

COPY

In Camp, 33 miles S.E. of
Fort Wallace, Aug. 3, 1871.

My dear Tom:

I have just received the thrice welcome letter from yourself and old Gassy. They have done me quantities of good and I needed it, - for, strange to say, my brawny form, my Herculean constitution succumbed a few days ago to this Kansas climate. If you want to know what heat is, read Miss Phelps' "Lady of Shalott," and multiply the heat of "South St. Boston" by ten. "Mary Jane" remarked that that was "hot as hell": what Mary Jane would have said of this is beyond imagination. Then picture to yourself my spiderlike form crawling painfully up and over cliffs of blue and yellow shale [see Dana's Geology for particulars], hammering, chiselling, picking away for five or six hours per day and you will see to what I finally yielded. I am all right now though. Joe Page is at the fort, sick. T. Peck with an escort took him in. Peck has just returned. I said "T. was it wise for Joe to go in." "Wise, damned providential." By the way, congratulate me on the fact that Joe and myself are the only two men who have not sworn on the trip as yet. Even the heat has not aroused me to that, altho' "conscientious scruples" [which you know form a large part of my character] have prevented my praying about the weather. Of all the fellows who profess to believe in Sunday Keasbey is the only one who keeps it. But I must try to give you a connected account of our trip. Please don't be bored.

Friday, July 21, 1871. We left the fort. The ominous day was made still more ominous by the fact that the party consists of just thirteen. We, with our five army wagons and escort of about a dozen men, made 14 miles that day. The only incident [or accident] of the journey consisted in DuBois' mule falling upon him and injuring his leg slightly. We got into camp about sunset and straightway, after dining, slept. Just before we left the fort I was talking to a Mrs. King who said apropos of some remark of mine "You're a Presbyterian, ain't you? That's true blue Presbyterian doctrine." You see how one's narrow denominational views will stick to one.

Saturday, July 22, 1871. We spent this day in hunting fossils. A number were found, but my misdirected zeal induced me to pass some hours in digging out of hard clay a buffalo femur which must have been nearly 20 yrs. old. Jack Quigley carried seven large stones two miles, in order to show them to Marsh. He thought they were fossil bones but Marsh didn't.

Sunday, July 23. We moved camp 3 miles farther east. Our guide gave us his views on Indians. "If them damned reptiles gits to heaven, I don't want to go. The whole outfit'll be saved." We hunted fossils with good success and everything went all right until about ten P.M. People say "it never rains in Kansas." When you have finished this letter, you can judge. Well, about 10 our first storm came. We were up, dressed, with our blankets and guns rolled up in the centre of the tent. It rained and it rained. Then without stopping raining, it began to blow. We held on to our tent-poles. Then without stopping raining and blowing, it began to thunder and lighten. Suddenly there was a tremendous flash and DuBois with [it has just commenced to blow and rain like whatever you can say. I must stop till tomorrow]. False alarm. As I was saying - DuBois with a "My God" reeled back into the centre of the tent while Fred presented the appearance of a brilliant firework, for sparks snapped off from him in all directions. Nobody was really hurt, and after an hour of anxiety, we got to sleep.

Monday, July 24, 1871. We hunted fossils and spent the day pleasantly enough until evening. Then there arose a storm which instantly blew over our tent and when we three, - Fred, DuB. and myself crouched on the canvas to keep our luggage and

guns dry, it changed into a terrific hail storm. For twenty minutes which seemed like twenty hours we crouched there with the hail beating pitilessly on our heads. It was a terrific storm. When we finally gave it up and, sore and sick, tried to reach another tent, we have to crawl backwards to do it. I never came nearer fainting. I just reached Ziegler's tent and fell over his luggage. He had his flask hung around his neck and gave me a deep draught of whisky, which dose, often repeated, carried me through.

Tuesday, July 25, we spent in drying our tent, baggage and guns. They formed an island in the centre of a miniature lake. One of the soldiers deserted, carrying off about 300 rifle cartridges and no rifle.

Wednesday, July 26 in searching for fossils I found and dug out a fossil liodon, - quite a fine specimen. I smoked on this day my fifth pipe. I trust that CHC. and you will not carry out yr. idea as George tells it, of not smoking. I find it very refreshing and think the good more than balances the evil.

Sunday, Aug. 6, 1871. I see that my letter will be an interminable one but since I have begun a journal-letter, I shall finish it. Read it at intervals of a week, if it pleases you so to do. Also, please remember that I am writing on leaves torn from my diary and that table and chair are unknown luxuries. However, to resume.

Wednesday, July 26, 1871. I exhumed another liodon. In the afternoon I went gunning for the first time in my life and managed to find a plover and a grouse asleep, - both of which birds I instantly slaughtered and returned to camp covered with glory and blood, for my grouse refused to die like a decent bird and flapped all over me for about 10 minutes. During the night we passed a pleasant hour holding up our tent agst. the rain and wind.

Thursday, July 27, 1871. We moved camp to Russell's Spring, 23 miles east of the fort. With rare judgment I rode my accursed mule - "Calamity" by name - into a marsh. She fell down. I fell off. When we emerged it was a pretty even thing on mud, but I won. Fred, Zieg and myself went in swimming and Zieg straightway fell into a hole, - the only one in the pool, - where the water was over his head. He cannot swim and said not a word but sank. Fred was in the water. I was on the bank. We both thought that he was "ducking" but as he rose and sank with clocklike regularity and with an expression of quaint solemnity on his face Fred finally pulled him out and only then did we know that he was really in danger. After he was out I painfully washed my clothes. My dear fellows never be a washerman. It is very hard work. It made it harder because after I had finally finished - as I thought - I was coming up hill and came upon a large rattlesnake, which was straightway slain. To do this I carefully dropped the clothes into liquid mud and had my work to do over again. That evening, much to Marsh's disgust we celebrated the close of our first week of camp life by a slight "jamboree" as our guide styles it.

Friday, July 28, 1871. Ed Lane, our guide, Zieg and myself started for the fort with a wagon-load of fossils and two soldiers. We reached it about half past eleven and when I had bathed, shaved (my beard is something frightful to see) and clothed myself in my "store clothes" I felt like a new man. We had fresh meat for dinner - we had had none so far on the trip - and we ate like refined wolves. We started back about seven. Sergeant Otto, Lane, Zieg, myself and a pack-mule formed the party. I got a very nice mule and left my old one - Calamity. The other three were well mounted and we pushed on rapidly. It was a lovely ride thru'

the moonlight with the prairie stretching mile after mile around us and not a man, horse or even tree in sight. About 12 miles out we were galloping down hill quite fast when my new mule stumbled and came heavily down on her knees and head. Like an arrow and without the slightest hesitation I rose from the saddle and went as straight over her head as any line that Loomis e'er dreamt of. I must have looked like a gigantic frog. The hill was quite steep and hard and as I was in midair I decided to catch myself if possible on my hands and so break my fall. Vain hope. With the utmost agility I landed on both wrists which cracked like pistols and I had just time to turn a somersault and throw up my feet in the mules face in order to keep her from carrying out her kind idea of galloping over me. I was very little hurt, however and we were soon on our way again.

Saturday, July 29, 1871, the heat was so terrific that the Yale Scientific Expedition did nothing but lie on its back - or backs - and swear or groan.

Sunday, July 30, 1871. We got up at some unearthly hour and moved camp about ten miles. In crossing a stream one of the four wagons tipped over. One wagon was filled with fossils. Joe Page, too sick to ride, was in another. Marsh and myself, about a mile off, saw the disaster. "Great God," says the Prof. "are those my fossils." I told him no and a few moments afterwards he calmly remarked "why, perhaps Page is hurt." Happily it was the forage wagon and the loss was soon repaired. We all went off hunting fossils and the camp was pitched 3 miles too far on a sand-bank which I will back agst. any other in the universe as a place suitable for the production of bugs, red ants and rattlesnakes. The latter fairly lulled us to sleep. The usual thunder-storm kept us up from one to three o'clock.

Monday, July 31, 1871. Our breakfast consisted of tomatoes, coffee, hard-tack. I don't eat tomatoes. We moved camp 3 miles back and after a fruitless hunt, I spent the rest of the day suffering from a severe headache. Varied the monotony of the trip by sitting up for an hour or two during the night to hold up the tent while it thundered and rained.

Tuesday, Aug. 1, 1871. My headache continued. Couldn't eat - so you see I must have been rather unwell. Rode out hunting. Saw jack-rabbit in distance. I couldn't get my mule to stand steadily until I put my gun just over her head. I fires, - the jack-rabbit went one way - [unhurt] the mule went the other. I had no hold on the reins, one foot was out of the stirrup, the gun - a borrowed one - must and should be preserved - and my mule could have given Dexter odds. To add to my perplexities the ground was full of gopher holes and I knew that if she stepped in one of those there would be a fossil Mason on the cliffs which lay about a mile in front. However Providence preserved me and the beast - the mule I mean - at last ran into a marsh and had to stop. I shan't fire over her head again. This little adventure over I started for camp and was riding at full gallop with both spurs playfully implanted in the beast's sides. She fell down. The spurs flew up and so did I. There was some nice sand ahead and as I described some curve or other I thought gladly that I was sure not to be hurt when Jack - my mule - arose like lightning and dexterously caught me on her head. With a roar and a shriek and a squeal she rushed into camp and I regret to say that a brutal soldiery received me with shrieks of laughter as we entered. However one of them has since remarked that DuB. rides "like a turkey on a hot shovel" and so I am comforted. My nickname, by the way, is Don Quixote - why, I am sure I cannot see. As you may imagine my head ached more and more and I felt quite unwell. In the evening Joe Page was sent into the fort into a wagon. Lieut. Whitten, Peck and one or two soldiers went in with him.

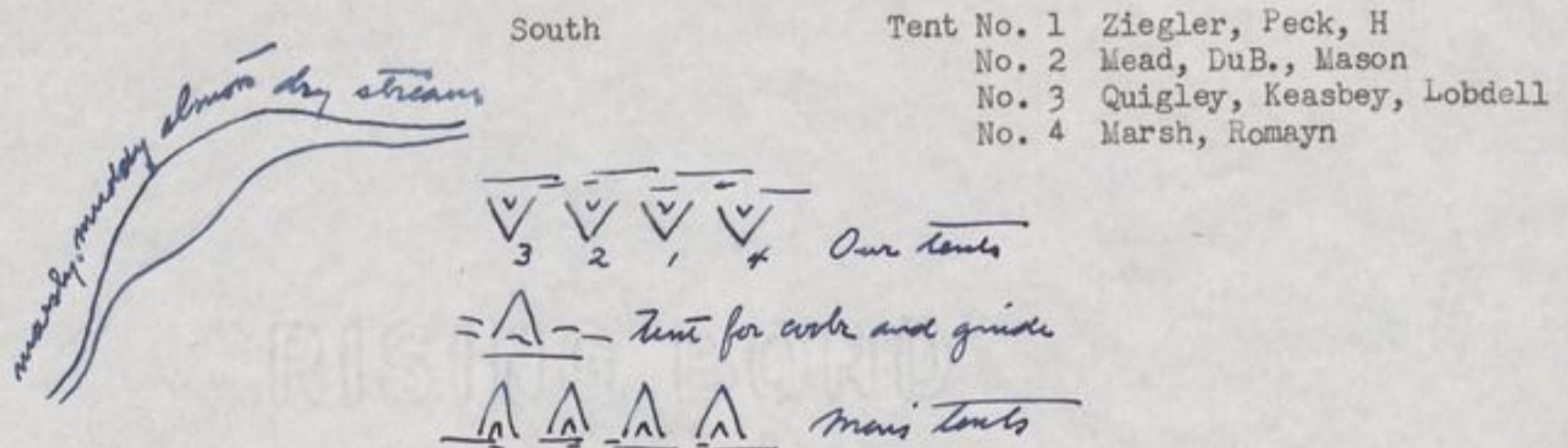
Wednesday, Aug. 2, 1871. I was quite sick. Camp was moved 7 miles on, I began

to sleep - when night came - in Zieg's tent, inasmuch as his two tent-mates, Page and Peck - were both away. Strange to say, a thunder-storm came up. We rolled up guns and blankets, put down a tent-fly for a bed and slept. We woke to find ourselves forming two islands in a gently-rippling pool of water. We waded over to tent No. 3, which Keasbey, Lobdell and Quigley occupy, and found them with Mead and DuBois seated on their luggage with two inches of water around it. Down we sat. We sang, we drank. Would have had a pretty good time but my head ached more and more. Finally I got a place in the Prof's tent to sleep and the other six fellows slept in our tent which was fortunately dry.

Thursday, Aug. 3, 1871. I was worse. To add to my general discomfort everything I had was soaked thro' and thro' and nicely covered with half-an-inch or so of clay. About 5 P.M. however I felt better. The wagon got back from the fort with Peck and Capt. Romain, who had relieved Lieut. Whitten. He is a much better officer and since he came matters have been better arranged. T. Peck gave me some cold chicken which did me quantities of good. Meat was what I needed. Then - to my joyous surprise - I got the letters from George and yourself. I have read and re-read them. I fairly thirsted to hear from and of the dear old fellows. I would say that I hold you all in my heart but it would be rather rough on you because according to a mutual friend of ours my brother Hen has more heart in his little finger than I have in my whole body. DuB. wishes to be remembered to George, yr. bro', yourself and any other friends of his. Romain bro't out intelligence that there were 300 Indians on the Beaver. The result was that the sentries did not sleep on their posts more than half the night and everything was serene except that the men got drunk and a severe windstorm kept us up nearly all night.

Friday, Aug. 4, 1871. We moved camp to a point on the Beaver 3 miles above its junction with the Smoky. The wagon brought out some fresh meat and we had some to-day for the first time since we left the fort. The Indians and the heat wave have driven all the game to the north and altho' we have seen plenty of antelope we have shot none.

Saturday, Aug. 5, 1871 we were called early and on the principle that the early bird catches the worm we caught a centipede under our blankets. Jack Quigley, Marsh and myself went off hunting fossils and game but had no luck either way. The train lost its way, and after a fruitless hunt and after 8 hrs. in the saddle we found the camp at the place where I am now writing, on Chalk Creek, about 50 miles S.E. of Fort Wallace. Since then we have been resting. I send you a little plan of our present camp.



The mules are fastened along the bank of the would be stream. Everyone takes care of his own animal. To-morrow we move to the north in search of fossils, game and water. We may possibly go to the north of the railroad and in any event will not reach fort Wallace again for over two weeks. Joe Page will meet us there. I

am in perfect health now, - ditto Fred and the rest of the party. The trip is doing me a world of good and if I could get part of my future out of my head I would be all right, - but the question "what are you going to do?" presses on me. I tell you in confidence of course, i.e. sub rosa - that financial reasons may oblige me to do something for myself as soon as I return, i.e. not oblige, but it would be far pleasanter and easier. My father will retire from all business very soon and I do not wish to be a drag on him. If you ever wade thro' this letter, remember me to all the fellows. Please write me and ask Gas to write me whenever you can. And so, dear boy, good-bye.

Yours,

/s/ Fred Mason

P.S. Where are Sam and Walt. I want to write to Sam. If he is in New Haven ask him to write to me. No signs of Indians. I forgot to say that we had a thunder-storm last night.

→ The Leon Hotel →

Tallahassee, Fla.

Dr. WM. H. HOWERTON,
PROPRIETOR.

→ Swannanoa Hotel →

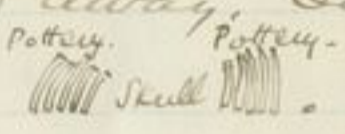
Asheville, N. C.

Dr. WM. H. HOWERTON,
PROPRIETOR.

1588

Tallahassee, Fla., 3 March, 1883.

My dear Sir:

I have sent you to-day by express, prepaid, a round box containing some part of an Indian skull, with bits of pottery, arrow-heads, &c. It occurred to me that these things might be of some ethnological interest. The body was found buried by the bank of a small creek, near St. Marks, Fla. The skull lay in a pottery jug or bowl, which was encased in four other similar jugs. These were all broken to bits and many of the pieces washed away, but those remaining were arranged like this: . The arrowheads, bit of iron, &c. were by the skull. If the things are of no value to the student, throw them away and pardon my supererogable zeal. You will oblige me by acknowledging the receipt of the box by a line addressed to me at 35 Wall St., N.Y. City.

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Bishop Mason

To Prof. T. C. March,
New Haven,
Conn.