent or \$666 at 8 per cent. Anybody that has a little to begin by borrowing a little more can afford to do something as it gives him 2 hands to work with

Wheat, corn, potatoes, oats, broom corn, cattle, horses, hogs, or any thing else sells well and readily for cash, in any amount any farmer can raise. We joined hands this year and planted 37 A corn, 2 of beans (planted with hand planter) 1 1/2 A potatoes and shall sew 1/2 A of turnips. Now if we have an average crop at an average price (nothing promises fairer now) we shall have no fears for the future, having enough to eat and to do with and to pay debts as fast

as due. I have today paid \$450 as first payment on 80 acres of prairie and some wood. This land is fenced the same that we are working this year. It lies 1/2 mile north and 1 1/2 miles west of the village close to the grove. There is a 40 acre piece 20 A ploughed enclosed in the same lot at the south end by the side of the road which can and must be bought making a beautiful lot 80 rods fronting on the road and running north 240 rods. \$200 paid down secures the lot no interest on the rest till next spring at which time \$400 must be paid the rest in interest on it one year after. I asked you for \$700. You promised 5 or 6 hundred. Now if you will furnish \$600 you shall have a mortgage on the 40 A costing \$1000. There shall be no other claim mortgage or tax on or against the property with a certificate to that effect (records by county, not town). Deposit money in any bank Take that certificate and send in a letter to me It will come as safe as any other letter. Write an answer as soon as you get this saying that I can have the \$600 and I will give you 2 months notice that there may be time enough for the business.

More next time. Write about the stove, chairs, table, bedstead, etc. and the news in general and particular. Love to all inquiring friends and to Lydia and Henry. Tell Henry to write without fail about all things and the shop and have Fred H. put in a word or two. Yours.

Geo. W. Cook to Sarah E. Cook