

12 1858-02-08: Letter

Grinnell, Feb 8th, 1858

Dear Brother:

I received your letter of Jan 1st in due time and would have answered as you requested long before this if J B Grinnell had been at home. He came home last week from ??? Des Moines (Polk County) where he is attending the state legislature as senator from this district. You may ask what this has to do with my letter. I answer much every (wagles??) temporal affairs as Brother Hubbard says. I want to borrow \$500 (Five Hundred Dollars) on land costing \$900, I buying the balance and giving you security on the whole. You all advise me to come back to old Conn or part way at least. Now that is impossible with any safety for 2 or 8 years for no one here can sell property for cash for anything what it is worth any more than you can at the East. This vanishing of many hundreds all over the West as well as East. I can buy this of Grinnell for at least \$200 less than I could 5 months ago. Now I want this so I can put things in good shape to sell to good advantage when the good time comes, for come it will, no one doubts. Now if you have any wish to have me come back, this is the best and quickest way to have it done and if your promises to assist me are good now is the time to do so with safety to yourself with the first and only mortgage and no incumbrance whatever. You can send the money by Express (taking their receipt for it) or deposit the money in Bank, sending a check for the same just as Grinnell thinks best for himself. You answer this soon after receiving it stating just what you will do. (I don't care if you add one or two hundred to it.) Grinnell will be at home once only (in 3 weeks) before the 1st of April. By that time I shall hear from you and the deed from him to me will be recorded and also the Mortgage deed from me to you, which with the note I will send to you on the receipt of which you shall send the money as directed. This land lies west of the village the west line just one mile from it the east line 50 rods nearer; it being 50 rods wide east to west (north end on the road) and 100 rods long north and south (south end on the railroad). All land west of Penn is divided into townships of 6 miles square (36 square miles in a township). Each square is a section of land (640 A). Each section is divided into four parts called quarter sections (160 A). This is as far as government survey goes in dividing, everything being exactly north and south, east and west. The corner bounds are made by throwing up the earth and driving into the mound a short stake with the section number, township north, range west, all plainly marked on it so that almost any one could go where he had a mind to. This may be all Greek to you but I see through it as plainly as through a 2-inch slab?. This piece 100 rods long by 50 rods wide contains just 31 1/4 Acres in it, being just that amount after dividing 160 Acres into pieces of such lengths and widths as will make them the best shape for sale and use. Cash price \$25 per A = \$781 1/4 = Ten Acres wood, 1 1/2 miles S.W. (Price 150 ???) Cash price \$11 1/2 per A \$115. Both making \$896 1/4 ???. This is the lowest cash price and will last but a few weeks. He has a few Acres between this piece and town he designs for building lots and an 80 A lot S. W. of this for \$20 per A but no dividing it. You can buy land many \$ cheaper of him than any one else. By doing without the wood \$400 might answer, but they must go together and each will sell the other. (You understand this.) In my last I did not speak of buying 40 A between mine and the road but said owing to the hard times and low price of everything that I had concluded not to buy it, and remain of the same mind for I can do better. The payment that I made last summer is so small that before anymore is paid the use of it and the timber and taxes will about equal it. But should there be a little left, the saving in cash trade with Grinnell will be more than double the loss. If will give me all the land I want at present and make the debt so much less that it will be perfectly safe if these hard times should last for years (they will not). My expenses are small. House rent \$2.50 per month. There is timber enough on this that I have for the entire covering, frame, floor, and lath for a house as large as that white house Sarah lived in when she went to school to Mr. Alexander to say nothing of road? and fence posts, all of which I can easily carry off at least the best part. Emigration will continue to all the western states. Let people down east say what they are of a mind to, you need have no fears about the Railroad, for it was located and the right of way (100 rods in width) secured before Grinnell came here, for it was the cause of his coming and will be built as soon as any similar work will be there being 59 miles already completed. I suppose you think we are out of the world and in the bushes but you are mistaken for we are not 1/2 across the state, the Capital is now at Fort Des Moines 50 miles West of here. Laid out twice as large as Middletown and lying on both sides of the river with 6000 inhabitants and one of the richest counties is 200 miles west of here. There are 3 or 4 cities on the Mississippi twice as large as Middletown. One of them (Dubuque) is as large as Hartford.

[3 bu ears make 2 bu corn] – ** on the next leaf ***

From DMC: There is apparently more to this one. Maybe it will turn up.