

Introduction to "Dazey"

By John Gilbert, Walnut Creek, CA, December 2014

While rummaging through an old truck I came across a letter from my great grandmother, Harriett, written to her daughter, Lovina, in 1897. Harriet was then 61 years old and living alone on her homestead near Dazey, North Dakota.

Her children had all married and moved away leaving her alone. Her daughter Lovina, my grandmother, was 32 years old, with husband and four children, and living near Franklin, Nebraska, 600 miles south of Dazey.

Dazey today shows a population of 80. Perhaps in 1897 it would have been double that total, but not large enough to have a hospital and a doctor. Death was always nearby.

This letter is a good reminder of what health care was like in the past. It highlights the internal emotions of an older person that had no one to care for her or other older persons.

The fragility of the letter made a scan of the original impossible to read so I typed this copy as it was originally handwritten with no changes in format, punctuation or spelling.

.....

"Dazey 1897

Dear Tuda

I will drop a few lines I am
well I expected a man
hear today to look at my place
I think sum of selling out well
the man has gust bin hear
and I am a goin to sell for

leven hundred i want to no
it would be to cum down their
I would pay you for your
trouble or bord i could
build a room on to your
house for myself or sum
other way bee so kind to
let me no what you
will doo and if you doant
want me you you can
tell me in plain english
and I wont take no a fence
it is so cold hear i all
most die in the winter
bee kind anuff to tell
me what terms you will
take for your trouble

from your Mother"