

Jefferson Manitoba

June 2. 73.

Dear William

Thanks for your  
letters received here on my arrival  
yesterday. I hope you may get off  
on the Restigouche trip, & find it  
pleasant & instructive.

On arriving at Moorhead a few  
days ago we found that the  
American Bdry. Com. Party had  
engaged nearly the whole steamer  
for their accomodation, including the

whole of the available sleeping  
acomodation. Fortunately we  
managed to get along however. I  
Should think there must have been  
nearly 200 people in all, & only proper  
sleeping room for 40 or 50. The Captain  
made fast a large alomside the steamer,  
piled it full of trunks &c, placed a layer  
of bap of oats, & erected an awning  
tent like over the whole. Here all the  
second class passengers slept. The  
first class lay in blankets on the Saloon  
floor, or on deck, or wherever they chose.  
Russel through knowing some of the  
American commissins got a small

berth, & he was kind enough to allow  
me to share it, & we spent the three  
nights head & tail fashion very comfortably.

The steamers are stern wheel boats, &  
which is curious, throw their used  
steam up the funnels like a locomotive.  
This no doubt helps the fire, but at the  
same time throws out such a shower  
of sparks that hats & clothes generally  
suffer to no small degree.

The Red River twists & meanders in  
the upper part of its course in a way  
that baffles all description. You may  
judge of it for yourself when you know  
that though the air line from here to  
Moorehead is not very long, it takes  
three nights & a day to steam down by

the river. Every few minutes we  
would come to an extra sharp turn  
which - the river being narrow - necessitated  
stopping & backing. Very generally on these  
occasions the steamer elms into the  
bank on the concave side, plunges in among  
the half submerged bushes & then rebounds  
into the middle of the stream.

The banks are 40 or 50 feet high, &  
in the upper portion quite close to the  
river, leaving only a narrow band of  
wood, generally elm, on each side.

If you climb up the bank, you experience  
the sensation of getting on a table, &  
see nothing but level prairie before you,  
unless there happens to be some distant  
line of trees in sight marking a stream

Course or head of the river.

During the trip a pelican was shot by a man on board & picked up as the steamer passed. They are common out here on some of the lakes. We also saw a fine pair of white-headed eagles hovering round their nest, which was in a high dead elm & seemed to be composed of about two barrels of sticks, arranged much after the fashion of a heap of Spillicans.

The American party, to most of whom I was introduced, landed at Fort Pembina, which is on the left bank, about 4 miles south of the line, & consists of several neat white-painted wooden buildings. It was raining heavily at the time, &

they had to climb up the bank in  
a little deep mud.

Pembina village is about 3 miles from  
the line & here we stopped again. It is  
a poor looking place.

Just on the line, & still on the left  
Bank is the Canadian Custom House.  
It seems however that the building  
is actually a few hundred yards in  
American Territory, & must be  
moved soon. The Hudson Bay part  
is just on our side & N of the Custom  
house. It & surroundings, including  
the post office, has been lately  
christened West-Point. Three miles  
further on are the Sufferin barracks  
where I now write. The buildings

are quite numerous altogether, but have  
not yet been painted & so of course  
look very new. Thickets & small woods  
spread for some distance around &  
so the place does not look bare.

I was so unfortunate during the turmoil  
of landing in the rain & wind  
yesterday to lose sight of two boxes  
of my apparatus, & also one of my  
own valises. I think they got  
heaped up among Winnipeg luggage  
& expect to get them when the boat  
gets here on her return trip tomorrow.  
I will not forget shells, & have  
already found three species of *Unio* in  
the Red River.

I have hardly got settled yet, nor do I know exactly where I may go first. Very probably I may stay here a week or ten days. I am to have I believe. A spring cart, & a horse for it. Two pack horses, a riding horse, & two teamsters. I hope to get the services of one of the men here who understands bird skinning & as an assistant in that line.

I will write again soon & tell you how I am getting on & & hope you will do the same for me.

Your affectionate brother  
George H. Dawson

McGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 909C/4
REF. 7