

Transcribed Excerpts from C.C. Andrews' Letters III and V about his Trip to Minnesota and Dakota Territory, 1857

Letter III

City of St. Paul

Fuller House, St. Paul, October, 1856

The circumstance of finding a good spring of water first led to the settlement of Boston. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that a similar advantage induced the first settler of St. Paul to locate here; for I do not suppose its pioneers for a long while dreamed of its becoming a place even of its present importance ... when the speculator came he saw that it was at the head of navigation of what he thought was the Upper Mississippi, but which in reality is only the Middle Mississippi. Then the stores were put up, small and rude, and trade began to increase with settlers and hunters of fur ... I believe this city numbers at present about 10,000 population. It is destined to increase for a few years still more rapidly than it has heretofore ...

I have had an agreeable stroll down up on the bluff, south-east from the city, and near the elegant mansion of Mr. Dayton. The first engraving of St. Paul was made from a view taken at that point. As I stood looking at the city, I recalled the picture in Mr. Bond's work, and contrasted its present with the appearance it had three or four years ago. What a change! Three or four steamers were lying at the levee; steam and smoke were shooting forth from the chimneys of numerous manufactories; a ferry was plying the Mississippi, transporting teams and people; church steeples and domes and great warehouses stood in places which were vacant as if but yesterday; busy streets had been built and peopled; rows of splendid dwellings and villas, adorned with delightful terraces and gardens, had been erected ... The whole scene revealed the glorious image of that ever advancing civilization which springs from well rewarded labor and general intelligence ...

... It is estimated that 28,000 people have visited and left St. Paul during the present season. During July and August the travel diminishes, but as soon as autumn sets in it comes on again in daily floods. It is really a novel and interesting state of things one finds on his arrival at the hotel. There are so many people from so many different places!

... I find people who have come from all sections of the country — from the east and the west, and from the south — not adventures merely, but men of substance and means, who seek a healthier climate and a pleasant home ...

The suspension bridge which connects Minneapolis with St. Anthony is familiar to all. It is a fit type of the enterprise of the people. I forget the exact sum I paid as toll when I walked across the bridge — perhaps it was a dime; at any rate I was struck with the answer given by the young man who took the toll, in reply to my inquiry as I returned, if my coming back wasn't included in the toll paid going over? "No," said he, in a very good-natured way, "we don't know anything about coming back; it's all go ahead in this country."

Letter V

St. Paul to Crow Wing in Two Days ...

Crow Wing, October, 1856

Here I am, after two days drive in a stage, at the town of Crow Wing, one hundred and thirty miles, a little west of north, from St. Paul ...

Between St. Paul and this place is a tri-weekly line of stages. The coaches are of Concord manufacture, spacious and comfortable; and the entire equipage is well adapted to the convenience of travelers ... I left Fuller House in the stage at about five in the morning. There were only a convenient number of passengers till we arrived at St. Anthony, where we breakfasted; but then our load was more than doubled, and we drove out with nine inside and about seven outside, with any quantity of baggage. The road is very level and smooth ... it is an uncommonly superior road ...

As near as I am able to learn, the things which conduce to [Crow Wing's] availability as a business place are these — First, it is the beginning of the Upper Mississippi navigation. From this point steamboats can go from two to three hundred miles ... This of course is a great element in its future success, as the country above in the valley of the river is destined to be thickly settled, and boats will run between this point and the settlements along the river.