

## Transcribed Excerpts from C.C. Andrews' Letters I and II about his Trip to Minnesota and Dakota Territory, 1857

... It is about two years since I was last in Chicago; and as I have walked about its streets my casual observation confirms the universal accounts of its growth and prosperity. I have noticed some new and splendid iron and marble buildings in the course of completion ... its busy population comprises citizens from every section of the United States, and from every quarter of the globe. The number of its inhabitants is now estimated at 100,000. Everybody that can move is active. It is a city of activity ... Last year 20,000,000 bushels of grain were brought into Chicago. Five years ago there were not a hundred miles of railroad in the state of Illinois. Now there are more than two thousand. Illinois has all the elements of empire. Long may its great metropolis prosper!

### Letter II

Chicago to St. Paul

*Railroads to the Mississippi — Securing passage of the steamboat — The Lady Franklin — Scenery of the Mississippi — Hastings — Growth of settlements.*

St. Paul, October 1856

How short a time it is since a railroad to the Mississippi was thought a wonder! And now within the state of Illinois four terminate on its banks. Of course I started on one of these roads from Chicago to get to Dunleith. I think it is called the Galena and Chicago Union Road. A good many people have supposed Galena to be situated on the Mississippi river, and indeed railroad map makers have had it so located as long as it suited their convenience — (for they have a remarkable facility in annihilating distance and in making crooked ways straight) — yet the town is some twelve miles from the great river on a narrow but navigable stream. The extent and importance of Rockford, Galena, and Dunleith cannot fail to make a strong impression on the traveller. They are towns of recent growth, and well illustrate that steam-engine sort of progress peculiar now-a-days in the west. Approaching Galena we leave the region of level prairie and enter a mineral country of naked bluffs or knolls, where are seen extensive operations in the lead mines. The trip from Chicago to Dunleith at the speed used on most other roads would be performed in six hours, but ten hours are usually occupied, for what reason I cannot imagine . . . Travelling in the cars out west is not exactly what it is between Philadelphia and New York, or New York and Boston, in this respect: that in the West more families are found in the cars, and consequently more babies and carpet bags ...

But I wish to speak about leaving the cars at Dunleith and taking the steamboats for St. Paul. There is a tremendous rush for the boats in order to secure state-rooms. Agents of different boats approach the traveller, informing him all about their line of boats, and depreciating the opposition boats. For instance, an agent, or, if you please, a runner of a boat called Lucy - not Long- made the assertion on the levee with great zeal and perfect impunity that no other boat but the said Lucy would leave for St. Paul within twenty-four hours; when it must have been known to him that another boat on the mail line would start that same evening, as was actually the fact. But the activity of the runners was needless; for each boat had more passengers than it could well accommodate. I myself went aboard the "Lady Franklin," one of the mail boats, and was accommodated with a state-room. But what a scene is

witnessed for the first two hours after the passengers begin to come aboard! The cabin is almost filled, and a dense crowd surrounds the clerk's office, just as a ticket office of a theatre is crowded on a benefit night. Of course not more than half can get state-rooms and the rest must sleep on the cabin floor. Over two hundred cabin passengers came up on the Lady Franklin. The beds which are made up on the floor are tolerably comfortable, as each boat is supplied with an extra number of single mattresses. The Lady Franklin is an old boat, and this is said to be its last season.<sup>1</sup> Two years ago it was one of the excursion fleet to St. Paul, and was then in its prime. But steamboats are short lived ...

Three weeks after this trip the Lady Franklin was snagged, and became a total loss.

... We were nearly four days in making the trip. The line of boats of which the Lady Franklin is one, carries the mail at fifty dollars a trip. During the boating season I believe the fare varies from seven to ten dollars to St. Paul. This season there have been two lines of boats running to Minnesota. All of them have made money fast; and next season many more boats will run. The "Northern Belle" is the best boat this season, and usually makes the trip up in two days. The advertised time is thirty hours ...

... It is quite rare to see a bluff which rises gradually enough to admit of its being a good town site. Hence it is that settlements on the banks of the river will never be very numerous. Nature has here interposed against the civilization which adorns the lower Mississippi. It appears to me that all the available points for town sites on the river are taken up as far as the bluffs extend ...

But there are several thrifty and pleasant villages in Minnesota, on the river, before reaching St. Paul ... the town of Hastings ... eclipses everything but St. Paul ... The boat stopped here an hour, and I had a good opportunity to look about the place. The town appears to have considerable trade with the back country ... A little way into the interior of the town I saw men at work on a stone church; and approaching the spot, I determined to make some inquiries of a boy who was briskly planning boards. First, I asked how much the church was going to cost? About \$3000, he replied.

"Are there other churches in the place?"

"Yes, up there, where they are building."

"What denomination is that?"

"I don't know," he responded. "I only came into the place yesterday."

I thought he was doing well to begin to build churches so soon after his arrival ...

The great panorama which time pains is but a species of dissolving views. It is but as yesterday the present sites of towns and cities on the shores just referred to showed only the rude huts of Indian tribes. To-day, the only vestige left there of the Indian are his burying grounds. Hereafter the rudeness of pioneer life shall be exchanged for a more genial civilization, and the present, then the past, will be looked back to as trivial by men still yearning for the future.