

Acc 926  
Missouri River  
We, 30. 1881

Dear Ranking,

We have been voyaging up this  
intermittent river since the 16th, but now  
hope to reach Benton day after tomorrow, &  
feel almost there. I got your kind note  
a few days before leaving home, & am  
anxious to know what your plans for the  
rest of the summer are. I did not visit  
in lots at Bismarck, as I was not long  
there, & besides do not think there is  
anything to make it much of a place. The  
surrounding country is not good. At present  
it is the chief point for supply of the  
upper Missouri country by the River, simply  
because the N.B. Ry strikes the river at  
this point. In a few years the N.B. will

be offered to Montana, & then the  
 river work will become quite subsidiary,  
 for even though the Ry freights are high,  
 the cost & difficulty of the steamer on the  
 upper River is very great; at present  
 Besawack is one of the roughest, wildest &  
 worst towns in the west. There are no towns  
 or even villages between it & Benton, only  
 military posts & Indian agencies, with  
 here & there a squatter's Cabin. Said squatters  
 generally making a living by cutting wood  
 for the steamers & hunting. Freights from  
 Besawack to Benton about 1.50 per 100 lbs.  
 about 75 small stern wheelers in the carrying  
 business between on the upper Missouri &  
 Yellowstone. Little true agricultural land  
 along river. Flats pretty but subject to overflow.  
 Higher prairies dry. Pasture land. Let me  
 hear from you when you have time. Yours affec. brother  
 George M. Dawson