

LETTER OF ELIZABETH FORY, DAVENPORT, IOWA, 1848

Maurine Carr Ward

The 1846 exodus from Nauvoo separated many friends and family members. Some went to various locations to earn money for an eventual "fit out" for the westward journey. Others remained behind because of dissatisfaction with the doctrines of the Church. The accompanying letter is written by one of the latter.

Not much is known about Elizabeth Fory, or Lizzy, as she was known by her friends. She was born 27 August 1825, probably to Peter Joseph and Sophia Fory.¹ Very little is known of the brothers and sisters written about in the letter.²

A close friendship appears to have existed between Lizzy and Mary Haskin Parker Richards, the recipient of this letter.³ Mary married Samuel Whitney Richards in January 1846. When he prepared to leave for a mission in Great Britain, Mary traveled to the Missouri River with her parents-in-law, Phinehas and Wealthy Dewey Richards, whom she referred to as her father and mother.

The families of John Haven and Samuel Burton were also close friends of Lizzy Fory. Mentioned in the letter are Melissa Burton, who married William Coray on 22 June 1846 at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, and then accompanied him on the Mormon Battalion march; Rebecca Burton Jones, who was living near Austin Post Office, Atchison County, Missouri (near present-day Hamburg, Iowa) and whose husband, Nathaniel Very Jones, was also in the Mormon Battalion; Robert Taylor Burton, his wife, Maria Haven, and her sister, Eliza Ann Haven, also living near the Austin Post Office on the Nishnabotna River, and Martha Spring Hall Haven, wife of Jesse Haven.

In her postscript, Lizzy mentions two more older daughters of John Haven, Elizabeth Haven Barlow, married to Israel Barlow, and Mary Ellen Palmer, married to Joseph F. Palmer. Truman Barlow, who, as Lizzy notes, brought her a letter from Mary, is a brother to Israel Barlow.

The letter is located in the Samuel Whitney Richards collection, LDS Historical Department, Archives Division, and is published here with their permission.

Davenport, 2nd June 1848.

Dear and ever remembered Mary;

It was with much joy, I assure you, that I received your very affectionate and interesting letter, of 14th April, by Truman Barlow. I have received but one letter from you dear Mary since we parted, that Mr Johnson brought, while we were yet in Nauvoo. And you may be sure, the one you sent by Truman, was received with a joyful welcome. It gave me heart-felt pleasure, to see that the long cherished and ardent affection that has existed between us is still undiminished, I have never ceased to think of you, dearest Mary, and love you as fervently as I ever did, "Sweet memory" as you say, often brings back, the many, many happy hours that we have spent together. Do you remember the delightful walk, we had with Samuel, in the Woods above your House, "that same" little House was afterwards torn down to build a Blockade against the Enemy. O Mary! Those were perilous times indeed; I never was so glad to leave any place, as I was to leave N[auvoo]. And here we are in sweet little Davenport, where all is peace and Harmony. It is a beautiful situation, noted for its lovely scenery. The whole place looks like a Park every Street is ornamented with beautiful shade Trees. Yet the pleasure is mared by the painful thought that you and dear Eliza Ann [Haven], are not here; that we possibly may never meet again in this life, but let us hope dear Mary, that we may meet in the morning of the resurrection, and enter that sweet Haven of rest where there will be no more farewell Sighs or parting Tears.

I suppose your dear Samuel is with you by this time; remember me kindly to him will you? I hope, oh how sincerely I hope that you are really, and truly happy. May your happiness never decrease, but may you feel all the bliss of a fervent reciprocal affections.

Your Image dearest Mary is indelibly impressed on my heart, and no time nor distance can ever erase the impression and tho' we may never meet in this life, I shall never cease to think of you, and love you still the same.

I might as well come to the point at once, dear Mary and tell you that I am engaged to be married, to a very fine young man, a member of the Baptist church of this place. He is connected with the Editorial department of this place, a very pious, industrious, young man, and possessed of great energy. He has been paying attention to me for more than a year, and has shown a fervent unceasing attachment so that I could not help but have a reciprocal affection, but it was not until lately that I gave my consent. If nothing prevents, we will be united in September, and I feel that God will bless, and Sanctify our union. I have told him all our former circumstances, of course I would keep nothing from him, that concerned myself. But dearly as I love him, I would not divulge a secret that I had promised to hold sacred, for another, after we are married I dont mean to hear any secrets if I can help it, but what I am priveleged to confide to him, I think the relation of Husband and Wife, so sacred, so holy, that they should be one, in all things, and there should be an unbounded, unwavering Confidence, ever existing between them, without this, there can be no real domestic happiness. I deeply feel the responsibility that will devolve upon me as a wife, and I pray for strength from on high; to enable me to perform my duties faithfully. It should ever be my highest ambition to make Home happy! Under any circumstances. Even if it required severe self denial. I sincerely hope that I shall ever retain these sentiments, for then I shall be sure to ensure the unchanging affection of my Husband.

What a digression! Here I hav been philosiphising, nearly half a page, and I was going to tell you that what I had told Mr Davis, (the name of my Intended) had not changed his feelings but he seemed to think more of me that ever. His first name is Levi. He has beautiful black Eyes, and hair and reminds me very much of Augustine [probably her brother], in his manners, so kind and gentle. He is not very tall but very well proportioned, excuse my foolishness dear Mary. But I thought you would feel a curiosity to have some little Idea how He looks. But to change the subject, we will talk about our dear Augustine. He is at New Orleans with my Brother Gurdon, they are building a large Hotel, that they made a contract for. It will not be finished until August, and then Augustine will come here on a visit, that is what we are waiting for, so that He will be at the Weding. I could not think of being married unless Augustine was present. Oh shall I tell you how I expect to be dressed but do not think it vanity, for the dear knows I have nothing to be vain about, and besides I shall be dressed very plain and simple. Augustine sent me ten yards of beautiful Suisse Mull, very fine, much prettier than the finest Book muslin; that you know is for the! occasion. I will have it trimmed with thread Lace and a wreath of Orange blossoms around my hair, they wear the hair braded very wide in the Basket, and Diamond braids and done up very high around a comb, the front hair is put over the Ear, as it was when you left or sometimes curled, but dont it seem vain to talk so much about dress, when it should be the least consideration, but I know you will take it as I mean, in the confidence of Friendship. Gurdon will be married soon. He has been engaged to a young Lady of New Orleans for some time, dear Augustine is still the same. My sister Maria in New York is married, and Alass, the melancholy reality, my dear sister Sophia is no more. She died on the 19th of Nov 1847. She left a young Babe only ten days old besides the one you saw. Oh Mary what a Blank she has left. I can hardly realize it but it is too true. She died very happy rejoicing in the hope that she should soon be with her Savior. Dear Mary you say that you have heard that I have joined the

Presbyterian Church, I have joined, not the Presbyterian, but Congregational church of this place, and I felt sure that if the love of God existed in any Church it did in that, and many of their principles coincided with what I had been believing. Do not think Mary that I have renounced all my former principles. I never shall renounce what I believe to be truth. I hope I have enough principle, about me to ever maintain Truth, let who will, oppose it. But there were some things dear Mary that I could not believe, [possibly polygamy?] and could not be happy where they were carried out, although I never, mention anything about those things. It would only make prejudice still greater. Mr Davis is the only one that knows that I have resided in N[auvoo.] I told Mr. Adams, (the Minister of the church to which I belong.) What church I had belonged to, of course I would not have joined without letting him know. He is a very fine man and I believe if there ever was a true Christian He is one. If you write to Eliza Ann give my kindest love to her and tell her I shall write soon, how much I wish she was here, to be Bridesmaid Heaven bless her. I have a great many sincere ardent friends here Mary, that I think a great deal of, but new friends never make me forget old ones. I am residing with my Br John and his family, we live in very pretty white frame House two story with beautiful shade Trees in front, it is very pleasant, and near the River. My Br John has just left for St Louis not to be back for some time so of course we feel very gloomy, and poor Father, is so feeble I do not think he is long for this world. He sends his love to you, and all enquiring friends. He has not left his room or walked, since a year this spring. He requires a great deal of care and attention and I mean to devote myself to him, to make his declining years as happy as possible. Give my kindest love to Mrs Jesse Haven [Martha Spring Hall] Mrs. Mace [probably Elizabeth Armstrong], and all enquiring friends my kindest love to Melissa [Burton] Cory [Coray], and her her husband [William Coray] also Rebekah [Burton Jones] and Mr. [Nathaniel Very] Jones, if they are there Maria [Haven Burton] and Robert [Taylor Burton]. Oh I had almost forgot your Mother [mother-in-

law, Wealthy Dewey Richards], my kind love to her also, and Ellen Wilding. I have not forgot any of you, but have not time to mention all. I have worked a Book-mark for you which I beg you will accept as a trifling memento, of my unceasing affection. I shall always be happy to hear from you, whenever you can make it convenient to write. Direct as before, Davenport, Iowa. May God bless you dearest Mary, and make you very happy I ever remember you at the Throne of Grace, and pray for your welfare. Please give my kind regards to Joseph Stratton if you should see him. I sincerely hope he is happy. Tell me where he is when you write, and all about his Wife.

Excuse the miserable writing as I wrote it in haste. Hoping that this will find you as well and happy, as it leaves me, I close, and remain dear Mary as ever

yours with ardent affection.

Lizzy Fory

Oh! My kind love to Mrs. [Elizabeth Haven] Barlow and Mrs. [Mary Ellen Haven] Palmer.

[Envelope addressed to Mrs. Mary H. Richards. Care, Docter Willard Richards, Kane, P. O. Pottawatamie Co. Iowa. Received by Mary on 7 October 1848.]

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Fory and Peter Joseph Fory are among those who signed the scroll petition to Congress on 28 November 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois, requesting redress for the persecution of the saints in Missouri. (Clark V. Johnson, ed. *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict*. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992, 583,584.) Peter Joseph Fory was born 24 December 1777 in Bockau, Lert Mortiz, Bohemia. Elizabeth Fory was born 27 August 1825. Both were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple (Susan Easton Black, comp. *Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1848*, 50 vols. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989, 16:768,832.)

2. Three sons of Peter Joseph Fory and his wife, Sophia, are listed in the LDS IGI: Augustine Fory, christened 22 February 1816 in the First Presbyterian Church, Troy, Rensselaer, New York; Martin Rodolph Fory, christened 3 May 1818, in the same place; and Gurdon Corning Fory, christened 18 March 1821 in the Dutch Reformed Church, Greenwich Valley, New York.

3. Before leaving Nauvoo, Mary and Samuel visited Elizabeth at "Father Fory's" and also attended singing school together with Elizabeth a few times. (Samuel Whitney Richards. Journals, 1839-1909. LDS Archives) Mary's journals and letters from Winter Quarters mention her friendship with Elizabeth Fory. On 1 July 1846,

Mary wrote, "I sat down and rote a letter to Elizabeth Fory & sent it by Bro Johnson." On Friday, 4 June 1846, 100 miles west of Nauvoo, Mary wrote to her husband who was still in Nauvoo, "tel Elizabeth Fory I often wish she was with me when I view the Romantic scens of the west." Mary wrote in her journal on Friday, 14 April 1848, ". . . I wrote a letter to Elizabeth Fory to send by Trueman Barlow." Again, on 21 April 1848, Mary said she wrote a letter to Elizabeth Fory in Davenport Iowa. (Maurine Carr Ward, ed. *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1996. 68,73,211,212.)