

Copied from letter by  
Fenas B Turman to  
Brother Alexander

Rev. & dear brother Alexander

I give you here a short account of the lines of nearly all of the first preachers of Nebraska I knew them all There is about all here that would be interesting But from brother Burch you can get more information than I can give you He has been here through all thick & thin with Rev H T Davis He is well acquainted & from an early day One thing I mention We were all clean shaved there were no Abrahamic beards amongst us and verry little starch used then or shoe blacking You can get from the minutes of the Conference much that I cannot give you You have them in miniature from me only My autobiography do not think worth writing a man of third or fourth rate any way My life is fast ebing out & I must soon go the whenc I shall not return'

Yours verry respectfully Fenas B Turman

Wm. H. Goode was the first presiding elder in Nebraska and was at that time a member of the Kansas & Nebraska Conference. He came here in 1853 or 4 I suppose while he was looking over the country to see what was needed he preached occasionally but do not know. He came from Kansas & bought a farm near Glenwood Iowa where he lived I think 5 or 6 years. I have seen his house & farm while he was living there. He was full 6 ft. high I should think large robust frame but not fleshy fair complected grave & dignified but possessed verry good social qualities easy of access & ready minded. He was regarded always as a verry responsible man every way & more than an ordinary preacher. He was a member of the North Indiana Conference for a number of years where he was raised & commence his ministerial life. He had a knoweled of the higher branches sufficient to teach in one the Seminaries belonging to us where he spent some years more or less. He went to Ft. Coffee Arkansas near Little Rock to superinted the Choctaw mission a tribe of Indians there & remained there until 1844 when the great Secession at Baltimore. He then returned to Indiana & continued to travel & preach as presiding elder until Kansas was open for settlement & was considerably settled he went there & remained there during the terrible imbroglio or war when that country was over run by border rufians & all the Slave states more or less half the horrors of which ruffians will never be known in the world and all to make Kansas a slave state.

Brother Good either employed Bro. W. D. Gage to preach at Nebraska City in 1854 or it was assigned to him by



the Kansas & Nebraska Conference do not know but Bro. Gage filled that appointment in 1854 Hiram Burch Succeeded him in 55 & 6 in Neb. City Bro Tf Collins first in Omaha as preacher in charge same time 1855 & 6 either as a supply or by Conference appointment.

My acquaintance with brother Collins was limited heard him preach at Nebraska City once but sup-- he was a good preacher. Suppose was about 5 ft. 9 inches high well set fair complected & weigh one hundred & 45 or 50 lbs married man. He was appointed to Atchison Kan where he ended his earthly career & recieve no doubt a 'crown of life'. Hiram Burch you are well acquainted with & I need say nothing about him to you he is known in all the Churches here.

At the Conf at Leavenworth 1860 brother Good was appointed to Pikes peak Col then opening up as a gold region he took brother Jacob Adriance with him a faithful stout young man a four mule team & wagon & went up there to set it on fire organized a work & returned the first that was done there. The fire is still burning there & will no doubt burn there till Millennial glory shall burst upon the world.

Brother Goods' wife died whilst he was at Calhoon holding quarterly meeting I think in 1859. He said 'God had smitten him'. She was his companion for 30 years always kept up prayers while he was absent. Set the compass & buried her on his own land & soon after returned to Indiana & preached as presiding elder until by a fall he fractured one of his thighs which resulted in paralysis & for several years was in a piteable condition on a rolling chair sufferings great died triumphant Lived in Richmond Indiana.

Brother Martin Prichard came to Neb. in 1858 from Indiana. He & his wife were an amiable young couple. He had not been preaching long as a local preacher he joined the Kansas & Nebraska Conference in 1858 & traveled & preached here 19 years. He was a promising young man was always faithful in all the circuits & stations to which he was appointed a growing man always stood very fair with his people and traveled in the Conference as presiding elder for a number of years the same good man & joyful 'always abounding in the work of the Lord'. He died in Peru Neb. where he lived in Mar. 14, 1887. The nature the disease was such that he could say but little but what he did say was satisfactory to all that 'his end was peace' & 'he rests from his labors & his works do follow him'. In his death the Nebraska Conference lost a verry useful & able minister & presiding elder.

Brother Burch dedicated the Church in Nebraska City & Omaha both in 1858. Both commenced in /57 & finished in 58 brick.

Rev. Isaac Chivington came here from Indiana in 57 or 8 & commenced preaching in Nebraska City. Soon after as presiding elder but did not continue long. He was deposed from the ministry at Conference at Nebraska City Bishop Morris presiding joined the Protestant Methodist Church.

William A. Amsberry commenced preaching here in 1860 at Dakota City. Was a promising young man & talented.



Preached at that place one year one year at Tekama & one or two years at Plattsmouth & then went to Colorado preached there sometime & is now in the West Nebraska Conference as presiding elder. Now about 50 years old. He was converted in Douglas Co. 4 or 5 miles North of Omaha a few years before.

A superanuate from gennese Cong came to Tekama in /57 or 8 & lived there a no of years & preached occasionally. I was tolerably well acquainted with him there. He was about 60 years old. He had been a useful man. He was a tolerably man I said became a spiritualist.

Bro. J. W. Taylor came here from Missouri in I think /56. He was stationed at Omaha in /57. He is still living & has done a great deal of hard work for the Church is a good preacher easy to fall in a discourse & a good Singer or was. Do not suppose he can either preach or sing either now much. Out West on a homestead.

Daniel May came here in about /57 & preached first in Nebraska City & then Falls City. Went to Kansas & located a number of years ago. A verry good preacher better than common. Was presiding elder on Hannibal district one term in the Mo. Conference. He is still living I think.

Jacob Adriance a good Stout young man came here from New York & commenced preacing in 1857 faithful young man the dray horse of the Conference. He accompanied brother Good to the Rocky mountains & remained there some years &

preached there & returned again to this conference & continued to preach until he became so deaf that he had to stop. He belongs to N. N. conf.

Brother Stringfield ought not to be forgotten he was a good old time local preacher from Iowa here built a mill at the falls of the big Nemaha and made flour there a long time. He went up a hundred miles to Tekama & supplied that circuit one year. He died at his home 19 or 20 yrs ago. He died as all good men in peace.

Brother John Chivington was one of the first preachers here. Large robust frame black hair & black eyes fair complected. A popular turn of mind & a popular preacher. He went to Colorado & then into the Service of the country as Colonel after returned & became embarrassed by marrying the widow of his son Thomas. Went to Washington D. Cand got into trouble & disappeared for near 20 years. Heard of him lately. He is at Denver making money & preaching. Moves in the first circles of society. He came from Indiana to Nebraska

Moses F. Shin came to Omaha in a verry early time. He had bee a presiding elder in Iowa for some length of time but was local while in & about Omaha. He preached occasionally but was unsteady. Sometimes he would be religious & sometimes not. Sometimes immoral. Died a few years ago. Old probably 80 or more. Do not know whether he was saved or not hope for the best. He was a wordy man. In his former life he was a drunkard he siad Drank a great deal.



Local preachers in South Platte Joel Mason J B  
Ford G L Griffing Cyrus Spurlock Abraham Towner Bro Morris  
all of Cass County Bro King of Falls City.

North Platt Wm Bates.

Benas B Turmans' short career. Last and least of  
all here is a short acct of myself.

I was born in Washington Co. Ills April 23, 1819.  
My father was a methodist preacher. He commenced traveling  
before he was of age. A boy joined the western Conf at  
Chilicothe 1807. Traveled till he married & located as all  
had to do then most no support for a married man. Traveled  
under Bishop Asberry & McKendry. Traveled under the noted  
Cartwright. He removed to Indiana Fountain Co where I was  
raised 4 miles from Attica on Shawnee prairie. Experienced  
religion in my 21st year under the labors of Rev. J. L.  
Thompson & Rev. Walter L. Huffman Dec. 11, 1839 in Old Bethel  
meeting house as it was called. I was powerfully converted  
& powerfully wrought upon to preach & commenced to exhort &  
to try to preach soon after. Had there many nursing fathers  
& nursing mothers. Was a supply on Logansport district  
Hokomo circuit at one time & on Montecello circuit Lafayette  
District. First under Samuel C. Cooper E Second under Joh  
H Bruce Second Local preachers numerous there came to Ills  
& engaged in teaching at Fairview & was that year employed  
as a supply on Fairview Circuit under Rev. John Chandler  
Elder presiding. I then came to Neb. & commenced traveling  
& trying to preach on Salt Creek 2 yrs Fontanell one Tekama  
one Dakota City two Cincinnatti one. Came near dieing at  
Dakota City with small pox & while sick was put on the super-

anuated list. Friends to do the work of an evangelist.

'Coveted no mans silver or gold'.

Gerome Spillman commenced traveling & preaching in 1858 at Fontanell Dodge Co Neb had quite a revival there & built a good church there. He came from Kentucky here. He was a small man black eyes a good singer & full of the 'fire' & good preacher. He enlisted in the war in /60 & was made chaplain in Tennessee & was at the battle of Ft. Donaldson afterward was elected elder there.

Isaac Cannon commenced traveling in 1859 at Rock Blufs & continued a few years a good preacher. When he commenced I think he was 45 or 50 years old. He went to Pikes peak one year & built the first Church ever built there. He built it out of logs. He died a few years ago at his home in Cass Co Neb rejoicing verry much in hope of everlasting life & that his journey was about ended.

Brother Minard a man of 40 or 45 of Cass County commenced traveling & went to Tecumse but did not continue there long for lack of support for his family. He was a good man & I think a tolerable good preacher but never heard him preach. He died in Nebraska Cass Co a few years after.

A man by the name of Hashiel came from Iowa in 1859 to Neb City a verry flashy man & the people there thought he was the man that they needed & they employed him forthwith to preach there. If I did but the opportunity I would have dissuaded them from having anything to do with him in that way

*all of it found on next page*



A man by the name of Flasliel came from Iowa in 1859 to Neb City a very flashy man & the people there thought he was the man that they needed & they employed him forthwith to preach there If I did but the opportunity I would have dissuaded them from having anything to do with him in that way but did not & it was only evil with them He ran his course with them & passed away soon with his vanity leaving them no better than he found them if as god to say the least of it

A J Porsey came from Virginia in about/57 & went with us to Topeka in Mar/58 to Conf He was about 40 or upwards years old He was received I think & was appointed to Dakoto City & was there a part of the year only He got into trouble involving his moral character & soon after removed to Missouri

Brother G L Griffing a located elder came from Pennsylvania about 1857 & settled near Table Rock Pawnee Co Neb opened a large firm & improved it well & preached considerably in that part of the country He was a man of Good ability as a preacher better than common He represented his county onc in the legislature & was one of the members of the constitutional convention when the constitution of the State was formed the only man who was ever elected as a State officer the second time from this County before

He was a man of great energy He labored hard neither stoping from heat or cold scarcely formed a large acquaintance in the Church & out of it & closed his earthy career & thus ended his earthly labors aiding in supporting the gospel as well as preaching it & all other acts of

about two years ago He died in peace with God & man Who can do more? When it was annoned to him by his dear wife that he was surely sinking he said it is all right 'His last words 'He is gone but not lost 'We sleepe in' the dust of the earth but

will awake to immortality & steal life

He left a wife & 8 children nearly all grown up

Plase excuse this manuscript 'written like Ezekiels roll within  
& without'

Suppose may be it would not make much differecnce such short  
sketches but if I should do such a thing again I would write on one  
side only

Dear brother Alexander Father Benjamin Bectan I was about to  
forget He ought not to be left out He came to Nebraska City from over  
in the Mo bottom Iowa & aided in laying the foundation of Methodism  
in Neb in an early day very much He was a good old type local preacher  
inded He was may be 75 years old a good preacher verry industrious  
sprightly as a boy He came fro O there in an early day made a grand  
farm all kinds of fruit on it & preached a great deal A man of a  
fine taste well developep fine silk hat & watch & c With all the  
agility of a boy Rode horseback with us to Conf to Topeka & Leaven-  
worth & preached there at Conference But few such Preached in former  
life as a local preacher in O & other States largely His reward is  
great

Brother L D Smith was one of the early preachers in Nebraska He  
was a young unmarried man He was of ordinary height & size a verry  
good preacher indeed & a good singer  
He traveled severel years on the South side of the Platt & some time  
on the South Side  
He was in charge of Freemont one year 1859 when there were about a  
dozen wood colored houses in it Longago a city He married a daughter  
Brother C P Giddings Brother Smith came early on the superanuated list



& removed to Colorado where he still lives We hear from him occasionally he still retains his christian & ministerial character & no doubt will until the last He does not claim any thing on the church fund as a superanuate He is in the mining business While here he some to his ministry 'He did not run in vain nor labor in vaine'

Dear brother Alexander I have told about about those good brethren that I know Peace to their memories & peace & love & joy attend you all through your happy life & yours all Fenas B Turman

Brother David Hart came to Nebraska from Illinois in 1857 & joined the Kansas & Nebraska Conference in 1858 at Topeka Kansas He was an Englishman by birth & was converted at the age of nine years He had been preaching some years as a local preacher but do not know the number He was 30 years old when He gained the Conference & traveled & preached in Nebraska 20 years

When he was admitted his presiding elder bro Good stated that he was a better preacher than we generally recieve on trial & think that was a correct represenation of brother Hart He was about 5 ft & 9 or ten inches in hight square built & would weigh about 150 lbs & was in good circumstances He was prompt & punctual in all his engagements temporary & religious endeavored to do every thing at the time He traveled on both sides of the Platt & filled some of the best stations & circiuts in the Conference Brownsville Plattsnth Omaha & others He enjoyed the blessing of perfect love or sanctification & preached it He was a good representative of an English methodist He increased in spiritulity & power as long as he lived & was able to preach He had the English brogue fed his 'orse ay & hoats' sometimes He was afflicted with a throat affection in the latter part of his life

which required him to desist from preaching one or two years & it was finally the cause of his death His last appointment was Plattsmouth He preached his last sermon there on one Sabbath from the text 'I fought a good fight I have finished my course' & c with a great deal of power He & his good wife soon from there to Colorado to visit one of his brothers & while there he died & died a most triumphant death Sister Hart told that he praised the Lord & gave thanks & glory glory to his name just as long as he could speak

Brother Hart had what I think is rare faculty that of giving consolation to any one in trouble There are sons of consolation as well as 'sons of thunder'

He is gone to join the innumerable host at 'Gods right hand'

Brother W D Gage I knew since 1856 but never was intimately acquainted with him Never was at his house but & then only a few minutes I heard him preach only twice he preached very well He did not belong to this Conference for I think 8 or 10 years after I came to Nebraska He represented \_\_\_\_\_ county I think in /57 the first session in the territory Saw him at Conf at Falls City when he was about 73 or 4 years old & he told me that he never had used spectacles He had a small sharp looking eye

He traveled & preached in several Conferences before he came here I think in Newyork: Illinois & Missouri He traveled in Illinois under the noted Cartwright He said Cartwright had a nickname for all his preachers He said he called him 'Birdy' He joined the Neb Conf & traveled some years dont know how many & was doing good work as long as I heard of him untill he took a superannuated \_\_\_\_\_ & died in great peace a few years afterward bidding all his children farewell that were there at the age I think of 84 or 5 Was married twice Do not know the year of his death



TO THE W. M., WARDENS AND BRETHREN OF LODGE, F & A M

Brethren:---Rev. Brother George S. Alexander, of Norwich, Conn., recently of the Jurisdiction of the State of Rhode Island, has prepared a most excellent Public Lecture on the History and Philosophy of Masonry, which we would most earnestly commend to all Masonic Lodges, wherever assembled. It is an instructive and deeply interesting address, and well calculated to strengthen the attachment of all true Masons for our ancient and honorable order, and eradicate the prejudices, if any there be, on the part of the uninitiated.

WM. STORER, Grand Master of  
Connecticut

THOMAS A. DOYLE, Grand Master  
of Rhode Island

AMOS E. COBB, Dep. G. M. of  
Connecticut

RUFUS M. -----

(Paper torn)

JOHN W. -----

Resolved, by the Worshipful Master, Wardens, and Brethren of Western Star Lodge No. 2, A. F. & A. M., That the thanks of this lodge be and the same are hereby tendered to Bro. Geo. S. Alexander for his able and eloquent Address on the subject of Masonry, delivered at the Court House, on the occasion of the Public installation of the officers of this Lodge; and that we cheerfully recommend Bro. Alexander to the Craft as an able, eloquent, and instructive Lecturer upon the subject of Masonry.

JOHN REED, W. M.

W. W. W. JONES, Secretary

Masonic Hall, Nebraska City, January 22d, 1869

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OFFICE OF THE GRAND MASTER OF MASONS FOR NEBRASKA, A.F.&A.M.

Nebraska City, January 29th, 1869

I had the satisfaction of listening to the Address of Bro. Geo. F. Alexander, before Western Star Lodge No. 2, A.F.&A.M., on the History and Philosophy of Masonry, and would commend it as an able and instructive production and well calculated to inform the attent\_\_\_\_\_ hearer of the principles and purposes of our \_\_\_\_\_ monstrating its conservative power in strength-\_\_\_\_\_ nds of Brotherhood among men.

O. H. IRISH, Grand Master