
LETTER FROM URSALIA B. HASTINGS HASCALL

Addressee: Col. Wilson Andrews¹
 North New Salem
 Franklin County
 Massachusetts

Postmarked; NEW YORK 5 Cts 12 Dec

Camp of Israiel

[Winter Quarters] Sept 19 1846

Dear Sister; In the wilds of North America is the residence of your affectionate sister. Not unhappy and suffering, no, far from it, nor none of our family. There is nothing that would induce me to leave the company of the saints of God, unless it is the salvation of my friends and dear relative[s]. O how gladly would I rend the thick veil of darkness, traditions and sectarianism that covers their eyes and hearts so that they might understand the plainness of the gospel while they have the open bible in their hands searching out their sabbeth school below. I am sure you would like to be placed in the right way if you knew certain which it was, Look about you and see if your preacher tells you things as they are in the bible, exactly, not I believe so, I think so, It is my opinion, and such stuff. It is of no consequence. If he does not know a thing we can all guess and think as well as he. When a preacher says he knows a thing, and I shall find it so when I meet him at the bar of God, and I find it agrees with scripture, there is no room for doubt. We have meetings every sabbath in a place fitted up in the woodland about a mile from the prairie where we are camped with our waggons and tents. We have it fixed expecting to stay until spring. There is two companies on ahead of us. One is stopped 150 miles from here the other has gone on. There is about 800 waggons in this company with brother Brigham Young and brother Weber Brimhall at the head and more adding daily.

Now I shall give you a history of my journey or a sketch of it. We started from Nauvoo the 30th of May, Had as good waggon as any of them; three yoke of oxen with flour enough to last us one year, ham, sausages, dry

fish, lard, two cans hundred pounds of sugar, 16 of coffee, 10 of raisens, rice with all the other items we wish to use in cooking. I will describe our waggons and tent as well as I can. I wish I could make you know exactly how they look. The waggon is long enough for both our beds made on the flour barrels, chests and other things. (Thales and I sleep [in] the back end and F. and Irene at the forward end. While we were travelling if we camped too late to pitch our tent.) It is painted red. It has eight bows eighteen inches apart; a hen coop on the end with four hens. We had two webs of thick drilling. We put on one cover of that, then three breadths of stout sheeting over that and then painted it. The heaviest showers and storms does not beat through, only a few drops now and then. Our tent is made of drilling sixteen breadths in the shape of an umbrella. A cord three feet long on the end of every seam and a pin on that to drive into the ground. The pole in the middle that holds it up carries it three feet from the ground, than a breadth of sheeting put on the edge to let down in cool weather and fasten with loops and pins in the ground.

Now we start (every one is councilled to start as soon as ready morn or eve) [on] Saturday [at] four oclock in the afternoon and went down to the Mississippi river [and] found a boat to convey us across. Landed safely on the other side, went three miles and camped for the night. Chained our oxen to the wagon after halting, eat some bread and milk and piece of pie and went to bed in our wagon. Never slept better. In the morning made a fire, had a good cup of coffee, went eight miles, found a camp of fifty wagons and tents [and] stopped for several days waiting for others. We found some of brother Fars family, pitched out tent waited two days for them and then commenced our journey in earnest. It was not many days before we bid adieu to the last house. we expected to see until we had them of our own. We traveled for hours and saw nothing but the wide expanse of heaven and the waving prairie grass. Not a tree or bush. Then we came to timber and water [and] camped for the night; do our cooking and washing, all that wish to start the next day [and] take wood and water enough to make our

coffee for breakfast and hasted pudding and milk for dinner. We always found wood and water as often as once in twentyfour hours but not always at the right time.

The company we were in killed several fat calves [and] they always gave us some. We had the old fashioned soups with a light crust. We have had everything on the way to make us more comfortable than anyone could possibly expect, and in this way we travelled until we came to Council Bluffs on the missouri river (you can find it on the map.) There we found the Camp of Israiel with its leaders (or some of them I might say) waiting for a boat to be built to carry us across the river where we camped two weeks. Then the boat was ready [and] all crosses as fast as possible, came on twenty miles this side of the river and stopped a while. Finally Brother Young the President of the Church said the best way was to stay here this winter and let those that are ahead break the way and we start early in the spring.

They consented to it [and] went to work. Cut grass and made such big stacks of hay as I never thought of for the cattle; building log cabins for their families. Some split the logs. Francis split his. They make boards and shingles here by hand. They brought saws and almost every thing else. they brought a cording machine. I think they will need it [as] there is seven hundred sheep in one drove that is church property. There is lots of fat cattle killed; one or two every day this six weeks. we have some every week. Francis and Thales got a lot of honey the other day equal to Daniels. The warm biscuit and honey [and] a good cup of coffee is not so mean. Do not worry about us. I think we shall get along with as little trouble as other people that live in painted houses and carpet floors.

The Mexican war is no trouble to us at present. It is rather a benefit. President Polk sent two officiers to our President Young for five hundred able bodied mento take Sante Fee and he might have it for a location. Polk would find everything [and] pay seven dollars and a half per month to the soldiers, 40 to the Capt and so on to the officers. President Young started out immediately from camp to camp [and] soon enlisted his five hundred men [and] sent them on to Fort Leavenworth there to receive orders from your President. They stayed there a while, received their money, sent home to their families considerable of it. They do not need of it at present and they put

it into President Youngs hands for the benefit of the Church. He sent one thousand dollars to St Louis to buy goods of all kinds.

We are all well and have been excepting a few days. Francis had an ill turn and so did Irene. Francelle is a beautiful child. She has had the hooping cough the old fashioned way. [It] took of her flesh some]but she is] pretty much over it. Thales stands all kinds of w[e]ather. He has had only one ill time since [we] started [and] that was bowel complaint. For two or three days [he] did not take anything but pepermint. I do not see but he is as contented as he would be there. He would like to have one play with the boys he used to play with. He began a letter - he said it would be all mistakes and he would not write. His business is herding cattle with several other boys. He says he is a sick of it as finds [blank space] he says he rather they follow him than to go back. He has a peck of filberts he picked.

I commenced writing this letter the evening after I received your first. I hurt my eyes so much I have had to delay untill now before finishing. I received your last the 18 Oct. I think Mr. Woodbury did very wrong to misinform you. I do not wonder you thought [it] strange you had not heard from me. I think all his news will [be] about the same. The fact is he had no opportunity to know anything correct. His wife honored him so I hear by brother Ponds family. The Woodburys are all on their way here. I saw Catherine about four days before we started. She looked and appeared very natural. If her mother had come when I did she would have gone home with her I think and stayed a while. I think Uncle Sam has jumped out of the pan into the fire.

Give my love to all husbands relations for his sake and their kindness to me. Tell Mother I wish she belonged to this church. I think she would be much happier than she is now. If I had been in Nauvoo when I received your letter I would have sent some of Josephs hair. All that have any here is in their bosom pins [or] finger rings &c. I do not know how their bodies are kept. Irene has not had time to write to O she says but shall when she gets her journey done. Give my respects to Mr. Pruitt and wife. Tell him to go a head [and] rip up the rumsellers. May God bless him and bring him into his fold that he may have a part in the first resurrection for on such the second death has no powers. Remember me to every one that enquires after me.

The temple was dedicted before we left. I attended. The Lord accepted of it. Elder Woodruff said he had had glory enough. His was joy so great tears wet the cheeks of many for joy. O dear sisters this [is] not [the] millimum nor delusions I am sure. You tell Wilson when he writes to Alanzo to tell Mrs. Levitt that the leaders of this church I find to be good men. She wished me to send her word what I thought of them. She had heard so much from Mrs. Hudson that had left the church. Our tent is next to brother Chases so called by the church. He is a native of Coleswin. His wife was Tirzah Wells from Greenfield, the best of people. When I left Nauvoo I gave fifteen cents to brother Thompson to take you letter and send it to mount Pisgah. That was the second camp. There they took the name of every man that passed through the gate, then when a letter came it was forwarded to him. I began to think if you had written it was lost but as last it was cried on the stand a letter for F. Mr. Pond he went and got it. How the last came is quite remarkable. Dr Richards was at some office where he found it. [He] paid the postage and cried it on the stand at meeting. Some familes that have arrived within a few days have suffered with sickness. All sick at a time. There has been over twenty deaths since we were on the way and since. We topped Brother Wallace [who] said he had made seven coffins.

I think Aunt Nabbeys family has a bad fortune entailed upon them for some reason or other. I hope Wilson will not lose any thing by them. Tell Mrs. Howard if she is glad I am, if not I pity her. I care not how well the old house looks I feel as if I narrowly

escaped from Babylon with a mighty effort. It is not my wish to return. The Indians are very plenty here. They are here begging every week. Sometimes [they] steal a tin cup or garment if it lies in their way. Brigham Young has made a treaty with them. They are to have our houses and all improvements when we leave. We found one tribe that had several that had been baptised by Joseph. They would say "me mormon"

Direct your letters to Huntsuckers postoffice
Atchison County Missouri

U.B.H.

Add: there is no end to them. Black walnuts in abundance and hundreds of bushels of grapes, orchards of mild plumbs. Fifty bushels in a place. You never saw anything better [to] make pies and preserves.

NOTES

1. This letter is the twelfth in a collection of twenty-four letters written by Ursalia B. Hastings Hascall and her daughter Irene Hascall Pomeroy to family members in Massachusetts from Nauvoo, Winter Quarters and Salt Lake City. Ursalia is living with her daughter, Irene Hascall Pomeroy, Irene's husband, Francis M. Pomeroy and their daughter, Francelle, also Ursalia's son, Thales Hastings Hascell. Typescript of the letters are located in the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Although Ursalia puts some paragraphs in her letter, more have been added to facilitate reading.