

provide for, Mr. Messersmith was only able to secure a
large family to ^{comfortable} support, nearly gave a support to his fam-
-ily. ^{have since} times taken a change the old man & his boys pursued, ~~and~~
and have been well paid for their enterprise. We then came
on to Dodgeville Digging, there found a town, as it was then
called, with five or six cabins, & three of them sold out ^{her gown into cyrils coat} of
poor tobacco; since ^{then} that the ~~have raised~~ quite a village.
Then journeyed on to what is called Mineral Point, then went
by the name of Little Shake Rag. After ^{having} looking round they
various diggings, I returned to Scrabble, & moved my provisions, tools & furn-
-ture, which consisting of blankets, spiders, fishing pan, &c., into
the neighbourhood of Little Shake Rag, ^{for} that neighbourhood staked
off; & after spending ^{some three} a few weeks or a month, I could not get
to dig where I wished to, I put up my stakes, ^{and moved off} my next min-
-ing was in the neighborhood of the Old Buck lead, near
galena; but meeting with the same luck as formerly I
moved again into the neighbourhood of the Finney Patch, ^{which} was
discovered in the fall of ¹⁸²⁸ twenty eight. by ~~the~~ ^{one} men of the name
of Clark, who sold to Finney the four fifths, & to Williams ^{the other} one fif-
-th. Finney afterwards swindled the men out of some two hun-
-dred & fifty dollars; he was to have paid them in July, 1830. I
struck a ^{vein} mass of mineral that ^{yielded} ~~yielded~~ ninety seven ^{thousand pounds}
& paid one third for ^{this} ground as rent. But was the custom
when you dug on a lot where mineral had been raised
& sold. Part of that mineral I sold at seven dollars the next
spring, I sold the last fifty thousand at twelve dollars
per thousand. ^{The} next fall we struck a ^{vein} mass that turned off six-
hundred thousand of mineral, that ^{brought} ~~cost~~ eighteen dollars per
thousand; & in the spring of 1839, I struck another ^{vein} mass south
of the second, that turned out four hundred & five thousand.
The range altogether ^{produced} turned off over two millions of mineral;
the old ^{Finney} Patch ~~and~~ ^{mine} turned off over two millions of
mineral and good digging there still. In May, 1862,
I ^{bought} ~~had~~ me a horse & rigging, & rode up ^{as} a volunteer, & served
in Loays's Squadron during the war, ^{during} that campaign,

I saw more of human nature than I had before in
several years. I could state some facts, concerning that
campaign, that would make some men who stand high in
the estimation of many, feel like the boy that lost the bee,
& prove them by living witnesses. I had on at present. We had many
difficulties to encounter, ^{of which} a majority of the present population
can form but a faint ^{conception}. ~~Idea of~~. Back to my occupation, I
I have done what no other man has done in this mining.
I ^{have worked} on one mineral lot for seventeen years, & work in
the ground all that time, ^{blasting} occasionally winter & summer,
& never used an air pipe. I have been well paid for my
labours, ^{having toiled} late & early, no eight-hour ^{have answered} ~~one~~ me for a days
work. After the ~~land~~ sales, ^{of the} renewed land, ~~land~~ I moved to my
present residence, to watch my timber & dig in the winter.
I think I have made a valuable discovery. Unless
some unforeseen occurrence should take place, I expect
to end my days in Wisconsin. I am, like friend Brigham,
enjoying the blessings of celibacy & expect to do so. I have
never asked the State or ^{General} Government for any office, & never
asked the people but once, for ^{such a favor} any office, then my health
was delicate, just at the turn of life. I was afflicted
with that awful disease called the confluent small
pox, I was known to be an industrious, persevering
man, therefore I had but few friends. Every man that
offered, no difference whether dead-fall knifer, black head,
pick-pocket, or ^{a robber of the penitentiary} ~~had ever~~ cheated the State prison out
of three years of his services, ~~he~~ had friends. The Election
returns of 1844 will show the result; since that, I have
had many solicitations, from those that would like me
to consider them my friends, to come before the people;
but my answer has invariably been, that I have known
men to gain a competence by minding their own
business. I have seen some ups & downs in this country
within the last twenty seven years; I have never yet

Known what it was to want a friend in need.
Some of the turns in life have been for the better, some
I think of differently. I never was known to desert a
friend in poverty or affliction, nor crave any favors
of my enemies. With the blessings of Providence, I hope
to sustain the character of an Industrious, pious,
Candidate for heaven, and I hope to be able to dig
my own potatoes, & hoe my own cabbage, as I also
- as have done, & ask no favors ^{beyond} ~~further than~~
Common Civility.

Yours Respectfully

Palo Alto, Grant Co., Aug. 31, 1855.

W. Davidson

~~Palo Alto Aug. 31st. 1855~~

~~Grant County, Wisconsin~~