

September, 1815  
Vandalia, Illinois Territory

Dear William,

My dearest friend ... this September afternoon, I sit on the summit of one of the beautiful hills near **Vandalia**, a delightful little town in the south-central part of **Illinois Territory**. As I gaze around me from this height of 200 feet, or perhaps more, I see the **Mississippi River** winding its way through a lovely valley. Oh! how beautiful the eastern prairie is. And still ... I miss home more than ever.

This town covers nine acres of ground, and its principal trees are elm and oak. **Vandalia** is a thriving little place, and as we sit here, we can see the carpenters at work putting up the frames of both residences and businesses alike.

This land was once the home of the **Shawnee Indians**, but ever since the **Battle of Tippecanoe** four year ago, very few of native people are seen near our town. In my heart, I cannot help but feel for the Indians who were driven from land their land by **Col. William Harrison** and the nation's army.

Beyond us lies the **Great American Desert**, but even the wilds of the Far West will soon be breached I think, as our country continues to expand. Talk is everywhere of the incredible Pacific mission undertaken by **Meriweather Lewis & William Clark**, and of **Zebulon Pike's** exploration of the central **Rocky Mountains!!!** Everyone speaks with fanciful giddiness of western exploration. I myself am content to remain here.

A great many strangers are coming in every day, some seeking fortunes, and others the glory of God; among the former are six gentlemen, friends of ours, from **Terre Haute, Indiana**, our last camp. We had a very pleasant visit with them. One mile beyond the town is the cemetery where the famous frontiersman **Daniel Boone** lies buried. Our home is just at the foot of the bluff, and I think it is a pretty place.

I am no story writer, my friend, but please accept my poor description of my western home.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth