

COPY

Iowa City, Nov. 17th, 1855

Respected Father:

I once more am privileged to write a few lines to you, my object in doing so is to inform you of my destitute conditions. I am at present needing some articles of clothing, a cap, a pair of gloves, a comfort and several other necessaries, which I am obliged to have. They can not be had in this part of the country without paying for. I have nothing to pay with. Write and let us know if you are coming up soon. I have been looking for you these many days with melting heart and brimful eyes. I like to stay here pretty well. I would like to stay here a great deal better but I have to saw wood occasionally and run small errands for aunt. You are aware of the fact that I never did like work as I never done much of that thing and consequently it goes very much against the grain to do a little work they watch against my playing with the boys a great deal, which you know is very congenial to my spirits.

Anne and the family are well. No more at present.

Your son,

George W. McCleary, Jr.

to: A McCleary

COPY

Iowa City, Dec. 2nd, 1855

Respected Father:

Once more I seat myself to give you the news that I have on hands and also to ask a few more favors at your hands. The festal days are drawing nigh, at which time we expect to have a grand celebration of the advent of the first train of cars into Iowa City. The track will be finished here about Christmas. The precise day of the celebration is not determined upon, but it will be one day between Christmas and New Year's Day.

I was at a party at Martin L. Morris' a few nights ago and danced like thunder. I had the pleasure of tripping the light fantastic with Miss S _____.

We have a fair here in the state house next Wednesday night. I do not expect to take a part in that. The favor that I require at your hands is to come up some time soon, at any rate a week before Christmas. Anne and I are needing some fine clothing, and me especially, as I have not clothing sufficiently respectable to appear at the festivities of the holiday. As I expect to attend the celebration with the other young folks, it becomes necessary for me to have the necessary clothing by the help of which I will be able to make my appearance in respectable society. If you can not possibly come up be so kind as to send up sufficient funds. I think about ten dollars will be sufficient for the purpose. That is for my purpose alone. Anne does not need so much as I, but she needs some and can not do without it. I appreciated the money you sent me that is one half of it to buy myself a pair of boots. The other half Anne received. I will pay strict attention to my studies if you will only accommodate me this once. I study in the state house and am getting along very well. Uncle George and John give me instruction occasionally.

Nothing more at present but still remain:

George W. McCleary, Jr.

Iowa City, Dec. 27, 1855

Dear Sir:

Your hopeful son, G. W., left here this morning afoot & alone for home. As the men say when advertizing their deserting wives "without just provocation." His school took a recess until the 4th of January 1856 - and as the young gentlemen had nothing to do, I requested him to saw & split about as much wood per day as I could do myself in an hour per day. This he declined doing. On my informing him that I would require him to do it, he left for home in disgust, telling the rest of the folk that he did not come up here to work & wouldn't do it. Now I supposed that instead of hurting him, to saw a little wood daily, it would be beneficial to his health and supposed he had been in the habit of working a little occasionally at home, especially when he had nothing else to do. On his leaving here he told some of them that he was not coming back again, at least not to my house, to which I have no objection as George is not quite as agreeable a boy as some I have seen. The fact is he has been so much in the habit of doing pretty much as he pleases that it is useless to attempt to control him. It can't be done. I tried to get along with him as smoothly as possible, but found him too self-willed to do anything with.

If he desires to attend school in this place, I can find him good boarding at a reasonable price and comfortable quarters. We will keep Ann with us as long as she chooses to stay for the fact is she is a good girl and of a very agreeable disposition amongst the rest of the children. George is entirely a different and keeps the whole brood (& there are several of them) in a constant uproar whenever he is about the house. I thought I would drop you a line and let you know the facts as you will probably think strange of his returning so unexpectedly. Besides he is in the habit of magnifying anything he relates. I do not know what story he might tell. Ann is uneasy about him, lest some accident should happen him on his way home & wants you to write to her & let her know of his safe arrival when he gets there. She is well satisfied, except that she wants the things.

Very respectfully.

Geo. W. McCleary

COPY

Iowa City, Jan. 18th, 1856

Respected Father:

I take the present opportunity of informing you that I am destitute of funds and would regard it as a special favor if you would send me up about 5 dollars and I will divide it equally between Anne and myself. Anne has spent all of the money which you gave her for clothing. I wish you also to send me a fine coat and vest as I am in great need of them.

I am still boarding at uncle Georges. We agree very well considering all things, etc. We received the letter that was mailed when I was down only yesterday. It was laying in the post office here about two weeks.

The cars are running lively and bring immense numbers of travel every day. Be sure and send that money.

Nothing more at present but remain, Your son,

George

COPY

Iowa City, Jan 24, 1856

Dear Sir:

Your letter is just received. In reply I have to say that George has been with us since his return, and not done any work that I am aware of that would be calculated to injure his constitution in the least particular. I have not asked him to do anything at all. All he has done since he came back he did voluntarily. He has done nothing in fact but some little errand for the family to town, and occasionally split a little wood after John Davis had sawed it up. The truth is John has sawed & split up nearly all the wood we have burned this winter, except a few cord I had sawed & split by an Irishman. We only keep one stove all the time & the cooking stove occasionally (3 times a day). Therefore, one boy could saw and split enough to do us, by working quite moderately, one half hour per day. But George does not like to do anything. I presume that you favor his ideas on this subject. Now it is all right for the boy going to school to have but little work to do. He should not be required to do anything to interfere with his studies. However, I didn't suppose $\frac{1}{2}$ hour a day would interfere. We all work more than that. I bring all my family up to work, nothing hard but moderate work for exercise and suppose you had the same idea and would not object to a little exercise occasionally. I therefore came to the conclusion that John & George could doctor up as much wood as we could burn, especially as I got at least half of it cut up by others. Altho he is a sickly weakly youth, I think a little work wouldn't hurt him.

Ever since his return he has been quite anxious to board out. I would have boarded him out but I was not able to find a decent boarding house that would take him for less than \$____ per week. As he is very desirous of boarding out and as you promised it when he was down, and he insists on it, I will find him a place to board. It is my opinion that it will be ruinous to his morals, honesty & every other virtue which constitute a good character, as he will have full sway among the worst boys in the world.

George says he wants his new clothes.

Geo. W. McCleary

COPY

Iowa City, Jan 25, 1856

Sir:

I forgot to inform you that Ann got your letter. She did not reply because she had nothing particular to say. She remembers that preacher Wilson you speak of and has not forgot about his staying at your house.

I find that the present term of the State University expires in about two weeks after this week-end. As the time was so short I concluded that it wasn't worth while to get boarding for George, and in fact he is at least a 100 per cent better boy than he was before his trip home. I hire my wood chopped & split. Consequently the young gents. have but little to do and are getting along swimmingly.

If I had George strictly under my own control, that is, if he was my son, I could make a good boy of him and a pretty tolerable smart boy, I think. But he had his own way so long he won't brook control. Now my advice to you would be to send him to a boarding school where he would board & lodge in the school house or college and be all the time under the eye of the teachers. They would not only be able to teach him faster but would also make a better boy of him. As you are able to afford it you ought by all means to make a good scholar of him. If I had to live my life over I would rather receive a regular collegiate education than to have a fortune of a million dollars left me when of age and be brought up in ignorance. I have no doubt you will agree with me in this. Suppose you had received a liberal education and studied law in your youth, don't you think you could cope with any lawyer in this state? Why you might have been chief Justice or Governor or perhaps President. What is money to that, in point of honor, etc.-nothing! Why not then send George to school until he is twenty-one. It won't cost over 2 to \$250. You had better spend that out if you leave him that much. I would send Ann also to school for some time. She has improved amazingly in knowledge & in appearance. You should educate her. If I had not so many in my own family, I would take pleasure in operating big, educating all of them all the time. The fact is I have had 14 in my family all winter besides comers and goers. It makes a slave of my wife so that she will wear herself down in attending to her duty. She complains so much I don't like to put any more work on her than I can help as I know she always has enough.

Geo. W. McCleary

COPY

Iowa City, May 14, 1856

Yours of yesterday came to hand today. I am glad my recommendation for the return of the fast young man to the bosom of his family meets your approbation. I shall take pleasure in participating in the _____ when we meet again, which I hope will be soon.

The young man had a peculiar faculty of running up an account. I don't know whom he inherited it from—not from his father & certainly not from old "Dangnation" as both were always regarded as very economical, especially old "dirty foot" or old Peggy either. He ran up a large acct. here. I paid more of them and retained the account from money that I had received for Joe ____ some, however, have come in since that. I knew nothing about them at the time. I have paid them and expect to retain it from money which I am to get for land sold. If you can get an order from Joe to me for the amount he owes you, you can get the money. You might write him this.

I informed you last _____ that I was collecting ferkins and ask him to send an order on me. But don't tell I said anything about it. I presume however that he intends to pay you _____. When Jo entered lands at Fort Dodge when he was out, he left the warrants with a man, Ringland, at Fort Dodge, to whom he had sold them, but to make all safe he inserted my name in the land warrants. They were all entered in my name. The notes were drawn in my name & also bonds. Some have been paid & some are yet unpaid. I have had a good deal of trouble with it but _____ made nothing by the operation.

We are all well, respectfully.

G. W. McCleary

COPY

Abram McCleary

		in a/c with Robt Gillis	
1859	Mch 31	To amt pd Abram Sellers	\$ 3.50
April 14	To Order \$200 April 23 Lo 6 lbs coffee self 100	3.00	
April 23	" 1 plng tobacco 15¢ rope 06¢ April 29 To pr self 10 00	10.31	
May 4	" 17 yds muslin 170 & 8 yds calico 1.00 & 10 yds drilling 135	3.95	
May 4	" 5 yds calico 63¢ May 6 to 8 yds chamba gingham 128	1.91	
May 6	To 1 yd drilling 13¢ & 1½ yd cambric 15¢ & 1 lb tobacco 35¢	.63	
May 9	To 9 yds calico 113 & 1 spool thread 15 pr ama	1.18	
May 9	To 1 dumb watch 10¢ & 1 Bottle hair oil 10¢ per Lute	.20	
May 10	To 1 plug tobacco 15¢ for Gro & 1 Broom _____ 30¢	.45	
May 19	To 1 lb tobacco for self 35¢ May V7 Toll b.tobacco self 35¢	.70	
May 28	To 1 plug tobacco for Gro 15¢ & 1 white shirt \$2.25 for Gro.	2.40	
May 28	To Cash 100 & file 75¢ for self	1.75	
June 4	To 7 lbs. coffee 100 & 1 lb. carb soda 15	1.15	
June 6	To ½ lb rope 10¢ & 1 lb. tobacco 50¢ pr Gro	.60	
June 10	To 1 paste board pr Ann 05¢ June 25 To 1 comb 18¢	.23	
June 25	To 1 hat 125 & 6½ lbs. coffee 100 July 4 To cash pr self 100	3.25	
July 5	To 3 lbs coffee pr Gro 50 _____ July 6 to 2 spools thread 10	.60	
July 6	To 6 tumblers 50¢ & 1 set cups & saucers 15¢ 1 lb soda 15¢	1.40	
July 6	To Ball wick 08¢ per Lady July 7 To Order \$200	2.08	
July 8	To 4½ lbs sugar pr _____ 50¢ July 11 To cash pr self 5.00	5.50	
July 12	To 10 lbs, nails pr self 50¢ July 14 to cash pr self 10.00	10.50	
July 16	To cash pr self 11.00 July 21 to cash pr self 21.00	32.00	
July 27	To cash per self 18.00 Aug. 4 To ½ lb pepper 13¢	18.13	
Aug 4	To ½ paper kneedles 15¢ & 31 lbs salt 63½ pr Gro	.77	
Aug 6	To 56 lbs flour 196 pr Gro & 30 lbs flour per Heigby 105 pr Heigby	3.01	
Aug 17	To Cash pr self \$2100 Aug 23 To ½ lb grass rope pr self 30¢	21.30	
Aug 23	To hair pins per Ann 05¢ Aug 25 To 1 pr boots pr Gro	3.50	
Aug 29	To 1 Bottle hair Oil 10¢ & 1 Bottle Oxe Marrow 20¢ pr Gro	.30	
Aug 31	To 1 watermelon 05¢ for Gro Sept 2 To Cash 05¢ pr Gro	.10	
Sept 8	To 2 lbs rice 10¢ per Lute Sept 10 To 2 lbs shot 20¢ pr Gro	.30	
Sept 10	To 1 Box caps 10¢ & 2 pr hinges 50¢ pr Gro	.50	
Sept 12	To Verbal Order to Jno Stineman 253 & 2¼ lbs rope 45¢	2.98	
Sept 19	To 1 set strap hinges 20¢ & 1 door handle & latch 15	.35	
Sept 19	To Note on Goss & Crone 845 pr self	8.45	
Sept 19	To Transfer of Goss 2/c	3.36	
Sept 27	To 1 thimble 05¢ pr Ann Oct 3 To /pens 10¢ Bot ink 10¢ pr Gro	.25	
Oct 4	To 1 lb candles 20¢ & 2 candle-sticks 30¢ per Gro	.50	
Oct 4	To 1 quive paper 25½ & 2 pen holders 05¢	.30	
Oct 8	To verbal Order to A. M. Kent 300 Oct 24 To 1 lb soda 15¢ pr Lute	3.15	
Oct 27	To 1 lb tobacoo 35 & 1 padlock 20¢ pr self	.55	
Nov 3	To 1 curry comb pr Gro 20¢ Nov 11 To 2 spelling books pr Lute 20¢	.40	
Nov 12	To 2 lbs buck shot 30¢ 1½ lb shot 13¢ & 1 Box caps 15¢ pr Gro	.58	
Nov 17	To Cash for self 500 Dec 1 To 6 lbs coffee for self 100	6.00	
Dec 1	To curry comb for Gro 25¢ To linen thread 10¢ for self	.35	
Dec 3	To 1 pr socks pr Gro 30¢ Dec 9 To 1 shirt for Gro 125	1.55	
Dec 9	To 1 pr gloves 25¢ Dec 10 To Order to Clint Knap 1000	10.25	
Dec 10	To 2 lbs candles 32¢ Dec 17 To 1 lb soda for Lute 15¢	.47	
Dec 19	To Order \$10.00	10.00	
	To Order by Martin \$120.00 To 1 Note pr Neon & McCleary \$13.39	133.39	
	To Note by McCleary & Lacey	31.40	
1859	Abram McCleary C	\$349.38	
	May 9 By cash pr Nancy Helen	.20	
	Aug 5 By Beef hide	1.35	
	Sept 15 By Bal on _____ 2/c	.03	
		\$ 1.58	

COPY

Iowa City, Jan. 2, 1860

Dear Sir:

I received your last and was glad to learn that the suspicion I had heard was incorrect. You are right in regard to George. The fact is you have completely spoiled him by permitting him to run around when, where & how he pleased, and furnishing him money to spend at his pleasure. A boy of his age should be either kept at home or school and should have no money, only what is actually necessary for getting such little things as he really needs, and then should never be permitted to purchase anything without the consent of his parents and with their knowledge. I think Joe is acting nasty with you. I don't see how you can help yourself unless you get the men he owes to send his accounts to a lawyer in Steubenville for collection. If you would get their accounts & send them there for collection I have no doubt he would want to pay them rather than be sued. I found out myself that these fast young gentlemen were rather troublesome visitors. But what can a man do when his friends visit him? He can't refuse to receive them unless he does as old aunt Betsy Atkinson said to me when I told her I had come to stay two or three weeks. "O.K.", said she, "2 or 3 days is long enough for a visit." I don't think it any use to write to the Secy. about the school law, as they would not probably alter the feature you wish, as children must be educated whether rich or poor, and number of teachers is governed by the number of children & not by the number of sections in the district.

If the township boards do wrong put them out. The county has the most votes & can elect whom they please and thus correct the wrong. I have long since got over trying to get good laws passed. Instead of getting better, they are getting worse & worse. There is no prospect of improvement. Every Jack must have his say to distinguish or extinguish himself. We are all well at present and have nothing new to say.

We suffered some the last few days by extreme cold but the weather has moderated, which I presume you are aware of & glad to see us well as we are. I intended visiting Louisa County before this but the cold has deterred me. Should we have any good sleighing, we will look for you & the family up to see us. So nothing more, but remain.

Geo. W. McCleary

COPY

Des Moines, Iowa - April 21, 1871

Dear A,

Please pardon me for neglecting to reply sooner to your letter. I have had so much work to do in the office for the last two or three weeks that I have had no time to spare for any other purpose. My letter to you in regard to Uncle George's affairs was written in the hope that you might devise some means to extricate him from his present difficulty. I did not know but that you had the money to spare to pay off his indebtedness and take a mortgage on his property to make yourself secure. This no doubt would be a relief to him and at the same time could not be burdensome to you, provided you had the money to spare, and was getting the usual rate of interest. But you know best what amount of relief you are prepared to offer. As for me, I am not in the condition financially, to do much for uncle George, however great my desire might be for the welfare of himself and family. If it is not convenient for you to help him out of the difficulty in some such manner as I have indicated, perhaps uncle Joe could, as he is now worth some 60 or 70 thousand dollars, according to the statements of his son, William.

By far the greater portion of your letter to me was devoted to berating the Republican party because of their determination to preserve the good faith of the government by paying off the bonds in specie. No party can hold to any other doctrine, that wishes to deal honestly with the individuals who came forward in the day of the nation's greatest need and furnished the necessary funds to put down a gigantic democratic rebellion, receiving in lieu thereof the government's bonds as security for the payments of the money furnished. Your policy of paying off the bonded debt in greenbacks is very unwise, unjust and dishonest and would be a virtual repudiation of a large portion of the national debt. True it would be a very summary and easy method of getting rid of the bonds, for paper is very cheap and greenbacks, sufficient for the purpose, could be engraved at comparatively a trifling cost. But don't you know that if so large a debt as the bonded debt was paid off in greenbacks that the country would be flooded with them, and this would have the effect to decrease their present value to one half and perhaps still less, thus virtually giving the bond holders half price or less for their bonds? That would be justice, perhaps according to the democratic standard of that virtue, particularly the copperhead wing, but the republican party are determined to preserve the integrity of the government, as is evidenced in every political position they take.

A bond is not money, neither is a greenback. Both are only promises on the part of the government to pay money to the holder. The former draws interest semi-annually and the principal to be paid at maturity, while the latter draws no interest and is to be paid at the pleasure of the government. Now your proposition is for the government to say to the bond holder: "Gentleman, you hold our promise to pay you a certain amt. of money at a given time, which promise draws a percent of interest to be paid semi-annually, our promise was made to you at a time when we were more distressed for money, when our very existence depended on your extending to us this favor; at that time our distress was so great that we were obliged to promise liberally, as an inducement to get your money; but we got your money on our promise, and used it, we put down the rebellion and established peace, but now since the rebellion we have had time for calm reflection upon the matter, we think the promise we made under those adverse circumstances was too liberal; our proposition now, is to give up or surrender to us the promise we made to you, in our dire necessity, to pay you a certain sum at a given time with interest, and receive from us in lieu thereof, another promise, drawing no interest and which we agree to pay whenever we please." Is this an honest proposition? If you loaned me a hundred dollars and took my written obligation to pay you the amount in ten years