

THE STEELE LETTERS

SEE REW TO SID HOOKER, 9 AUG 1951

Fort Yates, North Dakota  
Sunday, Jan'y, 12, 1889.

My Darling Mother:

I am "up a stump" for anything to write about tonight, but the habit of the day has sent me here to the desk and made me take up the pen, and the pen must do the rest. If I had been born a poet, I might write you an ode on the "Snow the snow, the beautiful snow." But I'm not. Besides I am not in a good humor with the snow any way. It looks fine and deep out on the ~~prairie~~ parade ground and its appearance there fooled me into having the cutter brought up for a drive this afternoon. It was about as poor a sleigh ride as you could imagine. We were alternately in drifts up to the horse's girth and upon bare ground. It was a pretty cold day to begin with and the horse soon changed color from bay to snowy white; but every time the runners passed over a bare, gravelly place, the screechy sound sent rigors up and down my vertebrae column whose temperature was 60 degrees below zero, I know.

The pleasures of sleigh-riding on the prairies of Dakota are a failure. In the first place there doesn't enough snow fall and in the second place as soon as any does fall the high winds proceed to sweep it all off the roads & pile it up in heaps in every available hollow & against every fence or other obstruction. Down in the river bottom, on the narrow roads among the willows is the only place where a comfortable ride can be had & you usually have to drag over a mile or so of dry sand and gravel before you reach the edge of the slope that leads from the prairie to the bottom & almost usually - at least I do upset or get buried in a drift somewhere along the slope before you reach the bottom.

The ladies here are all busy getting ready their and their husbands' costumes for the impending "Martha Washington Ball." You would naturally expect it to fall on the 22nd February. But this is not to celebrate G. Wash's birthday but that of Miss Maggie Wood.

2...Jan.12,1889.

And since she & George don't celebrate the same day, hers is given the preference, and the ball will come on the 23 of January. Stell has made a long, pocket-flapped, yellow-flowered vest, which she says ~~it~~ I'm to wear. She also informs me that the angles or the tails of some members of my evening coat are to be turned back & faced, & in addition, I am to have a lot of lace stuffed in to hide my shirt front & fill up the cuffs of my coat sleeves. Add to this a pair of black knickerbockers & black stockings & patent leather slippers with big buckles & see if you can imagine any thing more idiotically simple and idiotic than your sedate son Matthew will be. Aren't grown men & women fools, anyway? Children's brains never conceive a half of the simple things their elders do. Not that I would deprecate ~~knit~~ knee trousers, for I believe that are the only sensible leg-wear for a man & I hope to live long enough to see a return them in reality. But to masquerade in any sort of costume seems silly & childish to me, doesn't it to you? The McLaughlin german Tuesday evening was a nice pleasant party. We had two or three days of right warm weather during the week, the thermometer must have been considerably above freezing in the middle of the day.

Stell and I took a horseback ride on one of the days. But it has turned colder again. The mercury is probably 20 or 25 degrees below zero tonight, but the atmosphere is so still it doesn't seem nearly so cold as that. It is those north-west winds that make the marrow of your bones turn to ice. I am glad you are free from them. I don't see how some of these poor farmers winter it. True, their huts are built of thick slabs of sod, ~~but many of them have nothing~~ laid like bricks & are almost air tight, but many of them have nothing on earth to burn except straw & manure.

The Russians, over in their little colony about 40 miles from here, make a very good fuel by pressing manure & straw into bricks & drying it by during the hot weather. Every hut you see over there has a big stack

3..Jan.12, 1889.

of it, the winter's supply, close without the door. But they are a very thrifty lot & hailing from a cold country know how to make the best of it, whereas the poor Americans that have drifted out here & taken up a claim with the vain hope of getting rich, have to pay a cold penalty for their rashness. Poor things, I feel very sorry for them & thank God, none of my poor friends & relatives have ventured this way.

Good night - Ever devotedly

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, D. T.  
Monday, Jan'y 21, 1889

My Darling Mother:-

Last Sunday one interruption after another keep - kept - me from writing you my usual letter & so the whole week slipped thro' my hands. And again yesterday the same thing happened, but I am determined another week - nor another day shall go by without a letter to you - 'cepti'n this splotchy ink and decrepit pen fail me entirely.

This pen has grown old in the service and pleads to be retired but I must scratch along with it to the end of this chapter. It has a constitutional & insurmountable aversion to crossing t's & dotting i's, which will account for the fact of so many of the t's & i's of this letter being without ~~the~~ their finishing touches. I have gone thro' the proper motion of finishing each of them off, but my effort in most cases has resulted in signal failure & my best successes are but poor imitations of --'s and .i's. Well, Mother, Stella had your long wished for letter a few days ago & we were both glad to have a word from you at last. I won't compromise on it tho--I must have one too, for you didn't tell as much in your letter to Stell as I want to know. I was sorry to hear you are without a servant and I hope by this time you have secured one. We are fortunate in having a very good girl this winter & I hope may keep her for a long time. Southern servants are such utterly good-for-nothing, filthy lazy things any way, I'd almost rather not have one any way. This girl of ours does the cooking & washing, wai ts on the table, attends the front door & cleans the house--all but the parlor- & Stáll has lots of time for her beaux & other pleasures. Her kitchen & everything in it is as clean & white all the time as anybody's parlor need be & when I think of the filthy nasty way those vile niggers always keep their kitchens & I wonder how on earth you all stand them, and think of the lazy wenches calling themselves cooks, & doing nothing but cooking a meagre meal or two each day & perhaps emptying the slops in the bedrooms!

2--Jany 21,

Stella attends to her parlor herself & never lets Dora go in there except to wape up the floor around the rugs once a week.

But why this dissertation on servants? Perhaps it is because I haven't anything better to write about. S'pose I try the weather.

Well, the weather has been a little more aggressive the last week, still hasn't manifested any serious hostility yet. It sent us a baby blizzard as a sort of advance-guard one day last week & knocked the mercury down to -18 degrees one night, but we haven't suffered any yet. It is pleasant today with no sign of anything worse just yet. Will now say good by with much love from us all -

Ever your devoted son

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, D.T.  
Sunday, Feby 3, 1889.

My Darling Mother:-

It is high time for bed but it takes Stell about four times - yes, ten times - as long to get ready for bed as it does me, so I cal'c'late to get a short letter written and still be in bed before she gets there. Stell can dress in the morning in about one fourth the time it takes for me, but then she never has to shave & that takes most of my time. In getting ready for bed tho' she is almost as slow as you are.-- We all in this house--& I guess in 'most every other house on the post--spent this Holy Sabbath afternoon getting back some of our lost sleep for we have lost a good deal of that luxury within the last week. Monday night, Mrs. McLaughlin, wife of the Indian agent, gave a very handsome German which kept us all up till three o'clock. Friday night, Mr. Douglass, the Post Trader, gave a stag party which kept the "men persons" of us up till after two & last night Dr. Spencer, the Post Surgeon, gave a hop that crowded Sunday morning very closely. And to add to the fatigue for me, I fought a battle at Kriegsspiel yesterday from 11 a.m. till after 5 p.m. No work, no study, nothing I have ever done ~~works~~ works me as it does to play a game of Kriegsspiel & nothing is so intensely interesting or exciting I have ever done. I had a letter from Brother last night in which he again said how anxious he was to have you breakup house-keeping & go & live with him & Lovie, & I hope you will at last conclude to do so. We are still having an exceedingly mild winter - no blizzard & no cold to speak of. The last few days have been like spring & the snow has nearly all melted & gone. There isn't a bit on the house-tops & scarcely a particle in the roads. We have just had our buggy newly painted & Stella & I went out driving today in it.

Mr. Folsom sent his cutter up to us & it is now at Bismarck waiting a chance to be brought down but from the appearance of the weather I do not think we will have any use for it.

2--Feby 3, 1889

I also had a letter from Tracy a few days ago. It was written on M. & C. Ry paper, but he did not say what he is employed at, nor did he say what John Newman is going. Is Tracy in the M & C office now? But why do I ask you! You never write to me any more. Interrogation marks are entirely out of place among the punctuation marks in my letters to you nowadays-- unless I use them simply to point a figure of speech. Stell has bathed & glycerined her face & braided her hair & is now prowling around the toom in her robe-de-nuit so I guess it is about time for me to cease firing & make myself ready for bed.

I will enclose a P.O.M.O. in the drawn (sic) in the usual way. With much love from us both goodnight -

Your devoted son

Matt.

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, D.T.  
Monday, Feby 24, 1889.

My Darling Mother:-

It has been three weeks, I believe, since I last wrote you - a longer time I think than ever elapsed before between my letters to you, when I have been within reach of a post office. But I am, as usual, not without good excurses. Tuesday before last Stella robbed me of all I had to tell you by writing to you herself and last Sunday I was laid up or rather set up - with severe sore eyes & had to spend that and several other days playing a sort of blind man's buff with my eyes bandaged up. The soreness of my eyes was partially due to cold, for we all--Mrs.Folsom, Stella & myself-- have suffered with colds and sort throat during the past ten days, but I fancy the bad effects of the cold upon my eyes was greatly augmented by the bright glare from the snow. We are at last have (sic) a little -- a very little -- of Dakota weather. We had a fine snow storm a little over a week ago & within the past week the thermometer has fallen several times as low as 26 degrees below zero. But the sun is usually so bright & everything so dry that you would never imagine, without looking at the thermometer, that it was nearly so cold. I guess the mercury is three or four degrees below zero at this moment, but the sun is so brilliant and the atmosphere so clear it is hard to believe it to be so cold. Barring the brightness of the sun tho', everything looks very wintry outside. I am officer of the guard and looking up from my paper thro' the window of this room, I see icicles four feet long hanging from the eaves of the barracks around the parade ground. The snow has been shoveled by the prisoners from the different walks and forms long lines of little fortifications chin-high, intersecting in angles of all degrees. In the distance the hills rising from the valley of the river, on the opposite side, are great white banks of snow. Just a glimpse of the river itself is visible, which, of course, is solid ice. Everyone I see passing has on fur caps and gloves, but only an occasional buffalo coat is



2---Feb.24,1889.

seen. Mrs. Folsom saved my purse, or my pride, by giving me a handsome sealskin cap Christmas. ~~My~~ Mr.Folsom sent Stella two or three weeks ago a cutter & yesterday we took our first ride. Owing to my sore eyes & our colds, & my duties and other preventives, yesterday was the first time we had gotten a chance to try it, & I distinguished myself by upsetting us in a snow drift. As I managed to hang on to the reins and nothing got broken, Stell & I both thought the upsetting the best part of the drive. I had a letter some days ago from Kate - the first I have had from her since I came to Dakota, but Stella had one from her a week or so before. I would like to hear from you & learn something about how you & Father Roberton (?) getting on. (May be Father Robert are getting on..RPJ). I think ~~My~~ you ought Mother to send me a postal or a line of some sort in acknowledgement of the letters which contain my P.O.M.O's to you, for I never know whether you have received them or no. I guess tho you have concluded to drop me from among your correspondents - well all right. I'll continue to send my letters. I hope you are still having a mild pleasant winter, and have kept off your usual winter cough.

With love to you all & especially a great deal for your dear self

Ever your devoted son,

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, D.T.  
Monday, March 4, 1889.

My Darling Mother:-

I am celebrating Harrison's inauguration by serving my country here at the guard house - like the rest of the prisoners & bed bugs. This is always a good quiet place for writing letters tho & I usually take advantage of my guard day for that purpose.

Your most welcome letter came some days ago & it had been so long since I had received a letter from you, it was like some sweet, long buried, but still remembered voice from the grave. I began to think you were never going to write me again. I wish you would give me a little more of your time & ~~and~~ that fool man & his baby across the way a little less - That is his first baby, isn't it? But I know it is, for why, otherwise would be such a dam fool about it.

After our little touch of winter last week we have plunged right into the midst of spring. Yesterday & today have been as lovely as a spring day in Alabama. All the snow nearly is gone & the river is fast breaking up--I mean the ice on the river of course. Mrs. Folsam is still with us, but I guess will leave us this week. I fear we would not have kept her this long but for the difficulty of getting to the railroad station.

You asked about your cardplate--I have got it put away somewhere & would have sent it on & had you some cards engraved long ago, but that I forgot it. I will look it up very soon & attend to it. I am sorry you did not succeed in escaping your cough. I had hoped you would get through the winter without it. I hope you have broken it by this time. Stell & I are about over our colds. I must bid you a hasty goodnight now & go out to inspect my sentinels.

Ever your loving son,

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, D.T.  
Sunday, March 17, 1889

My Darling Mother:-

It has been nearly two weeks since I wrote you last, but since nothing has happened in the meantime for me to tell you about you haven't lost anything by my silence.

Within those two weeks we have had, within certain limits of heat and cold, all sorts of weather. If I remember rightly, when I last wrote you the weather was like a southern spring & the river was breaking up. Since then we have had some more snow and winter & the ice on the river has become solid again. But the last three days, including today, spring has been with us again. Today has been so lovely that Stella & I were tempted to take a buggy-drive, from which we have just returned. Mrs. Folsom left us a week ago yesterday & Stell & I have missed her very much. She is a sweet lovely woman & everyone on the post became very fond of her & did every thing ~~they~~ possible to make her enjoy her visit with us. The only event of the past week at the post was some tableaux we had at the post hall Thursday evening. It seems the widow of a former officer of the 12th infantry is in destitute circumstances & the officers & ladies of that regiment stationed here got up these tableaux in order to raise a small fund to help her. Stella escaped the tableaux, but I wasn't so lucky. I had to pose as the "Country Lover," & as the victim in the tableaux "Condemned to die." They cleared \$40.00, but they wish to raise the sum to \$100.00 & to that end we will have a little play in a few weeks. In this Stell & I are both cast for a part. The disagreeable event of the week is the arrest of Dr. Spencer. Dr. Spencer is our post surgeon. He is a brilliant & very fine looking man; very genial & agreeable, but like so many other men endowed with like gifts he will drink whiskey. His wife is a handsome Nashville lady. She has not been with him since I have been here and, they say, she left him last spring & went home on account of his drinking. They also say, however, that she is neither sympathetic nor restraining when she is with him. At any rate the doctor

2---March 17, 1889

has been in arrest for the last week & charges have gone forward against him for "drunkenness on duty," upon which he will no doubt be tried by C.M. & sentenced to be dismissed, and as Harrison is not so tolerant of such things, as Cleveland has been, I have no doubt the "orders of the President" will be that the "sentence is approved & will be duly executed."

I feel very sorry for Spencer, because I like him, but he ought not to get drink. Any man can quit drinking if he wants to. The trouble is they are usually too mean & selfish to want to. They prefer to drag their wives & families into poverty & degradation for the sake of satisfying their vile appetites for liquor.

I must now say good-by. Stella joins me in love.

Ever your devoted son,

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, Dakota  
Sunday, April 7, 1889

My Darling Mother:

I am down to bed rock on the writing paper question, but since I consider the paper the thing of least importance about a letter, I won't let the want of the regulation sort of better paper prevent me from writing to you tonight. If I were not determined not to let another week begin without sending you a letter tho, I might let the lateness of the hour keep me from writing tonight, But it just seems to me I can not write on any day except Sunday, so sure as I let that day cease without accomplishing my letter to you, the whole week slips by. Thus went the week which has just closed. I ought to have written today, but all day I had my nose between the leaves of the Virginians, expecting to have a quiet evening, any portion of which I might devote to you, but Stella wanted to go down to the Brooks & the Brooks would make tea & so the whole evening slipped by & now it is after 10 o'clock.

I enclose you a programme of the play we had Friday evening. (not found). The lookers-on all say it was the best amateur play they ever saw & I believe that say Stella & I carried off the laurels of the evening.

Stell did play her part splendidly & looked beautiful. They all wonder how I who pretend never to have been drunk & not even to know the taste of whiskey, could play the part of the sot so truly. My God! If they but knew the school of drunkenness at which I was educated from the time I opened my eyes into this life, they would not wonder to see one act well the part of a drunkard! If there is anything that I do know in all its symptoms and stages it is drunkenness.

Last Tuesday was the worst day I ever experienced in my life. The wind blew almost with the strength of a cyclone from reveille to dark, & the clouds of sand and dust were so thick you could not possibly hold your eyes open out of doors & from behind the panes of glass within you could not see ten feet outside. Poor Stella! It nearly broke her

2--April 7, 1889

heart, for you never saw such a sight as this house was. For an hour or so she fought the dust and sand by struggling to keep it out at the cracks of the doors and windows with wet cloths, but she finally gave it up. It is no exaggeration to say that the sand on the window sills (inside) & the floor about the windows and doors was an inch deep & of course everything in the house had a proportionate covering of it.

The roofs on all except one of the barracks were blown off & several chimneys & many shingles were torn off. April has begun very discouragingly. Almost every day we have had a dust storm & Stella keeps cloths over all the cracks about the windows & endeavors to keep them wet all the time. They dry so rapidly tho' that I fear she doesn't succeed very well. There is nothing in all the meteorological phenomena that I so detest as dust storms. Thunder and lighting, hail, northern blizzards and even drought are preferable. But I fear Fort Yates is at the very center and source of dust storms.

I must hurry now for Stella has made out her wash-list and "fixed the bed," & actually finished her bathing and scraping for bed & is sitting here nursing the old cat and trying to keep her eyes open till I finish my letter. This all means that I must have been writing about three quarters of an hour for I am sure Stella can't get ready for bed on week nights in less than a half hour, and on Sunday nights, when she has to count the week's washing & look in forty different pockets for my handkerchiefs & growl at me the whole time for not knowing where they are, I am sure it takes at least a quarter longer. Well doesn't it take a woman a long time to get ready for bed! Stell can dress for breakfast in half the time I require, but when it comes to making her toilet at the other end of the day she is as slow as the wrath of God. I usually get in bed and begin to snore before she comes in to crowd me out of the warm place and plaster her cold feet on mine. But she's no worse than you -- & I guess all other women. (I don't know about any others as personal knowledge

3--April 7, 1889

as she & yourself are the only two ~~we~~ I ever slept with). I well remember how long it used to take you to get ready for bed. But poor girl, I can't keep her up any longer & she won't go to bed first (guess the sheets are too cold!) so I will hurry this to a hasty close. If there are any words left out please supply them; any ideas left out please take them for granted. I will leave this open and enclose a P.O.M.O.O. before sealing.

With a heartfull of love from us.

Ever your living son,

Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, Dakota,  
Sunday, April 14, 1889

My Darling Mother:

The ink has already dried in the heaping & I have dipped and re-dipped the pen in the bottle without succeeding in conjuring up an idea or a fact to continue my letter with. Fort Yates is a hard place for a person afflicted with the desire to write letters, for we not only haven't enough happenings to make a letter of, we haven't enough to form the bases for fabrications, should a person possess the genius and inclination for that sort of composition. Now-a-days we have nothing but sand storms. On Monday the wind blows from the northwest & brings all the dust and sand from miles in that direction and heaps it around our houses-- i.e., it heaps all on the outside that it does not succeed in driving thro' cracks about the door and windows to ~~bury~~ bury the furniture and bric-a-brac with on the inside. On Tuesday the same wind comes whistling back from the southeast and brings us a load from that side. May be it won't blow on Wednesday. It spends that day accumulating energy for a large blow from the northwest on Thursday. And so it goes. It doesn't remember the Sabbath day to rest either, but keeps it holy by blowing like holy smoke. So it has blown all day today but "T.G." it let up when the sun went down. Stella prowled around the house all day with a wet towel in her hand & a pan of water swiping (sic) the windows & making mud on the sills. It is impossible to keep the sand from coming in. It actually gets in between the putty and the glass. That sounds pretty "far west" doesn't it? But it is true. Despite the wind tho' we are having a very early spring. Our fires have already ~~been~~ been allowed to die out once or twice and the parade is beginning to turn green with new grass. Think of that for Dakota while they are having snow storms in Virginia! Why flies and mosquitos have actually begun to appear, and the first boat of the season is expected down tomorrow. It might have come down ten days ago tho' for the ice has been out that long.



2---April 14, 1889

We had a bold desertion last Monday night. The sentinel on post over G troop's stable skipped with two of the horses, and he got such a good start and was so smart in back-tracking his trail in some places and burning over it in others, that even with "Smell-the-Bear" & "Butcher," two of the best of the Sioux scouts to assist it was impossible to follow him & he made good his escape. Desertions are very common occurrences but such a daring one as that is very unusual. This fellow crossed the reservation & has gone west, possibly to Montana.

What has become of our illustrious cousin, David Shelby? I thought he would certainly be rewarded for his fidelity by the present administration and have watched carefully for his name, but so far I have failed to see it amongst those sent to the senate by the president. The biggest person at the White House now-a-days seems to be the McKee baby. When I used to "spoon" Miss Harrison at West Point, I little thought she would some day have a young one crying with the colic in the White House & making the president of the United States get up in his shirt tail to comfort it. Such, according to the papers, is the case at present. But I must fetch this letter to a close. Goodby - with love from us,

Matt.

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, Dakota,  
Sunday night, April 21, 1889

My Darling Mother:-

The Bakers, our next door neighbors, have just left and it is pretty nearly bed time, but I will not let this Easter Sunday end without writing you a short letter. This hasn't been the sort of Easter I used to have in Alabama. It hasn't been cold, but so blustery and dusty. The wind has been blowing steadily for two days but I hope it will go down tonight. Stell & I had a lovely little lunch for the Howards & Abbots today. I wish you could have sat down with us too for everything was so good. We had croquettes of brains & peas; sweet breads; bread & butter; olives & pickles; tea; lettuce with mayonnaise dressing & stuffed eggs; ice-cream seasoned with nuts (?); sponge cake & cocoanut macaroons; apples & oranges.

We had a dinner for the Bakers & Capt. Craigie & Gordon Wednesday & we have got to have one more for the Von Schraders & Maj. Brown & Barth, then Stell won't have to bother with any more dinners & lunches for some time to come. Everybody has been so nice about entertaining us since we have been here; that it has kept Stella pretty busy returning the obligations.

Stell & I have a cow now & I can not tell you what a luxury she is to us. ~~We~~ We don't own her.

The ranchmen about these frontier posts are very glad to let officers have their cows for the sake of having them well cared for. In fact she is no expense whatever to us. One of the Indian scouts on the post, who has nothing else to do except when troops go into the field is detailed to herd the officers' cows & there is all she wants to eat besides from the waste of hay & bran & grain about the stables.

Where is Tracy? Please send me his address if you know ~~about~~ it. I would like to write to him but don't know where to send my letter. I would like to go down as a spectator to Oklahoma tonight & be present

2--April 21, 1889

at the rush for homesteads in the next few days. I guess they will have very lively times down there. We marched right through that country last summer & met two or three lots of the "boomers." Some of them had regular little houses mounted on wheels arranged so that they could squat it down anywhere. It is a very pretty country, but I don't think it is by any means as fine as the papers say. Next month our target practice & other spring work begins.

This has been a long winter & I am glad to say I have not been idle all the time. I have read & studied a great deal & in a professional way think that I have improved myself a good deal. This summer we hope to be sent out for a month or two to march & maneuver & establish a camp for military exercises. In a year or so I hope the state troops will begin to take part with us in these summer exercises. Indeed I should like to see the day when every man in the United States is a trained soldier, just as they are in Germany. Had this been so there would not have been as much murder & bloodshed on either side in our own war. There would have been more butcher but fewer butcheries. But this must do for tonight. I am sleepy & Stella is waiting for me, so buenas noches!

Ever your loving son - Matt

THE STEELE LETTERS

Fort Yates, Dakota  
Sunday, April 23, 1889

My Darling Mother:-

Your sweet most welcome letter came safe to hand a few days ago & for fear I may forget to answer your queries which you charge me with doing always, I will read it over carefully & give an immediate answer to every sentence fixed (?) by an interrogation point. First: No I never met Team's wife, but I saw a photograph of her that Aunt Mani has. She is pretty. Stella & I never hear from Berenice. Stell wrote her a great while ago but she has never deigned to reply. I am sorry to hear poor little May is so delicate. I am afraid they will never bring her up in the swamps. I have not heard from Susie since I was married. Nor have I written to her for want of her address. If you succeed in getting her address be sure to send it to me for I am anxious to write to her. I hadn't heard either that Nancy was married. Whom did she marry and where does she live? Yes, I saw it in some paper a notice of Mr. Johnston's death. I don't remember the questions you "asked last summer" and I failed to answer. Repeat them & they shall receive immediate replies. You need not trouble to send me the B'ham papers, unless they have something you think I would be particularly interested in--something of such a local or private nature that the Herald correspondent would not notice. Everything in the way of general news I get out of the N.Y. Herald. It had several notices of the white and negro Republican conventions. The ~~N.Y.~~ Herald is a very fair, square unprejudiced paper & it has news from every corner of the globe. I get a great deal of pleasure from it. I didn't, however, see the speech of the ex-Union soldier about the monument, but I am glad you did. Before you die you will yet find, Mother, that there were some brave men on the Union side--a few good ones & even a gentleman or two. If you will go to Texas, you will find that no man in the state has worked harder for the Confederate Veterans home at Austin than General Stanley.

2---April 28, 1889

The 8th Cavalry band gave a concert for the benefit of the same a few weeks ago & raised \$75.00 which was duly transmitted to Texas. By the time all the old fossils, south and north, who never smelt powder on the battlefield but have done so much "Jeffersonian democracy" talk on the one side, & "bloody shirt" waving on the other since the war have been carted out to the nearest cemetery and securely weighted down by a large monument of stone, the better it will be for both south & north, especially south. I mean such men ' John Sherman & on a smaller scale poor old Wither's Clay. Fortunately, God has silenced his tongue, but I suppose he will have to paralyze his pen hand too, before he becomes perfectly harmless. And if poor Uncle Willis would spend a little of his time and money on current literature and events instead of devoting his whole time to the Huntsville Democrat and the sketch of Jefferson as found in the "New Cyclopedia Americana" edition of 1859, he will find his life brighter & be better prepared for the next. I began this letter two hours ago ' got just this far when in came Capt. Fechet to sit until just this moment & now it is high bed time. So I must say goodnight, with much love from Stella & me.

Ever your loving son

Matt.