

MS # 12-05 01 01 03

ISAIAH LAFAYETTE KEPHART'S LETTER TO HIS SON HORACE KEPHART

October 3rd & 4th, 1888



Fig. 1: Isaiah Kephart at Gold Buckhannons's Mill

Transcribed and Edited by
Nicole Palpal-latoc
for ENGL 618: Research Methods in English
Instructor and General Editor: Dr. Brian Gastle
10 December 2019

Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 - Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

Introduction

This edition is created from the manuscript of Isaiah Lafayette Kephart's (I.L.K.) letter to his son Horace Kephart on October 3rd & 4th, 1888. Isaiah Kephart's letter from these two days covers topics of domestic life such as complementing Horace's wife Laura and their newborn Cornelia, updating Horace on his sister's schooling, what has happened in their community recently and a small mention of what chores Horace's mother is performing at that time of year. Among general updates of domestic life, Isaiah Kephart also writes out a genealogy of Horace's mother's paternal family that immigrated from Switzerland and Germany. This would be of particular interest to scholars tracing Horace Kephart's family tree, for the names and dates listed within this letter are largely missing from record. This letter subtly reveals the ways in which genealogy and family trees were kept up with and tracked in times well before the access that digital advancements have given us today. Isaiah Kephart also briefly discusses his honorable discharge from the Union Army after the American Civil War.

The letter's recipient, Horace Kephart, was born in 1862 in Pennsylvania, though he grew up in Iowa. In 1875, at the age of thirteen, Kephart attended Western College. In 1876, he enrolled at Lebanon Valley College. Later, he went to Boston University where he spent much of his time studying in the Boston Public Library. This led to an interest in working as a librarian and a year later, in 1880, he moved to New York and received a position at Cornell University as a supervisor of the library's resources. He also enrolled in graduate classes there, focusing on history and political science. Cornell's first librarian, Willard Fiske, invited Kephart to work with him in Florence, Italy. In 1886, Kephart returned to the states and worked in a temporary position at Rutgers College, eventually accepting an offer to be an assistant in Yale College's library. By 1890, Kephart had landed him a job as the director of the Mercantile Library in St. Louis, Missouri where he worked for over a decade. Due to "ill health," Kephart resigned from his position as director and began to focus on his literary work revolving around American outdoor life.

Kephart moved to North Carolina in 1904, to continue exploring his keen interest in nature. He wrote about his outdoor adventures and was published in magazines including *Forest and Stream*, *Outing*, "The Southern Highlander" in *Outing Magazine*, and *All Outdoors*. He published a number of books as well—the most well-known, *Our Southern Highlanders* and *The Book of Camping and Woodcraft; A Guidebook for Those Who Travel in the Wilderness*. He was an advocate for environmental conservation and partook in the creation of the Appalachian Trail. He also became one of the largest influencers for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Kephart remains one of the most influential regional writers.

Editor's Note

This edition of Isaiah Kephart's letter to Horace Kephart uses a diplomatic format. According to standard diplomatic format procedures, this transcription attempts to recreate the presentation and appearance of Isaiah Kephart's manuscript as he wrote it – all extra marks, deletions, misspellings, mistakes, and mark-throughs have been kept as is in order to enhance the reader experience, and to match the original letter as closely as possible. The transcription mostly follows with the letter page by page to ensure an easy read, and all paragraph breaks have been kept as they were in the manuscript. The annotations are done via footnotes to allow the reader easy access to pertinent background and contextual information during reading without losing place in the letter.

I.L. Kephart has distinguishing features of his penmanship, syntax, and grammar, which are included in a list below as a reference for future readings of I.L. Kephart's letters to his son Horace Kephart:

- The letter *t* is often not crossed, especially when coming at the end of a word.
- The letters *m* and *n* are often stretched particularly wide.
- The letters *C* and *O* are distinguishable only by the addition of an upper loop to *C*.
- The letter *p* is created without closing the loop.

All spelling errors, shorthand, inconsistencies, and grammatical features remain the same. A few editorial decisions were made that may be different from the original manuscript due to indistinguishable features of Isaiah Kephart's handwriting. This includes what I have decided is the word "wrote" but other possibilities are "writ" or "met." These decisions were made on a case by case basis after careful and close examinations. Underlined words in the transcription are replicated and do not indicate italicization. Bracketed information indicates editorial notes. Significant places, subject terms, and referenced literature are all annotated using footnotes to provide additional information. Proper names are as well and that information has come from either other manuscripts within Western Carolina University's special collections or from Ancestry Library Edition unless otherwise noted. Within this letter is a family tree transcribed verbatim by Horace's father from the Sower's family Bible. The verbatim spelling of the Sowers name is "Sour," but historically they have been recorded as Sower. I have replicated historical records for clarity and ease of retracing and also used the surname Sowers in footnotes instead of Sour. Another name I have used in footnotes that is accurate of historical records but not of the letter is the name Pentzer. In the letter it is written as Penser. Sources for the information within the footnotes can be found in the works cited at the end of the edition. The overall decision to format the edition accordingly was for accessible comprehension, simple comparison, and quick access to background information through the placement of the footnotes.

Manuscript Description

The letter is written in a light grey ink on yellowed, lightly blue-lined paper that is of heavier stock than contemporary lined paper but not as thick as cardstock. It is composed of two separate pages, each measuring approximately 16" x 5" when unfolded, 8" x 5" when folded. Page one of the manuscript opens up to page 2 and is then closed again to reveal page 3. At the bottom of page 3 of the manuscript, at the fold between page 1 and 3, there is what appears to be a brownish-red ink smear in the left hand corner. Each page has been folded three total times: one fold to create the front and back pages of the manuscript and two subsequent folds inward to presumably fit within an envelope. The second page of the manuscript, which is composed of the same construction as the first (as in the first page is also the last page but they are folded so that they are front and back), has a small dent in the right hand corner (when folded) that could have been caused by the slipping of it into an envelope.

Transcription

Westfield, Ill.

Oct. 3rd 1888,

Dear Horace & Laura,¹

Your letter of 1st inst
is just (2 P.M.) received and read.²
The baby's photos will arrive tomorrow
I suppose.³ Our annual conference
was in session here last week.⁴ We had
Bishop Dickson for our queen, and had
a very pleasant time.⁵ Among the at-
tendants was Rev. Penser--a full
cousin of your grandfather (my fath-
er) Kephart, for he is the son of Cath-
erine Kephart Penser--a sister of
my grandfather Kephart.⁶ He was
born and partly raised near Osce-
ola Mills, Pa. and then his parents
moved to Ohio. He was of our home
--took tea with us, and he told me
that he had written and sent
to your uncle E.B.(two weeks ago)

¹ Laura White Mack (1862-1954), wife of Horace Kephart.

² 18th century term for the word "instance."

³ Cornelia K. Kephart (1888-1947), Horace and Laura Kephart's first child.

⁴ The Church of the United Brethren in Christ held annual conferences at Westfield College.

⁵ Unknown.

⁶ Reverend William Pentzer (dates unknown), Horace Kephart's paternal first cousin twice removed (MSS #80-24.63 pp. 39); Rev. Henry Hunter Kephart Jr. (1802-1886), Horace Kephart's paternal grandfather; Catherine Kephart Pentzer (1793-1883), Horace Kephart's paternal great, great aunt (MSS #80-24.63 pp. 39); Henry Hunter Kephart Sr (1776-1858), Horace Kephart's paternal great grandfather.

a full statement of all that he knows about our ancestors.⁷ He told me that there were six (instead of five as I wrote you) brothers come over from Switzerland just after the close of the revolutionary war, but he does not know what became of them.⁸ He told me that some twelve years ago he wrote a Kephart in Indiana who said he lived in Bartholomew Co. Ind. and that he was an old man and said his father's name was Jacob Kephart—the original Jacob, one of the six brothers.⁹ I have written the treasurer of Bartholomew Co. Ind. to ascertain if there are any Kepharts living in that Co. but have not had time to hear from him yet.¹⁰

In 1859-62 there was an Essington Kephart (old man) living near Franklin, Venango Co. Pa. and he was a son of Caleb Kephart, I think.¹¹ Your uncle E. B. stayed overnight with him there once, and said he was an intelligent, sensible old man. He may have children living in the county.

The following is the record from the old German (Sowers) Bible: (verbatim)
“Michael Sour born” (no date given)
Leanora Frederika Sour born the 25th
October, A.D. 1785.¹²
Frederick Hartwig Sour, son of Michael

⁷ Ezekiel Boring Kephart (1834-1906), Horace Kephart's paternal uncle.

⁸ See letter from Isaiah Kephart to Horace Kephart dated 9-2-88, MS# 12-05 01 01 01; American Revolutionary War (1775-1783).

⁹ “wrote a Kephart” has been transcribed based on context, could also be “writ” or “met.” Jacob Kephart (1765-1836), Horace Kephart's paternal great, great uncle.

¹⁰ Records show that Henry Neinaber (1833-1891) held this position the year prior to this letter being sent.

¹¹ Essington Kephart (1807-1893). He was not the son of Caleb Kephart (1804-unknown) as Isaiah has assumed here, but actually brother to Caleb Kephart. Their father's name was Henry Kephart.

¹² Bibles were an antiquated method of keeping track of a family tree; Michael Sowers (~1753-1824), Horace Kephart's maternal great grandfather; Leonora Fredrika Sowers (1785-), Horace Kephart's maternal great grandmother.

and Leanora Frederika Sour, born the 31st
December A.D. 1816.¹³

Henry Sour son of Michael & L.F. Sour
born the 1st January A.D. 1819.¹⁴

William Sour son of Michael & Leanora
F. Sour born 26th of May A.D. 1820.¹⁵

Michael Sour son of Michael & Leanora
Frederika Sour born the 1st of March A.
D. 1822.¹⁶

Louisa Catherine Sour, daughter of
Leanora Frederika Sour, born the 3rd De-
cember A.D. 1823¹⁷

¹³ Frederick Hartwig Sowers (1816-unknown), Horace Kephart's maternal great uncle.

¹⁴ Henry Sowers (1819-1819), Horace Kephart's maternal great uncle.

¹⁵ William Sowers (1820-1895), Horace Kephart's maternal great uncle.

¹⁶ Michael Sowers (1822-1894), Horace Kephart's maternal grandfather.

¹⁷ Louisa Catherine Sowers (1823-1882), Horace Kephart's maternal great aunt.

Of the above, Henry died when a nursing babe, Frederick lives at the cherry tree (P.O. Grant) Indiana Co. Pa. William lives here with his son-in-law, Prof. Cooley; Michael is your grandfather; and Louisa C. was the wife of Wm Grumbling (Theodosias father) and is dead.¹⁸

Belle will copy the little note on the bottom of the little page of the old German Bible.¹⁹ They are the same at the beginning of the book and at the beginning of the N.T.²⁰ We are preserving it carefully.

I suppose your uncle E.B. has sent you, ere this, the statement furnished by Mr. Penser.²¹ We are all quite well, and getting along nicely.

I enclose your statement of Kepharts from army records, with my statements subscribed. I will only add that I was mustered out “by special order” because I tendered my

¹⁸ Cherry Tree, Indiana County, Pennsylvania (MSS #80-24.63 pp. 45); L.H. Cooley (dates unknown), Horace Kephart’s maternal second cousin by marriage (MSS #80-24.63 pp. 45); Wm is an abbreviation for William; William Grumbling (1825-1898), Horace Kephart’s maternal first cousin once removed by marriage; Theodosia Grumbling (1847-unknown), Horace Kephart’s maternal first cousin once removed.

¹⁹Elizabeth Belle Kephart (1871-1892), Horace Kephart’s sister.

²⁰ Abbreviation for New Testament in reference to the Bible containing the family tree.

²¹ “ere” is an abbreviation for before.

(5)

resignation.²² After Lee surrendered, our army returned to Petersburg Va. and as our regiment had more than 18 months to serve then yet, on our second enlistment, I expected it would be retained in the service (in being a cavalry regt.) and sent south to do provost duty.²³ And believing the war to be virtually over and not wishing to remain longer in the service, and seeing in the papers a notice stating that the resignation of Commissioner of-ficers would be accepted, I tendered my resignation, was honorably mustered out of service by special order on the 6th of May, 1865 and returned home.²⁴ I have my honorable discharge carefully preserved.²⁵

(over)²⁶

²² “Mustered” is an antiquated military term meaning sequestered.

²³ General Robert E. Lee (1807-1870), Commander of the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War (1862-1865); “regt” is an abbreviation for regiment; provost duty is also known as the Provost Guard, the military police for the Union Army during the American Civil War.

²⁴ It is unclear where in 1865 Isaiah Kephart lived, but it is recorded that in the year before his service he was living in East Salem, Pennsylvania, and in 1870, five years after the war, he lived in Jefferson, Iowa.

²⁵ It is unknown whether this document still exists.

²⁶ Did not mean turn over, meant end of letter written on October 3rd.

Oct. 4th 1888, 2.30 P.M.

Well, the mail has come and brought the photos, and we have just gotten through our first fits of admiration and complementing. Indeed we think they are perfect--so very good for a 5 weeks baby.²⁷ Both the Mother and baby are taken splendidly.²⁸ The look so life-like, we feel like speaking to them.²⁹ The babe looks exactly like you did when you were its age. This is our united opinion. Both baby and mother look so sweet we can compare them to nothing but Raphael's sistine Madonna.³⁰ How we would love to see them face to face. Be sure to make your arrangements so that you can visit us next summer.³¹ We must see you all.

The mail also brought me a letter from the treasurer of Bartholomew Co. Ind.³² He says he knows of no person by the name of Kephart in the county; but he says there is a man by the name of W. Gebhart living near Auburn, Ind.³³ Certain it is, however, that he is no kin of ours.

²⁷ See footnote 3.

²⁸ See footnote 1.

²⁹ George Eastman invented the Original Kodak Camera in 1888. It took 100-exposure rolls of film that produced circular images 2 5/8" in diameter. Once the roll had been completed, the camera was sent back to Kodak for processing and printing. It is unclear whether this was the camera used for these photographs specifically.

³⁰ Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520); commissioned in 1512, measuring 265 cm by 196 cm, and depicting a Madonna standing on clouds holding the Christ Child between Saint Sixtus and Saint Barbara, two distinctive winged cherubim resting on their elbows below her.

³¹ Horace Kephart would be living in and visiting from New Haven, CT at this time.

³² See footnote 10.

³³ Kephart name was originally Gebhard. Unknown how Isaiah is certain that there is no kinship.

I enclose the note from the old Bible
as copied by Belle.³⁴

We are all well. Your mother is busy
canning pears.³⁵ Fruit is very abun-
dant this year. Belle is busy with
her studies. They are Geog. Of
the Heavens, Nat. Theology, Mathemat-
ical Philosophy, and German.³⁶ She is
progressing finely.

We all send our love to all,

Affectionately,

I.L. Kephart.³⁷

P.S. A Mr. Barnes of Westerville, Ohio, brother
to our Lady Principal and a very fine
sensible, cultured gentleman, well ad-
vanced in his studies is now our

³⁴It is so far unknown whether this note or the Bible still exists. According to page 45 of MSS 80-24.63, Horace Kephart was in possession of the Bible at some point.

³⁵The second *n* in "canning" had been inserted from below using a carrot ("^").

³⁶The study of the German language. It is likely that it is because of Belle's studies that she was the one to make a note in the Sowers German Bible (see footnote 44).

³⁷Isaiah Lafayette Kephart (1832-1908), Horace Kephart's father.

our student, and is Belle's company.³⁸ He is a decided improvement on any company she has had here before.

I.L.K.

P.s. No. 2 Your mother wishes you to send the book she sent to Laura, entitled Parturition Without Pain, to your aunt Kate Dick³⁹

I.L.K.

³⁸ Lady Principal was a term used for someone responsible for the student affairs for female students. The person who held this position at this time is unknown, as is her brother Mr. Barnes.

³⁹ Full title *Parturition Without Pain: A Code of Directions for Escaping From the Primal Curse*, written by Martin Luther Holbrook and originally published in 1878. Parturition means "the action of giving birth to young; childbirth"; Kate Dick could be Sarah Catherine Dick (1849-1943), Horace Kephart's maternal aunt.

Works Cited

Ancestry Library. <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com> accessed 9 December 2019.

“Archives.” *Official Website of Bartholomew County Indiana*.

<https://www.bartholomew.in.gov/archives.html> accessed 9 December 2019.

Henry Nienaber (1833–1891), memorial no. 53064229. Columbus City Cemetery, Columbus, Bartholomew County, Indiana, USA. *Find A Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com> accessed 9 December 2019.

“History.” *Brethren in Christ U.S.* <https://bicus.org/about/history/> accessed 9 December 2019.

Holbrook, M.L. *Parturition Without Pain: A Code of Directions for Escaping from the Primal Curse*. M. L. Holbrook, 1878, New York.

<https://archive.org/details/101597780.nlm.nih.gov/page/n6> accessed 9 December 2019.

“Horace Kephart: Bibliography of Kephart Writings.” *Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma*. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, 2015. Accessed 30 November 2019.

Ellison, George and Janet McCue. *Back of Beyond A Horace Kephart Biography*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2019.

Kephart, Cyrus J. and William R. Funk. *Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart, D.D.* Press of United Brethren Publishing House, 1909.

Kephart, Horace. Journal 17. July 1904. Box 63. *MSS 80-24* Horace Kephart Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

Kephart, Isaiah Lafayette. Letter to Horace Kephart. 2 September 1888. Box 1, Folder 1. MS 12-05 Horace Kephart Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

-- Letter to Horace Kephart. 3 & 4 October 1888. Box 1, Folder 3. MS 12-05 Horace Kephart Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

“Original Kodak Camera, Serial No. 540.” *National Museum of American History*.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_760118 accessed 9 December 2019.

Oxford English Dictionary. <https://www.oed.com> accessed 9 December 2019.

“Westfield College.” *Clark County Illinois Genealogy and History*.

<http://genealogytrails.com/ill/clark/schools/westfieldcollege.html> accessed 9 December 2019.