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Note: Only the first page of this letter was found, the rest of this letter had previously been transcribed by Jeannie Estrada, a cousin.

Monday Nov. 4 '35

Dear Edgar:

I'm not nearly as prompt about answering as you are but I have a good conscience which keeps nagging at me to get busy while things are fresh in my mind. When I first read your letters I think of about fifty different incidents that would be of interest to you and by the time I get going my mind is a big blank. About a year ago Dad was giving me sort of a ressume of his early days and I said, "Whoa Dad let me get that down I believe I'll send an article to the Nebr City Press just for fun about well let's call it - a few things that happened to a pioneer merchant of Otoe County Nebr.", so I'll copy it for you and perhaps it may help you somewhat in our genealogy :

Alexander Francis a pioneer merchant of Dunbar, Otoe county, Nebr. for 37 years was born in Merrickville Canada on July 9th 1853 of Scotch-Irish parents James Francis and Esther Humphrey Francis. When eight years of age - 1861 - we came to Nebraska City by train as far as St. Joe and by boat on the Missouri River to Nebr. City. Our party consisted of my sister Mary and husband John Lewis my brothers Stuart, Will, Peter, sister Rachel and Jimmy the baby. My father had a couple of ranches near Denver Colo and had gone on ahead of us to look after these places at Fort Vrains Colo. So he wasn't with us at this time. We had been in Nebr City only a few months when my mother passed away and

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was buried in Yuka cemetery at Nebr City. It was about six weeks before my father arrived as it took a long time to get the word to him and he drove a mule team from Denver to Nebr City. In the Spring of '62 we crossed the plains with the Overton Bros. With probably 50 teams of freight -- ox teams --. We spent a year at Fort St. Vrain on my father's ranch. Then my father and second eldest brother Will went to Montana to the gold mines. And my two brothers Peter and Jimmy and myself (he doesn't mention Stuart here) came back to Nebr City with Nels Overton in a prairie schooner and ox teams. I lived in Nebr until 20 yrs of age then went out to Oregon and spent three years there. Was working with my father on the farm and brother Peter and I farmed one year together. Then I worked on the shoe bench for two years. In the Spring of '76 my brother-in-law George Whitaker (sister Rachel's husband) came out to Oregon and we decided that Oregon wasn't as good a place to live as Nebr so we came back to Nebr in the Fall of '76. I farmed with my brother Stuart in '77 and in the fall, my childhood sweetheart, who rocked in the same cradle with me since our mothers were fast friends, Rachel Fletcher, came to visit her sister Mrs. Stuart Francis (Minnie Mary Fletcher). We were married Dec. 8th, 1877 and my wife and I farmed four years and saved enough to start us in the General Mdse business by raising corn at .10 (cents) a bushel.

I started in business with my old partner R. W. W. Jones and we were partners for thirteen years. I stuck to the General Mdse business for 24 years after we dissolved partnership and I went out of business in the fall of 1917 -- traded my business for a farm over in Iowa. Two years later in the Fall of 1919 I moved my family consisting of my wife and

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daughter Nita, to Beloit, Kans. and we've lived here for fourteen years. My health improved and I again went back to my old weight of 240 lbs. So you see it wasn't such a bad move after all, altho I'll never go back on my old Nebraska friends and customers. Since I've been here, I've been a trouble shooter for the grocers of Beloit -- helping them out when they needed an experienced hand. While I'm not up to the standard in health, on account of a cancerous ear, am still able to get around and eat three squares a day and have passed my 80th birthday. At the present moment while writing this I am sitting here in my big arm chair enjoying this nice cozy porch of my Beloit residence. My only occupation being my nice garden and the care of sixteen old hens."

Will try to answer some of the questions you asked. I asked Dad what Uncle Stuart was doing and why he didn't go back to Nebr. with them with the oxtrain and he said Stuart was out on the plains somewhere and he afterwards went to Canada to finish his schooling. He said when he came back to Nebr. he was engaged to Mother's sister Sarah Fletcher, but Sarah in the meanwhile became infatuated with George Carr and eloped with him which enraged her parents. They thought she had disgraced them because she wasn't married in the good old fashioned way, besides they thought Uncle Stuart quite an eligible young swain and were quite disappointed. So when Uncle Stuart came back to Canada and found that another guy had beat his time, he said "Well, I must have one of the Fletcher girls" and Minnie was the right age so they were duly married and as you say, Uncle Art was best man and I think Aunt Sue was bridesmaid. Any way, I've heard mother laugh and tell about the "pranks" they played on Arthur. She and Aunt Sue filled his

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overshoes with water and set them out doors to freeze. I wish, Edgar, you could have visited more with mother. She had the best memory and always saw the funny side and could surely dramatize everything. The Francis and Fletcher families were always close friends, so their histories would have a lot in common. I imagine Carrie and Eva Colbourne at 44 Sherwood St., Brockville, Ontario, Canada or Mildred Jane Chapman at 77 Ormand St., Brockville, could tell you a lot of interesting things. Carrie & Eva's mother was mother's sister Jane and Mildred's mother was Aunt Susie. And Mrs. Mary Reeves (Mrs. J. G. Reves at 83 6th St. Portland, Oregon) could tell you about Will & Pete Francis families. The girl Aunt Rachel Francis Whittaker raised -- Nora Whittaker -- married Aunt Mary's son, John Lewis, so she would probably know a lot about Aunt Mary. She is married again and her name is Mrs. Nora Clark Route #3 3345 Salem, Oregon. If you write to these people let me know what you find out, will you -- I am intensley interested in all this and will help you in any way I can. I told you about Peter Francis of Irish Creek, Ont., Canada. Well, Mother and I spent a summer in Canada about two years after you visited us at Dunbar and of course we tried to find Dad's relatives in Canada, but he (Peter) was the only one we saw. We were in Irish Creek a couple days and started one evening to drive out to Great Aunt Rachel's farm not far from there and a bad storn came up and so we had to turn back. I remember we went part way on a 'corderoy' road. I'm not sure that I spelt that correctly.

But I was so disappointed at not seeing my Great Aunt and I've always regretted it. We had dinner with Peter Francis and wife and two little girls. He looked a lot like Uncle Stuart (red hair and lots of

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freckles) not so good looking as Uncle St. Yes, Uncle Stuart was in the General Mdse business at Dunbar and sold out when he and Aunt Minnie went back to Canada. He never wanted to go back, but my Aunt was so discontented that he did it to please her. He did a lot with fine racing horses when he went back to Brockville and took a lot of prizes Dad says.

*Must close now -- More later --*

*Lovingly,*

*Nita*

P.S. I notice I have an extra blank sheet so will write another little dab. Dad was just saying -- "I remember when we were living at Fort St. Vaines that we took our hay to Denver and sold it for \$40.00 a ton and bought flour at \$20.00 a sack. I thought that was interesting. Did I tell you that I taught in Wallowa Oregon one semester and in Miles City Montana one semester in 1927-28. In 1924 (in the summer) I worked at Yellowstone Park from June 15 to Sept 12th. Was a Savage for three months. I was a pillow puncher and sheet slinger -- in other words -- Lodge Maid. Got \$15.00 a month and a \$15.00 bonus because my work was o.k. Had a wonderful summer. Met some gorgeous people from all over the world. Made some wonderful friends. I played steel guitar to help entertain the visitor. I got my appointment the second summer, but mother was ill so I couldn't go. Met some lovely fellows from your state in Iowa. One we called Dr. Buzz and Skeet and Jiggs, and Sid our chief 'Pack Rat', (porter). I could tell you their names if I looked them up, but we called each other by 'pet' names, which was a lot more fun. They

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*called me "Old Faithful" after Old Faithful Geyser because I got sea sick and Erupted (heaved Jonah) one day when we were out on a boat trip on Yellowstone Lake. I really never had so many experiences and so much fun before or since.*

*Nita*