

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN IN 1827.

LETTERS OF JOSEPH M. STREET TO GOV. NINIAN EDWARDS, OF
ILLINOIS.¹

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, Nov., 1827.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have been here two or 3 weeks and I can assure you I have not been idle, as my official communications would shew. By the same conveyance that takes this letter, a communication *directed to the Secretary of War*, as close written as this, on 3 whole sheets of paper, is sent off. And altho' so newly introduced into the Indian relations, I think you, who are by your knowledge of them and their affairs and countries, so able to judge, would give me some credit for my *tact*, and the easy manner in which

¹ Joseph M. Street was born in Virginia, about 1780, and in the winter of 1805-6 emigrated from Richmond, in that state, to Frankfort, Ky., where he published *The Western World* newspaper, "and for several years took a conspicuous part in the gladiatorial field of Kentucky politics." In the summer of 1812, he became one of the first settlers in Shawneetown, Ill., and formed a wide circle of political and personal friends among the leading pioneers of southern Illinois. He appears to have always been an uncompromising Whig, in office or out, and conducted an active political correspondence for many years with Gov. Ninian Edwards and others; many of his letters may be found in Washburne's *Edwards Papers*, from which volume the two here given are extracted, as casting interesting side-lights on the condition of affairs in Prairie du Chien and the lead region, in 1827. March 30, 1827, we find him writing from Shawneetown to Governor Edwards, complaining that he has a family of "12 white persons besides myself," dependent on him for a support which he is "at an entire loss" to know how to provide. It appears that he had been conducting a vigorous correspondence with influential men of his party in Washington, begging for office, but he says that those having influence are "sweet in compliments and but give us hopes," while those who do exhibit "warmth and feeling" are without influence. His correspondence with Edwards throughout the summer is in the same melancholy strain. He had, after persistent labors, obtained the county clerkship at Peoria, in March, 1827, but the appointment cost him \$40 in traveling expenses from Shawnee-

I have slid into the spirit of Indian affairs, and took a peep behind the curtain. I am not boasting to the world, but writing to a confidential friend, sure and tried, whose good opinion of me under every difficulty I am striving to justify. I trust that you will never have cause to blush for one, who you so warmly and urgently recommended in highly flattering terms of commendation. I can never cease to remember it.

town to Peoria and return, while the office proved to be not worth \$30 a year. During the summer he was appointed by Governor Edwards as brigadier general of the state militia, then being organized; but not being called into active service he received no pay. In August, 1827, his efforts were rewarded by a "letter of appointment" to the vacant Winnebago Indian agency at Prairie du Chien — Agent Nicholas Boivin having been drowned in the Mississippi (*ante*, p. 248), during the early summer. Street resigned his militia office, September 16. He moved to Prairie du Chien on the first of November, and from the letter here given it will be seen that he was at first fearful the senate would not confirm his appointment. The senate did confirm it, however, and he was allowed to retain the post at a salary of \$1,200 per year, with John Marsh of Massachusetts as sub-agent (\$500 per annum), and John P. Gates of Canada as interpreter (\$400 per annum); Thomas P. Burnett became sub-agent in 1830, succeeding Marsh. When the county of Iowa was organized by proclamation of Governor Lewis Cass, of Michigan Territory, October 3, 1829, Samuel W. Beall, Louis Grignon and Street were appointed commissioners to locate the seat of justice. Street did good service during the Black Hawk war, and it was to him that the Sac leader was delivered up, by One-eyed Decornh and Chactar. Street appears to have been fairly successful in keeping the Winnebagoes quiet, during the term of his agency. While not particularly popular with either whites or Indians, he was deemed a satisfactory agent. His letters show him to have been a pompous, garrulous man, and given somewhat to flattery of those from whom he expected favors. Upon the final removal of government troops from Rock Island, in November, 1836, he was ordered to establish a Sac and Fox agency there. In the fall of 1837, he accompanied Keokuk, Wapello and about thirty other Sac and Fox chiefs and head-men to Washington; in the party was Black Hawk, who had, in 1833, been placed under Keokuk for safe keeping. The party was received in the leading eastern cities with much ceremony, Indian deputations to the seat of government being then rare. In April, 1839, Street, pursuant to orders, removed his family from Prairie du Chien, which had till then remained as his home, to Agency City, on the Des Moines river, Wapello county, Iowa. During the following winter his health broke down, and he died at the agency house there, May 5, 1840, aged about sixty years. — Ed.

I have very minutely enquired into all the causes connected with the late disturbances with the Winnebago Indians.¹ Hastily I will sketch them to you that you may compare them with your accounts and judge between them. I place great reliance upon my information as it comes from different sources, and fits nicely together. Should you have any variant opinions you would highly gratify me by communicating them. I took occasion in my communication to give that weight that is evidently due to the prompt measures you took in relation to the militia. The Winnebagoes and the whites all admit that they apprehended more from the militia ordered to be drafted than all the regulars. They had set down the draft of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the militia of Illinois, as an immense number of *Mounted Riflemen*. They remembered the *Rangers of Governor Edwards*, and that was the force they most dreaded.

The Indians had been soured by the conduct of the vast number of adventurers flocking to and working the lead mines of Fever River. Those who went by land, by far the greater part, passed through the Winnebago country. Many of them had great contempt for "*naked Indians*," and behaved low, gross, and like blackguards amongst them. The Agent at the mines² granted permits on the Winnebago lands, and numerous diggings were industriously pushed far east of the line between the Ottawas, Chippewas and Pottawatomies of the Illinois, and the Winnebagoes, and great quantities of mineral procured and taken away to the smelters. I should first have called your attention to your treaty of the 21 Aug., 1816, and the treaty of 19 Aug., 1825,³ which together establish the line between the Ottawas, &c., and the Winnebagoes. Take the treaty of 24 Aug., 1816, and lay a map of the country before you, and delineate the

¹ The Winnebago war, or "Red Bird disturbance," described at length in preceding volumes of *Wis. Hist. Colls.*—Ed.

² The superintendent of the United States lead mines was Lieut. Martin Thomas, who lived at St. Louis. His resident sub-agent, at this time, was Thomas McKnight, who lived at Galena.—Ed.

³ The treaty of 1816 was held at St. Louis; that of 1825 at Prairie du Chien.—Ed.

lines as follows: The country of the Ottawas, &c., commences at the Winnebago village on Rock River, 40 miles above its mouth,¹ runs down said river 'till it strikes the line running from the south end of Michigan L. due west to Rock Island,' then up the Mississippi to the southern line of the Prairie du Chien reserve, and along said line east and north to the Wisconsin, then passing southwardly passing on the east of the heads of all the small streams falling into the Mississippi to the beginning. This last line is on a dividing ridge between the Mississippi waters *direct*, and those falling into Rock River. The same treaty makes the unlocated reservations of such tracts of land as the U. S. may choose to locate not exceeding in all 5 leagues square. Then look at the treaty of 19 Aug., 1825 (page 363 of the Book of Treaties), and you will see the bounds of the Winnebago country. Again refer to the map having the last line from P. du Ch. to the Winnebago village in your recollection.² Commencing at the sources of Rock River, down the said R. to the W. village, 40 miles above the mouth of R. R., *thence along the line of the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pottawatomies* (above mentioned) *on a dividing ridge passing east of all the small streams falling into the Mississippi*, to the P. du Ch. reserve, thence with the east and north lines of said reserve to the Mississippi, and up the Mississippi to the Bluffs on the east side of said river opposite the mouth of the upper Ioway R., then with said bluffs to the mouth of the Black River, and up said river 'till a due west line from the sources of the west fork of the Wisconsin will intersect Black River, and along said line east to the sources of the W. B. of Wisconsin, down the same and the Wisconsin to the portage, across the portage and down Fox River to the Grand Kan-Kaulin [Kackalin], including the whole of the Winnebago Lake. Leaving an open line from the Grand

¹ Prophetstown, Illinois.—Ed.

² The language is: "From the southern extremity of Lake Michigan to the Mississippi river." In accordance with the terms of this treaty, the line was run by John Sullivan, a surveyor, in 1818, and his westernmost monument was placed "on the bank of the Mississippi near the head of Rock Island."—Ed.

Kan Kanlin to the sources of Rock R. that I can find no treaty closes. From this you perceive that you in the treaty of 24 Aug., 1816, made the only reservations that have been made, and they are *all west of the line of the Winnebagoes*. Then we have no colour of claim on the Winnebago lands whatever. Harrison indeed bought all this land by the treaty of 3^d Nov., 1804, from a point 36 miles up the Wisconsin to Lake Sakægan,¹ at the head of Fox River of the Illinois. This includes the whole mining district, 80 or a hundred miles east of the mouth of Fever River. But in the treaty of the 19th Aug., 1825, the commissioners recognize and establish the right of the Winnebagoes to this land, and make no exception or reservation except at P. du Ch. This closes all our chance of claim. This is the treaty *you said you had never noticed, and that you would have opposed its ratification had you considered its provisions*. The Winnebagoes complained of the trespass of the miners, and the open violation of the treaty by the permits of Mr. Thomas, the Ag't. No notice was taken of it and the diggings progressed. The Indians attempted force which was repelled, and very angry feelings produced. Under this state of excitement some of them left the neighborhood of the mines and went above this place, as it is supposed to consult some chiefs and influential men there, and to invite the co-operation of the Sioux, at any rate the lower band of Sioux with Wabasha. They were met there by a Sioux Indian called Wawzæekootee, or he that shoots in the pine tops, who told the Winnebagoes that the U. S. officers had delivered up several Sioux Indians to the Chippewas, who cruelly murdered them and cut them to small pieces, amongst whom was one innocent Indian; and that the 3 Winnebagoes, in confinement for previous murders, were at the same time butchered by the whites. Now, said he, go and revenge their death, and the moment you strike a blow, the Sioux will help you to kill all the whites above Rock River. Two Winnebagoes who had invited the Sioux of Wabashaw's band, then offered a string

¹ Doubtless Pewaukee lake. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix., 130-134, for opinions as to the identity of Lake Sakægan.—Ed.

of wampum, and asked the help of the Sioux. They all refused but pine tops, and he repeated the assurances—"Go strike the first blow and the Sioux will then help you." Under these feelings the Winnebagoes left them, and struck the blow on the boats, and at this place.¹

I have in one case recommended a purchase to be bounded east by a line from the mouth of Pine River about half way from this to the portage, on the Wisconsin, to the point of intersection between the line running due west from the south end of Lake M. and the northwestern line of the Illinois canal purchase; and that a treaty should be held next summer at this place. Gen'l Atkinson promised the Indians that com'rs should be app'd to treat with them in relation [to] the lead-mine difficulties.

I find Gen'l Clark² is resolved I shall move here, or he, I fear, will endeavor to have me removed. He spoke very positively on the subject of my removal to this place. An immediate removal would subject me to some smart sacrifices—to meet debts which my salary would extinguish if I had a little time to make sales and gradually diminish my debts. If I must move this ensuing year or loose the place I shall certainly move, for I cannot do without it. If commissioners are appointed to treat with the Indians for these lands or other purposes, and I could be one of them, the additional sum would enable me to move without any great sacrifice. And I believe I could write a much better treaty than $\frac{3}{4}$ ds of those I see. Your treaties are the only ones that are *definite* in their lines or terms. Harrison's are the next best. If in writing to Washington you would mention me as being on the spot, and a fit person, if you think I am, you would greatly serve me in my depression. I will mention it to some friends also in Congress.³

I have met several chiefs and tolerable large parties of Indians, and had some talks with them. As you advised

¹ *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, v., 143; *Hist. Crawford Co.*, p. 109.—ED.

² See *ante*, p. 258, note 2.—ED.

³ Street's wishes were not granted. The next treaty with the Winnebagoes was concluded at Green Bay, August 25, 1838, Cass and Menard being the commissioners.—ED.

me, I have deputed myself and find no difficulty. Indeed I speak better than I had supposed I could, and casually learn that the Indians and whites think I speak very well. The Indians have a great opinion of my gravity and portly look (on which you joked me) and the officers of the Fort have paid me great attention. Major Fowle sent workmen to fit up my room and run a partition across the council chamber which I had suggested as proper, and is very respectful and friendly.

Like Bolingbroke, tho' I have kept pretty close to my room, and mean not to make an everyday exhibition of my person. I only appear in the Indian room when I wish to see Indians. At other times I turn them over to the Interpreter, and never receive any in my chamber.

You will doubtless think me very particular, and be tired of my garulity; the situation is new to me, and having craved your advice I am shewing you that I am acting upon it, or in accordance with your views.

Mr. Douseman,¹ who takes this, is going, and I have written very hastily, not knowing of his departure but a few hours. With respect and deep considerations of regard, I am, sir,

Your most ob^d h^u s^t,

JOS. M. STREET.

Nathan Edwards, Governor of Illinois, Belleville, Illinois.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, December 28, 1827.

DEAR SIR,—The closing of the river appears absolutely to cut me off from any intercourse with the civilized world. I arrived here the first of Nov., since when, we have had one mail from below. Capt. Clark of the army² came in this

¹ Hercules L. Douseman, then confidential agent of the American Fur company at Prairie du Chien.—Ed.

² Doubtless Nathan Clark, afterwards commandant at Forts Howard and Winnebago, respectively. He was a native of Connecticut, entering the service May 19, 1813; became captain in the 5th Infantry, June 29, 1824; brevet major, June 29, 1834; died at Fort Winnebago, February 18, 1836. In August, 1827, four companies of the 5th inf. had been stationed at Fort Crawford, under Brevet Major John Fowle, Jr., on account of the Winne-

month from St. Louis, but brought no letters or papers. I have not heard from my family since I left the Saline. And have not rec'd *one letter* from below this place since we parted. *From this*, you will readily conclude I am quite uneasy. If it is not imposing too much upon your goodness I should like, at a leisure moment, to get a few lines from you. I feel some anxiety to hear also from Washington City, whether my appointment has been confirmed. Kane¹ promised to write me, and perhaps has, but as I before remarked, we get nothing from any place except Fever River and St. Peters. I have no newspaper from Washington, and until I can get a paper sent on, I would acknowledge it as a great favour, if you would send me on one of your W. papers after reading it. Or the *Richmond Enquirer*, after you have retained it one week to read, it will be *very new here then*.

Is it not astonishing that we have been all this time without a mail? The Postmaster-General has been quite accommodating towards us, and directs all the money arising from our post-office here to be applied by the Postmaster to carrying the mail.² The deputy informed me that during the summer the mail was mostly carried free of expense by steamboats and that the whole fund of the summer was untouched, and would pay for carrying the mail during the winter. Yet the Postmaster, who left here last July and

bago disturbance. Fowle was a native of Massachusetts and entered the army as second lieut. in the 9th inf., April 9, 1812; captain, June 10, 1814; transferred to 5th inf., May 17, 1815; brevetted major June 10, 1824, for ten years faithful service in one grade; major 3d inf., March 4, 1833; lieut. col. 6th inf., Dec. 25, 1837; killed April 25, 1838, by steamboat explosion.—ED.

¹ Elias Kent Kane, then United States senator from Illinois. Kane was born in New York, but emigrated to Tennessee at an early day; afterwards (1814) settling as a lawyer at Kaskaskia, Illinois. He was elected secretary of state in 1818, and in 1824 was sent to the United States senate; he was reelected in 1830 and died in Washington, Dec. 12, 1835. Governor Reynolds, in his *Pioneer Hist. of Ill.*, writes: "His career in Illinois was brief, but elevated and conspicuous."—ED.

² In *American State Papers (Postoffice, xv., p. 210)*, it is shown that "the net amount of postage accruing" for the year ending March 31, 1828, at Prairie du Chien was \$49.81.—ED.

went eastwardly to lay in m'd'z., is on the river below Rock Island with his m'd'z., stopped by the ice.' Capt. Clark of the army passed him and came on here some weeks past, and yet no mail. *With this fund on hand*, the deputy here has omitted to send until 7 or 8 days past, and the Postmaster has failed to hire a carrier to bring it up. When Capt. Clark came up there was a fine opportunity of company for any man hired to bring the mail. I am apprehensive that the whole is made subservient to the convenience of a merchant, and that while I am tortured with suspense, he is calculating cent-per-cent and hiring *cheap, payable in m'd'z.* You know payments in that way are not as *imperative as silver or gold.* I am unacquainted with the P. M., and under excited feelings may judge him hardly. Can you give any aid in establishing a mail route to this place, which shall be an extension of the route from Edwardsville? If you can, I would be gratified if you would write the Postmaster-General. It will be of considerable advantage to your population at F. R., as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the proposed route lies in your State, and your citizens are quite anxious it shall extend at any rate to Fever R., if no further. This would be a stepping stone that would ultimate in continuing the route to Prairie du Chien.

I have written to the P. M.-Gen'l this mail, and think if you will add some other information as to the route, and press the subject, the P. M.-G. would establish the route. I have proposed the following routes, either of w'h will be perfectly agreeable:

¹ This postmaster was James H. Lockwood, who mentions the fact in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ii., p. 152. The books of the department, at Washington, show that he succeeded James Duane Doty as postmaster, Dec. 6, 1824, "and so far as shown by the postoffice records remained as such officer until October 27th, 1828, when he was succeeded by Joseph M. Street." Daniel Drew, an old settler of Prairie du Chien, states that he used to carry the mails, as a boy, during General Street's postmastership, and that Thomas Street, the general's son, had charge of the distribution, the office being in the fort.—ED.

From	Miles.	Miles.
Prairie du Chien to Turkey River.....	25.	
Turkey River to Fever River.....	45	70
Fever River to Rock Island Post	60 to Peoria.....	190
Rock Island Post to Lewiston	120 to Springfield ..	70
Lewiston to Springfield.....	45 to Edwardsville	85
Springfield to Edwardsville.....	85 to St. Louis	12
Edwardsville to St. Louis.....	12 = 392.	427

NOTE.—At a point on the east side of the Mississippi, opposite the mouth of Turkey River, is mines as valuable as any at Fever R., 25 m. from here, and there are 60 or 70 persons building a town they call Cassville.¹ All the other points you well know. And at F. R. when I passed there, many computed there were 4,000 or 5,000 persons. Now, sir, this route (by Lewiston, Fulton county, Illinois, I think preferable) will lie all in your State below Fever River, leaving only 70 miles, the distance of this place from Fever River. Certainly, if you can, you therefore ought to aid my efforts. From here to Rock Island is in the Indian country, except the reservations for lead; below that (the line from south end of Lake Michigan) is secured by your treaty of 24 Aug., 1816, to U. S. The mail could pass the whole distance and not spend one night in the Ind. country. From here to Turkey R. (Cassville), 25 m. first night; 2d night, 45 m., Galena, Jo Daviess county; start in the evening from Galena, and 3d night stay at Gratiot's diggings, 15 miles; 4th night, Rock Island Fort, 45 m.; from there I am unacquainted with the road, and wish you to write on, if you please, to the Post-master-General and give him an account of that section of the route. Or of the one by Peoria, as you may deem best

¹ There were huts of roving French and wigwams of Indians on the site of Cassville, as early as 1816. When James Grushong stopped there for awhile in 1824, on his return from the Selkirk settlement, on the Red river, he found a deserted cabin, the only evidence of previous habitation. In 1827, the place was first occupied by permanent settlers. Judge Sawyer erected the first lead-smelting furnace there, and Tom G. Hawley the first house. Sawyer left July 3, however, on account of the Indian troubles then rife in the lead region. In 1828, a large number of people arrived. The settlement did not thrive, however, until after the Black Hawk war.—ED.

in your judgment, to which I would readily yield, as you know the country better than I do. You, no doubt, saw the report of Osian M. Ross¹ and 2 other persons who viewed and marked the route from Springfield to Fever River by way of Lewiston last spring. They say the distance is only 205 miles from Springfield to Galena. I estimated it at 225. They report the road to be excellent, and that several loaded wagons proceeded directly after them upon their route and found no obstructions in the way except Rock R. If the route can be made to run by the Fort this difficulty can be removed, as the land there is within our limits, free from any danger from Indians from its vicinity to the Fort, and some person can be got to settle at the ferry, if the Government will extend any privilege to him as to the ferry. The route by Peoria crosses R. R. in the Winnebago country. A glance at the map with your knowledge of this country will make all this plain to you.

A word about the Winnebagoes. By-the-by, you could do something in the furtherance of my views if you have time and disposition to do it, the latter I can never doubt. I have met many of them, and numbers are calling to see me every week. Indians are very curious and like to *see* and *feel* all who are placed near them. They remain as yet very quiet, and are engaged in hunting and those who come bring some furs and venison. I am, as you know, a novice at Indian affairs. Yet I am unable to conquer my suspicions that there is much dissatisfaction amongst the nation in relation to the people of the U. S., and I am thoroughly convinced that if the Winnebagoes could induce any other tribe or tribes to join them, a stubborn resistance would be made to the *execution of the Red Bird*. He is a *favorite of his people*, and has obtained a high reputation amongst the whites previous to the late most unprovoked murders.

¹ Osian M. Ross, of Lewiston, was one of the earliest settlers in Fulton county, Illinois,— being the first justice of the peace in that county, the first postmaster and the first tavern-keeper,— and kept the ferry across the Illinois river, at the mouth of the Spoon (present site of Havana); he was therefore interested in having the highway between Springfield and the lead mines run by way of his Havana ferry and his Lewiston tavern.— Ed.

You, no doubt, have had a particular account of his voluntary surrender of himself.' This manly, chivalric act, his open, free, and high bearing at the time, has something more than ordinary in it. Dressed in his Yancton uniform of white unsoiled skins with a fine white dressed skin robe cast loosely across his shoulders, and mounted on a mettlesome horse with a white flag in his hand, and marching into the camp of Whistler, unconfined, with a pleasant unclouded brow to deliver himself up as a murderer, is a little out of the ordinary course of such things amongst us. You, perhaps, have seen him. He is a tall, well-made, straight Indian, about 38 or 40, and a very pleasant countenance. There is nothing remarkable in the other 7 prisoners, if you except Red Bird's son, a lad of about 12 or 15. He is a pleasant, smiling boy. Confinement goes hard with the Red Bird, and he does not have good health, but if a white man calls to see him all the *nobility* of a *great savage* appears to light up his seemingly intelligent features, and a stranger would point to him as *no every-day character*. I wish the trial and execution of the murderers was past. If a strong force is not present when Red Bird is to be hanged if convicted (of which I can see no reason to doubt), I shall not feel free from apprehension of danger. There is an opinion prevalent at St. Louis and amongst some here, that the Winnebagoes are greatly alarmed at late events. They *were* much alarmed at the time Gen'l A.¹ and the Ill. volunteers were in their country. The movement was sudden, beyond what the Indians had been accustomed to, and the expected reinforcements from Illinois under your order for $\frac{1}{2}$ the militia, was calculated to take them by surprise; and at the time had its effect. Since then they seem to be gradually awakening, as it were, from a deep sleep; until their fears are given to the winds and there is dead stillness—a portentous calm that all my secret endeavors cannot unravel. They cannot be induced to talk on the subject. And they come and go, ask no questions about the prisoners, and if told of their health, answer

¹ *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, viii., 260-264.—Ed.

² Brevet Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson, colonel of 6th Inf., U. S. A.—Ed.

to any mention of them *Uh!* Say they are well or sick it is immaterial—*uh!*—is the answer. And it is evident they wish to avoid the *mention of them*. At the same time the wives and relatives of the prisoners are greatly attended to. The wife of Red Bird does not come near. I learn she is *rich*, as Red Bird was the best hunter in his nation, and great attention is paid to her by the nation. The chiefs who have visited me profess their friendship; but somewhat anxiously enquire when they may expect their Great Father will *settle the line and mark it* between their country and the whites at the mines. They say, "we have left our country to keep our young men from having anything to do with the people at the mines until we hear from our Great Father. This is our promise to Gen'l Atkinson, and we will keep it." They add, "Gen'l A. promised us that next summer persons should come from our G. F. to council with us about this matter and we will wait and see them."

1828, Jan'y 1.

An *old mail* has arrived from Fever River from whence our messenger who was to have gone to Rock Island returned. He met the P. M. there, who sent him back with the *old mail*, directing his young man here to send him 9 or 10 trains to draw up his m'd'z. Now when all things suit the P. M.'s convenience to bring up his m'd'z., we shall be favoured with a mail. I hardly know how to speak patiently of such conduct!

It is with sentiments of sympathetic sorrow, that I notice the death of my friend, Mr. Cook.¹ He was a *clean poli-*

¹ Daniel Pope Cook, then member of congress from Illinois. Born in Scott county, Kentucky, in 1793. Went to Ste. Genevieve, Mo., in 1811, and clerked in a store. In 1815, he entered upon the practice of law at Kaskaskia, Illinois. In 1817, he was sent to London as bearer of dispatches to the U. S. Minister, John Quincy Adams, and returned home with him. The following year he was appointed judge of the western circuit of Illinois and "became very popular in that office." In the fall of the same year he was elected attorney-general of the state. Two years later he was elected to congress, after a second masterly contest with John McLean, who had beaten him for the office in 1818. He was among the most notable of the western congressmen. He died at his father's home in Kentucky, Oct. 15, 1827, aged but 35 years. Gov. Reynolds (*Pioneer Hist. of Ill.*,

tician — and a “ripe and a good one.” Few men in the U. S. at his time of life, had entered so completely into a knowledge of the politicks of the U. S. both at home and in its foreign relations. I am apprehensive Illinois is not destined soon to be so ably represented upon the floor of Congress. I saw it but a moment past when about to close my letter. It has cast a gloom o’er me and dashed some bright anticipations that were floating in my mind for Ill.

Should you correspond with any person at W. City likely to do me any good, you w’d greatly oblige me by casually mentioning me as one of the commissioners to treat with the Winnebagoes next summer. I am here, and it w’d be a little mortifying if some person was sent here, *over my head*, to treat with these Indians. Make my respects to Mrs. Edwards and Ninian, and suffer me to renew to you assurances of my high respect and deep obligations.

Your friend,

JOS. M. STREET.

Gon. Ninian Edwards, Belleville. Ill.

p. 385) pays this tribute to him: “He rose high, shined bright and died soon. He was at one time the darling and idol of the people; he was great, brilliant and active in his mind; his qualifications of heart were noble, generous and benevolent.” Street’s estimate of his friend appears to have been a just one.—ED.

Prairie du chien

8. Jan'y 1828.

Jos. M. Street -

Winnipeg

Relative to the Indians,
the ~~old~~ ^{new} mines, & the mines
& other matters connected

with his agency -

The Honble The Secretary of
The War Department.

United States Indians Agency at
Souris du Chien 8 January 1838.

Sir,
On the 15th I had the honor to address you on the subject of
the Indians adjacent to this Agency, and more particularly in relation to the Minnetagoes. Since
that time, meeting the chiefs and influential men, belonging to the Winnebago Tribe have been
to "offer the hand of friendship, and smoke the pipe of peace" with their "Father, the Great
Chief, Great Father, had sent any good words to his Minnetago children." In all their
talks, they endeavor to impress the belief, that as a Nation, they have been friendly,
their conduct correct, and their "hearts true towards their G. F. & his whole children." Much
of their conversation, is of their poverty & misfortunes. What immediately relates to our
recent difficulties with them, I have endeavored to glean from numerous detached
conversations, through a very imperfect Interpreter, and will lay it before you, as nearly
in their own figurative language as I can.

In visiting the Agency, they say, "We are thankful, that when our Old Father died,
and the Minnetagoes had no one to advise them, one G. F. remembered us, and has sent
an offer you that hand of peace, & hope you will be good to us - we are poor and
needy, our Father. Our country is large. There are many of us, and we are scattered
over it. We do not often meet at one large council fire. There are many bands, who all
have their chiefs, who seldom meet. The chiefs of one band has little influence with
an other band. Each chief and his followers live as they choose. So that one band
does not know what an other band is doing. Some of our bad-men, & worst young-men,
not with any of our great chiefs, killed white-men. One chief assembled the Nation
as soon as possible, and threw the murderers were delivered up to the whites, and we
expected they would immediately be shot. This was our desire. Indians do not love to
know, that their fellow Indians, are living, in confinement, with Iron on them, where
they cannot see the Sun in the day upon the plains, or the Moon in the night. We
are ready to hear that those who murdered white-men, are killed. - But our faces
are blackened for sorrow - our hearts are big with grief, & our lips are closed up,
when we come to see our Father, and look towards the walls that hide our fellow
Indians. We hear the prisoners are sick, and that some are dead, but we believe you
our Father, when you say, they are all alive. And we thank you, that you have
given them Blankets and clothing, and tell us they do not suffer with cold or
hunger."

They were not all bad Indians before this last summer. Before that - one man (the Red-Bird is named) was loved by the Indians, and trusted by the whites. But he became the murderer of whitesmen. We gave him up along with the rest to die for their crimes - and our faces would smile, our hearts no longer mourn, if all was over, and forgotten.

The White-headed Dove, a very interesting old Chief, with prominent features and a eagle-like nose, meeting two Indians a little intoxicated, in company with a large number who were in the Council room at the Agency, made the following speech to them. "My heart is sick, when I see Indians drink much whiskey. It is not good for Indians. It is not made by Indians but white-men. I drink none, and I wish all good-Indians to drink none. It is poison to an Indian's heart. When he drinks much, it runs over his senses, he does not know what he is doing, and then, he murders, and when he sleeps, and the whiskey is gone - he must die for it. If there had been no whiskey the murders on the Banks of Prairie du Cheu would not have taken place. When the Red-Bird & his party had drunk much whiskey - some went to their hearts, and some to their heads, until poison was in one, and madness in the other - yet their throats were dry, and the more poison they drank, the more their throats were parched - The Red-Bird, threw away the balague of the whiskey, and said 'Now our throats are dry, let go and drink some blood to cool us' - and he shed the blood of white-men in time of peace. For this he must die. and it is the work of whiskey.

Indians ought not to buy whiskey. It is hot in his heart for a little while, then it is gone, the Indian is sold, his head is sore, and he does not remember what he did when the poison was in him. Tent tip fire skins are gone too. His women & children are shivering around the fire - There is no blanket upon them - no skins spread around for them to repose upon. The furs and skins were given to the Trader for hot-poison. He is hungry - there is no meat, and what he ought to have bought a gun or ammunition - he bought whiskey, and he has nothing more to give the Trader - his winters hunt has got whiskey enough to madden him for a week - and now he must go far into the woods, cold hungry till some Indian lodge shall give him something to eat. For many moons sorrow and suffering are before him. Whiskey is hot-poison for the Winnebagoes my head is like the snow with age. I have seen the man that it has brought upon our nation - and I advise them, to buy no more whiskey."

In allusion to the head mines, as collected from different Indians - They remark - "Our people have shed the blood of whites in time of peace. You thought we were long in delivering up the murderers. Our people are scattered over a wide land. The murderers belong to one band, and it was necessary for many bands to meet before they could be taken. Many good Indians, walked a long way to get this done. So soon as many chiefs could meet at one place, the murderers were given up to you. We expected your warriors to shoot them. This we are told is not your way, and we submit - Yet our hearts are sad - that it cannot be passed forgotten. Some of our people live low down on Rock River, and near the head mines. The largest number of the Winnebagoes live many days journey to the north of the East, and never go there. Our lands are very near there, and some of our people

have their village and hunting grounds near to the mines. The Illinois Indians sold our G. F. their lead-lands for goods before every winter hunt at Peoria. But the Winnebagoes sold none. When some lead was found, and it was known down the Mississippi, Whitemen came flocking to Four Rivers, like the Wolves in the plains to the dead Buffalo. Many crossed in our canoes at Rock R. and some did not pay for it. More came up in the Smoking Boats on the Mississippi - and there ~~is~~ much land to hold them. They spread out in every direction, and began to dig & find & carry off lead on the Winnebago lands. More said, if we do not stop them soon, it will be too late. - More More are coming every day - the game & fur are leaving the country, and the Indians cannot live in it any longer, if we do not stop the white-men from coming over the line into our country. Our G. F. has bought the land of us, and we will tell his children. But the white men would not listen - our chiefs were sorry, and our young-men were very mad. Bad thoughts came along - and there was none to advise. Bad birds sang in our warriors ears - and lies came down the Mississippi from St. Peters. Bad white-men have been murdered. We know soon, that we ought to have sent this word to our G. F. and he would secure our land to us, and take away his white children. But we had none to advise us good. We have called all the St from that country - we are afraid to let our young-men go to their hunting grounds, our people to their village near there. And it thinks told our chiefs that our G. F. should know all. And that he would send men after the corn-moon to see where our country is, and mark it by a good line that his people would not pass. We hope it will not be long. The winter hunting will not last long - the corn-moon will come, and our people of that band will remember their village on Rock R. where they have so long raised corn. When the women are making corn - the young-men warriors will be idle - or roaming over the plains - and we fear when good chiefs are away, they will go amongst the whites - get whiskey, and when drunk, murders will come. The lead mines and the Winnebagoes are too near. - White men will carry whiskey where ever they go - Indians will buy it when it comes near to them - they are maddened by it - and murder comes."

I suggested the propriety of their selling a strip of country near to the mines, so as to remove them further from any probable contact, or collision with the Miners. I did this, supposing it might enter into the views of our Government in guarding against any sudden exhibition of passion that might excite in Savage a aggression, to endeavour to cast a wide barrier of country between the ferocious tribe, and the heterogeneous population assembled & assembling at the mines. They answered - "It would be good for the U. of the land was unoccupied - if whitemen dig there too, they will come where the Indians go - whiskey will follow - and murders will come." I have been minutely particular in collecting and detailing these talks, that you may calculate what influence the conduct at the Mines has had upon the late Indian disturbances. It would be presumptuous in me to urge the propriety, I might add, the vital importance of some more permanent, and reciprocal arrangement, with these Indians in relation to the lead-mines, as a means of averting more serious consequences than those

which nearly depopulated this frontier at one time last fall. At the moment when I am writing - my messenger has returned with the certain information, that Genl Dodge, with about 25 men is now digging something lead, about 15 miles south of the Wisconsin, and 60 miles East of this place, nearly opposite of the mouth of the Pine River (the little sketch in my former letter will lead you to the spot) - This is the country, the purchase of which I suggested. It is not near the line, and cannot be deemed a mistake. It is at the most liberal calculation 30 miles within the lines of the Winnebago lands as designated by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of the 17 Aug. 1825. see Art. 7 & 9. pages 365 & 6. - It is said - Genl Dodge, has purchased the liberty of a band of Winnebagos near that place on the Wisconsin, and all who are flocking to him (numbers are going) he compels to pay certain portions of the purchase from the Indians. It is said by the messenger, that the richness of the Mineral, the facility of obtaining it, and its vicinity to the surface of the Earth exceeds any mines known in this country. There is little chance of places for a considerable distance. Genl D. and his men are well armed with Rifles and ammunition - and he is a determined, and brave man. (He is, I think a good - man - pecuniarily unfortunate - and I suppose, making a "bold stroke" for a fortune.) What effect this will have upon our relations with the Tribes - I am at a loss to say - They may mistake the bargain of the bands and unfortunate results may flow out of it. This cupidity may also be awakened, which may interfere with the projects of the Government, and operate unfavourably on any treaty of purchase. (You will perceive, Sir, that if peace is maintained on this frontier, under such open disregard of our laws, flagrant violations of solemn Treaties, and high-handed invasions of primitive inherent aboriginal rights - something must speedily be done on our part to satisfy the Indians that it is not our intention, to wrest from them their country by the sword. I have ^{means of obtaining a} no force capable of doing any thing. I shall endeavour to warn the Indians, who speak on the subject, and assure them that their G. H. will comply with Genl D's promise, and urge them to await some news from him.) With these 8 Indian persons, the depopulated state of the Fort here, - and the navigation closed by ice - Any difference with the Indians would be extremely unfortunate. I hope this subject, will meet your attention as early as possible. -

You doubtless have frequent opportunities of looking into the particular character & government of the several Indian Tribes upon our immediate borders. Yet it may not be amiss in recommending an important change in our mode of trial and punishment of Indians for crimes committed against our Citizens, to give you a brief sketch or outline, of the character and government of the Winnebagos. The Winnebago Tribe of Indians consist of about from 9⁰⁰ to 1000 warriors. They may be divided into 3 parties, one residing on the Waters of Rock R. - an other, on the Fox River and Winnebago Lake, and the other, on the Mississippi above Prairie du Chien, the Black R.

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Prairie La Crosse R. and the Country N. E. of this place (P. du C.) to the portage of the Wisconsin.
These are made up of numerous smaller bands, ^{the frequently corporations, or minor units} ~~the~~ ^{moderate} followers of chiefs or influential men, whose power is derived alone from personal influence, with the bands. In these parties, some two or three chiefs, ~~also~~ ^{are} ~~are~~ ^{are} an occasional indirect controlling influence, by the judicious display of judgment, and acute, discriminating attention, to the most intelligent men amongst ~~them~~ the inferior classes, and thus operate unseen, upon the whole Tribe. Apparently they continue together for convenience, and not with any view to a general government of the band, party, or tribe. If on national, calamity or great public excitement induces them to seek safety in their collected strength, they do not see each other for years. Their Government, if denoting the name, is loose, and powerless. And nothing but a common language, similarity of disposition, and consanguinity would make them seek safety in their concentrated strength. There is no power save that of apprehended danger that can operate to bring them together. Individually, they are fierce, savage, and high minded - delighting in the chase, and finding in acts of Chivalry and deeds of War. The men are large, tall, straight, and very muscular - Consider labour degrading - and use no ornaments except medals. The women partake much of the same traits of character - They consider all the little arts and manufactures common amongst other Indians trifling and useless. They make but few Mats or baskets, and those are coarse ill-shaped and inelegant. Their Moccasins, are plain and ungarnished, and they seldom wear any kind of ornament. Yet the Menominee who reside near them, are industrious, ingenious, and expert in manufacturing numbers of beautiful Mats, Moccasins, baskets, and other useful & pretty articles. There is a savage scorn, a gloomy dignified reserve, and high manly bearing, that to my eye, easily points out the Winnebago warrior, amidst a crowd of Indians of other Tribes. In his formation and appearance, nature seems to give an assurance that he is a man. How deeply is it to be lamented that, ^{the} interior - the frame-work of his heart, is so deplorably deficient in the nobling qualities of the human character.

In the view of the Winnebago Indian, if there is much to tame, and subdue - there is also the substantial groundwork upon which to rear the most enviable points of character in the civilized man. And if the Government contemplate a gradual amelioration, and civilization of the Indians, and Philanthropic Societies an enlargement of mental acquirement - these Indians - present satisfactory and interesting ones, tho' I apprehend, difficult to be forced to the hand of the Artisan.

It is next to impossible, to give Indians, who have no government, a correct, comprehensible idea of "Trial by Jury". They know nothing of civil or criminal law, and cannot comprehend the infliction of punishments by the

operations. They are at a loss to know why we are keeping the murderers of white men, "alive, & long". That they may be tried. "Tried! what is that?" I explained it to them. They smiled, & said, "The murderers confessed to the Nation that they did kill the whites - some of us saw the scalps, and knew that they did commit the murders - they would not tell the Nation a lie - and we gave them up to you, not to be tried, but to be killed. We did so, to keep our Nation from a war, our women & children from slaughter, and to save our Country to live & hunt in". They add - "If it is your desire to take your revenge, they ought to be killed - if not - it would be very good to our hearts if they were liberated. We wish our G. F. to do what shall please him. - But now, these Indians lodges, are desolate - they are not in the hunting camps, or war parties. Yet we can not mourn for them - they are not dead - We come to see our Father, to offer the hand of friendship, and smoke the pipe of peace around the old Council fire - we see the high walls that hide the Winnebago prisoners and our hearts are very sore. - We wish to know that the murderers are killed - our white brethren satisfied and all is forgotten".

With such a people, if at all reconcilable with the spirit of our free institutions, the trial and execution of their ~~murderous~~ warriors, charged with the murder of the whites, should be by Sanctifying Courts Martial, in the most summary and expeditious manner. It is tho' with great diffidence I venture this opinion, as corresponding with the unanimous sentiments and usages of the Indians. In instancing the conduct of the French & British - they say, "they took the murderers of white men, shot them immediately, and we shook hands in friendship the pipe of peace went round, and all was forgotten!!" - I can only leave this delicate subject with wisdom and better heads.

I feel assured that that is my duty, by your wish, that every thing in relation to the Indians, shall from time to time, be laid before you that comes to my knowledge. And that prudent decisions from those facts should be made, by the Agent on the spot. Under these things, I would mention that whenever a Court is assembled here for the trial of these Indians, as well as at the execution of those who may be condemned, it will be highly important - I would add absolutely necessary, that our imposing Military force should be at Prairie du Chien. I mean an additional force to that of the Regiment stationed here. In conversing with the Commanding officer at this place, he strongly coincides with me in opinion, and that conversation, authorizes me to assure you, that the moving up the additional quantity of troops from the Jefferson Barracks, will be attended with no more expense to the Government. The situation is as healthy, their advancement in discipline & knowledge of Military tactics, would progress as advantageously as if left where they are, and the advantage of a great and imposing Spectacle would

be presented to the neighboring Savages at the same time that perfect security was guaranteed, and possibly an Indian. War averted. The Red Bird was much beloved by his band, and respected by the Nation - Had many followers, who were obedient to his orders, and even now, speak of him with evident marks of sub-due love, & entire confidence and respect. His wife (who has recovered the whites since his surrender) is a woman of no ordinary character, and standing. Sensitive and acute, she knows how to improve the advantages devolving upon her, as the wife of a subdued leader, and she is now perhaps ascendant at the head of the band to which he is lately assigned. What she is doing, and why she has not visited the place where her husband is in confinement, I have not been enabled to get out of any of the Indians. They approach the subject with a solemn reverence bordering on the superstitious.

When ever the trial and execution of these offenders shall take place Indians from all the adjacent Country, will flock to this place, to witness the interesting scene. What may be the effect upon a Savage Multitude, witnessing, thus, to them, new mode of execution, I cannot venture to say. However I am warranted by the opinion of men old in knowledge of Indians and their character, as well as by that of Officers in the Service, in wishing to guard against any possible difficulties that might occur, at such a moment. A question of feelings, some time, takes place with civilized men, and extremely unhappy consequence result. What might be the case, with a large body of this band, collected, and viewing the Red Bird and the Eagle, mounting the Gallows - It is a little serious to imagine, in the absence of a strong Guard. A large body of Troops, appearing on the ground, would give an assurance of perfect security to the whites, and completely overawe the ferocity of the savages, at the same time an excellent opportunity will be afforded to impress them with our strength, by the exhibition of such a grand spectacle.

The speedy trial, and if convicted, the Execution, of the Indians in confinement here, cannot be too strongly pressed upon the attention of our Government. Some Chippewas were found guilty by the Grand Jury, of murder at Mahanaw, & escaped. Others were tried and acquitted at St. Louis, and returned home with many presents. Aomague, an Indian killed a white man, was tried convicted & sentenced to be executed at Peoria, at 12 o'clock days, all word of error was sent out of the Supreme Court, and the proceedings hitherto set aside for error. The Indian returned to his nation unscathed. These facts are all carefully noted and inscribed in the recording minds of the Indians. And the consequences are deplorable & distressing to our frontier settlements. Their release, acquittal, pardon or escape - is attributed to our fears. And the Indians have several times said to white men amongst them. "The whites are afraid to take their avenger, even if we do some times, kill their people. If we kill many, then they will send Warriors into our country; but if we only kill a few this time, and many more go by, and we then kill more - they will not hunt for us, and if they take us they will

keep us a while bound as back with a great many parents, to buy us to sell our
more. — I am warranted by the concurrent testimony of several persons long accustomed to Indians at
this quarter in sustaining the opinion, that if the several Nations at Medicine, Prairie du Chien
and on the Mississippi above Prairie du Chien, had been executed in accordance with their crimes,
the murders of Lord Sumner at this place and on the Banks would not have occurred.

I cannot consider the punishment of Indians for crimes committed against our Citizens, as
a matter of mere Municipal concern. It is true, the Indian Tribes are no where considered
by us as independent Nations; yet in the nature of things, we must to a certain extent
deal with them as Sovereign powers — on a people distinct from us, and managing to
governing themselves according to their own former principles of Government, and that
without any reference to us. Therefore, it cannot be denied, that the laws, and the execution
of the laws, enacted in relation to murders committed by Indians upon white men,
affect powerfully and immediately, operate upon our relations with those Indians. Of
course it assumes a higher character than we award. If upon relating the accounts received
from Indian Agents, it shall appear, that the present mode of trial and execution of Indians
charged with the murder of whites, is materially defective — unsatisfactory to the Indians,
and troubles our and dangerous to the peace and security of our frontier settlements —
I trust that some course more satisfactory to the Indians, and less dangerous to the
whites will be adopted. In order to relieve the feelings of those who might dislike to see
a different law in our Statute Book for Indians. I would respectfully suggest that it
be provided for by a stipulation in our Treaties with each Tribe.

There are 8 Winnebago Indians now in confinement at this place. Two since
the Spring of 1826, and 6 since the capture of Rev. Alkinson last summer. There is
great risk to us, so long as these persons remain in confinement. Let it terminate
in a proper manner, and peace and quiet on a most lasting foundation, will be
the consequence. On the other hand, every day that their confinement is continued,
insecurity and danger is around us. Should an Indian escape, they would not
be returned until awed into obedience, at a great expense of treasure, and perhaps
of blood. And the death of one or more of them would be difficult ~~satisfactory~~
to explain to the entire satisfaction of the Nation. And at last, some remote
family or lone man may lose their scalps to satisfy their revenge. Yet an
immediate execution of those they pronounced guilty, would be perfectly satisfactory.

I beg leave to apprise you, that some apprehensions are entertained that there will
be no Court at Prairie du Chien next Spring. This would be a deplorable event,
and might cost us our lives here, and the U. S. an Indian War. That this may
be enquired into in time, where alone it can offensively be done, I would emphatically
draw your attention to the subject. I understand that Judge Doty is at Washington,
and if so, a reference to him, will enable you to receive all the information in
relation to this supposition that may be requisite, to enable the proper steps to

be taken to secure the trial of these Indians as early as possible. I understand a difference of opinion exists between Judge Doty and the Legislative Council of Michigan. As an A. J. Judge, does not acknowledge the authority of the Council to assign any duties to him. The Courts are created and regulated by the Ordinances or laws of the Council, and if not recognized by the Judge, he will not hold the Courts, and these Indians cannot be tried unless the Council shall make a special act of legislation by their body. — Such is the difficulty in the spring from ice, in passing in this northern climate, as well as some danger from the Winnebagoes — that if Judge Doty is at Washington receives a new Commission to return to Green Bay — he may not in all probability be sworn into office, and reach Pointe du Clair in time for the spring term. Therefore if he is at Washington, and Governor Cass. The Judge ought to be qualified, and come on early in the spring by the way of the Ohio & Mississippi by Steam Boats. In this there will be certainty, safety & expedition. I can give but an imperfect idea of the disappointment, additional expense and danger, if these Indians are not tried and disposed of early next spring. The Garrison, will be saddled out other year with this heavy tax, and high risk — and the Government and the Citizens of this frontier with the consequent dangers growing out of the protracted confinement of these Murderers. If this should unhappily occur, I apprehend that too late, it will be lamented, by those of our frontier settlers who may live to witness it. The matter respecting the Judge, is mentioned purely from its connection ^{with} and evident bearing upon the affairs of the Indians. Not from any feelings connected with the individual. — I do not know him, and but two months gone I never had heard of him.

In my letter of the 15th Nov. I mentioned the urgent necessity of suitable buildings for the use of this Agency. It will be necessary that a particular place be located for the purpose, as there is now no spot designated for the Agency. The late Agents heirs own the house now rent, and occupy. It would be desirable, that this should be as early next spring as possible, that when the New Fort is located, the Agent may locate the point for the Agency. Great facility as well ^{as saving} of materials and expense would arise from the building of the Agency and the Fort at the same time, and most of the work might be done by the Troops if so directed.

Since my arrival at this agency, my feelings have been greatly excited from white examining into, and considering our intercourse with, these poor ignorant children of our common Father. The first view which the civilized man obtains of the civilized, is calculated to express those feelings of high admiration and respect, which would be ~~supposed~~ ^{naturally} induce the former, to consider the latter, as of a superior race of beings. The whole of that effect, which a first impression is so calculated to produce, is destroyed by too grossing views, and open contradiction on the part of those white men who first enter their country. As a nation, in our intercourse with them, they are told of the comforts and securities of civilized life — the strength

and order of our Government - the pleasures & beneficial tendencies of learning - the high restraining influence, and consolations in this life, of our Religion find the everlasting happiness that opens to the view of the believing Christian beyond the narrow precincts of the grave. And we persuaded the Indian to abandon his present precarious mode of life - his ~~Uncivilized~~ Government, and the Religion of his fathers, - learn of civilized man agriculture & the mechanic arts, be instructed in our schools, and embrace our Religion, and that he will rise to a higher grade, in the scale of humanity under the benign influence of our sublime Religion, and the guidance of white men. It is natural that man should examine with scrutiny the conduct of those who advise him to a radical change in his sentiments and conduct. The Indians are not deficient in this - and in our language, acts, and intercourse with them, ^{are particularly noted} ~~are particularly noted~~ and treasured in their minds. Our declarations and our actions are carefully compared - distant conversations are brought together in their recollections, and thus consonance or disagreement noted. Consequently they examine how their white-man's land, and how the life and the actions of the civilized and religious man, correspond with his declarations and advice to them. And it is deeply to be lamented, that the character and conduct of ^{many of} our citizens who first go amongst the Indians, cannot bear a comparison, even with uncivilized men.

It has become almost a matter of course, for a white-man on entering the Indian country, to take one of their young women, to live openly with him in his house as his concubine during his stay at the place. - And the same takes place on his removal to some other encampment. I was mortified to hear this reprehensible practice defended as an Indian custom. Upon the most thorough examination I was enabled to declare it is not so. It is the unfortunate result of their intercourse with civilized men. However criminal, the conduct of the retainers of the tyrannical Hodges, amongst civilized society, cannot be defended by the other. With us, it is put under the ban of public opinion, subjected to the severe penalties of the law, and by the influence of religion and morality, preserved the respectable circles of society, compelled where it does exist, to shroud in darkness & obscurity, with limited influence & circumscribed power for producing mischief. Here, introduced amongst the uncivilized savages, by the educated civilized white man - it demoralises a nation and tends to render prostitution respectable in their eyes. The white-man comes amongst them, with his goods & his trinkets, and this is the key to his trunk. - It is soon discovered, that the Ind, his family, friends and relations, are loaded with presents, and that this is an easy way to get goods there to hunt furs. Every descriptive eye brings more white-men simulation to please, and to

be the medium of presents to the family, brings forward numerous girls, as candidates for this criminal distinction. The Indian girl, has but an imperfect idea of the moral turpitude of the act, and looks upon it as belonging to civilized life, undervalued respectable in her notion, and its influence extended, by the knowing white man who would seduce the Indians. This, doubly to be deplored in our general intercourse with the Indians, as casting serious difficulties in the way of every attempt to ameliorate their savage condition. But when men in the employment of the Government of the United States, dare openly, to set such an example, or yield to such an abominable practice, in the face of the poor savages to whom they are sent as the representative of their Great Father the President - It is not, in my humble opinion, enough that he be made a mark for the slow moving, foreign of scorn to point at - chastisement, adequate to the big offense, & base desertion of duty, should be awarded him. It is difficult to imagine that entire abandonment of high honorable sentiment, which should persuade the bosom of an officer of the Government, that disregard of the high guardianship, committed to his trust, ~~withholding~~ played as the agent of the President and the advisor & instructor of the Indians in all that is calculated to civilize & enlighten the savage mind - that can permit him, openly in the face of the Nation, and his own fellow citizens, to keep an Indian square. Yet, however disagreeable this may appear, needs not of place, to you - The fact is so forcibly obtruded upon me, to the utter shame and disgust of the moral portions of society here, that I should consider it improper not to lay it before you, as a serious obstacle to ~~the~~ ^{the} attempt of the Government to civilize the savages. I refrain from saying any thing, on the subject of the feelings either of myself or my family, in finding that business, ~~presenting~~ ^{official} subjects us to submit to this objectionable intercourse in the view of the Indians. If it had alone involved individual feeling - I should not have alluded to it at all. It is its public influence, and wide spreading ruin, as applied to our intercourse with the neighboring Indian Tribes, that has seduced me into the preceding observations.

I beg not to be mistaken, in these remarks to be considered captious. These offenses are not of a fugitive character, - the unfortunate result of an ardent moment, when superabundant passion has for a time stifled the voice of reason and virtue, and a solitary aberration, marks the frailty of erring man. No - it is a regular business of long standing, and irregular progression, and calculated in its effects to paralyze the best efforts of our Government, to disseminate morality, virtue, and the high & beneficial influence of Religion amongst the Indians.

This is one prominent obstacle in the way of our Gov^t in carrying into effect their humane intentions in relation to the Indians - over which they have a direct control.

There are others, where it is difficult for the restraining power to reach the offender. Not how painful to the philanthropic mind, to reflect upon the Cupidity of the trader, who can with smiling face, demoralise a whole band of Indians, for the sake of 50 or 100 Musk-out-skins, and ~~with~~ shake whilst calculating that the Whiskey cloth to maddening them, has cleared him 300 Bar-bent upon the bar. - What a melancholy view of the human heart - of the heart of civilised man! And what a formidable barrier do these things present, to the splendid schemes for the enlightening and ameliorating the savage barbarity of the Indians, that breathe in some of State papers of our Government on this subject. These are facts, that present themselves to the sober sense of the practical Agent, standing on the verge of the Indian population, as the organ and recipient, ~~the~~ ^{not} survey to the latter, the advice, instructions and beneficence, of a great people, and I could in justice turn aside from a review of their consequent & melancholy tendencies, as well in relation to us, as to the Indians.

Where this mighty torrent is to be arrested in its destructive course - how turned into perennial stream, and then invigorating current, taught to flow to the savage heart, rise in rich and softened tints upon their ragged minds, and under the influence of Religion, ripen into virtue, civilization and moral grandeur. - It is not for an obscure individual of limited means, to say. -

With sentiments of great respect and high regard

I have the honor to subscribe myself

Yours most obedient

Wm. Allen, Servant

Esq. No. Street United States
Indian Agent at Prairie du Chien

P.S. I have your indulgence as to the draft, of my, letter, the duties of my station have been arduous this winter, and I could not submit my views, or a great portion of my letter to the sub-Agent, for reasons that are obvious. Therefore I have had no person to copy my numerous letters, and make out all my returns. -

Respectfully Esq. M. Street.