

## Ellen Douglas Denison Goodnow to Isaac Tichenor Goodnow

Ellen Goodnow wrote from Shannon, Kansas Territory, to her husband Isaac, who was traveling on the East Coast. In this letter, which is largely personal, Ellen Goodnow describes a frightening conflict between white settlers in the area and members of the Cheyenne Indian tribe. A neighbor had awakened her in the middle of the night to enlist men to fight alongside members of the Delaware Indians, who had also been attacked by the Cheyennes. Isaac's brother, William, had lead her to safety in Manhattan.

Creator: Goodnow, Ellen Douglass Denison, 1812-1890

Date: August 8, 1857

Callnumber: Isaac Goodnow Coll. #357, Box 2 Folder 9

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 3728

Item Identifier: 3728

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Shannon Wildcat Creek Aug 8/88

My dear Husband,

Yesterday William brought in two letters from you, one from E. G. & one from Boston. Welcome messengers I can assure you as I had not received one for two weeks. I received the directions about the claim, and went to Mr. Houston immediately and left it with him doing all that is for me to do. He said he would attend to your & Joseph's as soon as the office was opened which is not as yet, and he writes every week to show the news. You say why don't you write, I think I have been very faithful in that respect. Writing one every week but five since you left. Did you not get two long ones at Kansas and three at Fairbairns. two at E. G. one at Whitingham & one at Bellevue? I did not send one the last mail, being nearly sick enough to keep my bed, and in the dead of the night being awake by Mr. Houston saying he wanted to get long to go and enlist men to go immediately to the Ft. and prepare to fight the Cheyennes. Indians who had plundered several parties, and Mrs. Kearney of Fallston had come to his house for refuge, and all the families were fleeing. He was going to enlist a company of Delaware Indians, camped near the Kansas. They had recently lost four or five of their men by the same Cheyennes. He wanted long for his use as they lacked horses. Thought William Goodnow

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better take us, and Miss Denison's family to a stone  
 house in Manhattan immediately. The man that  
 came with Mr. H. went to Mr. Babbin and told him the  
 came over and as soon as we could get our trunks  
 and pack up and pick up a few things for to keep  
 up possible we looked up and left for Essex thinking  
 in all probability that our goods and some <sup>report said</sup> would be  
 burned we returned as they had sworn to exterminate  
 the whites. You cannot imagine the amount of thought  
 and feeling that can be crowded into a few hours space.  
 While Mr. H. had gone for the horse and wagon and  
 I had my trunks and trunks open I looked into  
 the garden, and exclaimed to Phatty the Indians are  
 right upon us. Shuttling up horses trunks and  
 horse I went out without anything on my head  
 and met them, and to my great joy they were the  
 Delawares that were going up to the Ft. the shortest  
 way, and wanted to go through. I opened the doors  
 and escorted them all through, and they rode up to  
 the door for water talking good english and appearing  
 well. We soon left for Essex, and Mr. H. went for more  
 information, and we concluded that if Phatty and I  
 went with our budgets that the rest might get  
 there after they had farther news. Such a Sabbath  
 I never spent, and I hope that such nervousness  
 and fear I shall ever be preserved. News came as  
 the men returned that it was a false alarm, and  
 as Mr. H. had business we did not return until  
 Monday night. Mr. H. was at Appledore to



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dinner said there never was a madder man  
than the commander of the 11th. The baggage  
that came up from Leavenworth came on  
forced march without eating or resting, as  
were so increased that they said on the march  
that they would have hung the men sent the  
alarm if they could get at them. We were obliged  
to get off with as little as I suffered, and began  
up that it was no worse, as it was, it can be  
as to lay by nearly all the week, with much  
weakness, and but of all the Lord has given  
us comfortable health again, and we hope  
be spared from being laid on a bed of sickness  
until you are by our side to comfort and care  
us. I could not help dropping one tear to think  
you were to delay your coming, but do not want  
you to hurry or overdo on my account. How soon  
you are hurrying off your visits at home at  
such a rate, rather endure all the privations  
of your absence a week or two longer and have  
enjoy those home visits. They say we need hear  
no further troubles from the Indians as the 11th is  
well manned at present the will be held  
back. Jane and the children are well, and  
were very much disappointed that Joseph  
did not write when you did. Were glad to hear  
had met. You did not say as much as we want  
to hear about the college. I had Gatty what  
should write for her she said tell him the

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Wild cats have eaten up my bobtail and four  
of her chickens. They have taken all but  
fourteen small chickens. You can't imagine  
how we want to see you. I have been counting the  
days for some time to the fourteenth when you  
are to be in Cincinnati. I will direct this there,  
and write you and that in at the same time  
directed to Chicago so you will get that if not  
this. William Goodnow I think will not get  
his business settled at until you see him there.  
Remember me affectionately to Dr & Sister Adams  
and the children that remember me. Love to all old  
friends you may see and as much for yourself as  
you choose to accept. As ever Yours Ellen.

Isaac T. Goodnow

N.B.

Think the dog you spoke of, I think you might  
get one with less labor and expense in Missouri that  
would by right training answer as well. That would  
not likely get here without wearing you out, E.