

# LEWIS C. BURNETT

History of his life from birth  
to death - Lewie, Lew were nicknames

I have often wished even when a boy that my father had left on record some incidents of his life, and often I have looked thro his books to find some note or comment. Tho he was a great reader and a fine historian he left but little on record of his useful and noble life. With this idea in view that no parent should die without leaving on record some account of life struggles, triumphs and defeats, religious and political beliefs I shall write the following pages.

Knowing these things may be an inspiration to some child or grandchild. A parent may leave on record some facts that if some attention is paid to them by children or grandchildren may save some from a lifetime of suffering. For instance, I have found out that it is vitally necessary for me to lead an active out door life to attain to the best of health. But since so much of my life has been spent at indoor work I have been compelled every few years to take long or short outing trips of which I will relate farther on.

My beloved father was born 1809; was youngest son and child of Justus and Lois Burnett, and was only 17 years old when his father died. Father's folks objected to his marrying Harriet S. Compton on account of the Compton's having such violent tempers. This touched Mother's pride, and she never got over it very well. But Father was always so good and kind their married life was just as good as it could be. Father learned the trade of blacksmithing from his older brother Linas at Chatham, NJ. One morning while waiting for his brother to come to the shop he said to himself, "I wish Linas would hurry up. I want my toddy (whisky)." He then and there realized that an appetite was being formed for strong drink, so lifting his [hand] like taking an oath, he said, "God being my helper, I will never touch another drop." And from that day he became a strong advocate of temperance principles. (about 1827; Lafayette visited this country 1824.) So far I have learned few of the particulars of Mother's family history. Her mother, Ruth Terrell Compton, was born in 1775, the year our country began business for itself. She was a daughter of Judge Terrell of Plainfield, New Jersey and sister of Thos. Terrell, a prominent farmer. Mother's grandmother,

wife of Judge Terrell, was quite a small woman, but very active, and a great horse back rider. Mother's mother, or Ruth Compton, said she had seen her mother many times step on the darkies' hands as they lifted her into the saddle. She was quite a rider even into old age. Her name before she married Judge Terrel was Ford, a prominent name in the history of New Jersey. Mother's father, \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup>[LCB's blank] Compton lived at Perth Amboy. His brother was a sea captain. On the return of Cap. Compton from one of his trips, he brought yellow fever with him. Some of the sailers [sic] had caught it in some southern port. Grandfather Compton, after his brother was taken down with the fever, superintended the unloading of the vessel, and he took the dread disease and died. Grandmother Ruth Terrell Compton, being used to her aristocratic ways, never having worked much, could not take care of her large family. So her brother Tommy Terrel took her and her children to his home.<sup>2</sup>

Mother was the youngest of the little family. In all after life, even down to very old age, Mother could not say enough for her "dear Uncle Tommy Terrel." Surely a man's good deeds shall live after he is long numbered with those gone on before, but not forgotten. Mother well remembered the return of the New Jersey troops from the war of 1814. As one regiment came by, Tommy Terrel went into his cellar and brought out an abundance of wine for them to drink and fruit to eat. (1814, mother 6 or 7 years old. Indian War in Indiana) The Comptons came from Compton Street, London to Perth Amboy, N.J. at an early day, and were very aristocratic. They had their family crest and owned slaves. There was a very high streak of temper running thro both the Compton and Terrel families, and the older Burnetts knew this, and that was the reason they objected somewhat to father's marrying mother. But their anxiety was needless, for Mother was one of God's noble women, strong in her Christian character, and at all times inculcated in her children the great necessity of absolute honesty in all dealings with others. Many times in conversation with her great theme was for me to be a good man. Even when she was over 90 years and her mind was weak, she would never forget to say, "Be a 'good man.'"

Mother had an iron constitution and great will power. Such a nature with divine

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1 I believe his name to have been Joseph Compton; if so, he died intestate Sept 15, 1811 in Perth Amboy, NJ.

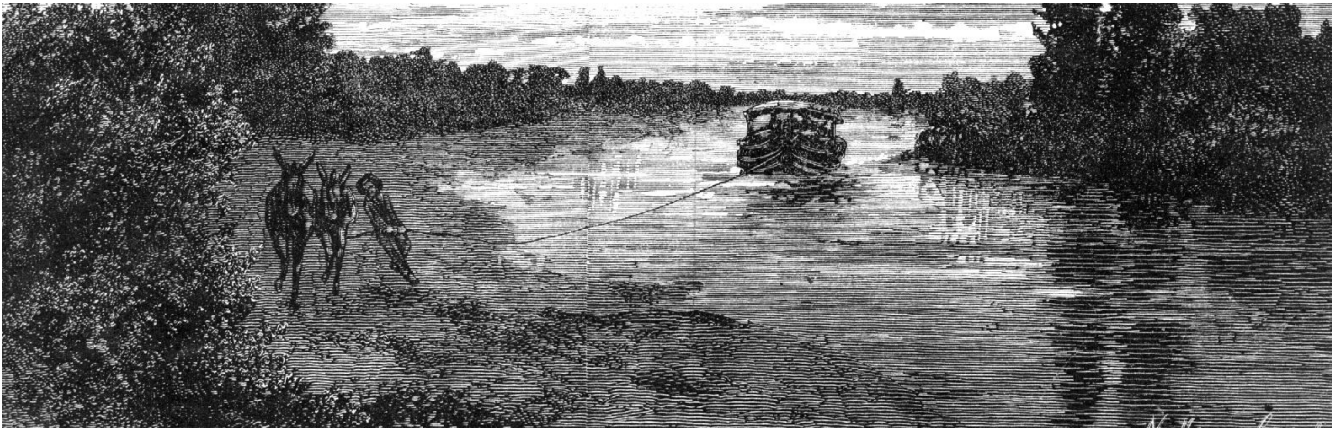
2 I believe this to have been in Barnard's, Somerset Co, NJ.

power at the helm can do great good in the world, but if it lacks the divine help there is liable to be trouble on hand sometime in life, like loosing control of a high spirited horse. Father and Mother were married July 1st, 1832. Father was 23 years old when they were married, and mother between 24 and 25. For years Mother kept this very quiet, as she did not want Father to know that she was the oldest. For a short time he engaged in the grocery business in Newark, NJ, but the hard times of 1836 & 1837 came on. He concluded to sell out. For a time he worked at fine carriage work at Rahway. But he had received letters from his older brothers<sup>3</sup> living at Terre Haute for him to come there. So they left Newark and started west, I think spring of 1842. At this time there were no rail roads west of Pittsburgh going to Terre Haute. They stopped 9 months in Pittsburgh where brother W.J. Burnett was born Oct 25th 1842. From here they went by boat to Louisville where they had to stop again for 6 months spring of 1843. They went by boat from Louisville to and up the Wabash to 15 miles above Terre Haute. Henrietta remembers this trip well, tho she was but 4 years old or a little over. The boat on which they rode from Pittsburg to Louisville was called the *Adelade*, and the captain of it was so kind to father and mother that when Addie was born they named her for the boat. When they reached Clinton Landing the river was so shallow next to the shore father had to carry the children to the bank on his back. This was very hard on father as he was not strong. They sat on the bank for some time, mother being very much worried about father's exposure. After waiting for some time Uncle Eleazer came after them with a lumber wagon and took them to his home. They found an old house to live in, but it nearly broke Mother's heart. She went out in the woods & had a big cry over it; this Henrietta remembers well. (1843 - Jerome was 10 yrs old, George 8, John 6, Henrietta 4, 'Leazer 3, Will 1. War with Mexico, 1847; first Republican Party 1856) They staid here but a short time when they moved down to Terre Haute on 4th St. May 1843. He bought some lots of John Sibley north of the canal on 5th Street<sup>4</sup> and that fall moved into his own home where Addie and I were both born. We lived here till spring of 1856, when father on account of his health moved onto our farm just east of town, where we lived till after father's death.

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3 He had a number of family members in Vigo Co., IN: brothers William, Stephen G. & Eleazer, sister Hannah (Nevins), and perhaps sister Rhoda (Harrison).

4 This, on "the crosscut canal," was sold to Byron Sandford, VJB's apprentice (in 1850) & nephew (?) for \$160 on 30 Jun 1853.



*Canal Boat*

There may have been better men than my father, but they were few and far between. He was well posted on the events of the day and [an] extra fine historian, was strong in his religious beliefs but accorded the same rights to all others, was very liberal with others ideas. One of my earliest rememberences was of seeing the Catholic priest come and have long conversations with Father at his black smith shop, and one of the mourners at the funeral was one of the priests. Father was converted in early life, and joined the Methodist Church and was a member till his death. In politics from 1850 to 1854 he was a fusion Democrat, but one of the first to advocate and join the Rep. party in 1856 voting for Jno. Fremont.

Henrietta remembers well when it cost her \$7 per quarter to go to school, so they could only go during the winter months. It was this heavy cost of schooling that determined father to advocate the free school system, which he did in season and out of season untill he was elected member of the legislature. Thro his efforts, the free school system of Indiana became a law, and so stands with but slight changes to this day. This was enough to his credit, for it last for many years, and his children are proud of it and his grandchildren should be, even to the 3rd, 4th, or even 5th generation.

After the Civil War was over, Henrietta traded with Mr. Johnson as he ran the best grocery store near their home [in Newark?]. One day when she was in Mr. Johnson's store, he said to her, "Mrs. Beardsley, I want to congratulate you for having such a good husband. Why," he said, "every boy of the 13th New Jersey regiment speaks in the highest

terms of his many good qualities, and his bravery in the battles of Antetam [sic], Chancellorsville, &c &c." After he had his say about Austin, Henrietta said, "Mr. Johnson, I have often thot I would tell you who my father was." "Why, " he said, "did I know him?" "Yes, for I have heard him speak of you often." "Who?" "Virgil J. Burnett." "Virgil J. Burnett that moved to Terre Haute years ago?" "Yes." Hurrying from behind the counter, he grabbed her hands, saying, "Is it *possible*, is it *possible*? He was one of the best men that ever lived. Another, yes another Lincoln. Why, 30 years ago he predicted the Civil War, and it came to pass as he said it would. Mrs. Beardsley, you are surely blest with having such a good husband and such a grand noble father." As I write this, 1906, I too am proud of such a father, and I might well be, for there [are] not many just as good as he was.

1848 It is very little I can remember of this year, but I was born sometime between daylight of Oct 29-30 1848. And I suppose the first thing was to cry. In early life it takes but little to start the tears to dropping; a broken toy or any little disappointment. But as we grow into years we become ashamed to be seen crying, we say it is unmanly, that we must be brave and not give way to our feelings. The years come and the years go. Little ones come to cheer and comfort our hearts; oh, how anxiously we watch over them thro infancy and our anxiety never diminishes. The years have been prosperous, the children are all still alive; we have grown somewhat indifferent to the sorrows of others. But suddenly there is an empty chair; one, possibly two or more. The heart strings are torn, the whole being is sick. Then it is again that the tears start quickly; just the mention of the loved ones is all that is necessary.

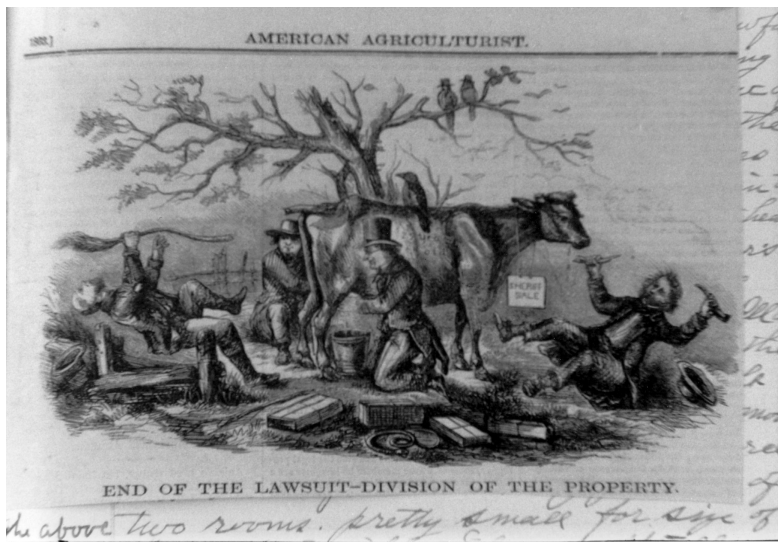
1850 I learned to love the dearest mother on earth. For I was the last of the precious family of eight, and of course received all the little acts of love and kindness from both dear parents and seven big boys and sisters. And it [is] well I absorbed so much love early in life, for I have needed [it] all thro life. Love and a home, but what is a home without love? There is joy and peace everywhere when there is love at home. [In this year] I learned to walk after many mishaps and falls, but I didn't have far to fall. These were the easiest falls I have ever had in after life.

1851 - In my early years the stage and the canal were the only means of travel. I well remember the stage yards at Terre Haute; one was about three blocks south of our old home in Terre Haute, Ind. The canal boats were a means of travel but not so much; it was used mostly for freight purposes, of which I speak more in detail in other places. My earliest joys was fishing along the canal and seeing the boats come and go, load and unload. I am quite sure it was this year that the Indianapolis, Terre Haute and St. Louis R.R. was built. I well remember track laying and the first engine I looked at. The R.R. was one block north of our home.

1852 - The bridge nearest our house was a pivot bridge, and whenever a canal boat passed it would turn half around to admit the boat passing; if we saw a boat coming we would run to the bridge so as to get a ride, and also to see the boat pass. On the south side of the canal was a large dock; here the canal boats would tie up to load and unload. Many a time on spring and summer evenings we would go over to this dock and turn up sideways the little push carts and sit in them and fish, or as warm weather came on to swim in the canal and dive off the bridges or the docks. When winter came oh, what fine skating we had to and fro over its glassy surface. But sad events also came to mind - how in jumping onto one of the boats I ran a large nail almost thro my foot. Oh, how frightened Mother was when I came home limping on my bleeding foot. Another event that happened either in this or the 4th year was a neighbor woman, Mrs. Clayton, committed suicide by jumping off the 6th Street bridge. I well remember them bringing the body to the shore.

I was beginning to be of some importance now, and as the canal was close by, very often in the winter Sister Addie carried me on her back down to the ice or draw me on my sled and oh! such jolly times we had when the ice was good. It was during this year that I loved to run to meet Father as he came home from his blacksmith shop.

1854 - We lived at the corner of 4th and Cherry Streets. Father's first blacksmith shop was located corner of 5th and Main.



Another eventful incident of this year for a little boy. Father and Jerome made me a pair of skates. The same year the boys took me down to the swimming hole just below the west end of the I, T.H. & St.L. R.R. bridge. Jerome threw me into the water and said, "Now Lew, sink or swim." I paddled safe to shore as I had learned to swim some

before this.

1855 - Charley Sibley, a neighbor, used to always call me Flaxy from the color of my hair. I can yet hear his cheery words, "Hello, Flaxey, how are you?"

I well remember the political campaign of 1856. During one of the processions of the Democrats I saw a man with a sword in his hand. This somewhat frightened me for I had often heard Father say, "there would certainly be a war soon."

1857 - The incidents of this year are many among the most important. Father's health being so poor he thought it would be best to move onto our farm. It was 2 miles east of the court house and ½ mile north. It is now within the city limits, and the farm that Mother sold for \$4,500 would bring a great deal now. This moving to the farm was a delight to me as it would give me more outdoor freedom in which I have always delighted from that day to this. I well remember the first winter, how brother Will and I would go rabbit hunting with our little dog Dash. One day we ran a rabbit into a hollow tree which had been broken off 20 or 30 feet above ground. We thot we had him sure so we built a fire at the bottom and seen the smoke was coming out at the top finely; it was a good chimney, and soon out came bunny, and to our great chagrin made a safe leap and got away. Father fixed up a little blacksmith shop next to the road and did some work for the neighbors.

I had a patch of popcorn just west of the house. I was forever teasing the cats by taking them quite a distance from the house and tying something to their tails to see them run for home. This year the older boys read the book called *Wild Western Scenes*, which amused me very much, especially the characters Jo and Sneak.

One evening brother John quietly went out to the chicken house and caught two chickens and started out into the corn field. Geo, thinking someone had stolen the chickens, grabbed his gun and tried to run the thief down. By and by he came back very tired to see us all laughing at him.

Again I am in the old home. I see the great fire place in the east end of the room; on the hearth is the baking oven, the pot is hanging on the crane over the fire. I see myself lying on the floor as Mother and Henrietta come and go preparing supper for the big family. Soon after six Father comes in from his shop, and then one by one the boys drop in from their work or play. Supper is ready, and six boys and two girls; Jerome, George, Henrietta, John, Eleazer, Will, Addie, and last of all the baby of the family, Lew. Then the sewing girl and one or two of father's apprentices. 12 or 13 hungry mouths to fill and work for, yet Mother lived to 94 years old. Oh, it is not work that kills, *it is sin*.

When wild pigeons were plentiful, Mother would sometimes make a large pigeon pie or roast pigeons and turkey. She would put the turkey in the center of the large dish and then place around it one pigeon for each one of the family.

It seems strange that in a few years time the beautiful birds, wild or passenger pigeons, should become extinct. I have seen untold numbers of them and men would often kill them by the hundreds. A neighbor boy killed 26 at one shot. Many mornings I have sat on the roof of our kitchen and seen flock after flock fly by. Indiana at this time was a paradise of game. Plenty of wild turkeys, prairie chickens, some deer, a great many raccoons and opossums and other game. The fishing was good in the Wabash and in the upper basins of the canal. But now in 1905 the canal is gone; pigeons, turkeys, and most of the wild game is almost extinct. Jerome and Lizzie Lange were married this year.

1858 - During this year I fell out of the hay loft on to a large mocking bird cage



and smashed it, for which I got a good scolding from George. Another day I was catching a chicken when it ran behind the mules, and as I grabbed for it one of the mules kicked me on the chest. I knew nothing for some time.

It was during the spring of this year that I earned my first money. I helped a neighbor plant corn for two days. I said to Father, "What shall I ask for the work?" Father's answer was, "Ten cents a day is plenty." When the work was done Mr. Tuerny called me into the house and gave me two silver quarters and said I was a good boy. My, but I was happy as I fairly flew homeward.

Oftentimes there comes into our lives years of adversity and sorrow. Trouble seems to come in bunches, as it were. Sometimes our lives run along smoothly, for years it may be, but all at once there is a jar, a shock, and possibly a dear one is taken away, never to return, and some heart is left sorely hurt. Time may heal the wound but the scar is there and years afterward tears will dim the eyes as the memory and the forms of our departed loved ones come to us.

The whole year seemed to be a year of sadness. The very heavens were in a tumult. It was a cold wet spring and we did not get the corn planted until the 4th of July, and then came an early frost in Sept. killing corn e'er it was ripe. It was a summer of violent wind and thunderstorms; during one storm Mother put us under a feather bed in the middle of the floor.

While up to Aunt Hanna's<sup>5</sup> in the spring she gave me a pet sheep. This I had all summer and fall and it learned to play with me like a dog. Times were very hard and some time at the last of October Father asked me if I would not sell the sheep and buy a pair of shoes, as I had nothing then to wear. Father was not poor, as he owned his farm and town property free of debt,<sup>6</sup> but money was so very scarce. I sold the sheep for one dollar only,



*Virgil Burnett's  
Headstone, Woodlawn  
Cemetery, Terre Haute, IN*

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<sup>5</sup> Probably Hanna Burnett Nevins, daughter of Stephen G. Burnett and thus LCB's cousin, born about 1825.

<sup>6</sup> This is not true. He may still have owned a town lot purchased in 1849, but the farm, 30 acres, which was bought in 1852 for \$815, was sold to his son Jerome C. Burnett in Feb 1857 "for \$235 and filial affection."

with which Father bought me a pair of brogan shoes, and I had to make these last me all winter. To keep the snow out I cut tops of boots off and tied them over my shoes like leggings.

Father caught a violent cold while husking the ripe corn; this, with his long standing asthma, told on him rapidly.

On Dec 2nd 1858, my beloved father Virgil J. Burnett passed away to his eternal reward.<sup>7</sup> I was just beginning to remember him, his little acts of kindness and kind words. He had to leave us all too soon. I well remember him as he called me to his bed side and bid me goodbye, saying, "Lewie, be a good boy, and mind your mother." Precious Father, I can yet see him in the little setting room with the bed to the east, giving a last farewell to each in turn. I can yet hear the words that he wrote to his beloved sister shortly before; "My elder brother Jesus will convey me thro the valley of the shadow of death, and I shall fear no evil." So ended the life of a good man. It was the first great shadow that fell across the life of Mother, and for months and years you could see the wound she was bearing. Oft would she say, "In all of our life, Father never spoke an unkind word to me."

I can recall but little of Father's life. I know he was very loving and kind, and I have often heard Mother say, "He never spoke an unkind word in his life." From that year of Father's death till the present I have regretted his dying so soon, for I have always felt the loss of care in the years from ten to twenty-one.<sup>8</sup>

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7 Cemetery records list him as having died of "consumption", i.e. pulmonary tuberculosis.

8 Virgil Burnett Memoir written by Jerome C. Burnett [Virgil's eldest child]

Virgil Justus Burnett was born at Caldwell, New Jersey, in 1809. Came to Indiana in 1843, and settled at Terre Haute, where he resided until his death. In religion he was a methodist of liberal or advanced ideas. In politics he was an anti-slavery Democrat until the organization of the Republican party, which he joined in 1856.

Mr. Burnett's former residence was Newark, New Jersey. After the financial crisis of 1837, in which he lost his business as a grocer, he determined to seek the great west. He set out with his little family but stranded in Pittsburgh, on account of financial troubles and remained there three years, employed in Townsend's carriage manufactory. From there he journeyed on, going from Pittsburgh to Louisville, Kentucky, in a flatboat, the owner of which made and sold tinware on his boat, at the towns along shore. At Louisville he remained a year, then relinquished a profitable position on account of his feeling against negro slavery, and sought a home in a free state. The final journey was made from Louisville on a steamboat which was loaded for a special trip up the Wabash river, then navigable by reason of a rise. He and his family were landed at Durkee's Ferry, above Terre Haute, where he was compelled to carry his children on his back through the "bottoms" from which the high water had not receded, his wife and the more valuable "plunder" being taken in a pirogue. Shortly after he reached Terre Haute, which he made his home. Here he went into active business, and at once identified himself in school work, being on one of the first of the public school boards, and rendered service as a member of the City Council. He was particularly zealous, with other citizens, in developing the present system of Common schools, and was much gratified at the wonderful progress that had been made throughout the State before he died – a progress which has placed Indiana foremost among the States in institutions of learning, and general educational facilities.

In the break-up of parties immediately preceding the organization of the Republican Party, he was, a short time, a member of the Know Nothings, and on their ticket was elected to the Legislature of 1855.

1859 - Mama moved back into our home on 5th Street. This was an eventful year. Henrietta married Geo. A. Beardsley in Jan'y, George married Josephine Eaton July 20 and John married Mary Beard on Dec 8.

During this and the following summer brother Will and I gathered a great amount of wild cherries and sold them to the distillery. We sold enough to get us our winter clothing &c. It was during this year that all kinds of nuts were very plentiful and often we went across the river into the bottoms and get our sacks full of fine hickory nuts, and it always went against the grain to have to give the toll man at the bridge two big hand fulls of nuts for our toll.

1860 - My 12th year and somewhat eventful. Very many incidents come to mind, but I will note only a few.

My second cousin John Eaton, George's brother-in-law, came west with George and Josie in 1860. He lived with them for about two years. He was a New York City boy and was already a hard smoker when he was between 13 & 14 years old, and he very soon got me to smoking. We made pipes of cream nut shells and honey suckle vine stems.

Some time during the fishing season Johnny Eaton and I went up to Uncle Robert Briggs<sup>9</sup>. The next day went down to Tuttle's Mill to fish and had fine success, having caught a full tub full. Among them were several fish that weighed 4 to 6# each. This was a fine day's work and I tell you we were proud boys when we got home that evening.

One day, or evening rather, Sue Beard and Addie had teased Johnnie Eaton and I a good deal and to get even with them I thot up a plan. Brother Will had some tanned possum hides; one of these we rolled into a tight roll and tied our stout fishing lines to each end of it. One cord passed out of the foot of the bed along the floor to our bed. The other cord passed under the pillow forward to our bed. We kept the made rat at the foot of the bed till the girls were about asleep when we set the rat to going up and down between the girls. It did not take

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In his last years he was enfeebled by declining health which greatly empaired (sic) his energy and usefulness. He died in December, 1858, respected by all, and loved and honored by those who knew him best.

<sup>9</sup> He was married to Rosetta Burnett, b. 1825, daughter of Stephen Grover Burnett.

long for the covers to fly and the girls to get out of bed badly frightened, while Mother exclaimed, "Girls, girls, what is the matter?"

1861 - As I look back over this eventful year I hardly know what to tell or what to leave untold, and this might truly be said of the following years of '62, '63, '64, & '65. Geo. A. Beardsley at once raised a company at Newark for the 13th N.J. Volunteers.

In this year we first used coal oil lamps. Before we had used candles and camphine lamps - the latter were very dangerous.

A majority of the people in and around Terre Haute sympathized with the South. John was outspoken in his hatred of the slaveholding section. Bro. George did not like the idea of an abolition war. You could hear the word very often applied to Republicans - "You black abolitionist." Fist fights and knockdowns were common and occasionally ended in bloodshed. But after the firing on Fort Sumter a great many Democrats became what was called "War Democrats."

On the fourth of July this year I went to hear Gen. Cassius M. Clay speak at Strawberry Hill, south part of Terre Haute. Johnny Eaton got me to smoke a cigar, what was then called "Cuba Sixes" a long slender cigar not much thicker than a pencil. You could buy 6 for 5 cents. It made me very sick and I could hardly get home. We went to Bro. George's for dinner. Josie had a blackberry cobbler for dinner. This seemed to settle my stomach; at least after dinner I felt all right and from that day to this I have well remembered the dinner. We kept this smoking up for some time before Mother found it out; finally she found our pipes and tobacco out in the stable. She made me promise to not smoke any more, and I did not untill she went east spring of 1863.

One day west of the Wabash brother Eleazer shot at some quails and killed seven with one barrel and eight with the other as they flew away, and killed eight more, a total of 15 out of 16. One day returning from hunting I saw a flock of ducks far out on a pond, and just to be doing [it] I shot at them, aiming very high over them. One of them fell dead, to my surprise. My faithful dog so got it and brot it to me. When I got home I was anxious to see where it was shot, finally I found that it was hit between the back bone and the head.. about

the only place it would have been possible to have killed it [from] so far - at least 125 to 150 yards away. I shot 4 mallard ducks one day and killed all at one shot. At another time I shot at two prairie chickens; I thot I must of hit them, but they did not fly, but walked away naturally as if uninjured. I reloaded and walked towards them, ready to shoot if they should fly, but cought up with them and killed them with my hands.

1862 - This was more eventful than the preceding year. As Henrietta was not well, Mother broke up housekeeping and went to Newark, leaving me with George and afterwards John and Mary. I have always looked upon this error of Mother's as a very serious mistake. I needed her care very much. She should have taken me with her. I have always felt that my sickness during the latter part of the year was the cause of my sickness in after life.

[The battle of Antietam] was the first battle that Geo A Beardsley was in; in this battle their regiment lost 150 men. They went right from their homes about Newark. N.J. Austin's Co. was made up mostly of young men from the churches; mostly the Bap[tist] church he belonged to. After this fight Austin had no use for Gen. Geo. B. McClelland [sic]; he said he was no better than a traitor [and] that he could have whipped Gen. Lee much worse if he had wanted to.

I lived with George and Josie during the spring out on the Lange Place,<sup>10</sup> but after George enlisted in the 4th Indiana Cavalry in June, Josie broke up housekeeping and went back to New York <sup>10</sup>, and I went to live with John and Mary. About first of July I began having the chills and fever<sup>11</sup> and had them for 6 months, and all that was done for me was to dose me with quinine. A little good nursing and a few good sweats would have done me far more good. From this time on untill I was 19 years old I had very poor health.

When living with brother John, I fell out of the window of his kitchen onto a sharp piece of iron. It struck in the fat of the calf of my leg and nearly thro. As it came out it tore loose pieces of flesh. It was a long time in healing up, and for years I could lay my finger in the hole and now there is quite a depression.

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<sup>10</sup> Her father was a goldsmith in New York City.

<sup>11</sup> Hese were classic symptoms of malaria, which was endemic in Indiana and Illinois at the time. The best treatment then, and until quite recently, was quinine

The war feeling got more bitter every day; several citizens were killed. I well remember the first rebel prisoners that were brot to Terre Haute. They most all wore "Home spun" butternut suits. I think it was this year that the order of "Knights of the Golden Circle" was organized. Their object was to abet and help the rebels. One of their badges was a butter nut split in two pieces and a half used as a breast pin. Brother Eleazer was in the 90 day troops and was captured by the rebel Gen. John Morgan.

Brother Jerome went down to the battlefield of Fort Donelson.

1863 - One evening some time Mother was gone, a neighbor boy came by with some "Cuba Sixes." I asked him for one, which he gave me, and I soon had it smoked up. After a bit I began to feel the effects of it good and hard. I began to have that feeling that I would like to turn inside out. Behind brother John's house was a ladder leaning against the house. I took the round in my hand and leaned forward, and my supper was soon mingling with the soil at my feet. I tried to throw up even my "shoes," but the worst was over, and I went to bed that night a wiser and better boy; and from that day till now I have had no use for the weed. It is a great pittty that every boy could not learn the lesson as I did. At the best it is a bad expensive habit, even tho it does not injure the health.

This was an eventful year to us. Mother returned from the east and Henrietta came with her. Mother went to housekeeping half-block south of Main Street on east side of 5th St, keeping boarders. Austin was in the Army. We were so afraid he would be killed, especially at the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, but he escaped injury during both of these awful battles.

Brother Jerome was in Washington, and while there met Governor Morton of Ind. He said, "Jerome, I have been invited by the President to go with the Presidential party to Gettysburg, and I want you to go with us." Jerome said, "I would like very much to go if there is room." Morton said, "We will find a place for you," and he did, so Jerome was one of the party, and took seat with the other prominent men on the platform. Jerome said Mr. Everett delivered the main address; (seemingly) it was grand indeed; but when Mr. Lincoln arose, Jerome said, the cold chills ran up and down his back as Mr. Lincoln uttered his

burning words, especially as he uttered the now historic words, "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." After Mr. Lincoln's address, he turned to congratulate Mr. Everett for his splendid address, when he said, "Mr. Lincoln, my words will be forgotten, but yours will live forever."

The paper on which Mr. Lincoln's notes were written fell off of the table [and] lay on the platform, and Jerome often said, "What a fool I was not to pick it up." Surely we do not appreciate our opportunity till it is past; what seemingly is of no importance to day may be of greater value some day. Strange, we never prize the present blessings till it is too late.

I went to school during the spring, but worked during most of the summer and early fall.

During the spring John's little baby James was very sick, so mother brot him to our house and nursed him back to health. Brother John was living on Mother's farm this year. In the early fall brother Will went to Charleston, Ill, and with Mother's assistance went into the boot and shoe business, also bought hides, fur &c. In October we all moved to Charleston. Houses were so scarce that we at first could only get one of two rooms, pretty small for our size of family; Mother, Eleazer, Will, Henrietta, and two children and myself. One or two of us slept at the store most of the time. I worked for Will in the store; he gave me \$4 per week.

While we lived in Charleston, Ill. 1863-1865, there was a half-witted man by the name of Sol Morris that made his living by sawing wood and doing odd jobs. He sawed wood quite a good deal for us. Some of us played innocent jokes on him, which he took in good part, untill this occurance, which he thot was a little too much. One evening he was seated in Brother John's grocery store, and one of us set off an artificial grasshopper, and by merest chance it jumped for Sol. He jumped from his chair and again the hopper hit him. This was too much for Sol; he beat a hasty retreat, exclaiming, "The Bill Burnetts will be the death of me yet." From that time till now this has been a by word in our family. "The Bill Burnetts will be the death of me yet." He knew Bro Will better than any other so we all went by his name.

During the last part of the year brother George was at LaGrange, Tenn; a battle was fought there. Geo. was promoted to captaincy in the 4th Ind. Cavalry.

Spring of 1863 Brother George joined the 4th Indiana Cavalry, and was soon seeing active service. He went out as Quartermaster Sargeant, but e'er the war was over got the Captaincy. He was in several severe engagements, especially the battle of Chickamauga, where Gen'l Thomas made his renowned stand. Geo. was at home on furlough when we heard it reported that brother Eleazer had been killed by Gen'l John Morgan's rebel command. I met Geo. down town; he was angry and sorrowful. As I came up to him, he said, "Lew, I understand 'Leazer is killed; if he is I will make some Rebel pay for this." Fortunately 'Leazer was only captured and parolled.

At the beginning of Gen'l Sherman's memorable "March To The Sea," Geo. was captured at Buzzard's Roost; their regiment was overwhelmed by a brigade of Texas Rangers. Geo. had on a fine pair of Cavalry boots; these a Rebel compelled him to take off and exchange for his worn-out shoes. But the shoes were too big for Geo. and the boots too small for the Texan, and the last Geo saw of him, he was still tugging at the boots to get them on. He was taken to Atlanta, Macon, Millageville, and then to Savanna, Georgia. It was while in prison here [that] he and several others dug a tunnel under the prison wall. They had it completed, and were only waiting for the most opportune time in the night to attempt their escape. As luck would have it, early in the evening an old cow fell into the tunnel near the exit. They [had] intended to attempt a swim out to the blockading squadron, which was just off of Savannah. The effort would undoubtedly have proved disastrous, but they were desperate men willing to take desperate chances. This was the 11th tunnel they had dug to make their escape, and I think it was the last one.

It was here that Geo. met Captain De Forest, a rebel blockade runner. This Cap. De Forest was a 2nd cousin of ours, and Geo. had met him at Newark, N.J. before the war. He befriended Geo. by giving him some money. DeForest never came north again after the war.

From Savannah Geo. was taken to Columbia, S.C., where he met Gen. Beauregard the Rebel Gen, and while in prison here he and 24 other Union officers drew the



black balls, to be placed under the fire of Gen'l Gilmore's guns at Charleston, S.C. When Lincoln heard of this, he sent word to the Rebel authorities [that] if the Union officers were not at once taken from there, 25 Rebel officers would [be] executed at once. This had the desired effect, and they were again taken to Columbia, S.C. The[y] got the dyspepsia most awful bad here as their food was mostly coarse corn meal and molasses. Several of the officers committed suicide by crossing the firing line purposely so the Rebel guards would shoot them. They thot they could not stand it any longer. While in prison life, Geo. said they would take any old bones and crack them up and make soup of them. Nothing was ever allowed to be wasted. One day a "razor back" hog got into the prison yard, and in spite of threats they succeeded in getting Mr. Pig, and soon had him divided up among the men, so they had fresh meat.

An amusing incident - while they were in prison in Charleston, they dug holes in the ground, and whenever they would hear or see a shell coming, they would go into their "holes" like a gopher. While in prison George's pants wore out, but he had kept his company's flag, so he patched his pants with this, running the stripes up and down the legs and the stars on the back part, a veritable Uncle Sam in looks. One day as he was going into his hole right quick, he saw a handkerchief shake out of a window off to one side, but did not think much of it. After their exchange and after he left the boat at Annapolis, a lady stepped up to him, saying as she took his hand, "Were you not one of the officers at Charleston prison?" "Yes." "Did you see a lady wave her handkerchief at you as you hurriedly crawled into the ground?" "Yes." "Well, I was that person. For the life of me I could not keep from laughing at you." She had recognized Geo. from his quick movements. She was a northern lady who had been in the South, but could not get away.

He had many other incidents to relate to us on his return home, but space will not permit me to say much more. George was as brave as the bravest; a very healthy man, and barring his accident would undoubtedly have lived to [a] ripe old age.

The last days of this year and first of 1864, it was fearfully cold, 30 below zero, and all the years since has been remembered as the cold New Years of 1863 & 1864.

1864 - Like the preceeding year this was full of stirring events to us and our home town and the whole country. The whole county south of Charleston was a hot bed of rebel sympathizers; fights were of almost daily occurance, especially on Saturdays. After the 54 Illinois regiment came home on Veteran's furlough the daily fights increased and many rebel sympathizers were compelled to take the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. government. This finally brot on the fearful riot on March 28. I witnessed it from the beginning till the last man that was killed fell. Captain Wells (rebel) first shot Private Slee; after he fell, he raised himself up on his left elbow and shot Wells thro the heart; soon shooting was going on in all parts of the court house yard. I saw Major York shot; he died almost instantly. I caught one soldier in my arms as he was falling, and gently laid him down; I quietly asked him if he had any words for his family; at the same time the man that shot him was threatening my own life; yet I can not say I was in the least frightened. After I laid the soldier down, I walked to the south gate and watched the fighting. Three balls went into the gate block in front of me. Eight solders were killed and several mortally wounded, and two secessionists dead and several wounded. Col. McMitchell's life was saved by a ball striking his watch; the watch was flattened by the ball in the middle.

Major Geo. A. Beardsley came home from the army spring of 1864 just after the riot.

During the summer I caught a ground hog alive by throwing a blanket over him. I took and put him in a barrel, then called Mother to come and see my pet. As she looked over into the barrel, the animal to make a jump to get out, making his peculiar whistle or noise. Mother thot she was sure to be caught by him. She turned and fled in haste to the kitchen; even after she got the door shut, she continued to jump up and down. Lizzie and Jerome Burnett were visiting us then, [and] she exclaimed, "Mother Burnett, Mother Burnett, was is the matter?"



*Lewis C Burnett about 1865*

What is the matter?", while I was outside almost dying with laughter.

1865 was the first year I ever kept a diary; from it I have gleaned very much and could write several pages. I was sick a great deal during the year. Brother Will had the typhoid fever. Josie and daughter Ella<sup>12</sup> were with us. Brother John was in the grocery business; afterwards sold out and bought a farm 2 miles north of town. Eleazer, Will and Addie were all at home now. Uncle Eleazer and his wife came over from Terre Haute and visited Mother. This was Father's brother.

Brother George was still a prisoner in the south. We had not heard from him for several months. On March 2nd I wrote, "It is reported that our soldiers who were prisoners at Columbia, S.C. have been sent to Fortress Monroe to be exchanged; if it is so we will soon see poor George."

We moved to Mattoon, Ill., and on March 8th I wrote, "Josie got a dispatch from Cousin Linas that he had received from George stating that he was at Annapolis & that he wanted to know where Josie was." "Hurrah, George is coming home after being a prison of war for ten months." He was captured at Buzzard's Roost at the beginning of "Sherman's March to the Sea." On March 10 I say, "Sherman is going through North and South Carolina like a whirlly gust of woodpeckers thro an apple orchard." John's brother-in-law James Beard just returned from the rebel prison via New Orleans, was a month coming up the river, passed thro Mattoon March 13th. George got home on the 25th of March. April 4 we had a big Jubilee up town over the fall of Richmond. April 9th, "Lee has surrendered, Hurrah!" [April] 15. This is a sad day for the U.S.- last night at ten o'clock Pres. Lincoln was assassinated by J. Wilkes Booth. Addie, Lizzie and I went over to Terre Haute on the 4th.

[*newspaper clipping: When Sherman Marched down to the Sea (song).* *Marginal note re this*] I understood Bro. Geo. to say that his mess composed the above while in prison; at any rate he was singing it when he got home from his prison life.

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12 Ella Burnett was born in 1860.

*Our camp fires shone bright on the mountains,  
That frowned on the river below,  
While we stood by our guns in the morning  
And eagerly watched for the foe.  
When a rider came out from the darkness  
That hung over mountain and tree,  
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,  
For Sherman will march to the sea.*

*Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman  
Went up from each valley and glen,  
And the bugles re-echoed the music  
That came from the lips of the men.  
For we knew that the stars in our banner  
More bright in their splendor would be  
And that blessings from northland would greet us  
When Sherman marched down to the sea.*

*Then forward, boys, forward to battle  
We marched on our wearisome way,  
As we stormed the wild hills of Resaca;  
God bless those that fell on that day.  
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory  
Frowned down on the flag of the free,*

*But the east and the west bore standards,  
And Sherman marched down to the sea.*

*Still onward we pressed till our banners  
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls  
And the blood of the patriot dampened  
The soil where the traitor flag falls.  
Yet we pause not to weep for the fallen,  
Who slept by each river and tree,  
But we twined them a wreath of the laurel  
As Sherman marched down to the sea.*

*Oh, proud was our army that morning,  
That stood where the pine darkly towers,  
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary,  
This day fair Savannah is our."  
Then sang we a song for our chieftain  
That echoed o'er river and lea,  
And the stars in our banner shone brighter  
When Sherman marched down to the sea.*

We moved to Mattoon in the spring of 1866. Burnett Bros. started the Leather and Hide Business<sup>13</sup> at Mattoon several months before we moved over.

Bro. George and Will were talked into buying a fake machine for taking sugar out of sorghum molasses. From that day to this when any of us have made a bad bargain we have had the words put to us, "buying another sugar machine." It is hard to tell in a few words the laughable part of these stories. The actors of the incident can see the jokes better.

During the spring of 1866 brother Eleazer and I went hunting north of Mattoon. I was for getting up early, but Eleazer would not, so I told him where to meet me about nine o'clock. I was at the hunting grounds by day light, and very soon had a fine lot of ducks, but did not meet 'Leazer. Finally I met a boy who said he had seen him one mile to the west, so I hid my dozen ducks, all large ones, in a hay stack and hurried after 'Leazer. I found him just in time, as he was getting ready to start for town as he had got nothing, so far. I told him of

<sup>13</sup> Several generations of the Burnett family were associated with the leather business; Stephen G Burnett had a tan-yard for the tanning of leather in Terre Haute. Virgil J. Burnett's sons William & Lewis sold hide, leather & fur at various times, as did a number of Virgil's grandsons.

my luck and I thot I knew where we could find some more good shooting. This gave him heart, so we hurried over after my ducks, and then went east of the Illinois Central rail road 5 to 6 miles north of Mattoon. Here we had fine shooting in the afternoon, and soon we had enough; a total of 25 fine ducks. It filled the bed of our little spring wagon, and as the roads were very muddy we were late in getting home; and how surprised Mother was. Dear Mother, how I can hear her as she said, "My Masse me, what a fine lot you have got!" We had plenty to feed all of the Burnett tribe for several days. I was never a very good shot, but I always got game when I went after it because I was not afraid to work for it or to get wet if necessary. Another time this spring Eleazer and I went hunting four miles north of town and killed 26 ducks, nearly all large ones.

Going home one evening just as it was getting dark I shot a prairie chicken; it was out of sight instantly, but I stood still and listened. In what seemed to be two or three minutes I heard it fall just in front of me. It must have been shot in such a way as to make it fly directly upward till it was dead, and then fell back to the ground.

During November 1866 I think it was, Burnett Bros.' hired man and myself went in south of Mattoon Ill. to buy hides and pelts, and during favorable weather we would camp out. Finally we got as far as Newton, Jasper County and then turned homeward. The night after we left Newton, shortly before nightfall a slight cold rain set in, so we went into camp early after supper was over. We hung up over us some dry hides to keep the rain off and laid down to sleep, listening to the light patter of rain drops on the leaves and hooting of the owls. We were soon fast asleep. But along in the night I was aroused from my sleep by a cold chilly feeling along my side. I soon found that the hide had tipped sideways and instead of running the water off of me it was running it on to me, and as I got up I found that the rain had turned into a driving snowstorm and I was soon very cold. Everything was so very wet by this time it was hard to get up a good fire, so we had an alternate freezing and thawing time the rest of the night. But day came at last and we continued on our journey. At noon we found a farmer that had a large lot of pelts to sell. After buying them, he asked [us] to spend the night with him, which we gladly consented to. After a fine supper, cooked in his old dutch bake ovens and kettles on the fire place, we were shown our bed; and such a bed it was I think there must

have been 75 [lbs?] of feathers in it, for when we got in it we just went most out of sight. But it was a cold night and we enjoyed our sleep greatly; and from that day to this I have never forgotten the biggest feather bed I ever slept on.

This year I saved up as much money as I could, that I might have some to go to school.

1867 - I worked for the Burnett Bros. until April, when I went to Chicago to take a commercial course. On April 19th I received a letter from Bro. Will saying that Cousin Alexander Mulford was going into partnership with them and would put in \$4000. This partnership did not turn out very well.

I want to state here that Mother broke up housekeeping spring of '67; she went east to Henrietta's as Henrietta's health was very poor. Addie went over to live with Jerome and I lived with George and Josie, but my health was very poor the whole year. Now after 37 years since this sickness, I can say what few persons can say; tho never very strong, yet by taking good care of myself, I have never been in bed during daylight hours from sickness since, with the exception of when I broke my 2 ribs. This is a long record of taking good care of myself. Oh, it pays to do as near right as we know how.

Mother started for New York as she had received word that Henrietta was very sick and to come at once. Will sent me a lot of fur to sell for them, which I did. He said the price I got for them was all right, \$3.50 for best mink. On April 29th I received a very swell letter from Addie. She was still at Mattoon but expected to go to Indianapolis right away. On May 12th I received a letter from Henrietta and Austin at Newark, N.J.<sup>14</sup>

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14 Newark 5/12/1867 Dear Brother,

Your most welcome letter of the 24th inst from Chicago was recieved in due time and you cannot imagine how much we were delighted? to hear from you it was I believe the first letter we ever recieved and I intended to have answered it immediately but partly through negligence and partly for want of time has delayed it untill this late date but we will endeavor to be more punctual in the future. We are happy to say that we are all well.

Henrietta has been very sick and was confined to the house for four weeks, but is able to go out now but is not very well yet. Bouth of the children has been very sick but is much better now and I think they will soon be perfectly well again... I tell you Lew Mother is a whole team and I do not know what we would have done without the Dear Old Creature.

Now Lewie allow me to congratulate you upon your success in your studies and you have my best wishes for your final accomplishment and attainment to the highest honors in the profession. I need not say be faithfull for I know that you will be even too studious and high and perservere and you will come out right in the end.

We were somewhat ammused at your Appreciation of city life. I do not wonder at this and if I could I should not live in a crowded city for another day but for the present we must be content with our lot. Now Lewie with much love we remain your Mother and Sister and Brother and all.

G A Beardsley

On May 9th there was a letter from Jerome, my dear eldest brother. They just celebrated their tin wedding; "In June if nothing happens to prevent, Lizzie and I will go to New York. Going first to Canada, New England, and other places of interest," Jerome said.

On July 15 a letter from Addie. She said she received the first letter from me after I returned from Chicago. Addie said, "Oh, I am sorry you have the dyspepsia. Do you have any more chills? I expect you commence to sigh for Mother and home again." Now, as I look back over those many years, I certainly did. "Lizzie and Jerome arrived home from their trip: I tell you they were hailed with delight by one and all."

There was a letter from Henrietta dated August 4th. She sympathized a good deal with me, as I had written her how poorly I was and I had also told her I thought of going west. She said, "Mother is not well, having the Rhumatism quite a good deal." Ida was the first niece I ever really loved. As Henrietta was then writing, "Ida lay stretched out on the table watching me write and says, 'Now tell Uncle Lew to write me a letter.'<sup>2</sup> Sept 10th; letter from Dear Austin to Burnett Bros.<sup>15</sup> There was a letter from Jerome dated Oct 26th. He said

98 Union St, Newark, NJ

Dear Brother,

What a big thing it was to get a letter from you. I had almost given up the idea of ever hearing from you but now I know what a good letter you can write I will not excuse you any more. Mother is well, I am so glad to have her here; A Mother, Lewie, is a big thing, I bet you think so by now don't you. You must write to us often. Mother will be anxious to hear from you. I am tired tonight and must stop, I will write more next time.

Much love, we remain Brother and Sister Rett

Mother says she would give a big five cent to see her baby and says be a good boy. Good night, sleep tight, don't let the bugs bite.

2

<sup>15</sup> *This is for all the Burnett boys* Newark Sept 10th 1867

Dear Brother,

Your letter of the 3rd inst was received in due time - the Draft came all right. We are as well as usual only a little more so. We all went on a grand excursion up the Hudson to Newburgh on the fifth of this month and had a splendid time untill nearly home on our return when we came very near participating in one of the most appalling accident on record; there was about one thousand souls on board but a mercifull providence interposed and we escaped with only being badly frightened. I send you the account published in our paper which is very imperfect. Had the Boat struck ten feet farther forward your sister and Brotherinlaw would have in all probability been numbered among the lost as not less than fifty to one hundred people would certainly [have] been killed.

Mother is very well and expects to go to Amboy this week. Aunt Letty was here yesterday and is well. Aunt Maria's folks are well business is good Weather is cool and damp. Our nice Cat is dead Ida has gone to bed. The baby is cross as four sticks and we are all \_\_\_\_\_ now [ These were Henrietta Beardsleys' daughters Ida (b. 1861) and Manetta (b 1863).]

Mother feels so sorry for Lewie and wishes she could do something for him - we received your circular to day. I am not in want of any of your goods to day except for a pair of good boots and I do not see them \_\_\_\_\_ so I shall have to look elsewhere with much love from all to all I remain your Brother

G A Beardsley

PS Where is Alex Mulford I do not see his name in the circular Lewie tells us that he is bookkeeper now. GAB  
Henrietta got a letter from Eleazer and will answer it soon. Also one from Addie love to John \_\_\_\_\_

Geo, Will and Eleazer had written him about my sickness, "of which, of course, I was sorry to hear." His letter was so very good in every way; so encouraging and helpful. Dear good brother, how I love to read his letters, 37 years after they were written.

Sept 10th; letter from Dear Austin to Burnett Bros.<sup>15</sup> There was a letter from Jerome dated Oct 26th. He said Geo, Will and Eleazer had written him about my sickness, "of which, of course, I was sorry to hear." His letter was so very good in every way; so encouraging and helpful. Dear good brother, how I love to read his letters, 37 years after they were written.

The fall of 1867 I was taken down with the congestion of the stomach and bowels, and also intermittent fever. I was sick for six weeks and part of the time very low; in fact they did not expect me to live. Addie, dear good sister, came over from Indianapolis to nurse me, but Mother did not come home until after my sickness. After getting up from my sickness I worked part of the time in the packing house. Geo. was keeping books for the same company, but it was too hard work for me considering the condition I was in.

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<sup>15</sup> *This is for all the Burnett boys* Newark Sept 10th 1867

*Dear Brother;*

*Your letter of the 3rd inst was received in due time - the Draft came all right. We are as well as usual only a little more so. We all went on a grand excursion up the Hudson to Newburgh on the fifth of this month and had a splendid time until nearly home on our return when we came very near participating in one of the most appalling accident on record; there was about one thousand souls on board but a mercifull providence interposed and we escaped with only being badly frightened. I send you the account published in our paper which is very imperfect. Had the Boat struck ten feet farther forward your sister and Brotherinlaw would have in all probability been numbered among the lost as not less than fifty to one hundred people would certainly [have] been killed.*

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*G A Beardsley*

*PS Where is Alex Mulford I do not see his name in the circular Lewie tells us that he is bookkeeper now. GAB  
Henrietta got a letter from Eleazer and will answer it soon. Also one from Addie love to John \_\_\_\_\_*



*Indianapolis Oct 26 1867*

*Dear Lewie,*

*Geo and Will and Leazer have each written to me and told me of your sickness, of which, of course, I was sorry to hear. We have about as much as we can do to manage our affairs and keep even, even when we are in good health, and to be snowed under by a perfect storm, in the way of a spell of sickness, is rather disagreeable, to say the least. But, even in your case it may prove to be a blessing - as blessings travel about sometimes in very unprepossessing guises - and in this way; a good, healthy reaction will undoubtedly follow your sickness, if you succeed, as I think you will, in making yourself master of the situation. The thing to do is to get well, but don't be discouraged if matters seem to progress rather slowly- nature will make a tremendous effort after such an attack, and if you will assist her wisely, you will come out all right. Don't be in a hurry about getting out. In the meantime, if you are out of bed, be careful of your diet, don't expose yourself, and don't bother yourself about anything. Eat unbolted flour bread, or gems [?] if you can get them, roasted apples, and ripe apples, and other harmless things, but rather sparingly of anything, and drink black tea. Do this in a religiously careful way two or three weeks and you will have a foundation to build up good health upon that you have not had before. As soon as you get strength enough to ride in the cars five or six hours come over here and I'll finish you off and send you back iron-clad and fire-proof. This is no joking- it is just the thing to do, and I will expect you to do it. Now is the time to recover, and the opportunity is excellent.*

*Lizzie will be home today, and I will be glad of it, as I have been running the machine alone until I am tired of it.*

*Thursday morning I went out hunting and killed two ducks, a pigeon and a quail. Shot is going to be a fine dog. I have taken great pains with him, and am as careful with him as I would be with a child. He is as steady on a point as an old dog, and bringing ducks is his particular "hot." He is as ugly as can be, but I don't care for that. He is about the only young dog in town that is worth anything; the rest all run at the crack of a gun.*

*Yours, Jerome*

1868 - This year opens with my desire strong to go west. Eleazer was also talking strongly of it. Mother was still in Newark, Addie at Jerome's. Early in the year I went over to Indianapolis and visited Jerome. Before I went over I invested my ready money in several hundred papers, the facsimile of the paper printed in Ulster Co, New York on the death of Geo. Washington. I sold a few in Indianapolis and Mattoon, but not enough to pay me for the effort put forth.

I received a good letter from Addie March 9th. I had written to her that I was so anxious for Mother to come home. In March Jerome sent Mother \$40 and a pass to come home on. He was very much worried about the financial condition of Burnett Bros.

In April I started on my trip to Minnesota. During my trip I was walking one day from Owatona to Lake Watseka. When I left town in the afternoon I was a little lonesome, but when I got about 2 miles west of town, such a feeling of lonesomeness came over me it would be hard to describe. For a while it seemed as tho I did not care whether I lived or died.

I sat down on the ground for a while, then hurriedly retraced my steps to town. Having but a little money, I slept in a [railroad] car that night. The next morning I felt much better, and resumed my journey to the lake, where I staid a week. But there seemed to be a lasting injury left on my mind by that afternoon's homesickness; for years if I was away from home, especially if alone I could hardly stand a cloudy or rainy day. It would bring some of the ugly feelings back.

While at the lake I met two men that made my stay there very pleasant. I went hunting and fishing with them 'most every day, and as one of them had been a sharp shooter and scout in the Civil War, he had many incidents to relate.

I was on my return trip from Minnesota, when I got as far as LaCrosse, Wis; I only had 65 cents left, and I had had but little to eat for two days. I took 30 cents and bought 3 loaves [sic] of bread, but I was so hungry I ate the bread up for supper and breakfast. In the morning I tried to trade my watch for a skiff, but I could not. While talking to the man I was trying to trade with, up came a canoe full of indians, five I think. The man said to me, "I would advise you to watch the indians till they went up into the store up town. Then jump into the canoe and get away as soon as possible." I had reached the point where I was desperate enough to do most any thing to get nearer home. At just eleven o'clock Saturday I jumped into the canoe and began paddling as tho my life depended on it. I keep out of sight and as close to shore as possible so if I was overtaken I would abandon the canoe and run. Very fortunately the indians never saw me and that night I slept in the canoe in some thick willows north of Bad Ax, Wis. Before day light I was on the go again. This time I kept to the middle of the river so I would not be seen from either shore. Just as it was getting daylight I came suddenly on an island on which the indians were camped; the very ones I wanted to avoid, but it was so dark I only saw one indian. He called to me, but I soon put plenty of darkness between us. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon I had reached McGregor, Iowa, where I staid till Monday morning. I made 38 miles Saturday and 74 Sunday. While at McGregor, Iowa I spent the last money I had for 25 cents worth of rice, a 5 cent tin cup, and 5 cents of salt for several meals. I allowed myself about 2 tablespoons of uncooked rice, but when it was cooked made very near a pint. I never saw any more of the indians, and if anyone of

them was alive I would like to pay them for their stolen canoe.

I had so little to eat on my way down as far as Burlington, Iowa, I got very weak. The night after leaving Burlington I caught a fine large eel. I had quite a time landing him but held on and saved a mighty good supper. During the middle of the day it was quite warm, so I laid down in the canoe and let it drift. I was soon sound asleep, about two o'clock I was roused from my slumber by the beating of the waves. I soon saw a storm was coming, but I did not go at once to the shore and in a short time the waves and white caps were so big I dare not turn either to the left or the right for fear of being swamped. There was a bend in the river 4 or 5 miles ahead; this was the nearest point for me to make. I was soon wet thro by the splashing of the water over my canoe and in spite of all my care water would slop over the sides and I did not dare to stop and bail any of it out. At times I could hardly see the shore line. It became a veritable race with death. One time I struck so hard with my paddle that I almost upset the boat. Finally I reached the shore and just where I landed stood two river men; they had seen me but they said it would have been impossible for them to have saved me. They claimed they only saw me part of the time and every time I disappeared they thot would be the last.

I built a roaring fire as there was plenty of brushwood around and began driering my clothes; by night fall I drew the canoe up on the bank and by the fire and laid down in it, as the night was very cool. I took the eel and laid it on my canoe paddle close to the fire. Soon I was fast asleep. At twelve o'clock I awoke; being somewhat cold I built up the fire again, turned the uncooked side of the eel to the fire, laid down and was soon sound asleep again. At just three o'clock I again woke up. The fire being low, I renewed the fire, looked at the eel and found it well cooked. I pulled the skin off, took the back bone out, and began my early morning meal. I was desperately hungry and it was so good I could not stop eating till all was gone. I suppose I ate fully two pounds, as it was a large eel. This was the strangest meal I ever ate; from this on to the end of my trip I had plenty of fish to eat. I arrived at Alton, Ill two weeks from starting, making over 600 miles by water.

About August 31st after my return I got a letter from Jerome saying he would soon send me some money to go to school on, which he did afterwards, \$50. I used this

money to pay Mother board while I attended the city high school. Sept 28th; another letter from Jerome, saying "I have a yearning to shoot a few ducks and chickens," and to let him know when the best time was to come- "All is well- love to Mother and the rest; Jerome."

Mother came home from Newark latter part of summer or early fall and went to housekeeping again, in the property not far from George's home just east across the Ill. Central RR. I was overjoyed that Mother was with us again after being east with Henrietta so long. I started to school and went about the full term of 1868 & 1869, and learned rapidly, as I had begun to feel the need of all the education I could get. We were about all at home now; Mother, Eleazer, Will, Addie and myself. During the years 66-67-68 I was very much an unbeleaver in religion; George and 'Leazer were Unitarians or universalists. Will was on the fence, so to speak, as well as Addie and Jerome. Henrietta and Austin were devout Christians in the fullest sense. During the fall I began to change my views and to lean more on the teaching of the Good Book. Bro. Eleazer was reading Renan's *Life of Christ*, Tom Paine (some) and other liberal authors. We had many bitter arguments about the Bible. Mother would often say, "Boys, if you cannot talk about religion without quarreling, you better not talk at all." But argue we would. In the mean time I was getting deeper and deeper under conviction that I was a sinner and needed to have my sins pardoned. Yet I could not believe in Christ as a Saviour of Man. I often said, "Of course Christ was a good man; so was Horace Greeley and Lincoln." That Christ died to save mankind I could not understand, but I was seeking after truth.

During November 1868 Lon Mars, a school mate of mine, and I concluded to have a good duck hunt, and it was so very successful that I never could forget it, so I copy it as I originally wrote in my composition book which I read at school.

### ***Fun and sights***

*One Friday eve. Lon Mars and I made arrangements to go hunting next morning 4 to 5 miles north of Mattoon. We were up and equipped by four o'clock. So I called my dog from his hiding place and we started. We had just crossed our home boundary line when something bright lit up the whole sky. "What was that!" was the involuntary question from both of us. We were not kept in suspense very long, for soon another and another meteor shot thro the air. Then we happened to think it was the long looked for Metioric shower. We commenced counting them, and by day-light we had counted five hundred and sixty nine. They fell at the rate of 7 ½ per minute, sometimes four or five would fall at once. We were wild with delight, and every time a large one would fall we would*

*yell like a band of Sioux Indians. The largest one we saw fall fell in the northwest at about 5 AM; it left a long blue trail behind it which did not disappear for at least three minutes... Unknowingly we got to see one of the grandest sights that man ever saw. We arrived at our hunting grounds before daylight, so we crawled up to a pond and waited until it was light enough to see to shoot. Then we began our day's work; the ducks flew around pretty thick. And by eight-o'clock eight large mallards were ours. Our success was not so good balance of the day, but by night we had bagged 14 nice duck. I killed 12, Lon Mars only 2.*

1869 - It is a blessed thing to be born into this world, thrice blest it is to have good parents. But the greatest of all blessings is to be "Born Again." [The] year of 1869 ushered in my 21st year but this event was small compared [sic] to my giving my heart to God. Oh, it was good to begin the battle of life with divine help. During the final months of 1868 I was under deep conviction, so much so that I finally prayed unto God would send a revival to the Methodist Church to help me out of my struggles for more light. Finally protracted meetings began in January and I was among the first to rise for prayers. On the third evening as I walked homeward I raised my hand heavenward and exclaimed, "God being my helper, I may pray all night but what I will see light." I hurried home, went back into the wood shed, got behind the door, and there knelt down and surrendered completely to the divine master. Springing to my feet, the first words that passed my lips were, "Jesus, hast thou forgiven my sins?" Right here I want to state in all my prayers before this I had ignored my savior in all my petitions, but like Thomas of old my first words were to acknowledge Him as my Savior, and from that day to now my faith has never wavered! He has been a good friend now for 36 years, and has stood by me in the hours of deepest gloom. To you who may read these words at some future date, please remember that there is no grander step to take than to become a good follower of Christ. Did you ever hear of a person regretting having spent a noble, upright Christian life? The psalmist well said;

*Once I was young, but now I am old  
But I have never seen the righteous  
Forsaken or his seed begging bread.*

The morning after I was converted I was happy as a bird. The world looked brighter to me. I was anxious for Addie to go into the parlor and play some sweet songs for me; the first one she played and we sang was *The Home of the Soul*, and from that day to the

present I love it above all other songs. And it is my wish that it be the song sung by the quire when they lay me away in my last resting place.

Newark Feb 9th, 1869

My Dear Brother,

*I hardly know what to say to you now that I have commenced to write. This is the first time I have attempted to write a letter in some time. Oh, you don't know how happy I was when your letter came telling of the best news I have ever heard from home. Why, I was happy enough to of shouted, & would had I been in Methodist meeting.*

*I never before knew how it felt to want to shout, but it was in my mind; Glory, Glory be to God for his goodness and mercy, & now my dear brother, hold on firm, look to Jesus at all times, keep over to him & all will be well. Oh, I do hope and pray that our dear Addie will come out and stand up for Jesus; it is so cosy if she would only do it. I have prayed for you three, Will, Addie and you all this winter asking the Lord that you might be brought to love the Savior. This book, Lewie, I bought with money that I was going to get something to wear with, which I shall do without, and you can't think how much pleasure it gives me to do it. I have a little more money left; now is there any other book that you would like to have? Just say so and I [will] get it for you; don't hessitate to tell me, for I want to do it, and would rather know what you would like, than to get something perhaps you don't want. Austin can get them cheaper in New York or his brother gets them for him. I must stop, as I want to write some to Mother tonight. I am anxious to get another letter from you; I wish you would write as often as you can.*

*Your loving sister,      Henrietta*

*My dear baby brother, I did always love you more than you ever thought, and now you are dearer than ever.*

*"There is a tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love."*

*I must stop on a prayer that you stand firm through all trials.  
Henrietta*

I am glad that I joined the Methodist Church when I did.

Spring of 1869 we fixed up our Broadway property and moved into it. One day while 'Leazer and I were papering the rooms he said to me, "I am well satisfied with my religion (Unitarian) and when I overcome my temper like you have I will be all right." My answer was, "Leazer, you cannot overcome your temper without Divine help," and such is the fact.

During the summer of 1869 I worked for Brother Will for a few months, then began working in the hardware store for Drish and Richmond. This year I began going with Emma C. Berry. B.N. Berry, her father, was working also for Drish and Richmond.

I well remember the total eclipse of the sun in August.

Oct 19th one foot of snow fell; I saw one quail and shot it; when I went to pick it up I found seven. At another time I shot at a flock flying thro the corn and killed eight.

1870 - This was a memorable year in some ways; until this year most of us had lived near each other, or with each other. George and Josie and children were living near by. Eleazer, Will, Addie and myself were at home with Mother, who had returned from Newark in 1869. But Addie married Thos McCulloch and moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, and so Mother did not want to keep house any more, so sold off all of the house hold goods in the fall or late summer.



*Emma Caroline Berry  
about 1869*

From these years on she made her home almost constantly with Addie, but visited back and forth some from 1870 to 1880, and once after this went to Henrietta. But all her last years were with Addie.

Eleazer went to Denver, Colorado. George and Josie moved to St. Louis next year, 1871. Late in summer I quit working for Drish & Richmond and worked for a few months for P.H. Flaherty in the packing house. Some times he would get a little tipsy, when he would say, "I was born in Ireland, educated in America; a life-long Democrat and a good judge of whiskey."

On Dec 12th I received a letter from Eleazer from Denver urging me to come there, saying there was rare chances for sport. It was only 25 miles to where there were thousands of antelope, 100 miles to buffalo, deer, elk &c &c.

On Oct 18th I got a letter from Jerome writing about our prospective trip to Colorado next year. Also a letter from him on Dec 4th; more about our trip to Colorado. He also spoke of his trip 2000 feet high in a balloon. I was intense in my church work during this whole year; went regular to see my sweetness, for she had promised to be my sweetness forever and ever. Again my health was not very good; dyspepsia, mostly.

1871 - Early in the year I quit work for Drish and Richmond in the hardware

store and went over to Indianapolis to Jerome's and helped him to break up housekeeping and make preparations for our trip to Colorado, where brother Eleazer was living. We started in March and went at once to Denver via St. Louis and Kansas City. We saw quite a number of buffalo from the train in western Kansas and eastern Col.

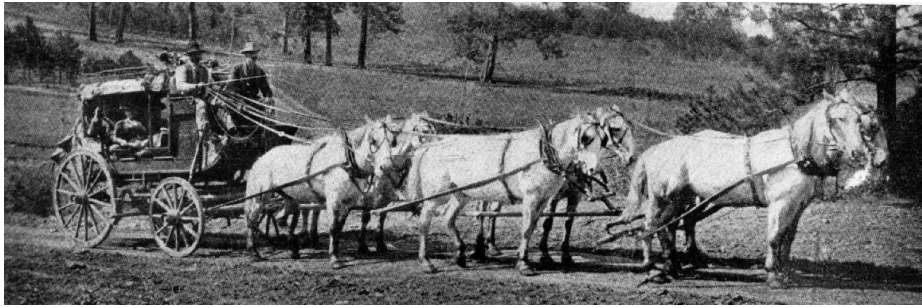
At this time Denver was only a small place; only a few houses on the west side of Dry or Cherry Creek. Eleazer met us at the depot at Denver and took us out to By Sanford's farm that Eleazer and Cousin Geo. Burnett were running about one mile from the little town of Littleton. We got there last of April or first of May; I forget.

We put in the first month mostly sight-seeing and hunting ducks; we killed a great many. During the between times I helped Eleazer irrigate the wheat and potatoes. We soon got ready for our first trip, which was to Pueblo, Pike's Peak Garden of the Gods, etc. We went with a freight outfit to Pueblo, as there was no RR south or west of wanted to go to Pueblo, this gave us a good opportunity for good company. When we reached the divide some 20 miles south of Denver, I saw our first antelope, and from there on they were very abundant.

The first two days out it rained almost all the time, so we had to keep in camp; yet after all this only added pepper and spice to the trip and gave us something to talk about in after years. It would not do to have all sunshine.

While we were in camp near the Fountain Creek, across the road from us was also a camp of Greaser freighters. During the day I killed a very large Bull Snake and skinned it, and while the Greasers were seated about their fire, I thot I would have a little fun. So I took the skinned snake and walked over to their camp and threw it among them; but they did not see the funny part, and took it for an insult, and soon knives were drawn and revolvers. Seeing there was a commotion, Jerome and the Greaser's wagon boss came running up, and after a good deal of explanation the ugly matter was settled, but I came very near having a knife thrust into me. The wagon boss afterwards met Jerome at Denver, and he said it was Jerome's hurrying over and all he could do that prevented trouble. I afterwards found out that there was a very bitter feeling existing between one of our drivers and the Mexican outfit. Yet it was a very thoughtless piece of fun on my part, and one I was in no hurry to repeat.





Twenty miles south of Denver we saw our first antelope; from that day on we saw hundreds most every day, especially if we went a few miles from the regularly travelled road. We reached Pueblo after a very pleasant trip; it was a very small place on the Arkansas River. After a stay here of a day we started for the Garden of the Gods and the hot springs. We got there the second day about noon after a long, dusty, hot ride. The mineral waters of the spring tasted fine. At this time there was no settlements here and only a few ranch men. The trip did me lots of good; I soon got so I could eat bacon and black coffee and flap jacks or sinkers.

After two or three weeks of resting we were again ready for another trip, which we took in July to Central Park and was gone some three weeks. There were few people in Central Park at this time, only a few prospectors.

In Central Park, several exciting incidents occurred. As there were plenty of signs of elk and mountain sheep not far from camp, I determined to make an effort to get one. So one morning I got everything ready before breakfast; the ponies were quietly grazing not far from camp. After breakfast I went to get my pony, but it was gone. I looked carefully, I thot, but no ponies were to be found, so I climbed up the mountainside for a better view, but my labor was unrewarded. Thinking something had frightened them and started them on the back trail, I hastily went down to the trail and carefully examined the horse tracks, and there, sure enough, was one track of a pony with his right hind shoe off, Jerome's pony. My pony was hard to catch, so I always let her larriet drag behind her; I soon found marks of a rope on the ground.

Without going back to camp, I at once gave chase; being young and active, I

could get over the ground fast. About three miles from camp there was a divide; I hoped to reach it before the ponies passed the second divide 3 miles farther on. I was soon there, but there were no ponies in sight. I was just as eager then to reach the second divide; when I reached it I had a good view for two miles, yet no ponies were to be seen. Nothing daunted, I pushed onward to where we had crossed the Grand River, 10 miles from camp. Soon I found that larriet mark was gone, but on the ground was a long willow switch. I at once thot some indians had run our horses off. There was so much at stake on my getting the horses, I pushed on, and to help Jerome find me in case I got lost, I kept tearing leaves out of my diary and pinning them to sage brush as I hurried along. I reached our former crossing of the Grand River, but the tracks did not cross, but continued on north. I followed them on to Willow Creek; there the tracks separated, one going on North towards Grand Lake, and the other west. While I stood there perplexed, I looked west up Willow Creek, when for a few moments I was sure I saw a body of Indians. My hair almost stood on end. I was well-frightened, but fortunately it was not indians, but a very large red cedar stump; but being on the shady side of the mountain, and I being ready to see indians, I easily imagined I saw them. I thot it useless to go on, so I climbed the table mountain and started campward, which I reached in due time. As I came into camp, I found it all in commotion. Jerome had been looking every where for me; he and several others that were camping near by were going to look for me. How happy was dear brother to see me. His first words were "Lew, where have you been?" "Looking for the horses." "Why," he said, "they have been here all the time." Sure enough, there they were. I had been following the trail of two others that left camp the day before. The right hind shoe and larriet dragging was a coincidence.

Later in July, after Jerome and I had been at the Hot Springs for two weeks, we started back toward Denver. The first day from the springs we saw a lone horseman riding toward us from a strip of timber. He was riding very fast, and we soon saw it was an indian in his war dress. As he came up to us, after saluting with his "How," he said, "You see Arapahoe? You see Arapahoe?" Jerome said no; again he said, "You no see Arapahoe," and away he went as fast as his pony could go. Now we were worried. The Utes were at peace with the whites, and we had met them several times before, but we were not well posted

enough to know an Arapahoe from a Ute. As we entered this strip of timber I was pretty well worried; I was afraid I would hear the crack of a rifle most any time. We were very much relieved when we reached the open beyond. Here we met a party of tourists going towards the Hot Springs: they had seen a body of indians off to their left and they too were badly frightened. I afterwards heard that the Utes did overtake the Arapahoes and had a fight with them in which a number were killed.

The day we left the Hot Springs we saw the tracks of an immense bear in a path we were traveling. At this time there was no road ways; just simply bridle tracks, and a green horn could get lost pretty easy.

While in Middle Park, Col. we found quite a good many very nice stones. I found most of them and gave several to Jerome. I have never felt as tho I could afford to have mine cut. I gave some others away, especially out to Judge Steel of Mattoon. He had a beautiful set made for a ring from it. Whenever I am in the mountains I am always on the lookout for specimens of all kinds and I take more pleasure in gathering them than I do after I get them. Yet in after years I look over them.



*"This is how we harvested wheat in Colorado."*

On this trip we had our two ponies and a pack mule. After our return it was about harvest time, so I put in one month helping 'Leazer and the neighbors' harvest, for which I received \$40 and board. After harvest I helped them dig their potatoes and do some plowing. Antelope were plentiful within 20 miles of Denver. We had some very fine duck shooting on

the Platte near Littleton. often went over to Cousin John McBrun's <sup>16</sup>, for he could tell many interesting stories of frontier days and times. He was with Kit Carson quite a good deal during his trapping days and was with him for some time when the former was scout and guide for Gen'l Fremont. But to the story I now wish to relate. McBrun, Kit Carson, and another trapper were trapping along Bear Creek which is about 10 miles south and west of Denver. When trappers select certain territory to trap all others are supposed to keep off, but in some way at this time they overlapped each other's line of traps. One day Kit found a beaver in his trap, but it had been skinned by his companion. Carson was furious over the insult, but he was a man of few words, so when both were in camp it only took a few words and their rifles came quickly to their shoulders; fortunately Cousin McBrun quickly interceded and made peace. But ever afterwards the beaver question was carefully avoided by both parties.



*Pioneer cabin of John W. McBroom on Bear Creek; McBroom on the right.*  
<http://www.littletongov.org/history/biographies/mcbroom.asp>.

The McBrun home is still on the banks of Bear Creek up and down which I hunted much, killing many fine ducks. In his home many men of frontier fame stopped. Cousin John is now dead, but he and his home on the hillside will live in my memory while life shall last.

Cousin By Sanford was teaming out a few miles from Denver when he noticed two wolves were chasing a jack rabbit [sic]. One wolf at a time would run the jack and when he came back to near his starting point the rested wolf would take up the chase. They were fast tiring out the rabbit, when the rabbit saw the wagon for which he ran for safety, jumping under the wagon and staid there till the wolves were out of sight. By said it would have been impossible for him to have killed the jack after his having trusted his life in his hands.

Early in September I began to get a little homesick. I wanted to see my Emma Dear. So I bought a ticket to Mattoon via Omaha. From Omaha I went down to Nebraska

<sup>16</sup> (apparently) after the death of their father William Burnett, Virgil B Burnett's brother, Emma (b 1839) and George (b 1843) moved to Littleton, Colorado. Emma married John McBroom, b 1822 in Kentucky; and George married his cousin Catherine Hevener (granddaughter of Stephen Grover Burnett, another brother of William and Virgil).

City and from there to Lincoln, Nebr. and visited Addie and Tom for several days. Lincoln at this time was a nice little city. Thos. McCulloch was running a milk dairy with his brother James. After a pleasant stay here of a few days I started homeward; after a few days rest I began working for Drish and Richmond again. Jerome in the meantime had returned to Indianapolis and became Deputy Auditor of Indiana again, which position I think he held for 13 years. The last weeks of this year were spent in sweet anticipation of my coming marriage to Emma C. Berry.

Eleazer married Vadie Woods late in the fall<sup>17</sup>

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17 - He married Eliza Nevada Woods Nov 1 1871 in Coles Co., IL.