

## AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER FROM THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH TO HIS BROTHER PATRIARCH HYRUM SMITH

By Susa Young Gates

This letter, written by the hand of the Prophet Joseph Smith to his brother Hyrum Smith, is one of possibly two or three such original letters in existence. The Prophet had a secretary, or scribe, as a rule, and was far too busy and engrossed to attend to his personal correspondence. But this letter, which has been examined by Presidents Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith and George Q. Cannon, is pronounced a genuine autograph letter.

The history of the present ownership is this: The Patriarch Hyrum Smith lived for about a year in the home of Newel Knight, who acted as the Patriarch's secretary. It was during this period that the letter from the Prophet was received by the Patriarch. When the Patriarch moved away from Brother Knight's house, the letter was left behind. Brother Knight valued it very highly, and kept it till his death, which occurred in the Pottawattamie lands, when he was on his way to the Valley. His second wife, Lydia Knight, traveled with him, and she, too, appreciated the value of the letter. Years after, she had it framed in a solid, quaint, home-made frame, with glass on both sides.

The present owner of the relic wrote Aunt Lydia Knight's History in the early '80s. Aunt Lydia, with that fine, splendid independence of character which was so much a part of her, wished to pay the writer for the work done. But this the writer would not listen to. She told Aunt Lydia that there was one thing that she possessed that would be precious in her sight, and which would more than repay and obligation between the two. Aunt Lydia agreed to consult her children about it, and especially her stepson Samuel, whose claim was first, of course, because his mother, the first wife, was alive when the letter was written, and it was she who had taken care of it for years. The consent was given, and at Aunt Lydia's death the framed letter was sent to the writer.

The contents of the letter have never before been made public.—Susa Young Gates.

### THE PROPHET'S UNPUBLISHED LETTER:

KIRTLAND, GEauga CO., OHIO, March 3, 1831.

Brother Hyrum: We arrived here safe, and are all well. I have been engaged in regulating the churches here, as the disciples here are numerous, and the Devil has made many attempts to overthrow them. It has been a serious job, but the Lord is with us, and we have overcome, and have all things regular. The work is breaking forth on the right hand and on the left, and there is a great call for elders in this place. We have received a letter from Oliver, dated Independence, Jackson county, Missouri, January the 29th, 1831. fn These are the words which he has written, saying:

"My Dearly Beloved Brethren: After a considerable lengthy journey, I avail myself of the first opportunity of communicating to you a knowledge of our situation, that you may be privileged of writing to us, for we have not heard anything from you since we left you last fall. We arrived here a few days since, which is about twenty-five miles from the Shawney Indians, on the south side of the Kansas river at its mouth, and Delawares on the north. I have had two interviews with the chief of the Delawares, a very old and venerable looking man. After laying before him and eighteen or twenty of the council of that nation the truth, he said that he and they were very glad for what I, their brother, had told them, and they had received it in their hearts, etc. But how the matter will go with this tribe to me is uncertain; neither can I at present conclude much about it. The weather is quite severe, and the snow is considerable deep, which makes it at present quite difficult traveling about. I have but a short time to write to you, my beloved brethren, as the mail leaves this place in the morning, but I wish some of you to write to me immediately a full letter of all your affairs, and then I will write to you the situation of all the western tribes, etc."

Thus reads most of the letter, saying to us:

"The God of my father Jacob be with you all. Amen.

"I remain, in Christ, your brother forever,

"OLIVER."

My Dearly Beloved Brother Hyrum: I have had much concern about you, but I always remember you in my prayers, calling upon God to keep you safe, in spite of men or devils. I think you had better come into this country immediately, for the Lord has commanded us that we should call the elders of this Church together unto this place as soon as possible. fn

March 4th.—This morning, after being called out of my bed in the night to go a small distance, I went and had an awful struggle with Satan; but, being armed with the power of God he was cast out, and the woman is clothed in her right mind. The Lord worketh wonders in this land.

I want to see you all. May the grace of God be and abide with you all, even so. Amen.

Your brother forever,

JOSEPH SMITH, JR.

P. S.—If you want to write Oliver, direct your letter to Independence, Jackson county, Missouri.

Harrison and Orson Pratt arrived here on February 27th. They left our folks well. David Jackway has threatened to take father with a subpna writ. In the spring you had better come to Fayette, and take father along with you. Come in a one-horse wagon if you can. Do not come through Buffalo, for they will lie in wait for you. God protect you.

I am,

JOSEPH.

Addressed: Mr. Hyrum Smith,

Harperville, Broom county, N. Y.

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