

John Holly Knapp  
Menomonie, Wis  
1871

Transcribed by Robin Sweeny

January 1

The year opened with a mild & thawing day & not enough snow on the ground for sleigh-ing – To day I entered upon the duties of Supt. Of our S.School. Thank God we are all well.

January 2

Some colder

January 9

An eventful day for Menomonie. The first passenger trains on the West Wis R.R. came in to day. A special train with the Supt. Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Bromphy, English Engineer, Express agt., etc etc. came in the forenoon & the regular passenger train at 1.30 P.M.

January 11

Foggy weather Mild & thawing. What little sleighing we have had is about gone.

January 12

Rained all day – in the latter part of the day the rain froze causing the greatest sleet I have known here.

January 13

Snow fell last night to depth of 4 inches so that now we have excellent sleigh-ing.

January 14

Called on Father Tainter & Mr. McKahan both suffering from paralysis. Teacher of Sunday school held a meeting at Mrs. Church's house this evening.

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>

January 16<sup>th</sup>

Left Menomonie for Harvard Ill at 3.45 P.M. This is my first ride on a Rail Road running from Menomonie.

January 17<sup>th</sup>

Remained in Tomah at the Dodge House kept by Boyington until this morning. Took the 7.27 A.M. train for Watertown. The C & New R.R. train from the North not leaving on time. I had to wait until about 3 P.M. for said train. Arrived in Harvard & put up at the Railway eating house alias Agnes Hotel.

January 18

Rode out to see Dr. Charles George. He lives 3 miles north of Harvard. He said he could cure me & rode in town with me promising to call to morrow to see me at the Hotel.

January 19

The Dr came in & treated me magnetically by touching the nerves with his hands. Left Harvard for home at 8 oclk PM changed cars at Watertown about mid night.

January 20

Arrived at the Depot Menomonie at 1.30 P.M.

February 3

Attended Literary Association for first time since its organization one month ago. They elected me Prest for this month. Eliza Wilson & AJ Messenger Vice Prests

February 4

Mr. Tainters father died at 3 AM. This morning. To day & yesterday were warm thawy day & snows melting very fast.

Sunday February 5

Much colder to day. The largest funeral I have seen in Menom-onie was that of Mr. Tain-ter the Elder known as father Tainter. Rev. J.C. Sherwin preach-ed the funeral sermon.

February 9

This evening Lute A. Taylor of La Crosse lectured on Margaret Fuller Pasoli. About 100 persons attended Admittance 25¢ each. A first rate lecture.

February 10

Ther 16° below zero at sunrise

Sunday February 12

Warmer Ther 4° above at sunrise The most brilliant Aurora Borealis to night that I have seen in a long time. Some parts of the northern sky were very red.

Monday February 13

Cold again Ther° below zero at sunrise.

February 14

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Clear & beauti-ful morning Ther 10° below

February 18

The R.R. trains have been detained two days owing to the snow storm Thursday. Cuts this side of Eau Claire were filled with snow.

February 19

Sunday – Rev. Gill preached this morning & evening at Cong. Church

February 21

Mr. Stout arrived to day.

February 22

John H. Douglass came up to day having left Ft. M- on Monday morning.

March 1

I left Menomonie in company with Capt Wilson & James Stout for Madison Wis – stopped at Tomah for the night.

March 2

Left Tomah this mor-ning & came to Mad-ison via Watertown Arrived in M- 7.30 P.M. Put up at the Vilas House. Was intro duced to Dr. Faros of Kenosha & I had a talk with him on the Dell improvement question.

March 3

Spent the day in M- talking over the Dell Improvement bill which is the exciting topic in the Wis Legis lature this winter. Talked with Senator Mcgon.

Saturday March 4

Took R.R. train to Harvard at 7.45 A.M. Distance 75 miles. Saw Dr. George & was treated magnetically by him.

March 5

Heard the advent preacher of Harvard III - viz Rev. Reed preach in Agnes Hall. Dr. George came in & gave me a thorough magnetic treatment. Went with the younger Ayer – Ed C. Ayer to his house to see his library.

March 6

Caught cold yesterday P.M. & am feeling badly to day. Took cars at 1 oclk PM for Madison arrived about 4.30 P.M. Had to talk with Senator Pettit in the car about Dell improvement. Was sick when I got to Madison & went to bed soon afterwards

March 7

Tuesday – Better to day. Visited the Legislature Halls & talked with several members. Left Madison at 3.40 P.M. for Portage. The track was poor & washed by rain & we did not arrive till 9 P.M.

March 8

Left Portage 2.25 A.M for Tomah – some delay by broken rail & truck off the track. Got to Tomah 6.25 A.M. Met Dr. George there – We left for Menomonie & arrived at home before 2 oclk P.M. – all well.

March 13

Rained & stormed all the afternoon.

March 14

Snow several inches deep on the ground. It fell yesterday & last night.

March 15

Dr. George started home

March 19

Wednesday Snow fell last night – surveyed to day in company with Capt. Tom Parker trying to find the corner of Sec 26 just north of my stable 100/or 200 yards

March 28

SW Hunt & wife A.J. Messenger Frank McLean John Kelly & I went over to Eau Claire on the 3.45 P.M. train to attend the indignation mee-ting held there by the people of the Chippewa Valley because of the Governor (Fairchild) vetoing the Dell improvement bill.

March 29

This is my birth day. I am 46 years old to day and feel grateful to God for his mercies & for sparing my life to this time – Took the train at noon for home.

April 3

Ordered an 800 lb bell for Cong Church of G.A. & GR Mcneely West Troy N.Y.

April 4

Tuesday – Town Election I was nominated on Saturday night for Chair man of the Board of Supervisors & to day elected on the Republican ticket by 78 majority. Capt Wilson was the oppo swing candidate.

April 5

Donation party held at Rev. J.C. Sherwins for benefit of Rev. O.A. Stain was well atten-ded & receipts \$154.

April 7

Wrote to J.S. Sherman to ship the apple grafts immediately by R.R. Warm weather Ther 74°

April 8

Wind blew a gale all day – The highest winds I have known here.

April 9

Cold & windy

April 10

Snowed – cold – windy Ther 24° this morning.

April 11

Snowed last night & this forenoon. We have about 5 in. of snow now. New quads are coming in & I have been helping to mark them.

April 12

Warm & clear sunshine.

April 19

Hired Robert Halbhouse at 1.50 per day & board himself. Rainy

April 26

This pm I took the train at 3.45 PM for Tomah in Company with Mr. Shoney, Dr. Pease Esquire or Superior Conductor WL Mead. We all go down then to shoot pigeons there being a nesting place in the vicinity.

April 27

Capt Dodger took us out 7 or 8 miles S.W. from Tomah where we found the pigeons quite abundant. We remain-ed there 5 to 6 hours & notwithstanding the rain fell part of the time 5 of us shot 266 pigeons. I bagged 65. The roads are horrible & we broke both single ? coming in to Tomah which delayed us.

April 28

Left Tomah for Menom onie at 8 A.M. arrived at 2 P.M. Found all well at home. It rained some to day which makes 3 days of bad weather in succession. It is a cold backward spring.

April 29

Cold rain backward spring. My fine black mare "Buss" Took sick with some thing like Colic this morning & though we did everything we could for her she died in the evening.

April 30

Notwithstanding the weather was slightly cold & thawing to day the church & S.S. were well attended.

May 1

Opens with bright sunlight which is very grateful after so much cloudy & rainy weather as we have had.

May 2

Rainy again – cold & windy

May 3

Rained – cold – a very backward spring with bad roads & very disagreeable weather. Sent 15\$ Draft to J.C. Garrigues & Co. – Philadelphia for Map of Palestine for the Union Sunday School.

May 4

Wrote to J.S. Sherman and sent him Draft for \$150- Wrote Albert & Horace Knapp. Sent Horace as a present a Draft for \$50

May 5

Went to Dunnville for Sis Mary R- but she did not arrive. Rev. J.C. Sherwin went down with me Johnny also – Day was pleasant. I shot 16 pigeons after dinner.

May 6

Went out on the bluff back of Dunnville & shot 7 pigeons this morning. Returned to Menomonee to dinner. The pointer dog “Doc” was sent up from Ft Madison to me & arrived last night on the “Pete”. He is a small white dog with brown ears & specked head & a brown spot 3 in long on & near the root of the tail.

Friday May 12

Went to Dunnville again to meet Mr. Rinehart & John Van Reed. Willie went with me. We went down into the bottoms about 6 P.M. & then I shot 18 pigeons. Weather warm. 2 men commenced building pig pen.

May 13

As our friends did not arrive I went out this afternoon & shot 50 pigeons – Warm work – very tired when night came. 2 carpenters worked Saturday on pig pen.

Sunday May 14

Our friends came last night & we drove home to Menomonie this morning.

May 16

Tuesday, Drove up to my wild farm alias Hunters Retreat & took with me cousin Theodore Seely & John Van Reed son of Jacob Van Reed. Mr. Sherwin & Mr. Edwards also went up there in Mr. Sherwin's buggy.

May 17

Two men & two yoke of oxen came down from Washburn farm & broke a small piece of ground for me to day.

May 18

Planted potatoes & some garden seeds at my hunting shanty on N.E. Corner of the N.E. ¼ of S.E. ¼ of Sec. 12 T.30 R 13

May 19

Came home from Hunters Retreat – Left there at 10 A.M. & arrived home at 3 ¼ P.M.

May 20

Wrote to Henry & sent him Draft for \$50

Sunday, May 28

Superintendent Sabbath School as usual – 112 in attendance.

May 29

Took mother Theodore Seely & John Van Reed to Dunnville. Mother started for Ft. Madison & the two young men for St. Paul.

May 30

I returned from Dunnville to day at 10.10 A.M. The “Pete” did not get in until about 9 ½ A.M. Weather hot & dry.

June 5

Dr. George & I went up to “Hunters Retreat” to day – It has been an exceedingly hot day. Flies & mosquitoes very bad.

June 6

Sent the team home with George Paul the driver. I went out to look up some land lines & Doctor went trout fishing – Weather much cooler to day. Sowed ¼ lb Ruta bagee seed about the house on about an acre of plowed ground.

June 8

I went trout fishing this afternoon on the north fork of Otter Creek half a mile above my shanty. I caught a basket full of trout 66 in all & several weighed over ½ lbs each. The Dr. caught 30 when his rod broke & he had to stop.

June 9

Dr. George & I returned from my shanty on Otter Creek – We came down in about 5 ¼ hours – I shot 14 pigeons on the way home. We caught in all about 260 trout this trip.

June 11

Weather pleasant & cool & has been cool for nearly a week – Ther 57° this morning.

June 12 Monday

Wrote to Henry & to JH Douglass also to OA Stainer & enclosed the latter a Draft on N.York for \$100. Paid Dr. George \$50 for treatment.

June 15

A Sunday school excursion numbering 300 excursionists came up from Blk river Falls to day – We had the various S.School of Menomonie out. Teams brought the Blk R.Falls people to the grove near the Methodist church where we had a picnic – speeches & music by two bands

June 16

Left home for Chicago at 3.45 P.M. – Stopped at Tomah for the night.

June 17

Left Tomah at 8 oclk for Watertown & Harvard. Reached Harvard at 4.36 P.M. & rode out to Dr. George's house with a man by the name of Labroke.

June 18

Remained at Dr. George's to day.

June 19

Went into Chicago on the morning train of the C & NW R.R.

June 20

Buying goods to day.

June 23

Completed goods buying to day. Weather very warm. This evening a very heavy rain & Thunder storm broke over Chicago deluging the streets with water & doing much damage. Had a hot afternoon.

June 24

Left Chicago for Ft. Madison at 10.45 A.M. arrived in Ft. M- at 8.10 PM fare \$8.10. Found friends all well.

Sunday, June 25.

Went to Pres ch this morning & heard Rev. Noble preach also went to the S. School before church. In the evening heard Rev. Adams preach in the Baptist Ch.

June 26

Very hot & 98° in the shade – Rode out with John D- & family to Jonas in the eve g & around the town of Ft. M- which I find much improved.

June 27

Took dinner with Mr. Gibbs.

June 28

John H. Douglass & I left Ft. Madison for St. Louis at 5.13 A.M. via Burling ton to Monmouth Ill ? we took the Rockford Rock Island & St. Louis R.R. at 9.48 A.M.

June 29

Went up to our Lumber Yard in Brenson to the new waterworks & reservoir. In the afternoon rode out to Shaws garden & to the Fair grounds.

June 30

John & I called on the Doctress Madam New 908 Pine St – She makes a specialty of curing old sores, cancer scrofula etc & says she can cure the sore on my nose in 3 weeks & if I will take the medicine then continu-ously for 8 mos or 1 year and she will guarantee it will never return. Price for cure 150\$ “No cure no pay”

July 1, 2005

I called on Madam New & agreed if she would go to Menomonie & doctor me there I would pay her ex penses & at the end of 3 weeks if the sore was healed I would pay her \$200 & at the end of one year if it still remained healed 200\$ more.

July 2

Last eveg 4 oclck PM we started from St. Louis on the steamer Andy Johnsen & to day heavy rain fell & also during the latter part of last night –We arrived in Keokuk about 8 ½ P.M.

July 3

Took the 4.10 A.M. train for Ft. Madison – arrived at 5.13 A.M. – John George & Archie Douglass & I went over to William's at 9 o'clock & remained till after dinner.

July 4

Spent the greater part of the day on the fair grounds where the old settler meeting was held & where we had some addresses toasts etc. About 5000 people were on the grounds.

July 5

This evening started for home via Chicago

July 6

Spent the day in Chicago. Bought Gas fixtures for my house of Misses Bagot & Almy.

July 7

Left Chicago about 10 A.M. for home via Milwaukee. Arrived at Tomah in the evening.

July 8

Left Tomah at 8 A.M. for Menomonie. Arrived home at 2.40 P.M. & found all well.

July 15, 2005

Henry Van Reed Esq. & wife with their children George & Annie Van Reed arrived to day.

July 22

Saturday. Took Henry V.R. & Geo & Henry Knapp to the Moore Farm.

Tuesday, July 25

Bro Henry Van Reed & family started for St. Paul via Dunnville & Reads Ldg. Vallie & Effie went with us to Dunnville.

July 29.

Mr. Sheehan commenced work at putting Gas Machine in for the Cong. Church.

July 30

Sunday – Warm & pleasant Superintended for S School as usual.

Monday, July 31

Mr. Sheehan & John Burt & Tom McKinney worked at Cong. Ch putting in Gas Machine. Chris Conrad & Ives Gillasky stone masons worked all day at my house building foundation to wood house.

August 1

Conrad & Gillasky worked today in getting stone weight for my house & cutting some ready to be used as weight for Gas Machine pump. Burt & Sheehan came over about 4 P.M. & put Gas Machine in Vault.

August 2

Sheehan & Desire Girard worked in my house tearing up floors etc getting ready to lay gas pipe.

August 7

The carpenters finished putting down the floor in the house where it has been torn up to put in the gas pipes.

August 8

Tuesday – The Gas fitters finished piping our house & will commence to lay the pipes tomorrow from the Vault where the gasometer is to the house. The main pipes are about 5. ft. under ground & covered with saw dust.

August 9

Wednesday – Vallie went to Dunnville with Eliza Wilson – John H. Douglass with Archie came up today.

August 11

Finished digging trenches to lay the gas pipes in up to the stable. Laid  $\frac{3}{4}$  pipe from wash house to stable & also am putting in a tin speaking ? in some trench. The gas pipe is about 2 ft under ground.

August 22

Went out 4 miles on Gilbert Creek with Rev. Chapin of LaCrosse & Forest Merriam of Ripon & Rev. S. Reynolds of Milwaukee.

August 23

Mr. Sheehan & J. Burt finished the plumbing so far as could be done yesterday – Today they worked  $\frac{1}{4}$  day putting on some burners etc.

August 28

Mr. Sheehan finished plumbing to day.

Tuesday, August 29

This day at 7 ½ PM Mr Beck & Vallie Mrs Rine hart & John Lyman left for Ft Madison via River – Henry took them to Durand. Madam New left by R.R. for St. Louis. I drove to Cedar Falls. Cold raw windy & showery

August 30

Was sick to day with bilious colic.

September 1

Was able to ride up the road this morning with Mr. Stout & Henry.

September 2

Very warm again to day.

September 27

Mr. Scott commenced about 9 oclk this forenoon to paint for me on fence, Range etc. etc. Jon Kreiser had gray team to haul lumber & lime to his home this forenoon. Nose pained considerably & is open yet in 6 places.

October 3

Vallie, Effie & I started in company with Rev. J.C. Sherwin to Fond du Lac to attend the General convention of the Congregational Churches in Wis. Ida Sherwin & John Sherwin were also in company with John was on the way to Ripen College & Ida is going to Chicago with us.

October 4

We arrived in Fond du Lac 7.10 P.M. – Put up at the “Patty House”

October 5

Attended the convention to day & the most inter-esting Prayer meeting was held the first hour of the Assembling of the members of the convention this morning that I ever attended. Henry came over from Ripen to see – Changed quarters going to home of J.K. Hamilton by invitation.

October 6

Remained in Fond du Lac to day – Heavy damage is reported by fires in the Green Bay District Oconto County & c. There has been no rain of importance for 3 months.

October 7

We left Fond du Lac at 10.20 A.M. for Chicago. On the way we were de-tained 1 ½ hours by fire along the R.R. track near Jefferson. Arrived in Chicago about 8 ½ P.M. Put up at the Sherman House.

October 8

John Douglass & Mr. Mason Ida Sherwin & I went to Trinity Church this forenoon & heard a short but very good sermon by Rev. Sullivan. Dry warm & windy day. About 9 ½ P.M. a fire commenced in the South West part of the city.

October 9

I did not retire last night but felt concerned about the fire which increased so that about 1 ½ oclk A.M. we fled from the Sherman House & soon after it was in flames. Chicago was burning & the most terrible conflagration that had ever been known in any city in the world. We left the burning city at 9.45 & went to Milwaukee. Left Milwaukee about 9 P.M. for home. All of us i.e. Vallie Effie & Ida all tired and worn out with last nights experience & terror

October 10

Arrived at home at 2 ½ PM & found all well.

October 11

Thank God for rich blessings – A comfortable house & health & freedom from fires that destroy & have been destroying many lives & much property in Peshtigo & other places in N.E. part of our state as well as in Chicago.

October 17

Rev. JC Sherwin Burn-ham Tainter & I went up north of Moore farm to hunt geese & c. We camped near a small lake N.N.E. of the farm about 4 miles.

October 18

Moved camp about ½ mile farther East in a pine grove near a swamp – Watched for geese in the evening but none came in the pond.

October 19

This morning Mr. Sherwin killed a deer – We took quite a tour around the country & then back to camp. Watched the pond for geese again - none came but one.

October 20

Came home this forenoon.

October 21 Saturday

October 24

Tuesday. The topic of the day has been the Wedding which took place this evening in the Baptist Ch. Col. LaPointe of Detroit to Jamie H. Wilson. Reception in the evg at Capt. Wilson's.

Wednesday October 25

Rev. J.C. Sherwin & I started to Hunters retreat to hunt deer. Near Butterfield I shot a goose flying. It was a good shot considering it was one with a rifle. It was dark when we reached the house.

October 26

We hunted all day saw nothing.

October 27

Friday – I saw noth ing in the way of game. Mr. S- saw 3 deer. The signs are all old. Most of the deer have left for other parts.

October 28

Went up to Washburn farm to day & back to Camp – saw 2 deer at a distance.

Sunday, October 29

Staid in camp all day.

October 30

Moved our quarters. Took up lodgings at Washburn farm. Hunted ? from there – no success.

Tuesday October 31

Sprague Mr. Sherwin & I went to Vance-burg & west & north of there & with no success to any of us. We are tired & discouraged. The deer were plenty here about 3 weeks ago but are not here now.

November 1

No better success to day so have concluded to go home to morrow.

November 2

Started for home about 10 A.M. – arrived home about 3 P.M. & glad to get home again.

Friday, November 3

Eddie was sick to day & to night with convulsions, fever & c. Effie is ailing some also & Vallie not very well.

November 6

Wrote letters this morning – attended meeting of the Town Board supervisors this forenoon & about 2 ½ P.M. went out on the Hudson Road as far as O'Flanagans. Bore northward from there ½ to ¾ of a mile & shot one squirrel & a large Buck. Home again by 6 P.M.

November 18

Put the roof on our new wood house & shed to day – Weather mild.

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November 19

Snowed all day – a moist snow & the first snow of any note this season – It fell about 6 inches deep. Margaret Kreiser was receiv-ed into the church to day & her three children bap-tized.

November 20

Mr. Sherwin & his son Wm & I went out hunting in the woods N.W. from home 4 to 5 miles. Saw one deer & Willie S- & I both shot at him & wounded him but did not get him. Ther 20° this morning & grew colder & windy this day

November 21

Colder this morning 16° above & cold all day. Sent Carriage cover back to Theo ? St. Louis by AMN Exp Co.

November 30

We have had steady cold weather since the cold first came about 20 inst Winter commenced fairly on 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.

December 4

Cold day. Ther 18° below 0.

Tuesday. December 5

Thermometer 34° below zero at sunrise.

Wednesday. December 6

A marked change in the weather – Ther 10° above 0 at sunrise & 42 ½ above in the after-noon. Quite a thaw. Barometer has fallen very much. Now 29.75 – yesterday it was 30.50.

December 7

Colder Ther 11° above at sunrise. I am confined to the house with poultices on my nose.

December 11

B Tainter gave me a young pointer about 2 months old. He takes the name of “Dash”.

December 12

Wrote to H.L. Stout still confined to the house.

December 13

Wrote to E.A. Gibbs. Flora & Dan kicked each other making frightful gashes. Had wounds sewed together & made sheaths for the two in our ? cellar.

December 18

Cold weather again.

December 19

Very cold all day.

December 20

Thermometer 20° 0 about 8 o'clock A.M. & steadily cold & clear all day – no wind.

December 25

We had a Merry Christ-mas. Our children had many presents & were happy all day.

December 31

The year closes with God's smiles upon us. Peace & plenty and Harmony also pre-vailing. December has been a cold month - unusu ally so.

Our coldest days the Ther. Indicated 35° below – another day 28° below zero. We thank God for his mercies and take courage for a new year.