

Return to ABBOT & KIMBALL,
BIGSPRING, Deuel Co., NEBRASKA,
If not delivered within 10 days.



Mrs Sam Dale Stevens
North Andover
Mass.

Big Spring, Neb. Aug 9th 1896

My dear Sister

It is so long since I have written you a line to know where to come, therefore I shall start in just as if I had been writing regularly. We were mighty anxious in your last letter of the Adair Celebret. The home had another dry season as usual but as there was very little seed planted on the table land and as no one expected much from dry farming we are not disappointed many of the farmers have left and those who are still here and expect to remain have given up farming and gone into cattle raising and some milking for the creamery. Some have moved down to the bottom and more expect to the irrigation ditch are proving a success and there will be considerable irrigation farming under our ditch next season. About every body who here has lost all their enthusiasm and are about ready to give up. At the present price of grain and farm products the farmers are about as well off with no crops as with big ones. Oats for instance at the present price will hardly pay the expense of thrashing.

and hunting to market so that the farmers in the eastern
part of Nebraska whom they have a tremendous crop are
not much better off than we out here, and then they don't
know how to live on wind and hope as well as we do.

For the last two months we have been all stirred up
over politics, and no wonder we are for Nebraska seem to
stone centers, and as an old fellow who lives out north of town
said in the store the other day Nebraska has more (elections)
to the acre than outside of corn, and it would seem as
with Senator Thurston as ~~the~~ principle ruling spirit of the Repi
Convent on St Louis, and Mr Dentley of Lincoln the
nominee of the Pittsburg Board of Councils for President and Senator
Allen of Neb. and our boy creates with the big mouth and brass chink
the nominee at Chicago, and Senat Allen Chairman of the St Louis
Pop focus and now a possibility of the sound money
democratic nomination our acting J Sterling Morton, we
as a state seem to be in it. Before Bryan was nominated
it was looked upon as a sure thing that McKinley would carry
Neb by June 20 to 40 thousand and now it looks as if
cheap money and the papocrats would ~~carry~~ carry very
thing before them. The Republic ~~has~~ picked up a good
clean ^{state} ticket and declared for sound money, and now the
Pop and Democrats have fused and a lot of Reform Republic
have gone with them, our candidate for Gov John H McCull
is an old friend of ours who lives at Lexington and is a
miller we have bought the flour of him for the last ten years.

Our candidate for Congress is one of the brightest men in the
State as good a orator as Bryan and far more logical
and better tested and broader minded he has been
a news paper man, banker, and is now in the ~~sole~~ wholesale
grocery business in St Paul, and by the way, is the
president of the bank at Elba of which Jim Bacon is the Cashier.

- 2 -
Big Spring, Neb.

189

his name is E. A. Cady he and J. Bowen have been partners
for some five years and I have known Cady personally
for five or six years. It is very doubtful if
either of these men can be elected this year as they are
both of them too honest not to be openly for honest money.
The republicans of this 24th Congressional district comprise
nine counties and with a area as large as the
States of Miss and R. D. combined. At their convention at
Ojullah some twenty me on an ~~amplified~~ of
migration & sound money but as the bulk of the
state is in the strong hold of the Pope and the Pope names
are to name on the President & J. F. ^{President} of the State Irrigation
Association as the candidates my chances are decidedly slim
McCull, Cady. However our candidate for the State Senate and
myself stunk out tomorrow for a two weeks trip together over
the district holding two meetings a day. Cady & Hoagland to do
the speaking and McCull and I the road skating and butter rolling.
The State Central Com. furnish us with transportation and
expenses so I am not spending any money on a foolish hope
or less cause. By advocating free silver I could probably
be elected for there is a stampede generally

to every republican who will go over with the advo-
cates and in made a hero of an Senator Dallas in
Colo. but enough of all these petitions you must have enough
of it at home. I am in hope of getting a certificate
of some kind this fall in Omaha or Lincoln so that
we can move to a place where the children can have
better school and social advantages about the only
prospects I can hope for is that of a traveling school
for growing on some of the lines we have been
handling but as there are hundreds if not thousands
of men in this State in precisely the same circumstances
that I am looking for just such a place I really
think it will be hard to find. Amy is still at Decatur
with her grandmother. I expect to go to Lincoln about
the last of the month and will stop over at Omaha
and bring her home she has been away so long
that Harriet & George were almost forgotten her on
she had got over missing her. Amy was delighted with the
school at Decatur got lots of new ideas and it has been
a grand experience for her. June of course misses her
the most as she has got to be a great help to her especially
in vacation time we are all as well as can be but
that is about all we have to be thankful for

Write when you can as we enjoy your letters more than any
things else I know we don't desire them and it is allowing our
time to write but what on earth can we write about that
can possibly interest you except possibly our ailments
and that is not an interesting subject for our correspondents
Very affectionately yours
John



Highspring, Nebr., Nov 6th 1896

My dear George

Have just received
 enough of the returns from this district
 to show that I am defeated by a
 small but sure majority. I was
 a stump for the Four Silver fellows
 and a man who advocated
 sound money in this State this
 year was doomed. It is some
 satisfaction to know that I ran
 away ahead of every sound money
 man in this district several hundred
 ahead of our candidate for Governor
 and Congressman. This country gave
 Mr. Kimby about $\frac{1}{2}$ Day majority
 Mr. Cady for Congress 100 majority and
 Abbot 140 majority out of less than
 600 total vote have probably carried

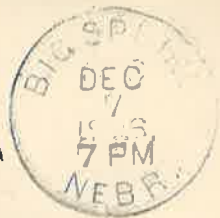


Big Spring, Nebr.,189

five of the nine counties in the
district will send more
complete accounts later
and I will also write more
and of other matters next
time

Very sincerely

John



Mr Sam Dale Stevens
North Andover
Mass

Hięspring, Nebr., Dec 6th 1896

My dear Amy

Your in regard to apple received yesterday we would like the apple but it would be out of the question to ship them so late in the season as this as they would surely freeze on the way and the carrying charge would be too much even if not for the danger of freezing

We all enjoyed the candy and guess you sent on Thanksgiving day George and I the ginger and Jennie and the girls the candy. We have been here some terribly cold weather 22 below zero on the Friday after Thanksgiving and a regular blizzard. It has warmed up now and we are now having beautiful weather

and today the river had thawed
out so that we let the water into
our ditch and are running it
full. I was not much surprised at
the results of the election in this state
the Fore Belm crew had taken full
possession of many of our farmers
and the complete fusion of the
Pope with the democrats together
with the Prohibitional and Fore Belm
Republicans made it next to impossible
for an honest money republican
to be elected. I carried every
County west of us by good majorities
and my own county by 100 ahead
of the next highest majority which was
Mr Cady for Congress our county
also went for McKimby by 82 majority
Cady receiving 60. I carried Devel
Cheyenne Kimball Basin & Scotts Bluff Cos
and lost Keith Park Lincoln & McPherson
And as I run some 400 ahead of the
highest republican on the ticket in the
district I feel that I did fairly well
under the circumstances and was only
beaten by less than 100 majority

Hespering, Nebr., 189

George has been getting along nicely for the last six weeks and now can walk fairly well and we hope to hold him back for some time we will soon do it. Harrett has been under the weather for the last few days with a bad cold but is much better today.

I would like to write more tonight but work to get this letter off on this mail

Sincerely
John

Big Spring, Neb. Dec 20th 1896

My dear Aunt

Your letter of the 16th came yesterday and the Christmas will undoubtedly arrive in due time for Christmas. Jessie and Army will write more particularly in regard to the contents of the box I can assure you that it is a "red letter day" for the children when they show in unpacking a box from you. The word delighted to know you had decided to move back to the old home in Andover and hope you will enjoy it not only on account of the convenience of sending the boys to Andover school but on your own account since to me it will be more convenient for you all in many ways except of course the new home the room and convenience that you have enjoyed at the Andover. Any arrangements in regard to furnishing or remodeling your old place to make are subjecting to us and Mr. Sternplum seem to me wise and practical.

What I had hope to be able to realize out of the plan you were about as follows. First the taper and insurance which amounts to about 175⁰⁰ per year then the interest on what I owe you and George to come out and then to pay the annual premium on my life insurance policy as follows 48⁰⁰ on 2000⁰⁰ due each year in May and 113⁰⁰ on 3000⁰⁰ two year term. Policy due in August each year and if any balance

Big Spring, Neb.

189

about what these items amount to, to have such balance to
apply on my note held by you and George equally. It does
look now as though there would soon be any chance of our
being able to live in the old place. And it is going to be
hard work for us to live comfortably here and make enough
to pay our debts. What I am trying to do now is to get some
kind of a situation on a salary as one of us can take care
of which business there is to attend to in the store and Walter
never expects or wants to live any where else. We have now
succeeded in getting the half section of land on the bottom which
is in George's name to secure his loan to me, under irrigation
and in shape to sell at a price that will pay both his and
yours what I owe you, a piece of land not so good and just
half the size but with some better improvements on it sold the other day
for \$1000.00 and the purchaser who has lived here two years and
knows what he is doing though he struck a bargain as I feel that
the 320 acres with the water rite which we have this last year
developed up it will be amply sufficient to pay you both

We are of course anxious to get to some town where the
schools are better than here as a chief the children as far as our
school has been equal to the requirements of any

Big Spring, Neb.

189

- 3 -

but she will soon be old enough and advanced enough
to require something far more than will be possible to
expect of our local school here. And besides I hate
to think of her ~~and~~ the other having to grow up within this
environment. All our capital has been invested here
and what we made in boom time being also locked up
here and then everything that we had invested in dropping
from 50 to 90% and the money probably 75% of the
furniture moving away and everything else generally going
to ~~smash~~ but had the effect of eating up about everything we
had and of course our business in Nov '14 which it was
several years ago. Had I the capital to go into the drug
business in a small way in a good town some where I
feel that I could get on my feet again or if I could only
get a situation some where. I realize that if I stay here
years after years waiting for the conditions to change
I will in time get into ruts and become discouraged
and give up trying. I have certainly worked hard and faithfully
here and at first with a good prospect of success and the
present conditions do not seem to be altogether our fault
except it be in holding on too long, and trying to

Big Spring, Neb.

189

The two weeks at present the home here having fine
warm weather even since Thanksgiving week and
have been running our ditch full of water for the last
three weeks and getting lots of our land ~~watered~~ ^{watered} up as
the season has been before, since the floods in order that
we may be in shape for receiving a crop next spring
and be in condition to keep it growing through the season
all of the farmers under our ditch are delighted with
the prospects and are expecting a sure crop next
season in consequence of getting their land so thoroughly
soaked this winter. I have been quite busy running
levels for laterals or little ditches from the main ditch
this nice day, when I came work in the field with the
instrument. George is still improving daily in his walking
the girls both well as usual. Sturritt very enthusiastic over
the park she is to take in the school Christmas entertain to
she is the one the makes an actress of nothing quite her better
than to appear in some park and receive the applause of the
audience. Plenty of chinks perhaps too much, just the opposite
of any who is backward about such matters. Jessie
will add something to the three already too long drawn out

letter. We shall be anxious to learn more of your
plans for moving over to Andover and all how you
all like it after you get settled. Several the
Beachman (our druggist) and Bland Summells family have
moved away it is sure more houses than ever for
Jesse there is now no one in town except Lill who
is coming in any way for her and no that the bank
has failed and closed the Vinton expect to move
away as soon as he can find a location to go into
the Hotel business. Jesse & Mrs Kimball are not
congenial and do not even call on each other
Jesse may have written you about it.

Write him to work carefully

George