

Leonidas Merritt was the son of Hepzibah Jewett Merritt (1812-1906) and Lewis Howell Merritt(1809-1880). Leonidas traveled from Pennsylvania to Superior, Wisconsin in 1856, with his mother and four brothers to join his dad and older brother, Napoleon (age 20), who had made the journey to Minnesota a year earlier. Leonidas had nine brothers and one sister. He and seven of his brothers lived to be adults. Lon (1844-1926) was the sixth child, the fifth son, and he had four younger brothers. He grew up and lived his entire adult life in Oneota. He served in the Civil War. His dad, he, and two brothers explored for iron ore. Lon and Alfred were land surveyors, timber cruisers, businessmen responsible for launching a railroad and ore docks, and Lon was later involved in Duluth's government. Lon was a Duluth city commissioner of public utilities and finance. The Merritt family was large, and appears to have been close-knit. He was very close to his brother Alfred - Alf - who was three years younger. Friends describe Alfred as a quiet, logical man. Lon died six months before Alf, and they are both buried in the Oneota cemetery in Duluth.

A LETTER FROM LEONIDAS MERRITT TO HIS BROTHER

In Camp

Sioux City

May 24th 1864

To B. B M B..

Dear Brother Alfred

I am just in the humor now to write you an answer to your very kind letter of the 9th instant I am glad you saw fit to write to me oh dear brother how know I miss your company you can even take all the excitement and amusement in the world could not keep me from thinking of you and my dear friends at home. I am thankful now for one thing and that is health I feel first rate and I have enough. When we have to graze our horses from 6 untill 8 and drill on foot from 8 till ten oclock then in the afternoon from one to two and late our horses from 2 till 5 the rest of the time we have to ourselves. When we are to leave this place is as impossible for me to state probably in the course of two or three weeks

Sioux City is a pretty nice place it is built on a splendid plain hemed in by a rise of ground with here and there a growth of hard wood The Missouri

is the muddiest stream I ever saw it is as red as the water along the shores of the St. Louis is after a Northeaster. But the bugle is sounding for roal call. So Good Bye for the present

Apr 25th 1864

Alfred when I last left off it was to attend roal call but you see another day has past and I find myself again writing to you although we are in camp yet time flies swiftly and I begin to look forward with light heart and high hopes to the time I may again be permitted to join again the home sircle but still it will perhaps a long time before I can have that inestimable pleasure .

Ayres did not come out very well I believe it was a good thing I did not send money by him for there came as I expected we did Good Bye write soon

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 1]

Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt grew up together in Oneota. They were married May 8, 1873, and had three children. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM LEONIDAS MERRITT TO HIS WIFE

11 Nov 69

Thrs Nov 11/69

To my only darling Lizzie I can not think you don't want to tell me evry thing Some time you will tell me evry thing I now you will.

Since you have asked me about joining the church I will tell you what I think about it. If the church is any safe guard to christianity as we love Christ we ought to be amongst his people unless you have a very great prefferance for some other church. I would join this one. At least untill some other is started where you may live. I do not know when the six months is up but I will find out and let you know.

And now Deare one heed not the advice of one but look to him that hath Loved us he can not be mistaken.

I am glad darling you wrote to me I am thankfull that you love me you may write to me again

Oh Lizzie I do love you

Good by my own love

Lonny & Lizzie

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 1]

Hepzibah Jewett Merritt (1812-1906) married Lewis Howell Merritt in 1831, and traveled from Ohio to Superior, Wisconsin in 1854, with three young boys to join her husband who had made the journey to Minnesota earlier.

Hepzibah was born in Massachusetts as the seventh child of Samuel and Hepzibath Andrus Jewett. She and her husband had ten children - nine boys and one girl. Eight of the boys lived to be adults. Leonidas (1844-1926) was the sixth child, the fifth son, and he had four younger brothers.

A LETTER FROM HEPZIBAH MERRITT TO HER SON

Cincinnati Feb the 7th 1872

Leonidas Merritt

My Precious Child

To morrow will be your Birthday Born in 1844 as I cannot see You I though I would write you hoping You may get time to read a few lines from me I think of you and how buisy you are and how much need of rest and how little you get I do not feel like taking up your time but you never will know how much good those too letters I had from you have been to me One I received in the Deaps the day I started for Ohio and the Other when you were in NY I answered the last but perhaps you did not get it I have not much news to write we are all well it is a very pleasant place where we live but there is not any place like Oneota for me but I enjoy being here for a time Eugens have come and it seems] mor Home like I see by the papers which I have watched with much interest that you have a hard time in youer business maters You need much grace and wisdom to direct you in the affars of life I trust and pray it will be all right How is Ruth it must be very lonely without Her are the boys well and Lizza what a good time I will have when I go back My love to all May the Lord gather us all in His fold is the prayes of Your Mother

Mrs L H Merritt

Please write soon

The 20 al just received from Lewis much better feels like a new man

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 2]

Ruth Merritt (1875-1963) was the oldest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM RUTH TO HER DAD

Oneota Minn Jan 25 [1885]

Dear Papa

I received youre letter last night I would like to see you very much I have forgotten St. Paul when you come home if you have got time bring us home some picture cards. Wee are getting along very nicely in school.

to day is Sunday the sun shins bright the wind dont blow any Friday was just like summer almost. saturday waas a nice day to. I went to literary - society and spoke a piece they elected new officers.

Mr. Himbough is president and Emma Hall is the secretary. Carry Thonphon has got a baby. it is a girl. she is getting along very well.

Good bye

From Ruth Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

Ruth Merritt (1875-1963) was the oldest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Ruth was born when her father was 31 and mother was 24. Ruth had two younger brothers, Lucien and Harry. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. The three children were 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family there as well.

A LETTER FROM RUTH MERRITT TO HER DAD

West Duluth, Minn., Dec 23rd 1888

Dear Papa;-

It seems a long time since you went away and left us alone. but it has not been but a short time. I suppose you found Uncle Luciens folks well and surprised to see you. Our school is now closed for two weeks holidays. The boys are happy because Christmas is so near & so am I. We are sorry that you are not here to spend a Merry Christmas with us. we will hang up your stoking for you. We have been practicing for the concert we are giving to have at the Christmas tree. We still have good skateing. I don't think we are going to have any winter it seems to get warmer every day. I thought may be it would rain to day it looked so much like it.

I must now close my letter

Ruth Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

Harry (1882-1970) was the youngest child born to Leonidas Merritt and Elizabeth E. Wheeler Merritt. Harry had an older brother, Lucien, and an older sister, Ruth. Lucien was two years younger than Ruth, and Harry was seven years younger than Ruth. Lon and Lizzie grew up and married in Oneota, and they reared their family of three there as well. Poly, a nickname, whose real name was Lewis Napoleon, was their cousin who was two years younger than Harry. Poly was the son of Lon's younger brother Lewis. The three children were young adults, 27, 25 and 20 when their mother died in 1902. Their widower father married Cordelia R. Sprague.

A LETTER FROM HARRY TO HIS DAD

Oneota Apr 17th 1889

Dear Papa,

The coat has gone off of my tongue and I can go down stairs to morrow. Johnny came here this morning and told me to go to bed but I didn't go.

Poly came over here after school this morning to play with me we are going to have a great play with my soldiers Ruth is going to write to Gussie Ertel to day and tell her that the things came all right

I am tired of staying in the house and I guess mama is getting tired too. Poly is going to eat dinner with me. Aunt Nettie has been over here this forenoon she has gone home now. I guess you will send me a great big letter now in answer to this one Wont you Papa

I wont write any more this time

Good bye

Harry Merritt

[NEMHC: S3120 Merritt family correspondence Box 1 f 5]

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