

Isaiah L. Kephart's Letter to Horace Kephart

September 2, 1888

MS12-05 01 01 01

Transcribed and Edited by

Aria Rose Ashburn

For Engl 618: Research Methods in English

Instructor and General Editor: Dr. Brian Gastle

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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
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to the subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions.
 - 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.
 - c. 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 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 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 transcriptions and annotations 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 I. L. Kephart's letter to Horace Kephart on September 2, 1888. Within this letter, I. L. Kephart lays out the Kephart family tree in what is a rudimentary genealogy of the paternal side of Horace's family, seemingly at Horace's request. In addition, Isaiah recounts to Horace he was invited to Clearfield County, Pennsylvania to preach at a "campmeeting," or church meeting, with all of the expenses paid by the church. Afterwards, he writes a few brief paragraphs on how Horace's family in Massachusetts is doing, and discusses briefly the upcoming election, before signing off. The genealogy continues to be a subject in subsequent letters; Isaiah continues the story of the family lineage in a letter he wrote to Horace in October of the same year. Isaiah is Horace Kephart's father, and seems to be deriving this genealogy from his memory and information he has received from other members of the Kephart family.

Isaiah L. Kephart was born on December 10th, 1832. He lived a modest childhood, working on his father's farm and later as a raftsmen when he was a boy. Once he was old enough, he began his long journey through several US colleges and educational institutions, starting with Dickinson Seminary in Pennsylvania. He also attended Pleasant College and Otterbein University, both also in Pennsylvania. In 1863, Isaiah enlisted as a chaplain of the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry, a role he served in until May 6th, 1865, when he was honorably discharged at his own request. He spent the rest of his life giving lectures in mathematics and sermons as a pastor, serving in various high ranking positions in US schools (principal, county superintendent, professor, etc.). He died on October 28th, 1908.

The letter's recipient, Horace Kephart, was born in 1862 in Pennsylvania. Not long after his birth, his family moved to Iowa, where he was raised. At eighteen, he attended Cornell University in New York City to become a librarian. It is here where he met his mentor, and eventual colleague, Willard Fiske. In 1884, Kephart moved to Italy to work with Fiske. During this time, he published several articles on libraries, which seems to be the start of his writing career. In '86, Kephart returned to the United States, and accepted a job as a librarian at Yale University, a position he is still filling when his father sends him this letter. After 1888, Kephart serves in a number of librarian positions, and begins to publish major works in the library

sciences field. It is here that he begins to earn some of his fame and renown, before moving on to what he is truly known for.

In 1904, at 42 years old, Horace Kephart moved to western North Carolina to rebuild his life after a severe mental breakdown. It is here that he becomes the outdoor explorer and writer that earned him his fame. He spent the rest of his life as an outdoors man, chronicling his journeys in his writing, and subsequently publishing those pieces. Most notably, he was published in several magazines, including *Stream*, *Outing Magazine*, and *All Outdoors*. He also published several books, but the two most well-known are *Our Southern Highlanders* and *The Book of Camping and Woodcraft; A Guidebook for Those Who Travel in the Wilderness*. His writings and advocacy for environmental conservatism were a major factor in the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and he remains one of the most influential writers to make his home in western North Carolina. In 1931, Horace Kephart was killed in an automobile accident. He is buried in the Bryson City Cemetery.

Editor's Note

This edition of Isaiah Kephart's letter to Horace Kephart features a diplomatic format. According to standard diplomatic format procedures, this transcription attempts to recreate the presentation and appearance of Isaiah's manuscript— all extra marks, deletions, misspellings, mistakes, line breaks, and mark-throughs have been kept as is in order to match the original letter as closely as possible. The annotations are provided via footnotes to allow the reader easy access to pertinent background and contextual information. In several places throughout the letter, there are multiple annotations contained within the same footnote, especially to give contextual information around the who Isaiah is talking about within the family tree; this ensures that the footnotes remain consistent, and to save space on the page. In footnotes containing multiple annotations, the annotations will remain in the same order as the names appear in the sentence annotated. The genealogical information featured in the annotations of this document derive from a combination of *Ancestry Library Edition*, *Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart* by Cyrus Jefferies Kephart, and from Horace Kephart's journal.

Isaiah L. Kephart has several distinguishing features in his hand writing, syntax, and grammar which are included in the list below as a reference for readers of the original letter:

- Capital C's and Capital O's are the same in several places, except for an upper loop he adds to his C's
- T's at the end of words do not get crossed
- Stretched out m's and n's
- Lower case p's often do not close fully

Other Editor's Notes: there is an instance where Isaiah refers to a Rev. W^M G. Kephart in the letter. the W^M is used to represent an old 19th century method of abbreviating William that Isaiah utilizes in this letter.

Manuscript Description

The letter is a two page document with six separate pages. Each page measures 16" x 5" when unfolded, and 8" X 5" when folded in half. Page one of the manuscript is on the front section when the document is folded, and to read page two the document needs to be unfolded to its full length. Page three continues on to the back of the document. On the second sheet of paper, the continuation of the manuscript is denoted with a "(5)" at the top of the page, letting the reader know which side of the document to continue on. The paper itself is a slight yellow with light blue lines running across the page. It is slightly thicker than contemporary paper, adding extra weight to the manuscript compared to a modern letter. It has been folded three times; once to fold it in half, and then twice more to allow the manuscript to fit into an envelope. Interesting features of this manuscript include the occasional smudge mark, presumably stained by a Isaiah's own hand.

(MS Page One)

Westfield, Ill. 9-2-'88¹

Dear Horace,

Your good letter of 22nd inst. came in due time.² We are glad to learn that Laura and the babe are doing so well.³ Laura may well attribute her success to her “never having worn a corset, high-heeled shoes, or other fashionable monstrosities.” That agrees exactly with what Mis. Elizabeth Cady Stanton once said in a lecture which your mother attended.⁴ If [^]the mothers and daughters of today would only heed such lessons, how much better it would be for them and the race. We congratulate Laura and her mother on their good sense, and you on your good luck in scoring such a wife. As to an ancestry, I am glad you are interested in looking it up. But it is a

¹ A small town in Clark County Illinois, where I. L. Kephart lived at the time of writing this letter.

² Abbreviation of *instance*, an 18th century term used to relate an item (e.g. a letter) to a point in time.

³ Laura White Mack Kephart (1862-1954), wife of Horace Kephart.

Cornelia Kephart (1888-1947), oldest child of Horace and Laura Kephart.

⁴ Renown feminist from the 19th and 20th century. Strongly influenced the early women’s suffrage movement with Susan B. Anthony.

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huge undertaking, for they are so numerous. This much I know of it, (which I think is very reliable) – soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, the following named brethren came to America from Switzerland; Nicholas, Adam, Jacob, Daniel, Caleb, and John, and settled in eastern PA.⁵ – and Adam settled in Berks Co. - Caleb lived at one time in Center, PA, and had several sons.

was the oldest and to him were born the following, - Daniel, Abraham, Henry, Andrew, George, Susan, Mary, Elizabeth, and Catherine.⁶ (A grandson of Catherine by the name of Penser is an alumnus of Westfield College from whom I think I can gather some statistics.)⁷

Nicholas, was my great grandfather.

He removed from Berks to Centre County, Pa, soon after he came to America. I know

⁵ Nicolas G. Kephart (1733-1829), great-great-grandfather of Horace Kephart.

Adam Kephart (1744-1829), great-great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Jacob Kephart (1765-1836), great-great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Daniel Kephart (1755-1822), great-great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Caleb Kephart (1778-1833), great-great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

John Kephart (1780-1847), great-great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

⁶Daniel Kephart (1768-1841), son of Nicolas and great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Abraham Kephart (1773-1866), son of Nicolas and great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Henry Hunter Kephart Sr. (1776-1858), son of Nicolas and great-grandfather of Horace Kephart.

Andrew Kephart (1788-1858), son of Nicolas and great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

George Kephart (1783-1879), son of Nicolas and great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

Unidentified

Mary Kephart (1785-unknown), daughter of Nicolas Kephart and great-aunt of Horace Kephart.

Elizabeth Kephart (1789-1850), daughter of Nicolas Kephart and great-aunt of Horace Kephart.

Catherine Kephart (1783-death unknown), daughter of Nicola and great-aunt of Horace Kephart.

⁷ Reverend William Pentzer (birth and death unknown), Horace Kephart's paternal first cousin twice removed. Westfield College in Illinois, founded as a seminary in 1861 by the United Brethren in Christ.

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nothing what became of his sons, Daniel and Abraham; but George, [^]Son of Nicolas, lived and died in Blair Co. Pa. near Bald Eagle Furnace. ~~He kn I~~ saw him often.

He had but one son, Daniel⁸ by name, who lived in Clearfield Co. near Hartzdale, raised a large family of boys (none of whom amounted to anything) and died there, not many years ago.

Andrew, son of Nicholas, lived in Clearfield Co. Pa. near Wallaceeton. He had three sons, John, Jacob and George⁹. I knew them well, but do not know what became of them.

Henry, son of Nicolas, was my grandfather.¹⁰ He married Catherine Smith, an orphan girl, of purely English blood.¹¹ To them were born in the following order. – Margaret (who married William Harner), David, Henry (my father, born Jan. 5th 1802, near Centre Furnace, Centre Co. Pa), Mary, (who married Andrew Nerhoff) Andrew, Barbara (who married Simeon Crane) Helen, (who married Daniel son of Adam [one of the original five brothers]), George, William, Char-

⁸ Unidentified

⁹ Unidentified; there is no record of Andrew Kephart having children.

¹⁰ Henry Hunter Kephart Sr. (1776-1858), great-grandfather of Horace Kephart.

¹¹ Maria Catherine Smith (1781-1857), great-grandmother to Horace Kephart.

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lotte (who married John Crane [brother of
Simeon, above named]) Nancy (who married
Richard Hughes, and Stephen.¹²

¹² Margaret Hartner, formerly Margaret Kephart (birth unknown-1833/1834), great-aunt to Horace Kephart.
William Harner (birth and death unknown), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart and husband of Mary Kephart.
David Kephart (1800-1871), great-uncle of Horace Kephart.
Henry Kephart Jr. (1802-1886), grandfather of Horace Kephart and father of Isaiah Kephart.
Mary Nearhoff, formerly Mary Kephart (birth and death unknown), great-aunt to Horace Kephart.
Andy Nearhoff (birth and death unknown), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart and husband of Mary Kephart.
Andrew S. Kephart (1807-1882), great-uncle to Horace Kephart.
Barbara Crane, formerly Barbara Kephart (1813-1892), great-aunt of Horace Kephart.
Simeon Crane (birth and death unknown), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart and husband of Barbara Kephart.
Helen Kephart (birth and death unknown), great-aunt of Horace Kephart.
Daniel Kephart (1802-1866), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart, and husband of Helen Kephart.
George Kephart (1815-1866), great-uncle of Horace Kephart.
William Kephart (1816-1890), great-uncle of Horace Kephart.
Charlotte crane, formerly Charlotte Kephart (1819-1899), great-aunt of Horace Kephart.
Jon Crane (birth and death unknown), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart and Charlotte's husband.
Nancy Hughes, formerly Nancy Kephart (1823-1904), great-aunt of Horace Kephart.
Richard Hughes (birth and death unknown), great-uncle-in-law to Horace Kephart and husband of Nancy.
Stephen Kephart (1827-1887), great-uncle of Horace Kephart.

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Of Henry's children (my uncles and aunts) only William, Charlotte, Barbara and Nancy are living.) William lives in Republican Co. Kansas and has sons and grandsons. Charlotte and Nancy live in Clearfield Co. Pa. near Ocoola, and Barbara lives in Blair Co. Pa. I saw Nancy and her husband (Richard Hughes) last Sabbath at the Bigler Campmeeting.¹³

Adam, (brother of Nicholas) lived and died in Berks Co. Pa. Two of his sons, (Daniel, the one who married my aunt Hellen, and ~~John~~ Jonathan) lived and died in Clearfield Co. Pa. they both had large families of boys and girls, Nathan, whom perhaps you remember of us visiting at Ocoola, Pa. is a son of Jonathan.¹⁴

Caleb, brother of Nicholas, had several sons, one by the name of Conrad, who lived at Philipsburg Pa. about 1826-35, and then moved to the far west and finally settled near Dubuque, Iowa.¹⁵ He had several

¹³ A church meeting that was held in Bigler, Pennsylvania.

¹⁴ Jonathan Kephart (1797-1885), distant cousin of Horace Kephart.
Nathaniel Kephart (1835-1896), distant cousin of Horace Kephart.

¹⁵ Conrad Kephart (birth and death unknown), distant cousin of Horace Kephart.

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(5)

sons, two of whom (Henry and Andrew) are in California [Tuolumne Co. near Sonora].¹⁶

I corresponded with Henry while at Woodbridge Cal, and ascertained that he was grandson of Caleb, and son of Conrad.

I have heard of Rev. W^M G. Kephart of whom you speak.¹⁷ He was Chaplain of an Iowa Regiment during the war. John Lett (whom we knew in Jefferson, Iowa,) was in his regiment and spoke very highly of him.¹⁸ You had better correspond with him. – that is with Rev. W^M G. Kephart.

I know nothing of the Kepharts in Germantown, Pa, Phila, Dakota, Doylestown, Pa, Baltimore, Cleveland, Chicago, and Cincinnati; but rest assured they are all descendants of the original five brothers. There is not a shadow of doubt as to our being descendants of Kephart, that is a fact well establish

¹⁶ Henry Kephart (birth and death unknown), distant relative of Horace Kephart.

Andrew Kephart (birth and death unknown), distant relative of Horace Kephart.

¹⁷ Reverend William G. Kephart (birth 1818-1894), relation to Horace Kephart unknown.

¹⁸ Unidentified

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-ed. My father told me that when he was a little boy he lived one whole year with his grandfather, Nicholas Kephart, and learned to talk dutch with him; but I do not know what part of Switzerland he came from. I shall be glad to aid you in any way I can in establishing the genealogy of our family. But I must tell you of my visit to "old Clearfield Co. Pa." On the 20th inst, I received a telegram from the Bigler Campmeeting Association asking me to come and preach for them on the 26th , ,¹⁹ They agreeing to pay my expenses. So I started on Thursday the 23rd at 11.30 A.M., and on Friday at 9 P.M. landed at Bigler, which is near Woodland, Pa., (the place where we visited years ago (and you was with us) and I got the laurell cane.)²⁰ It is within 8 miles where I was born and raised, right in the pine regions. Saturday I strolled through a forest of native pine, and had interesting chats with old friends. Mr. Conly (Harry Albert's brother-in-law) had a cottage there.²¹ He lives

¹⁹ A small church association that held and organized large religious gatherings in Bigler Pennsylvania. It was disbanded in 1908.

²⁰ A misspelling of laurel; likely a cane made from the branch of a species of the genus *Laurus* or the family Lauraceæ.

²¹ Unidentified

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at Woodland, where we visited him when I got the cane. Sunday there were fully 10,000 people present at the meeting. I preached in my very best style, morning and evening, and received a perfect ovation, and met many of my cousins, and distant relatives and former acquaintances – also uncle Richard Hughes and aunt Nancy, and aunt Hannah Goss and ~~uncle~~ aunt Sarah Goss.²² It was a great treat for me. On Monday I left camp and on Tuesday I landed at Homer City, visited “Aunt Betsey” and “Uncle Billie Sowers,” and in the evening walked up to “Ed Murphy’s.”²³ Wednesday morning I mounted a three-year-old colt, rode out to Jim Dicks, took dinner with them; in the afternoon I rode down to Grandpa Sowers,²⁴ and in the evening I rode back to Homer, and stayed over night with

²² There were several Hannah and Sarah Goss’s living in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania at this time, but none of them seem related to each other or the Kepharts, unidentified.

²³ Unidentified; presumably members of the Sowers family, but Mary Elizabeth Sowers has no known siblings.

²⁴ Likely Michael Sowers (1822-1894), maternal grandfather of Horace Kephart.

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“Uncle Billie.” Thursday I attended a Grand Army Pic Nic, took dinner and supper with aunt Betsey, and at 5 P.M. took the train for home and arrived safely here at 7 P.M., Friday, – having traveled nearly 1400 miles in the trip, twenty of which I rode on horseback, and three of which I “footed.”

My exchanges were \$40.98 and the Campmeeting Association paid me \$45.00, and said they must surely have me next year.

But I must close. Your mother’s health is excellent. I do wish you could see her more. She is so jolly and cheerful. Belle is very healthy and rosey-cheeked.²⁵ School opens on the 5th inst. Prospects very good.

Belle is happy and gay, as a lark.

How will the election go? The Rep-s say here, that Harrison is sure to win, but I hope not.²⁶ Of course, he will carry Ill, but I shall vote for Fisk, “If the heavens fall,” We all send love, and want you and Laura to come and see us as soon as possible, for we are anxious to see our grand-child.²⁷ Write soon, I will send you Parth-

²⁵ Elizabeth Belle Kephart (1871-1892), sister of Horace Kephart.

²⁶ Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901), Republican Presidential Candidate in the 1888 election.

²⁷ Clinton B. Fisk (1828-1890), Prohibition Party Candidate in the 1888 election.

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enor's book with this.²⁸ Sincerely Yours,

I. L. Kephart

²⁸ Unidentified; the book is presumably a bible containing the Kephart Family tree.

Works Cited

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This secondary resource provided biographical and genealogical information on Horace Kephart and his family.

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

This Western Carolina University digital resource provided information on Kephart’s writings, as well as biographical information on him.

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This Western Carolina University digital resource provided information on Kephart’s background, specifically in relation to when he lived where and his past accomplishments.

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

This Western Carolina University special collections resource was useful in ascertaining information about I. L. Kephart and the Kephart Family tree.

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This Western Carolina University special and digital collections resource contributed biographical information on Isaiah and Horace Kephart, as well as information on the Kephart genealogy.

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This primary resource provided information on the disbandment of the Bigler Campmeeting Association.

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<http://genealogytrails.com/ill/clark/schools/westfieldcollege.html> accessed 10 December 2019.

This secondary resource provided background information in regards to Westfield College, including what it was, who established it, and why it shut down.