JOSEPH ELLIS JOHNSON
—PIONEER
J. E. J.
TRAIL TO SUNDOWN
Cassadaga to Casa Grande
1817-1882

The Story of A Pioneer
JOSEPH ELLIS JOHNSON
... He ground his wheel tracks into the face of the continent.

by
RUFUS DAVID JOHNSON

GENEALOGICAL DEPARTMENT
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
from a Daguerreotype made in Washington, D. C. during his tour with a troupe of Omaha Indians. He was awaiting audience with President Fillmore to present the case for recompense to the Omahas for spoliation of their lands.
JULIA HILLS JOHNSON
Born Sept. 26, 1783 at Upton, Mass.
Died May 30, 1853 — Council Bluffs, Iowa

EZEKIEL JOHNSON
Born Jan. 12, 1778 (1773), Uxbridge, Mass.
Died Jan. 13, 1848 at Nauvoo, Illinois
For Maude, who bore with me, and for Elise and David, who prodded me into attempting it.
ABOUT THE EZEKIEL PORTRAIT

It was related by his daughter, Rosemary, that JEJ, reading one day in some Civil War material, came upon the portrait of Wm. Seward, Secretary of State in Lincoln’s cabinet. He exclaimed upon its resemblance to his father, Ezekiel, saying that it was a startling likeness, more like his father than any picture he had ever seen.

Rosemary’s daughter, Maude, recalled this at a reunion of the Johnson Family when the question was raised as to the availability of an Ezekiel portrait for genealogical records. Maude discussed the problem and the story with her artist husband Avard Fairbanks.

Avard studied the Seward portrait, then examined all the pictures of Ezekiel’s descendants available to him, noting the characteristics that persisted from generation to generation, sketched from life when practicable and developed at last a composite portrait which we can accept with confidence as a close likeness of Ezekiel.

Deep appreciation to Avard Fairbanks is here expressed in behalf of the family of Ezekiel Johnson for the time, talent and effort expended in this labor of love.

The Author
AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

This narrative is the outcome of a long expressed desire of members of the Joseph Ellis Johnson family that a story of his life be written for the benefit of his many descendants and relatives. This desire culminated in a movement spearheaded by Elise Knowles Mallernee and David J. Fox, grandchildren of Joseph, both of Los Angeles, which practically demanded that I undertake the task. This was because I happen to be the last born of JEJ’s family of twenty-nine children, as well as the last living child, not because I lay any claim to literary competence. I have endeavored to present the life of our progenitor in plain reportorial style as far as I can assemble the facts. Whatever shortcomings are apparent can only be apologized for and regretted.

Strictly for convenience I have used the editorial WE, OURS, US and where these words occur it means that the matter is my belief or opinion, except now and then WE means the family in general. The context should explain.

In mentioning the name of our subject the use of JEJ or Joseph has been adopted. Initials are sometimes used to indicate JEJ’s four brothers, viz: JHJ (Joel), BFJ (Benjamin), GWJ (George), WDJ (William). Any of these initials following the name of a Johnson indicates that person mentioned is a descendant of the owner of the initials.

If any member of the family should feel that undue prominence is given Eliza in the family drama, it is solely because the documents relating to her have been preserved, while such counterparts that may have existed concerning Harriet and Hannah have not turned up in our search. Many of what might have been in the way of poetry, love letters, photographs and tokens may have been lost in the
many drastic moves or the several fires which took place in the early years.

Wherever the term "Church" appears in the text with a capital C, this word has reference only to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Just as this is being written we learn that the Nebraska Historical Society’s Quarterly for June 1959 contains an article by Benjamin Pfeiffer on "The Role of Joseph E. Johnson and his Pioneer Newspapers in the Development of Territorial Nebraska." We regret that there is no time to read and get permission to quote from this article, since our manuscript is now practically in type. But it is pleasant to note that JEJ is really becoming "found" by River country historians.

Quite a number of people have assisted in getting this book under way. Many have submitted names, dates, photographs, fragments of family history or have in some way helped in the gathering of material or given other aid. We are grateful to all who have contributed, but it is impracticable to name every person who has been of service. However, I mention some whose names come to mind at the moment and if important omissions have been made I can only ask pardon and lay the blame on faulty memory.

For help in business matters, proof reading, etc., thanks are due to the Book Committee, S. Ross Fox, Elise Mallernee, Maude Fox Fairbanks, Jack and Jean Johnson and C. Ellis Johnson. Credit is given Avard Fairbanks for research and creation of pictures of Ezekiel Johnson, Dovie Johnson Hutchinson for deciphering and typing much of JEJ's diary material, Lilly N. Johnson for typing, Don S. Mallernee for constructive criticism, Rolla V. Johnson for general family history and Lamont Johnson for research. We thank the Historical Societies of Utah, Illinois, Iowa, Historian's Office of the L. D. S. Church, Daughters of Utah Pioneers and Andrew Karl Larson for permission to
quote from publications, also to the University of Nebraska Press for permission to quote from Olson: History of Nebraska, 1955, and Wilburn S. Johnson for allowing us to borrow from Benjamin F. Johnson's "My Life's Review."

For documentary material, photographs and other services we are indebted to Mrs. Ben F. Johnson, Rose Johnson Ogden, J. Elmer Johnson, Florence Turnbaugh, Mrs. C. C. Pingree, Stella Holladay, Susan Lawson, George and Robert Cassidy, William J. Fox, O. J. Pruitt of Council Bluffs, Joseph W. Fox, Jessie Bringhurst, Delpha Johnson, Annie May Johnson and others.

Rufus D. Johnson

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CHAPTER 1

"MID WILD CHAUTAUQUA’S HILLS WE ROVED"

This narrative is an attempt to relate in simple fashion the story of one New Englander who left a wagon trail almost across the American continent, and who was a witness or participant in countless scenes and enterprises which added their mite to the building up of the United States of America. The man was Joseph Ellis Johnson, son of Ezekiel and Julia Hills Johnson, and who began life on April 28, 1817 in Pomfret Township, Chautauqua County, New York. He was the ninth of sixteen children born to Ezekiel and Julia and lived his first sixteen years among what he termed “wild Chautauqua’s hills.”

As Joseph advanced in years he developed bronchial trouble. He was tall and thin and probably coughed frequently. Julia became apprehensive and was convinced that he had a “weak chest,” which in her mind presaged tuberculosis. One day when Joseph was lying behind a screen of some sort, he overheard Julia telling some of the other boys what she thought of his condition and expressed her fears that he would not live long. She told them that thereafter they must relieve him of the difficult tasks around the farm and shield him from any strain or exertion that might hasten his end. They were admonished to guard him as far as possible from all unpleasant things so that what time remained to him might be free from drudgery and worry.

Naturally he was shocked at the picture conjured up in his mind by her words. He made an instant decision that he would read all that he could find about medicine and that he would “doctor” himself until the dire fears of the family were proven unfounded. The practice of medicine on the American frontier in the 1820’s was confined mainly to
teas, tonics, bitters, infusions and other nostrums compounded from roots, barks, seeds and herbs of many kinds. There was scarcely a plant that was not supposed to have some medicinal value. In hunting these plants in forest and wildwood, learning their names, both Latin and English, also the qualities attributed to them, and in using them for his own medication, he laid the foundation for the broad botanical knowledge which he possessed in later life. Living thus close to nature he developed a natural affinity for plant life and demonstrated a "green thumb" aptitude for all growing things.

The lovely wooded land surrounding Pomfret was an ideal place to become familiar with and gather medicinal material. In that general area a large percentage of the species which made up America's contribution to the materia medica of the period could be found. As Joseph gradually became acquainted with the plants, he tried out many on himself and the family and probably supplied the neighbors with dried material ready to be stewed up as a tea, and the bitterer it was the more likely it was to be efficient!

Among the commoner things he would seek out would be Camomile, a popular brew used as a stomachic and tonic. Pipsissewa was a diuretic and tonic, Hepatica tuned up the liver. One of the best prizes was ginseng, a plant still used, especially by the Chinese. The Greek word for it, Panax, means, "for all a cure." Ginseng roots and plants are still advertised for sale and people are urged to go into the business of ginseng production. We must not forget good old boneset. In later years one of Joseph's long list of patent medicines was Johnson's Boneset Pills, which were known far and wide in Mormon country. They contained Podophyllum, also a denizen of the Pomfret woods.

Extract of sarsaparilla, colloquially "sassperilla," was one of the most widely distributed tonics as late as fifty years ago, and probably can still be found on some druggist's shelves. The early soda fountains all had a sarsaparilla
syrup faucet, the drink strongly reminiscent of the present day root beer. There were so many things,—sassafras to purify the blood, poke root and berries, bladderwort, viburnum, Solomon's seal, and the elder tree—a cure-all par excellence. Elderwood cured toothache, kept the home from being attacked, fended off snakes, mosquitoes and warts, quieted nerves, interrupted fits, kept worms out of furniture, removed poison from metal vessels and guaranteed that he who used it would die in his own house.

"In autumn through the leafy grove, for mandrakes, plums and grapes we'd rove." Mandrake is an emetic, purgative and narcotic, and was long used in amorous incantations and love amulets. The fleshy root was the part used in medicine. It is an ancient remedy; Genesis 30-14 reads: "And Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother, Leah."

There was lobelia, mullein, horehound, loosestrife, baneberry, bloodroot, hawkweed and many others,—all waiting and ready to cure whatever ailed one. Among the sweet smelling things were the mints, peppermint, the genuine, and possibly spearmint, grew in the damp places, and many a stubborn tummy ache surrendered to its fragrant tea. Sweet fennel for tea and to chew on, and delicious wintergreen berries with their pungent flavor, much sought after by the small fry. Our oldsters will remember that peppermint and wintergreen were the chief flavors of our early "stick" candy, and it is doubtful if they have ever been really improved upon.

It was not alone things medicinal that made roaming of the woods a happy experience for Joseph. The more showy flowers caught his eye early in life as he felt the thrill of coming upon a clump of delicate pink trailing arbutus in the early spring, or a wet spot glowing with scarlet lobelia. He began watching for the gay wake robins, Trillium, or the odd little jack-in-the-pulpit, for Cypripe-
diurn, or lady’s slipper. He was interested in the bright blossoms which Tennyson said, “... shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray . . .,” marsh marigold. He knew the bee balm, scented like mint. He loved the daintiness of the wood violet and took delight in colorful anemones, which the ancients declared sprang up from the fallen tears of the rose. Many of these and more he gathered and pressed, just as he did later on the prairies of Iowa and Nebraska and in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. Upon unfolding letters written to one of his wives in the 1850’s, several love tokens of faded posies from the plains which were pressed over a hundred years ago, were found.

There was more than plant life for Joseph and the other boys in the woods. Fishing was one of their superlative joys, and as a natural corollary, swimming. Who ever heard of boys going fishing who did not dunk their small carcasses in the cool waters of the creek on hot summer days? Besides Lake Cassadaga, Bear Lake and Little Canadaway, there was Canadaway creek, which must have been champion fishing water since it began in lovely Cassadaga and flowed into Lake Erie. What a set-up for trout fishing! In a little poem by Joel, lately found, the following verses prove that trout were the major species, although there must have been fish of other kinds. The second verse packs something of a nostalgic wallop in spite of its simplicity:

My Native Brook

Flow on! Flow on! my native brook!
In childhood for thy trout
In thee I cast my first pin hook
And sweetly pulled them out.
Oft by thy peaceful, winding stream
I wandered free from care
And plucked sweet flowers of every name
That bloomed so sweetly there.
Flow sweetly on, my native brook,
Though many are no more
That oft with me a ramble took
Along thy peaceful shore.
Flow on, and let thy sweet birds sing
And flowers perfume the air,
No pleasure more thou can’st me bring
For I’lI no more be there.

Ah me! those were the happy days and the happy surroundings. But we are intrigued by the whimsical picture of young Joel sitting there happily pulling them out on a bent pin. We have “pulled them out” in many ways over many years, but never to our recollection have we done it “sweetly.” We can envision dear old Joel, from whom rhymes gushed forth like a bubbling fountain, writing these verses and spending considerable time mentally seeking a substitute for this word. What could he have chosen? Should he have used swiftly, or smartly, or deftly or happily, or quickly, or neatly, or joy’fly? Perhaps “gaily” would have been the happiest choice!

Joseph’s verses, Our Boyhood Home were written as a Christmas greeting to his brothers, in printed form. Each verse exhibits a facet of life as it was lived in the early 1800’s, but it is over long and it is difficult to decide which verses might be omitted. We have cut five out of the 13 stanzas and it is still long.

OUR BOYHOOD HOME

'Tis Christmas, brothers dear, today
And, as, in scenes of early years
The earth is mantled white with snow,
And brooklets gleam with icy tears;
And bells ring out in merry chime,
As erst in our young Christmas time.
At eve our Christmas dinner smoked
Upon the cross legg'd table old;
Goose, turkey, spare rib, chicken pie,
And Indian pudding gleaming gold;
With pies of mince and pumpkin, too,
We ate, as boys alone could do.

Our Christmas fires! how bright they glowed
Within the fireplace broad and high
Where crane and hooks swung dinner pot
And kettles for the nut cake fry;
And porringer and trencher clean
In every rural home were seen.

In spring we boiled the maple's sap
And gathered wild flowers blooming fair,
And merry boys and girls would meet
To "sugar off" in wildwood there;
And when the springtime glories fade
We hunted berries in the glade.

In meadows verdant, waving, green
We searched for strawberries, sweet and red,
The Gulf farm grew sweet wintergreens
Whose berries there were thickly spread;
For birch bark, gum and slippery elm
We traversed oft our boyhood realm.

In summer's heat the hay we stirred,
To pasture drove the lowing cows,
And from the orchard gathered fruit
And ate it 'neath the shady boughs;
In autumn, through the leafy grove
For mandrakes, plums and grapes we'd rove.

In Cassadaga's lake we fished
And gathered lilies,—fragrant flowers;
And on blue Erie's beaten shore
Spent many bright and happy hours;
And later, to Fredonia's square
We ne'er missed "General Training" there.

When frost had nipped the leafy trees
That chestnuts from the burrs might fall,
And nuts from beech and but'nut trees
Black walnuts, hickory nuts and all,
When winds were high we took a run
For nuts, for winter eves to come...
CHAPTER 2

JOHNSON FAMILY ORIGINS

As this tale is told largely for the numerous posterity of Ezekiel and Julia Johnson, it is difficult to ignore the origin and history of the tribe. It has been stated (1956) that the descendants of this pair have formed the largest family in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that the number since 1831 has passed the ten thousand mark. It is likely that this was an estimate rather than a census, but according to Rolla V. Johnson (GWJ), who has been working for years on the "BIG BOOK" of family enumeration, this statement could very well be true. This figure embraces largely those who have been registered on the records of Church and probably does not include a number who never had Church affiliations.

The greatest number of this vast progeny must be attributed to five Johnson brothers who were pioneers in the settlement of western United States. In the first echelon, besides Johnsons, there will be a number of Le Barons, Babbits, Wilsons, Shermans and Bartons. These were children of five sisters who were also members of this pioneer band. The fifth sister had four children, all of whom died without issue.

The ten individuals named were not the entire family of Ezekiel and Julia who were actually the parents of sixteen children, six of whom, as well as the parents, did not live to reach the Salt Lake Valley. The five brothers, in order of birth, were Joel Hills, Joseph Ellis, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and William Derby.

The sisters were, Julia Ann, who married Almon W. Babbitt, first secretary of Utah Territory; Delcena Diadamia was the wife of Lyman Sherman, who early in the his-
tory of the Church was selected to be an apostle, but who
died before ordination; Esther Melita, wife of David T.
Lebaron and Almera, who married Joseph Smith as a plural
wife. After the latter's death, she married Reuben Barton.

Lyman Sherman was the subject of the revelation in
Sec. 108 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and Almon W.
Babbitt was mildly chastized in Sec. 124, although he and
the prophet became reconciled later. As to the origin of
the family on the paternal side, a great confusion exists.
This is because the father of Ezekiel cannot be located in
the known annals with certainty. His mother was Sethiah
(sometimes spelled Bethiah) Guernsey. Her family line is
a matter of record, but up to this time considerable research
has failed to unearth her marriage to Ezekiel's father.
Ezekiel never knew his father or anything about him, hav­ing
been brought up by a stepfather, Jonathan King. When
in his early teens he ran away from the King home appar­
etly about the time his mother and stepfather were leav­ing
for Canada. As far as we know, he never saw his
mother again.

The family tradition has been that the father of Ezekiel
bore the same name and that he marched away with the
Continental troops and was killed during the Revolutionary
War. This belief was so strong in the mind of the late
"Zeke" Johnson (JHJ) that he passionately believed that
an old sword which his father bequeathed to him was worn
by his grandfather in the war. It has been said that war
records of the Revolution show at least five Ezekiel Johnsons
on the rolls. Even if the tradition is well founded there
would still be difficulty in picking out the right Ezekiel.

However, many of the family have engaged in research
and some believe they have sifted it down to the Ezekiel
who served in the Continental army in 1775 and again in
1777. The line of this man harks back to Captain Edward
Johnson of Herne Hill, Kent, England. He was a founder
of Woburn, Mass., and the line has been carried back to around 1490. The findings which led to the acceptance by some of this line have been tentatively approved by the Genealogical Society of Utah, but no positive statement can be made until and if a record of the marriage of Sethiah Guernsey to this man can be found. In the meantime, the family organization has generally adopted as its own the line revealed by this tentative approval. Many members consider the case closed, but the specter of uncertainty remains.

The following excerpts are taken from a letter addressed to William S. Johnson (BFJ) in response to a request for information on the Johnson line. It is dated Jan. 18, 1937. The writer acknowledges that he is relying on family tradition and gives the already known history of Ezekiel, with a statement that no record of the marriage of his parents has been found. He then endeavors to find all evidence he can to show that the Bellingham man might have been the father of "our" Ezekiel.

Quote: "In Bellingham vital records we find the birth of Ezekiel Johnson, born 25 June, 1750, son of Isaac and Susanna (Thayer) Johnson. In tracing the locality of Uxbridge, Holliston, Sherborn, Bellingham and Rehoboth, Mass., we find that Holliston is about eight miles from Bellingham where Ezekiel was born, Rehoboth about 15 miles from Uxbridge, Holliston about 20 miles from Rehoboth, and Rehoboth about 10 miles from Providence, R. I. . . ."

"In the Thayer Family History we find Susanna Thayer (T. Gen. p. 375) married Isaac Johnson at Uxbridge 2 Mar. 1741 . . . bringing us right back to the place where Ezekiel Jr. was born . . . Bro. Archibald F. Bennett, secretary of our society, has gone over this work and feels that we are on the right track of these families. The records have been gathered from the towns mentioned, also from the Capt. Edward Johnson Family History . . . . As Reho-
both is so close to the boundary line of Rhode Island, it may be that Ezekiel Johnson, Sr. and Sethiah Guernsey were married in Providence, R. I., or some of the towns close to the boundary line. The early records are very incomplete. . . ."

Another group in the family believes there is insufficient evidence to connect us with Ezekiel of Bellingham and that conflicting evidence discovered in recent years indicates that there is little chance that we shall ever find an answer to the riddle of "our" Ezekiel’s paternity. Some years ago, Melvina, wife of the late Judge Ben F. Johnson (JEJ), received a request from an eastern publishing house for a brief report on the genealogy of her husband. This they wished to use in a list of lawyers and judges they were compiling. She sent them the Capt. Edward line, but the company rejected it, stating that the Captain’s family tree showed no branch on which we can build a nest. This alone, to us, is enough to scuttle the man of Bellingham.

Rolla once remarked that we seem to be facing a stone wall and that we may never learn the truth short of a revelation from the other side. There may be slight hope that someone will take up the search in Providence and the small border towns, as suggested by the Society, to see if any trace of this marriage can be brought to light. As the letter states, the records are incomplete and someone may yet run across an entry in some musty record book in a remote village church which will turn our darkness into the bright light of certainty. But to us, this is more of a wan hope than a probability.

**GUERNSEY, HILLS AND ELLIS**

The descent of Sethiah Guernsey is clearly authenticated. This line was dug out of many records culled from Massachusetts and Connecticut archives by Elnora, wife of Zeke Johnson (JHJ), by Rolla Johnson (GWJ) and by
others. Elnora wrote as follows: “The name Garnsy, Garnsey, Garnzy, Garnzey, Gurnsey, Gansee or Guernsey, as it was spelled interchangeably in the early records, is taken from the name of the isle and the family undoubtedly originated in the Isle of Guernsey.” These are merely phonetic spellings of dialectic pronunciations. Guernsey is the proper form and the one which we shall use in this story. We are confident that all these other weird renditions of the name are the products of ignorance and should not be perpetuated.

Henry Guernsey settled at Dorchester, Mass. as early as 1655 and was admitted as a freeman in 1660. John and Joseph Guernsey settled Milford, Conn. about 1639. Both seem to have had sons named Joseph. One of these Josephs moved to New Haven, where he was living in 1647. Later he lived in Stamford where he and his descendants lived for many years. He, or his son Joseph married Rose Waterbury at Stamford, May 11, 1659, and had Joseph, who settled in Stamford. John, born May 23, 1697, resided at Waterbury. We learn that his first wife Elizabeth died April 11, 1714, and that they had five children, the last of whom, Seth, was born Feb. 15, 1697. This Seth was the father of a son Seth, born Nov. 20, 1732, who married Bethiah Lee or Lea. She became the mother of Sethiah Guernsey, who was the mother of “our” Ezekiel.

The date of Ezekiel’s birth is clouded with uncertainty. When he and Julia Hills were married on January 12, 1801 he gave his birthdate as January 12, 1776, and this date is entered on the flyleaf of the old family bible in a bold and vigorous hand which might have been that of Ezekiel. The flyleaf is all that remains of the bible and was possibly saved by someone who was about to do away with the book because of its age and dilapidation. It is now in the possession of this writer. However, there is much evidence to prove that he did not give the actual date of his birth, for some reason at which we can only guess.
Evidence encountered in recent years seems to strongly indicate that he was born in January or February, 1773. A broad area of speculation is thus presented, but since this book is a biography of Joseph E. Johnson space is too limited to permit a full discussion of the various angles of Ezekiel’s origin. Until and if further investigation gives us something definite upon which we can all agree, we simply must take him as we find him, namely, the most remote paternal ancestor we can accept with complete certainty.

If the Johnson line has us stymied for the present, such is not true of either the Hills or the Ellis lines. Each is well authenticated. The family story of the Hills as far as we know it, begins dimly with the Hillys of Kent, and later at Great Burstead, near or part of Billericay, Essex, England. This town is located at the junction of highways 12 and 28, about 25 miles northeast of London. The village is a couple of miles distant. At this place, George Hills, the first known member of the family, married Mary Symonds in 1596. This being the only foreign spot where we have pinned down a family altar, we were curious enough to seek information concerning one of our ancestral homes.

Essex is more flat than much of England, but any part of the isle is beautiful with its grassy carpeting, magnificent trees and lovely villages. The area, including Gt. Burstead and Billericay, has been settled since remote times, even back to the Stone Age. The Romans maintained a fort here which they called Valerica, and it is probable that the word Billericay arises from the native Briton’s attempt to pronounce the name. We have a similar case in our own back yard, where the Navajo pronunciation of “American” comes out Belicana, or something very like.

The ancient parish church, St. Mary Magdalene, is at Gt. Burstead, which in the middle ages was an important center. Later Billericay expanded, while the village of Gt. Burstead remained as it was. It is still the ecclesiastical
center because of the venerable church, which is believed to have been built in a Druid clearing in the primitive Essex forest. In its vicinity prehistoric flints have been found, as well as British, Roman and Saxon remains.

The chief interest of this area to Americans is that here Christopher Martin made arrangements with the Merchant Adventurers for the chartering of the Mayflower, on which he became treasurer. Before sailing he married Marie Prower and the record may still be seen in the old church. The record of George Hills marriage to Mary Symonds is probably here also. Five residents of the place sailed on the Mayflower with Martin. This reminds us that these people were contemporary with our George Hills who probably knew them and who may have considered going with them. This suggests that here may be the origin of the persistence with which some of our family oldsters declared that we were of "Mayflower stock." The later Hills may have been aware that George was an associate of the Pilgrims and as the tale grew he was turned into a passenger. Some of these early emigrants established a town in Massachusetts which they named Billerica and which is now a manufacturing center.

As related, George Hills and his wife Mary had a son Joseph, christened in Gt. Burstead church in 1602. He in turn had a son Joseph, christened Aug. 2, 1629. This is the man who emigrated to America, the exact date of arrival being unknown to us. The son of this latter Joseph was (Sgt.) Samuel Hills, the first of this line to be born in the new world, on Dec. 16, 1699, at Malden, Middlesex Co., Mass. He sired a son Jabez, who had a son of the same name, born at Wrentham. His son Joseph became the father of Julia Hills, born Sept. 26 at Upton, Mass., and who married Ezekiel Johnson.

The mother of Julia Hills, Esther Ellis, was a descendant of early Massachusetts settlers. Her line begins with
JOHNSON FAMILY ORIGINS

John Ellis of Dedham; after him came John, md. 16 June, 1655; Joseph, b. Oct. 24, 1662, at Medfield; Joseph, b. 23 Nov. 1691; Joseph, b. 5 Jan. 1718, at Wrentham, who was the father of Esther. This Joseph died at the age of 29, of tuberculosis, which might furnish a clue to the tendency to that disease in the Johnson family later on at Kirtland. The Hills and the Ellis families were neighbors at Wrentham. After the death of Joseph, Esther became the wife of Enoch Forbush. He had a sister named Diadamia, which accounts for the origin of that name in the Johnson family.

There were a number of members of the three Johnson source families who took part in the Revolutionary War. It is suggested that if any of the family wishes to join the Sons or the Daughters of the Revolution that they submit the name of one of these as their participant sponsor. Some years ago when we thought the Ezekiel line had been pinned down to Ezekiel of Bellingham, this writer gave to a grandson of JEJ the name of the latter to attach to his application for membership in the S.A.R. He was accepted and remained a member until his death, but the chapter he joined did not investigate carefully or they would have found that the two lines could not be joined. There was no deception here; even if the error had been discovered, there were still several other avenues through which he was entitled to membership.

In case a sponsor is desired either of the following names from the Hills family would be accepted:


Same book, page 918.
Joseph Hills, Wrentham. Sergeant, Capt. Asa Fairbanks Co., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; also Lieut. same company., Maj. Metcalf’s regt., marched from Wrenthem to Providence and Warwick, R.I. on the alarm of Dec. 8, 1777; commissioned; many other citations, finally discharged March, 1781., roll endorsed “Col. Dean’s regt.”
CHAPTER 3

EZELIE OF UXBRIDGE

"Our" Ezekiel was born in Uxbridge, Mass., and while the precise date is still a moot question, it is practically certain that it occurred in January or February, 1773. His infancy and childhood were spent largely in the home of his grandmother, Bethiah Guernsey Smith, with whom his mother lived, probably until her marriage to Jonathan King early in 1776. The date of this marriage we do not have, but the intention to marry was published January 1, 1776. Ezekiel went with his mother and new stepfather, but where they lived at first has not been established. By January 19, 1779, they were living in Ashford, Connecticut, as is proven by a deed to property given by the two on that date. Family tradition has it that Ezekiel ran away from the home of his stepfather when he was about 14 years old because of unkind treatment by the latter.

The tale is that Jonathan King sent him to collect some money that was due from a neighbor and gave him an old rawhide wallet in which he was to bring back the cash. The amount was not large, but Ezekiel probably figured that it was large enough to finance him until he got on his own feet. So he vanished from the family scene with the wallet, and as far as is known, he never saw either Sethiah or Jonathan again. The tale of his wanderings would now be very interesting to us, but apparently he never wrote a line to tell his children anything about where he went or what he did.

The ancient wallet, which bore the name of James King, probably the father or brother of Jonathan, turned up later in possession of one of Ezekiel's descendants. From Rolla we learn that in it were a few business papers dated 1797 which indicated that he had business connections in
Albany, N.Y. Two of the papers were notes from one man, each for 12 cowbells at 12 shillings per bell, indicating that he was a vendor of cowbells, an article that has almost vanished from the American scene. One other note was for 30 pounds, five shillings, another for 25 pounds, five shillings and sixpence, still another for 15 dollars. It is odd that both English and American coinage should have been used in business transactions. Anyway, the notes were never redeemed. Perhaps it was a real job to get back to Albany to collect them, and thus he lost a tidy sum as money was reckoned in those days.

One of his roles at this period seems to have been that of a primitive “realtor,” wherein he acquired tracts of land, cleared them and built cabins which he sold to the new settlers who were beginning to swarm into the new western lands. By 1801 he had met and courted eighteen-year-old Julia Hills of Upton, who was then living with her mother, Esther Ellis Hills, in Grafton. Upton is a village lying a few miles southeast of Grafton, both in Worcester county, Massachusetts. Where his home was, if he had a permanent one at this time, is unknown, but his interest in Julia had probably caused him to cease roving and settle down in Grafton. The notice of their intention to marry was recorded in Grafton December 18, 1800, also at Upton, and the wedding took place on January 12, 1801. It is practically certain that he was then 28 years of age, not 25, as has been the belief until recently.

Julia Hills was an attractive girl, of a substantial New England family, intelligent and reasonably well educated. It is not likely that she would have taken up with Ezekiel had he been a “roughneck” such as his years of roaming could have made him. He must have had a certain refinement and sufficient charm to cause her to accept a man 10 years her senior. Someone who knew him well once wrote that he strongly resembled the conventional portrait of Wm. H. Seward, who was a member of Abraham Lincoln’s cabi-
His son, Benjamin in his "My Life's Review," had this to say of him, "As a husband and parent he was by nature tender and affectionate. As a neighbor and friend he was most obliging and true and was a man of truth and honor among men. Never was a question known to be raised as to his integrity, for his word was his bond; in all things he was a gentleman in the fullest sense, except only in the habit of intemperance, which at times seemed to change his whole nature. He was a man of full middle stature, about 5 feet 10 inches in height, of solid build, fine light brown hair, mild put piercing blue eyes, with light, smooth skin and of natural personal attractions. He was beloved and sought after by his friends, and for his words only he was feared, for with no other blow than words was he ever known to strike anything living."

The newly married couple remained in Grafton for something over a year, during which time their first child was born, a son. He was named Joel Hills, in honor of Julia's much loved brother. Then began an odyssey through western New England in search of the right location for a permanent home. The first place of tarrying was at Northboro, a village northeast of Grafton. Here a second child was born in 1803, a daughter. She was named Nancy Maria, and her name appears later in the family story in connection with one of the early miracles of the Church. The name of Nancy was to honor Julia's sister, Nancy Hills Taft. Their stay in Northboro was not prolonged, since their third child, a son, was born in Royalston, a small town close to the border of New Hampshire, in Worcester county, in 1805. He was given the name of Seth Guernsey, after Ezekiel's grandfather.

The pause here was just long enough to permit Ezekiel to take up or purchase and clear a piece of land, and with his carpenters skill, build a house. This was soon sold and the search began again for a new and better location. The third station on this odyssey was Westford, Chittenden
county, Vermont. It was situated on a branch of the La­moille, not far from the east shore of Lake Champlain. Little is known of their life here, other than that Ezekiel pursued his trade as carpenter, first clearing land, then building cabins to shelter the incoming settlers. A daughter was born in 1806 who was christened Delcena Diadamia. Ezekiel managed to stay put at Westford for about seven years, during which three more children were added to their flock. Julia Ann, named for her mother, was born in 1808; David, so called for Julia’s cousin, David Partridge, arrived in 1810; Almera Woodward took seventh place in the family in 1812 and was given the name of another of Julia’s cousins.

By June, 1813, the old restlessness assailed Ezekiel and the family yielded to the ever pressing urge to move westward. They set out across New York by wagon and about Sept. 28, 1813, they pulled up at a small settlement of Canadaway, later called Fredonia, in Pomfret township, Chautauqua county, situated about 12 miles from Dunkirk, a port on Lake Erie. The following letter written by Julia to her mother, Esther Ellis Hills Forbush, still living in Grafton, gives some details of this historic trip and something about their new surroundings:

October 14, 1813.

“My dear mother:

“After my love to you I would inform you of our welfare and hope these few lines will find you in health and prosperity. Through our journey we have been blest with health and are all well and hearty. We started from Westford, Vermont, on the 27th of June and came on over some 100 miles when one of our horses became lame and we laid over for a week. We then came awhile but were obliged to stop again for three or four days, and then we came as far as Hamburg, this side of Buffalo, where we stopped about seven weeks. I was very discontented there, yet the people
urged us to stay. They gave Mr. Johnson one dollar a day, with house rent, garden vegetables, milk, etc. He thought it best to stay until our horses got recruited up and we got rested, as he had the money for his work. But I could not be contented to stay any longer, for there were no neighbors short of about two miles, and all Sabbath breakers, and I could not feel at home there. We started from there on the 24th day of September and were four days coming to this place on account of bad roads.

"This is a beautiful country and we have concluded to stay until spring, if not longer. Mr. Johnson intends to go on himself and see the country before he moves his family any further for fear he would not like it so well as he does here. There are many moving to the west, some days 10 or 12 wagons in company, and some have come back to this place. The country is very healthy indeed, and good for grain which is plenty and cheap. Markets at present are distant. Such corn I never saw before as I have seen here. It is only seven years since the settlements were made here. There begins to be fruit of almost every kind; I never saw such sights of peaches before, thousands of bushels rot on the ground. They make sauce of them and brandy. The trees bear in three years from the stone, and apples in six.

"We have hired a little house about two miles and a half from the village of Canadaway (now Fredonia) which contains three societies, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist. There are also mills and school is near at hand, with neighbors who appear very friendly and kind. If Mr. Johnson does not like it at Cincinnati he intends to settle here before any other country he ever saw. It is a good place for his trade which demands one dollar and fifty cents per day, but the Lord knows what is best and I hope I shall be reconciled to His will. All things shall work together for the good of those who love Him. If we are afflicted, it is for our good, for He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. Therefore, let us put our trust in Him, for he hath
said, 'They that put their trust in him shall be as Mount Zion, which shall not be removed.'

"My children send their love to you all. Remember my love to all inquiring friends. Tell Almera I wish they would write to me. Do write as soon as possible. I shall write as soon as Mr. Johnson gets back if not before. This from your affectionate children

E. and J. Johnson"
CHAPTER 4

THE THOUSAND MILE STROLL

The journey to Cincinnati by Ezekiel, mentioned in Julia’s letter had two purposes. The first is described in the letter, but the second requires some explanation. Joel Hills, a much loved brother of Julia, after marrying his cousin, Rhoda Partridge, had settled in Canada. When the war of 1812 erupted, Joel, being an enemy alien, forfeited his possessions to the Crown, and not wishing to remain in hostile surroundings, moved back into the United States. On his way through Vermont he visited Ezekiel and Julia and told them he expected to settle near his sister, Nancy Hills Taft, who was then living in Cincinnati. On his solicitation, young Joel H. Johnson, his namesake and nephew, was allowed to accompany him. It was understood that Ezekiel would later visit Ohio and if he decided not to move his family there, he would take Joel back with him. It worked out just that way, showing how nearly our tribe missed expanding on the banks of the rolling Ohio instead of the shores of Lake Erie. Our concern now is with that estimated 500 mile hike out of the Ohio hinterland.

What a thrilling passage this foray into the virgin backland of America must have been to the young Joel! What a fascinating train of speculation it opens up to us! For Joel the southward trip was made by horse and wagon through all the loveliness of Vermont, the lakes and woodlands of early New York, across two thirds of Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh, then down the long reaches of the Ohio to “the old Kentucky shore,” Newport, opposite Cincinnati. Little has been written about it, nothing in fact, except a short account which Joel gave in later years. “I cannot recall many incidents of the journey, being small, but recollect passing the Alleghany mountains in Pennsylvania and
coming to Pittsburgh, where my uncle bought a flatboat, or what was then called an 'Ark.' Into this he took his family and several other families who had sent their teams by land. (An ark was more or less a raft with a shanty built on the floor and was steered by a long pole from the stern). We descended the Ohio to Cincinnati which was then a small town. My uncle located at Newport on the Kentucky side, where I lived with him until the spring of 1815, when my father came to look at the country . . . and not liking it concluded to return to New York. Accordingly about the first of May, my father and I (about 13 years old) went on foot to accomplish a journey of about 500 miles to the state of New York, through mostly a heavily timbered country. We passed several houses where the inhabitants had been butchered the year before by Indians. We arrived at Pomfret about the first of June, 1815."

An amazing feat was this. One wonders if many of us today could stand the rigors of such a journey in an age when much of the area was rank wilderness. It would require an iron nerve to attempt the action, especially in a boy 13, that of setting out with only what they could "tote" on a little jaunt of "about 500 miles."

It is regrettable that Joel did not have more time and space in which to write more of this memorable saunter. He was too young to realize that his descendants would be avid for details of his heroic journada. There are so many things to wonder about concerning their adventures, so many happenings that were commonplace to them but which now fill us with a lively curiosity. How did they find their way through this wooded country without maps of the area? Well, Ezekiel was a woodsman of long practice, and he had walked the distance in reverse, so that can be answered. Where did they sleep? Were settlements spaced closely enough to enable them to take shelter inside at night? Or did they sleep on the ground much of the time? If the latter, did they carry blanket rolls? What did they eat? Did they
largely "live off the land?" Of course each had a knife, but did they carry a gun to enable them to toast a partridge, a prairie hen or a quail over a glowing fire at night? Did they kindle fires with flint and steel?

Did they carry a fish line and hooks, stop now and then at some purling brook to ensnare a trout, or at some of the larger streams where sunfish, crappies or bass abounded? How sensitive were they to the beauties of plant life which must have been in its glory, for they were knee deep in May and were traversing that lovely land from the Ohio to Lake Erie where practically all the eastern flora would be encountered at one place or another? Did they thrill at the bright splash of color as a scarlet tanager flashed through the trees, and were they free enough from fears and anxieties to fully enjoy the song of the whipporwill, the persistent "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" of those feathery scamps, or the lilting carol of the meadow lark as they made their way across the open meadows?

What about the weather? It must have rained more than once during the month long "sashay." How did they find shelter, or did they slog along through the wet, depending upon the heat engendered by their walking to dry them out after the clouds were gone? How about their poor feet? Did their shoes endure to "the bitter end"? What were their feelings as they came upon the blackened ruins of homes where settlers had been massacred only the year before? Nature's plant larder was no help to them; it was too early for wild plums, hickory or butternuts, persimmons, berries, chokecherries or wild grapes. Were they able to obtain bread from the sparsely set villages and perhaps carry some along with them in their pockets?

These are but a few of the endless questions to which we would like answers, but which we shall never have. Thus, as all things must end, the tiring but not tiresome trek saw its finale one blithe June day when Ezekiel and Joel breezed
into the little home in Pomfret township, to be warmly wel­
comed by a thankful Julia. For Joel there was a new little
sister to greet him, Susan Ellen, born December 16, 1814.
Thus and then, for all practical purposes, the saga of life
in western New York for the Johnson family began. The
years from 1815 to 1833 may be termed the Pomfret Era in
the family annals.
CHAPTER 5

POMFRET A TOWNSHIP: NOT A TOWN

For many years it was supposed by the family that many of its senior members were born in a village called Pomfret. Only lately have most of us learned that there was no village of that name, but there is a Pomfret township, within the bounds of which a number of villages and hamlets are included. Canadaway, now Fredonia, located on a creek of the same name, is the most important place in the area. The first white inhabitants settled along the creek in 1803 and the township was formed in 1808 by being detached from Chautauqua township. An early history of the locality states that "the earliest settlers found widespread remains of ancient Indian mounds of a high culture, with trees growing out of them so old as to date these back many hundred years, with a wide lane like an old turnpike, also abandoned and grown up with underbrush and forest trees, showing how high was the Indian culture."

It is said that Fredonia was the first town in the United States to be illuminated with natural gas. About 1824 gas was piped to the Able house, which was thus lighted on the occasion of the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette to Fredonia. Both of these events are sources of historic pride to the town. The township consisted of ten square-mile lots running north and south, and eight lots running east and west, with two additional tiers of lots in township 6 which include the towns of Fredonia and extend a mile and a half north of that. The town lies on the east bank of Canadaway creek, which rises in Cassadaga lake, and runs northwesterly, entering Lake Erie near Dunkirk. There are several smaller lakes in the vicinity and the country generally has the lush beauty of any woodland region where rainfall is sufficient to keep grass green and to encourage the growth of shrubs and flowers.
The fertility of the soil is pointed up in Julia’s letter by her comments of the size of corn, abundance of grain, and the quantities of fruit, especially peaches. To us who have lived in the arid west and have battled with the problems of irrigation, the country would have seemed almost a Garden of Eden. The delights and pleasures of childhood life in the Pomfret area has been told in poetry by two of the Johnson brothers. Several poems on the same subject indicate that all their lives they thrilled to the thought of their youth. These verses by JEJ, though of simple construction, are filled with a haunting nostalgia.

THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

Lines suggested on receipt by the author, of a relic of “The Old Schoolhouse on the Hill,” a few days since. Dedicated to his old schoolmates.

How sweet the lingering dreams of olden time
Of childhood’s spring in far off native clime,
’Mid wild Chautauqua’s hills we used to stray,
Where wood-nymph fairies held a magic sway.

Our cot was high away from Erie’s shore,
Too far to hear the storm tossed water’s roar;
Yet white sails dotting o’er the lake’s clear blue,
Were often ready to our wondering view.

How oft in dreams we lightly trip, at dawn,
Where sparkling dews illume the grassy lawn.
For dandelions, cowslips, daisies gay,
Or to cull berries midst the growing hay.

How oft we’ve marked the hills with boyish feet
For fragrant wintergreens with berries sweet;
And by the fields for blackberries we’ve roved
With red cheeked schoolmates we have fondly loved.
The village bell, though full three miles away
We heard distinctly on each new born day;
Its peal, more solemn on the Sabbath air,
Marked time for school, for service and for prayer.

The school house, ah! the red one on the hill.
Full two miles south, Laona’s noisy mill;
Midway between the two we met our birth,
Our boyhood thought the brightest spot on earth.

How oft we’ve met with laughing girls and boys;
The happiest those who made the greatest noise;
Till Master came, with rule in hand, to bring
Order again, as beaten clapboards ring.

To books and study then with earnest will
We learned to spell, to read and wield the quill;
And once a week, through wintry frost or sleet,
At spelling school each playmate fond we’d greet.

In autumn, when the mellow fruit was red,
To “paring-bees” with lightened step we’d tread,
Where hopeful lads in home-spun hues were dressed,
In gaudy prints, the lasses looked their best.

We peeled the fruit, told yarns and joked and laughed,
We kissed the girls—new cider then we quaffed,
Then mince and pumpkin pies, and cakes were spread,
And then we played and laughed till night had sped.

Then homeward we with blushing fair ones go
And little else but happiness did know.
Alas! those schoolmates now are scattered wide!
Some have grown great, and others pined and died.

Away, ’mid Rocky Mountain’s peaks and snows,
Thanks! schoolmate, thanks! for relic of the house
Where oft we’ve met our joyous playmate band,
Memento cherished, of my native land.
THIS REWARD OF MERIT IS
PRESENTED TO
MR. JOSPEH JOHNSON
who has been a well behaved and studious scholar; who has made a good progress in the arts and sciences this winter past; and who, for which, merits the approbation of parents, the good will and esteem of all, and the eulogy of the teacher.

ALEXANDER CHENEY.

Whenever on these lines you look,
Remember him from whom you took:
The time has pleasantly glided
Since I first, with you, resided.

If we see not each other again,
While here on the earth we remain;
O, may we meet on Cana'n's shore,
Where parting will be known no more.
So, as it came about, in this green and pleasant western edge of New York, in an area only 14 years from stark wilderness, Joseph Ellis Johnson was born on April 28, 1817. The war of 1812 was still fresh in the minds of the people, and the downfall at Waterloo of the modern world's first great tyrant, Napoleon, was less than two years gone. Living conditions were on the strictest pioneer level. Sources of supply were far away and transportation was on a purely horse and wagon basis. It was not until 1825 when the Erie Canal was opened that traces of seaboard life began to be noticed. Earlier practically every necessity had to be wrested from the earth, created by their own hands or bartered for.

Much of their clothing was made by growing, processing, spinning and weaving flax, which also furnished household linen such as tablecloths, toweling, sheets and the like. Apples and other fruits were stored for the winter, peaches were dried in the fall and nuts were collected in the woods and stacked away. Cheese making was a common task and the butter churn was a busy instrument. An enormous stack of wood was required for the long winter. Candles were the chief source of dispelling the darkness in the home, and these had to be made by pouring melted tallow around string wicks in a cluster of moulds.

Soap was made from collected fats by leaching caustic potash (lye) from wood ashes, and what an ill smelling mess it was! We learn that they kept bees and thus had honey for sweets, but they also had delicious maple sugar and syrup. It was quite a task to tap the trees and boil the sap down to proper consistency, yet they had a lot of fun in their sugaring off parties in the woods. To live in that day and place meant to work and to work hard.

Joseph's verses above quoted, are but a few of the many written by the Johnson brothers, particularly Joseph and George, which furnish interesting word pictures of the
way the family lived, how the young ones entertained themselves and what their surroundings were like. The long schoolhouse poem gives a clue which may explain several things which have been puzzling. The verse beginning, "The schoolhouse, ah! the red one on the hill," tells us that the Laona mill was two miles south of the schoolhouse, and about half way between stood the house where Joseph was born. Yet the verse preceding this one states that the village bell, i.e., the schoolhouse bell, was full three miles away, whereas only two miles were encompassed in the next verse.

The explanation is that Joseph was referring to two locations. First was the house alluded to in the letter Julia penned to her mother soon after the family arrived in the Pomfret area. She wrote that they had hired a little house about two and a half miles from the village, where Joseph was born in 1817. Second was the larger house on the mile square farm, (Lot 21, Pomfret township) which Ezekiel acquired in 1825, to which Joseph moved with the family when he was about eight years old. It is to the latter place that he and George in their many allusions to mother, home and childhood, since Joseph's memory was just beginning to be fixed and George was too young to remember anything about the "little house." George gives us some details of the house and surroundings in his poem.

CHILDHOOD

Oh don't you remember the home of our childhood
That bright, sunny spot where we first saw the light,
Where oft we have wandered o'er fields and o'er wildwood?
No spot on the earth can to me be so bright.

Oh don't you remember the dear old brown cottage,
The kitchen, the square room, the bedroom and hall,
The wall at the door and the orchard near by it,
The garden, the barn and the corn house and all?
Oh don't you remember the old kitchen fireplace.
Where oft we had met when our days work was done
With brothers and sisters and friends we loved dearly
To pass off the evening with all sorts of fun?
Tho long years have passed and I've far from there wandered
Yet often in fancy's bright dream I am there;
Then bright rays of happiness over me lingers
And I gaze with delight on a vision so fair.

A verse from another of GWJ's rhymes, The Old Dinner Horn, mentions several other familiar things around the house:

How well I remember each tree in the orchard,
Each shrub and each flower in the garden that grew,
The well and the spring and the brick yard near by it,
And the bees, when they swarmed, oh what din and what clatter
To cause them to light on the old apple thorn;
What ringing of bells and what dashing of water
And the sweetest of music, the old dinner horn.

The din and clatter mentioned may make some of our younger members wonder what the racket was all about. It was a bit of old folk lore that swarming bees could be coaxed into collecting on some given object by loud noises, such as shouting, banging metal tubs or cans with sticks, ringing bells, blowing horns, firing guns or anything which would produce a racket. If the bees, not because of, but in spite of, the hubbub, settled on some nearby object, they were easily gathered in their semi-dormant condition and placed in hives. The old apple thorn was doubtless an ancient specimen of Craetagus (hawthorn) species which was native to the region and which had been on the farm for a long, long time, since this genus is of slow growth.
A few lines from George’s poem, *Fifty Years Ago* point out some frontier furnishings of the little brown cottage:

Again I saw my childhood home, the place that gave me birth,
With friends and kindred gathered round the old familiar hearth.
The bible lay upon the stand, it was not there for show,
When I was in my childhood home just fifty years ago.
The old Dutch clock hung on the wall, the cupboard too was there,
The pictures on the mantlepiece and mother’s old arm chair.

The gustatory delights of life on a farm where much food was produced are well portrayed in this poem by GWJ; also it expresses a deeply felt appreciation of Mother Julia’s culinary skill:

Fond memories will come of the scenes of my childhood,
How well I remember the dear old brown cot
Surrounded by orchard, by field and by wildwood,
I cannot forget them, thou dear hallowed spot.
How well I remember the old cellar kitchen
Where mother presided at night, noon and morn
And always had puddings and pies and turnovers
And best thing of all was a pot of hulled corn.

Some times she would make us meal mush for our supper,
With milk from the dairy or fresh from the cow,
Or a pudding, well sweetened with maple molasses,
It was made of corn meal but I cannot tell how.
Or a pot of baked beans, smoking hot from the oven
With a chunk of fat pork with rind sliced and torn,
Or a loaf of brown bread with sweet yellow butter,
But nothing compared with the pot of hulled corn.
The family of Ezekiel seems to have been an exceptionally well knit one as far as family affection was concerned. In the writings of various members, love for one another is played up to a marked degree. The mother was particularly venerated and the father was well spoken of in spite of his intemperance. In Benjamin's autobiography, in recalling his early years, he wrote, "While gathering forest nuts, wild fruits and flowers, with the tender care of, to me, a beloved and beautiful mother, loving elder sisters and companionship of my almost twin brother (JEJ), these were to me the happy features of my childhood and early youth."

In another set of verses, George expresses his love for his mother after she had cared for him through an illness:

How firm and untiring she watched by my pillow
'Till the long weary night with its shadows had flown
And the day god arose over mountain and billow
And relieved her night's vigils so patiently borne.

How kind were her accents, how gentle her chiding,
How sweet was her smile and how fervent her prayer;
Her love was unselfish, so pure and abiding,
How patient her toiling, how watchful her care.
CHAPTER 6

ENTER THE MORMONS

Although Ezekiel was not particularly a devotee of religion, probably owing to his more or less nomadic early life, Julia was extremely devout and was well versed in the scriptures. She had taught all the children to read the Bible and most of them could quote fluently from the book. The family professed membership in the Presbyterian church and each Sunday attended Sunday school and the later meeting. Benjamin, especially, was emotionally religious when young, and as he states, "afflicted with the idea of future punishment, with literal fire and brimstone for those who did not 'get religion' or a 'change of heart.'"

Some time in 1829 the Fredonia paper told of a young man who claimed to have taken from the earth, at the direction of an angel, a set of golden plates upon which were engraved strange characters, which he had translated. The Hill Cumorah, said to be the spot from which the plates were taken, the town of Palmyra, where the translations were put into book form, and Fayette, where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was afterward organized, are all within about a hundred mile radius of Fredonia. Naturally a great interest in these happenings was aroused among the country folk in the surrounding area and the Johnson family was as curious as anybody about it all.

In 1830 Joel H. sold his farm and mill on lot 5 of Pomfret township and moved to Amherst, Lorain Co., Ohio, near the shore of Lake Erie. There he established a sawmill and commercially exploited his patented shingle cutter. Later his brother David went to Amherst to visit him and stayed until the next spring. Prior to this—news had been trickling into the Pomfret area of the rise of a new religious sect teaching what was called Campbellism, after Alexander
Campbell, its founder. Sidney Rigdon was then one of its prominent exponents. Julia became fearful that one of her boys might become enmeshed in this new "delusion" and wrote to caution them against having any truck with this society and warning them of false prophets that were to arise in the last days.

Amherst was on the route westward which the early Mormon elders took in their journey from Kirtland to Missouri. They paused here and made conversion enough to form a branch of the Church, Joel and David being among those who entered the waters of baptism. Thus they ranked among the very early members of the Church. When the news reached Pomfret it came as a shock to the family. In fact, Benjamin wrote that it was received almost as a horror and a disgrace. The reaction of Seth to the news of the conversions to Mormonism is expressed in the following letter:

Pomfret, Chautauqua County, N.Y.

Dear brother Joel:

How shall I address myself to you? In what language shall I attempt to answer your letter? My feelings are truly indescribable and an unaccountable sensation pervades my frame. Oh! for some angel, nay, Oh! for the Holy Spirit to guide my pen while I attempt to address a few lines to you.

I have read and reread your letter to many, and by myself. When I have been reading, I have sometimes said in my heart, "This is directed by the Holy Spirit." But when I have read the Book of Mormon (I have read it some) I have said, "Alas! Alas! The time has surely come foretold by the blessed Savior—Alas! Alas! that the devil has so much power on earth. I judge not, neither have I satisfied my mind sufficiently as yet to tell any man what I think of the subject further than to say it is a supernatural work, either divine or infernal. . . .
It is true that I know not but the Lord has raised up a prophet, but I have fears lest this one is one of those false prophets spoken of and warned against by the Savior and His apostles and that the right way of the Lord has been perverted by him through the influence of the devil. I have read the book a little and find no evidence of its being a revelation of God; neither do I find any reason to look for a revelation from heaven of this nature. The manner of your being convinced of this doctrine and book I am not prepared to condemn, but since Satan will, if possible deceive the very elect, I fear that you might have been deceived.

The style, popularity of the book and doctrine I would not object to did it bring sufficient evidence to me of its divine origin. Its statement that the Indians are the seed of Joseph, etc., I might easily conceive to be correct, should I once believe the work to be a revelation from God. Men's not believing it would be no evidence of its not being true, to me... .

Oh! how careful we should be to embrace nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus; ... You express your fears for the professing Christians that they possess the same spirit that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, etc., I fear you are too fast. You exclaim, “Oh, when will mankind be rational?” I ask the same question. “Had I the pen of an angel, I could not paint my feelings,” you say. I think it would take an angel’s pen to describe mine.

Your injunction to search the scriptures and to pray to God for direction, I acknowledge to be good. Perhaps no better could have been given by an angel. I do not feel disposed to trifle with these things, and confess that professings do not treat the subject as they ought. You say that you pray to God that I might come to a full knowledge of the truth, to which I say, “Amen.”

Farewell,

Seth Johnson
THE BOOK OF MORMON IS STUDIED

There are two versions of the coming of the Book of Mormon to the home of Ezekiel. One tells that Joel walked from Amherst carrying a copy of it in his pack. The other states merely that the book "soon followed" the news of dual conversion of Joel and David, accompanied by a long explanation of its origin. A copy of the E. B. Grandin edition, 1830, in the possession of this writer, is almost certainly the book referred to. The flyleaf bears the name Joseph E. Johnson. We understood Julia gave the original family copy to Joseph because he was supposed to be the "bookish" one of the family. It is in reasonably good condition, although the front cover has become detached but is not lost.

Doubtless at first this book was received dubiously and handled gingerly, with "mental tongs," as Seth's letter seems to indicate. Soon natural curiosity overcame any existing scruples and various ones began to delve into its pages. Soon a little group of family members and some of their religious neighbors were meeting in secret to study and discuss the book and the explanation Joel had made. Most of the group were greatly impressed with what they heard and read and in a short time were well on the road to conversion. Soon the younger boys were admitted to the circle and each began to feel that the work might indeed be a manifestation from the Lord.

Later in the autumn of 1831, Joel, David and a young man about 17 years old named Almon W. Babbitt came up from Amherst to visit the family and to bear their testimonies that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of the Most High. The latter afterward married Julia, daughter of Ezekiel and Julia. These young men were fervent in their belief, but neither was possessed of strong evangelical ability. The final clinch was put into the conversion later in the fall when two Mormon elders appeared among them.
One, James Brackenbury, was a forceful preacher and logical reasoner who seemed to possess a spirit of truth that swept away their lingering qualms. Mother Julia was first to ask for baptism, followed by daughter Delcena's husband, Lyman R. Sherman. Shortly thereafter all of the children who had reached majority entered the Church through baptism.

Ezekiel had not accepted the new religion and he firmly exercised his parental authority by refusing permission to the younger children to join the Church. Almost immediately as the news that "the Johnsons have joined the Mormons" permeated the population, the family became the recipients of ridicule, expostulation and strong opposition. The high regard in which they had been held took a slump with the neighbors; they were railed at by ministers and in general began to realize what it meant to associate with an unpopular cause. One resident of Fredonia has written that for some time after the family left, children dug into every likely looking place on the farm seeking for the family Bible which the Johnsons were reported to have buried!

This point became the division line of their entire lives; the path of Ezekiel here began to diverge from that of the family. The father was to enter a life of frustration, humiliation and general unhappiness that was to dog him for the remainder of his days. The family went on to a series of adventurous ramblings that led them across the United States and even to foreign lands; they passed through experiences, made sacrifices, faced dangers and witnessed events that were beyond the most bizarre imaginings of their earlier years.

During the ensuing summer, Ezekiel, though no doubt disgruntled at what was going on around him, was persuaded to take a look at Mormonism as it was at Kirtland. With Seth, Susan and perhaps others, he visited the Saints gathering place and became acquainted with Joseph Smith.
At first he seemed much impressed with the prophet and the things he saw and heard, and Joel and the others had hopes that he would throw in his lot with the Church. He visited Joel at Amherst, where the latter was president of a branch of nearly 100 people. But upon his return to Pomfret the feelings engendered by the magnetic charm of Joseph Smith seemed to undergo an alteration and he was soon back to his old opposition to the general course of family affairs. While the others were rejoicing in what to them was a new life of truth and religious understanding, he was stewing in angry resentment at his almost complete de­thronement as head of the family.

Casting about for some means of regaining his prestige and also of saving his loved ones from becoming further enmeshed in what he considered an ill founded enterprise, he decided to liquidate his holdings in New York and carve out a new home for all in the newly exploited Illinois country. Doubtless he reasoned that if he could get them all in a distant location, interested in building up a new estate, they would outgrow their infatuation with the new prophet and his teachings. The depth of his feelings in the matter may be measured by the fact that to save them he was willing, at the age of 60, to relinquish all that he had labored many years to establish and to go into a new land to face the toil of creating new surroundings.

Accordingly, in the autumn of 1832 he sold his two farms at Pomfret, the buyer to take possession not later than the first of the following June. He then “sailed up the lakes,” embarking at Dunkirk on Lake Erie, telling the family that he would write as soon as he had procured land and erected a shelter for them and instructing them to come as soon as his letter arrived. His course lay across Lake Erie, through the Detroit river into Lake Huron, through the strait of Mackinac into Lake Michigan, traversing almost its entire length to the site of the raw village of Chicago, then called Fort Dearborn.
We have scant details of his actions there, other than that he began the purchase of a quarter section of land, cleared the trees from much of it and planted some of it to grain. He began the construction of a house of some kind, then sent the promised letter instructing them to join him in Illinois. According to the family story that letter was never delivered. At that time and place mail often entrusted to any person going in the direction of the address on the "cover" and delivery was largely a matter of luck. Thus, the tale goes on, Julia never received it, and when time came to turn over the property she had no place to go with her family and so elected to turn toward Kirtland.

The truth is that she did not wait until June, but left "in the spring" as was attested by two of her sons. Our guess is that she hurried to get away, we are quite certain in April, before the letter arrived. She had no intention of going to Chicago, being so obsessed with the new religion that she probably would not have followed instructions anyway.

To the Johnsons, what an infinite field of speculation is opened up by the simple matter of the delivery of one letter! What if Ezekiel's plan had succeeded and the family had gone up the lakes to grow up with Chicago? Would the four who died in Kirtland have met the same fate on the shores of Lake Michigan? Would the others have joined the Mormons later and moved on westward to assist in building up of the great intermountain country? Would the boys as they grew up have been exposed to the doctrine of plural marriage, accept it and become the sires of the vast army of the descendants of Ezekiel who now people the west from Canada to Mexico? If it were not for plural marriage what a whopping lot of us would not have been here at all! However, when this problem is presented to us we reply by quoting Andy Brown, "Is that bad?" But after all, for our part it WOULD have been bad, because in spite of "our tears and fears and doubts and dogmas" this is a good old
world and we would have been extremely sorry to have missed it.

It is to be regretted that there is no record in Chicago of Ezekiel's ownership of land. It is probable, as suggested by someone in the Chicago Historical Society's office, that he did not complete the arrangements for the purchase of the quarter section and thus his name was not placed on the property rolls. Then too, we imagine that the making of property records at that early date was a rather sketchy matter. We do not know what happened to the property when Ezekiel left so hastily, nor to his team and implements which his children state he had. All that we know is, that as time passed and he heard nothing from the family he became alarmed and dropped everything to hurry to Pomfret. There is one story that he did not wait for a boat passage down the lakes, but that he mounted a mule and rode around through Indiana and Ohio. We doubt this tale because such a ride would have taken him within about three miles of Kirtland, and surely he would not have missed such a chance of checking on events in the Mormon city.

Arriving at Pomfret, he found his worst fears realized; his family had vanished. He learned that Julia had given up the farms in the spring and all had set out for Kirtland to link their destinies with that of the rising young prophet. The date is not given, other than "spring," when the tribe began packing their impedimenta to the tune of "Kirtland Ho!" We can but guess at the number of vehicles required for the transportation of 16 or more people, with all their household goods, tools, implements and personal property. But it must have been quite a caravan that rolled out of New York, along the shore of Lake Erie, across the little corner of Pennsylvania and into Ohio, a distance of about 140 miles. We know that others were with them from a statement made by Apostle George A. Smith, that he had first met the Johnsons when traveling with them from
New York to Kirtland in 1833, and that he was personally acquainted with all of them.

Arriving at Kirtland, Julia traded some of their teams and wagons for a house on Kirtland Flat. Apparently their property was not "flat," as we read later of an orchard on a hill above the house. The Mormon "invasion" of Kirtland began in February 1831, when Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge arrived there. The coming of the Johnsons only two years later made them in a sense "charter members" of the Mormon congregation. They were witnesses and participators in practically all important incidents of Church establishment except the very earliest.

Not long after the wagon train reached its modern Mecca, Ezekiel arrived hot on their trail, deeply hurt and indignant that his wishes and instructions had been disregarded. He immediately took up a labor with them but all his protestations and urgings to return fell upon unsympathetic ears. He finally decided to abandon the Chicago project and remain with the family. In this he had neither desire or intention to join the Church. The poor fellow was indeed in a cleft stick. He was then 60 years old, and if he went back he faced a life of loneliness and misery perhaps greater than that which would affect him in Ohio. Possibly he convinced himself that by remaining, some eventuality might arise which would enable him to get his loved ones clear of what he considered the "mess" they were in. Vain hope! the family remained loyal in their allegiance to the prophet.

Joseph wrote that after his father's decision to remain, which was made under protest, he "bought some property which he improved, besides doing considerable at his trade, carpentering." He took a job where Brigham Young was employed "working at the same bench together." This interlude was of short duration; the state of continuous resent-
ment and frustration which enveloped him caused him to try to alleviate his woes by an increased indulgence in liquor. Thus his whole situation with regard to family affairs deteriorated, and he became an embittered, unhappy man. Later on a separation was arranged between Ezekiel and Julia and he bought a place at Mentor, a small town close to Lake Erie and not far from Kirtland. There his daughters stayed alternately to look after him and the younger children often visited him.
CHAPTER 7
A LITTLE OF LIFE IN KIRTLAND

The first tribal activity after settling in Kirtland was the building by Joel of a sawmill out in the virgin woodland. Joseph and Benjamin aided in this venture by helping to clear the land, tap the maple trees and make sugar from the sap, haul saw logs and run the mill. There they learned something of mechanics, considerable of initiative and self-reliance and other things which were valuable to them in subsequent pioneering, when every man was in need of many skills.

Back in Pomfret in 1830, Nancy, oldest of the Johnson girls, had fallen off a horse and broken her hip in such a manner that doctors told her she would never walk again. Thereafter she used crutches and never bore her weight on the injured leg. After the family conversion, neighbors whom the new converts had urged to join the Church on the strength of revelations, visions, miracles and the like, asked derisively why, if these things were true, was Nancy not healed. Their inability to answer this question rankled in their minds. In the summer of 1834, Jared Carter, an elder of mighty faith, appeared in Kirtland and visited the Johnson home. After talking with Nancy one day he asked her if she believed that he was a man of God. When she answered in the affirmative, he commanded her in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to drop her crutches and walk. She wonderingly did just that. She dropped her crutches and walked! She never again used crutches.

Later in the fall, Benjamin accompanied Almon W. Babbitt on a hundred and forty mile walk to Pomfret, eager to tell his old neighbors of the miracle. Filled with exultation and exaltation, he was brimming with confidence that many of them would join the Church when he told them the
story. His old neighbors and companions welcomed him in a friendly manner but his story evoked no enthusiasm. Some did not even wish to discuss the matter with him. "After a few days of disappointment and chagrin, disgusted with my overanxiety to visit them, and my misplaced confidence in their sincerity, I took steamboat at Dunkirk and returned home," he wrote. They had asked for a sign and when they received it they did not believe it!

Sometime prior to this Joseph Smith announced that he had received a revelation commanding the saints to erect a Lord’s House, later known as a temple, in Kirtland. The town was small, the saints were financially and numerically weak but they set to work with all the means at their command to get the work under way. Brick seemed to be the most readily obtainable building material to use in the structure and Joel was appointed to get brickmaking on a productive basis. He secured the use of a brickyard belonging to Joseph Smith and Thomas Hancock and began to mould and burn bricks for the temple. Seth and David worked with him and later Joseph and Benjamin joined in the venture, although they were still boys. To David fell the task of procuring wood for burning the brick, and being energetic and enthusiastic in the religion aspects of the undertaking, he worked long and hard, but finally fell ill with what was apparently tuberculosis, since lung hemorrhages developed. During his illness his intimate friend, Don Carlos Smith, brother of the prophet, sat at his bedside. During his last hours he bore a testimony of the divinity of the Church work through the gift of tongues. His words were interpreted by Don Carlos. Death came to him October 30, 1833. He was regarded as being one of the first modern martyrs to the service of the church.

Somewhat earlier a stone quarry was located within reasonable hauling distance of the temple site and the use of brick was abandoned in favor of stone. Benjamin wrote that such was the dire poverty of the people that there was
not a scraper or scarcely a plow that could be used on the job. However, the deep religious fervor of the saints enabled them by dint of great sacrifice and labor to lay the cornerstone of the temple in the spring of 1834. All of the family witnessed the event and Joel, Seth and brother in law Lyman Sherman took part in the ceremonies.

When mobs began to assail the saints who had gone on and settled in Missouri, the latter naturally asked help of the Church in Kirtland. The prophet announced a revelation which is Sec. 103 of the Doctrine and Covenants, declaring that Zion was to be established and instructing him to organize a force of men which should be called "Zion's Camp" and which should go to the aid of their embattled brethren. Each man was required to furnish his own arms and have at least five dollars in cash. The point of assembly was New Portage, about fifty miles west of Kirtland. Although the number of volunteers asked for was 500, approximately 200 appeared at the rendezvous. Joseph Smith led them in person and naturally such a military display attracted much attention and some alarm was felt by people along the line of march.

Nothing noteworthy took place until they reached the Missouri at the mouth of Fishing River. Here they heard tidings of mobs forming to meet and crush them, but a great storm and flood arose and dispersed their enemies for the time being. The detachment arrived too late to be of any real service and the expulsion of the saints from Jackson county became a certainty. The men suffered greatly from cholera, which reached plague proportions. A number died and those who could straggled back to Kirtland. The persecuted Missouri saints left Jackson county and spread out over Clay, Ray, Caldwell and Daviess counties. The prophet declared that the time was not ripe for the establishment of Zion and returned to the main body of the Church at Kirtland.
Up to the time of the Kirtland venture there had never been a death in the Johnson family of 16 children, except that of Elmer Wood, who died in babyhood at Pomfret in 1822. The greatly mourned passing of David in 1833 seemed to initiate a series of bereavements, which, added to the stern business of making a living and coping with pioneer conditions, made them all feel that their cup of sorrow was filled to overflowing.

When Zion’s Camp left Kirtland, Seth, Lyman Sherman and Almon Babbitt marched with it. Many of the group became emaciated from fevers and cholera, among whom was Seth, who came close to death from the latter disease in Missouri. When he returned to Kirtland he was in a precarious state of health and should have entered into a long convalescence. But so great was his desire to bear his share of the family burden that he accepted a position as schoolteacher at Willoughby, Ohio, only a few miles from Kirtland on Lake Erie. It was a large school and he worked hard at the job but his health deteriorated to a point where he was compelled to resign and return home. His final illness proved to be tuberculosis and his death on February 19, 1835 made him the second member of the family to succumb to this malady.

Joseph Smith, in his own history (p. 204, Vol. 1) noted Seth’s passing in this statement: “The council adjourned to the day following, Mar. 1, after attending the funeral of Seth Johnson. . . .” Slightly over a year later Susan Ellen fell a victim of the same ailment, dying on March 16, 1836. The prophet noted in his diary under date of Friday, 18 March, 1836: “At ten o’clock went to schoolhouse to attend the funeral of Susan Johnson, daughter of Ezekiel Johnson. She was a member of the Church of Latter-day Saints and remained strong in the faith until her spirit took its departure from time into eternity. May God bless and comfort her afflicted parents, family connections and friends.
President Rigdon delivered a fine discourse on the occasion and much solemnity prevailed.”

On October 30 of the same year Nancy, she who had been healed in a miraculous manner only two years before, became the fourth of the Johnsons to be stricken by this dread thing they called “quick consumption.” It was not only a heart breaking experience to lose her, but a frightening one for those left behind. They began wondering if the entire family was doomed to destruction by this terrible affliction. However, none other contracted it, and with the passing of their beloved Nancy, Death took a holiday. Cousin Rolla once wrote that one tubercular cow around Kirtland supplying milk to the family could have accounted for all four cases. This could be true but it is probable that other factors entered into the matter. Joseph Ellis, father of Esther Ellis Hills, who was the mother of Julia Hills, died of consumption at the age of 29. It is common knowledge that the malady cannot be inherited, but susceptibility to it, or the tendency to acquire it, can be. It is possible that when the family was by some means exposed to it, those who by inheritance had least resistance became easier victims. Or did they? We are not a doctor, you know.

It will be remembered that Joseph when young was said to have a “weak chest,” but apparently he never acquired TB. His chest troubles seemed more bronchial than pulmonary.

Recently a list of names of people buried in the cemeteries of Kirtland was examined in the L.D.S. Genealogical Library. The list was compiled in 1929 but not one of the four children of Ezekiel and Julia was listed. This led to the speculation that probably no real monuments had been erected and wooden boards had long since vanished through decay. The recent finding of a fragmentary autobiography of JEJ clears this matter up. Quote: “We remained in Kirt-
land five years, in which time a temple was erected and the Church fully organized. My father and mother had separated and by sorrowful dispensation of providence we lost and buried two brothers and two sisters . . . all of whom were buried near each other IN THE LITTLE ORCHARD ON THE HILL ABOVE THE HOUSE WE THEN OWNED.” Probably the “little orchard” has been gone for lo! these many years, but the hill remains and there four people who were inordinately loved by their kinfolk lie in silence and pathetic dust until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away.

Something of the affection Joseph felt for the departed ones is poignantly expressed in these verses written by him after a visit to the old home in December, 1851:

THE GRAVES OF MY KINDRED

I stood by the graves of my kindred, so dear,
Where the greensward had closely o’erspread,
My eyes were bedimmed with memory’s sad tear
As I gazed on the tomb of the dead.

Two brothers were sleeping in death’s cold domain,
How dear doth their memory cling!
Though lost to sad friends, free from sorrow and pain,
In the haven where death cannot sting.

How kindly they watched o’er my once tender years,
Such kindness one ne’er can forget;
How oft in my dreams I embrace them, with tears,
Their images dwell with me yet.

Two dear, lovely sisters were laid in the ground
By the side of the brothers they loved;
In sacred affection their lives here were bound,
Nor severed in bright realms above.
Those kind, gentle sisters! how patient and meek,
When affliction and pain was severe;
How often in sweet, gentle tones they would speak,
Our childhood's deep heart griefs to cheer.

Long, long years estranged from the land where they sleep,
Once again on the sad spot I've gazed;
In sorrow I ponder,—o'er their graves let me weep
To the memory of life's happier days.

O'er the hill where they lie we have oft roamed for pleasure,
On the fruit of the orchard have often regaled,
The sweet, blooming garden's perfume was a treasure
As daily its fragrance at eve we inhaled.

The garden, the orchard, and the place where they rest
And the once happy circle's loved home
In Kirtland, is now by rude strangers possessed.
Alas! how much changed 'tis become.

From a bough that grew o'er them, memento I have,
A relic both sacred and dear;
Oh! may we prove guiltless when called from the grave
And with them, the righteous, appear.

BLESSINGS, MUMMIES AND METEORS

Early in 1835 Julia and all of her children were assembled at the home of her daughter Delcena Sherman in Kirtland. Each one received a patriarchal blessing under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sr., presiding patriarch of the Church. He first blessed Joel, the oldest, then the others in the order of their birth. When it became the turn of Joseph, Father Smith passed over him and laid his hands upon the head of Benjamin. Julia quickly reminded him
that Joseph was the older of the two, but he said it mattered not; to Benjamin was to come the first blessing because it was to be for spiritual ministrations, whereas Joseph's blessings were to arise largely from his work in mundane affairs. That is the way the blessings were given; that is the way it worked out thereafter.

Though the two boys were but 15 months apart in age and were perhaps the closest of all the family in fraternal affection through life, they were of very different temperaments. Joseph in general took his religion calmly, as a matter of every day living, although in his youth his mind turned to religious contemplation to a marked degree. In a fragmentary autobiography lately found he wrote of his boyhood in these words: "...I was ever of a gleeful disposition, yet nevertheless ever thoughtful and seeking for the calm happiness said to be felt by those professing religion, and when arrived at the age of 14 I commenced to attend all the revival meetings in the neighborhood, so that if possible, I too, might find a change of heart and that enjoyment of a divine presence I so much desired.

"I prayed earnestly and was always foremost to desire the prayers and efforts of the professors of religion and preachers in particular, to the end of happy conversion. But alas! the old, the middle aged and the youth around me professed to have received the forgiveness of sins and the smiles of heaven, whilst I, save for an occasional spasm of emotional excitement, was still as ever in the dark. From early childhood I have been a regular attendant of the Sunday School... and the services of the church."

On the other hand, Benjamin lived his religion with ultra seriousness and was zealous almost to a point of fanaticism. This writer remembers as a child how easily he was moved to tears and how his eyes gleamed with fervor as he related incidents in his life connected with religion. Joseph avoided appointment to Church offices whenever he
could, while Benjamin seemed to glory in every call to official position.

At St. George, Brigham Young's home adjoined Joseph's garden and Brigham had a gate made in the fence so he could walk in the garden for pastime or go through it on the way down town. One day he passed through the gate to a spot where JEJ was tying up tomato vines, and one of the family heard him ask him how he would like to be bishop. Joseph was quick to enumerate all the irons he had in the fire and how difficult it would be to take on the additional work of the bishopric. His begging off was successful; Brigham smiled and told him the matter would not be pressed.

Some members of the family have seen in this "bypassing" incident that Father Smith was acting under divine inspiration in thus drawing a line between these young men. Others have taken the more earthly view that since they had grown up practically under his feet and he had seen them in action at home, at work and in church circles, he could easily discern which was the temporal doer and which was the devout religionist, who believed strongly in dreams and portents. Each reader who gets this far in this narrative, if any, may work out his own explanation of this situation.

Some time later, the Johnsons saw the Egyptian mummies in which Joseph Smith stated he had found papyrus sheets upon which were the writings of Abraham. These mummies were purchased by the Church from a man named Chandler who obtained them from Egypt. Their source beyond Chandler has been traced and is a matter of history. The only known family mention of this amazing happening was made by BFJ, who wrote: "Great was our wonder in looking upon the bodies of those who 4,000 years ago were living princes and queens." This makes it clear that they actually saw the mummies, but whether or not they saw the papyrus which Joseph Smith said he removed from them is
not made clear by BFJ’s vague phraseology: “And when the writings of Abraham were taken from its ancient casket, it seemed marvelous indeed. All rejoiced when the prophet told us these writings would be translated, which are now, in part, in the Pearl of Great Price.” It is to be regretted that he did not go into greater detail.

**PHENOMENAL METEORIC DISPLAY**

Perhaps the most remarkable meteoric display ever described in this country was watched with the greatest awe by the Johnson family in Kirtland on the night of November 13, 1833. Perhaps they were not as frightened as many others were at the celestial fireworks, because they had been taught by Julia that such things might occur at any time. One night in the Pomfret woods Joel and Seth were out hunting coons when a fiery something, of course a meteor, shot across the heavens in an incandescent glow. When they excitedly asked their mother what it could have been, she told them that in the last days “The stars shall fall from heaven as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs.” A graphic but brief description of this event was written by BFJ as follows: “...But my pen is inadequate to give a description of the scene then presented, for the heavens were full of a blazing storm from zenith to horizon, and a view more sublime and terrible the eyes may never have seen. To the fearful it struck terror, and even some of the saints seemed almost paralyzed with fear, for it appeared for a time that both the heavens and the earth were on fire.

“I gazed upon the scene with wondering awe, but with full realization of its purport as a sign of the last days. I afterward learned that it occurred on the night following the driving of the saints from Jackson county, Missouri.”

Joseph Smith wrote a striking paragraph on this weird phenomenon: “In Zion all Heaven seemed to be enwrapped in splendid fireworks, as if every star in the broad expanse
had been suddenly hurled from its course and sent lawless through the wilds of ether. Some at times seemed like bright, shooting meteors with long trains of light following in their course . . . Their appearance was beautiful, grand and sublime beyond description. . . ."

We are indebted to Dr. Robert R. Kadesch, Dept. of Physics, University of Utah for information on this frivolous behavior of some of our space roving sparklers. This event of 1833 was the first observance of a meteoric shower which later came to be called the Leonids or Leonides, because they seem to come out of the constellation Leo. Some are supposed to be visible each year in November, with a more brilliant display every 33 years. That of 1933 did not amount to much but 1966 will give many of those who read this a chance to see if a display anything like 1833 will be manifested.

Quoting Dr. Kadesch: "In 1866 a small comet was discovered within the same orbit. The period of the comet is 33 years and it is thought that the meteor shower is due to the debris from the comet which was gradually breaking up." However, many of these things were not known in that day, and it is small wonder that the saints viewed the occurrence not only with fear and awe, but with a feeling of certainty that they were witnessing the grand curtain riser to what was soon to be the Greatest Show on Earth.

**THE TEMPLE IS COMPLETED**

During the building of the temple the animosity of the non-Mormon inhabitants of Kirtland was so marked that it was necessary to set guards around it at night. Even in the daytime workmen performed their tasks with a weapon within reach. Gunsmithing was an important activity during these troubled times, and one of the gunsmiths, M. C. Davis, occupied the lower floor of Julia's house. Joseph and Benjamin learned something of the art by working
with Mr. Davis, but whether they worked for pay or merely for the general good of the community, we cannot say.

The dedication of the Kirtland temple took place March 27, 1836. At this time all who had made substantial contributions or who had labored on it were given a special blessing by the laying on of hands by the First Presidency. Benjamin, who "yearned" for a blessing, had not actually worked at construction, but he received one because of a new gun he had donated and of the bricks he had helped to make. The gun was no doubt one he had made or acquired in the gunshop of Mr. Davis. Joseph also donated and had worked in the brickyard, and was thus also entitled to the honor, but we have never read or heard that he received it. He was never as blessing conscious as was his younger brother and he may have merely neglected to mention it.

As Seth and David had died the year before, Joel was the only one left of the older males of the family who was entitled to this distinction. Not only had he labored assiduously on the lower part of the building but he had practically provided the roof. He cut all the shingles with his ingenious patented shingle cutting machine and it is probable that he laid a fair share of them.

**JULIA GOES INTO BUSINESS**

After the separation from Ezekiel, Julia found herself under the necessity of supporting the younger members of the family. With Nancy and Susan to assist her she began the manufacture of men's neckwear, and as a second string to her bow, palm leaf fans. The type of neckwear produced was called the "stock," a sort of wrap around necktie such as may be seen in pictures of Daniel Webster and his contemporaries. The stock lasted a long time in England, especially among outdoor people, such as the racing fraternity. As late as 1906 this writer brought one from England but it was worn only twice. The snickers
that it produced proved definitely that the stock was OUT as far as the United States was concerned.

Julia made a comfortable living from these endeavors as long as she had the two girls to help her, but when they died, both in the same year, she found that she could not handle it alone, and so gave up the business.

THE FINANCIAL PANIC OF 1837

About this time the great panic of 1837 was getting underway all across the country. Kirtland had gone through what was called in later times a "real estate boom." The town was growing at an astonishing rate. Town lots and real property generally had ballooned in price, people were starting businesses of many kinds and everywhere credit was much over-extended. Many of the saints became wealthy on paper. Much of the spirit of humility and brotherly love which had held them tightly bound in Christian fellowship in their poverty and adversity vanished as prosperity seemed to be smoothing the way for them. The Kirtland Bank which had been built on a very sketchy foundation, "busted higher than a kite," along with a large number of wildcat banks in every part of the land.

To make matters worse, it is said some members of the bank staff issued large sums in bank notes to unsophisticated people in the surrounding country after they knew the bank was defunct. Understandably, this was held against the prophet, the Church and all of the members who had remained loyal to him. The Church began the humiliating disappointment of its first serious apostasy. Many of the strongest personalities who had seemed rock ribbed in their fidelity to the revealed gospel and loyalty to the prophet, fell by the wayside. Hostility to Joseph Smith mounted rapidly, not alone from non-members, but from many of the renegade apostates who turned on him in hatred. The loyal saints were threatened and it seemed as if the entire
structure of the Church would topple into oblivion. Meanwhile, the Johnsons were hard hit by the panic and they struggled, as did the majority of Kirtlanders, to make ends meet. Joseph makes brief note of the situation: “Finally, in the midst of wild speculation, I purchased a farm, and with my younger brothers and sisters and my mother, did the best I could to support them.” This farm was about one mile from Kirtland, but there is no record of how large it was or what they produced on it. But it was not long before it, along with Joel’s valuable saw mill, became worth to them less than a handful of ashes.

SITUATION IN KIRTLAND DETERIORATES

The great moral, economic and ecclesiastical schism which engulfed the Church members in Kirtland became so pronounced that the saints were divided into two active camps. One was the main body of the Church which was loyal to Joseph Smith; the other was a group of apostates, some of whom were probably never converted to the gospel but who joined the Church with the intention of using it to their own ends. When the crash came, their alleged faith crumbled with their fortunes. They not only easily abandoned their allegiance to the Church, but they became turncoats and traitors, casting in with the outsiders whose purpose was to destroy its entire structure and bring about the death of Joseph Smith.

Some individuals who had been high in Church circles fraudulently claimed the property belonging to it, such as the temple and printing office. With these they expected to create an entirely new organization. Before they could seize the printing establishment, JEJ’s brother-in-law, Lyman R. Sherman, succeeded in burning the plant with all material on hand. Warrants were out against Joseph Smith and others in connection with the failure of the Kirtland Bank and for municipal indebtedness. These, in addition
to threats against his life, caused him to join the saints in Missouri in the winter of 1837-38, whither he was accompanied by his father and brother Hyrum. It was then well understood that Kirtland would be abandoned and the faithful ones began to plan for the westward hegira.

Before leaving the subject of the Kirtland bank, our most precious souvenir of the institution and of the period is a dollar bill issued by the institution. It is signed in ink, (signature not printed), by J. Smith, Jr., cashier, and S. Rigdon, president. Printed on white paper, it has four large figure 1’s at the corners, with a pastoral scene in the center (man shearing sheep), and two circles centered at each end showing a railroad train of the period. A small engine puffs smokily on a curve in the distance and three wagon or bus like carriages with people inside and on top, follow behind. The number of the bill is 340, written in red ink, the 4 being botched. The inscription reads, The Kirtland Safety Society Bank will pay ONE DOLLAR to O Hyde, (this name written with a pen), Kirtland, Ohio, 9 March, 1837 (date written in ink). O. Hyde, was, of course, Apostle Orson Hyde, who later on in Council Bluffs was an associate of JEJ. This bill was kept by Joseph and preserved through all the after years of migration and colonization. It bears the only signature of the prophet that we have found among JEJ's papers.
CHAPTER 8

FAREWELL TO KIRTLAND

The break up of the community of Kirtland as a gathering place of the Latter-day Saints was an accomplished fact by the spring of 1838 and the great exodus, supposedly to Missouri, began. The great task for Joseph and his mother now was to obtain transportation for the family to the new mecca in the west. Their property was worthless, since the boom had burst and the real estate was valued at less than nothing. Benjamin had returned from Missouri a sick man a few months before and his mother had nursed him back to reasonable health. He was able to be of some assistance in preparing for the flight.

By dint of much planning and a lot of Yankee trading they managed to secure teams and wagons enough to transport the two families. A number of outfits would have been required to carry all of these people with their personal baggage and the bedding and equipment for camping out many nights in the open. The more valuable items of furniture and fixtures were sent to St. Louis, to be shipped up the Missouri river to Richmond, Mo., where they were to be picked up later. As will be shown, the Johnson family never reached that destination and these shipments were a total loss.

Early in July, 1838, the Kirtland Camp, sometimes called the Kirtland Poor Camp, because most of them had lost practically all of their possessions, was ready to meet whatever destiny the west had for them. The camp comprised nearly 60 vehicles and over 500 humble but courageous outcasts who went forth as simply prepared as was David of old to battle the looming Goliath of human intolerance and cruelty.
All money possessed by this unhappy but heroic band was pooled so that food and supplies could be purchased by a central agency, so that all might share equally. This worked well in the earlier part of the trek but later food became scarce and much sickness prevailed. With no knowledge of sanitation in the modern sense, and being unaware that mosquitoes caused the malaria which dogged them, or that contaminated water gave them typhoid fever, they had no relief from these scourges. In some places efforts were made by citizens of towns through which they passed to compel them to pay for losses sustained through the Kirtland bank failure. In general they were received about as enthusiastically as the citizens would have welcomed the plague.

One episode is related by JEJ’s brother George in these words: “Threats were made that we should not pass through Mansfield alive. We started along, however, in close procession; the women driving the teams and the men walking alongside. On nearing the town we were met by two horsemen who rode down each side of our column, seeming to count the number of wagons. They soon returned to town. Ere this our ears had detected the beating of drums and firing of cannon, but we pushed on and were not molested. We afterward learned that the horsemen had given the crowd which had assembled in front of the Court House, and who were firing the cannon, an exaggerated report of our numbers and armament.”

Thus they reached Dayton, Ohio, where, finding that their funds were on the verge of extinction, they decided to remain long enough to replenish their war chest and to allow the ailing ones to recuperate. Fortunately the Ohio section of the national turnpike was just then under construction and many of the brethren obtained jobs on this project. During this interlude of about one month, Joel, Julia and Benjamin were able to go to Cincinnati, some fifty miles distant. Here they were received happily by Julia’s
sister, Nancy Hills Taft, her brother Joel Hills and possibly some other relatives. This was Julia's gallant effort to preach the restored gospel to her beloved kindred face to face, but with all her own faith and sincerity, her fervor and eloquence, she apparently met with no sympathetic response.

The pause of the caravan at Dayton lasted about four weeks, during which several people died. The camp coffers were fattened, however, and while sickness followed, they had enough capital to be reasonably well fed for the remainder of the journey. Nothing of importance happened to the Johnsons as they crossed Indiana after leaving Dayton, until they were nearing Springfield, Illinois. Here two members of a family which seems to have been closely linked with them in travel became seriously ill. The father, Samuel Hale, soon died. Later the wife followed him in death, leaving a ten-year-old daughter Mary Ann, who was adopted by Julia. Some years later in Nauvoo when Joseph Smith asked to marry Almera, Julia consented and BFJ suggested that the prophet marry Mary Ann. He declined with the remark, "No, but she is for you. You keep her and take her for your wife and you will be blessed." One cannot but be mildly curious as to what Mary Ann might have thought had she heard this matter of fact disposal of her future. However, she DID marry Benjamin as his second wife in 1844 and she remained as such until his death in 1905.

Upon arrival at Springfield the heretofore hopeful pilgrims heard the distressing tidings of the mobbing and expulsion of the saints from Missouri. The future looked gloomy, even frightening, but the majority decided to go on to where they could at least be with the Prophet and augment the body of the saints. The death of Samuel Hale and illnesses among the Johnson group along with the uncertainties of their ultimate destination, caused our party to remain in Springfield until the location of a permanent
gathering place could be determined. BFJ, desiring to be where he could hear and see the Prophet, decided to go on with the wagon train. His subsequent adventures during the bad times in Missouri are interestingly told in his "My Life's Review"; read it.

THE YANKEE SCHOOLMASTER

Joel and Joseph were detailed to remain and care for Julia and the younger children as well as to look after the sick. Joseph spent much time using such knowledge of medicine as he possessed in this work and he wrote that after their arrival, "Mother and other members of the family were taken sick, and with little means to help us we had a very hard time. I was forced to resort to any light employment I could obtain, and among other things chopped wood, sawed stovewood, made axe handles and washboards, and was finally induced to act as 'yankee schoolmaster,' which I did through the winter with much satisfaction and success, having 60 scholars, mostly small."

In later writings he referred to himself as "the yankee schoolmaster" in remembrance of this venture into the field of education. He was about 22 years old when he accepted this job. Doubtless he was amazed at his own temerity in daring to take on a school of this size, since he never had any training for it. All he had to go on was a common school education plus what he had gained by being an avid reader and his native wit, reinforced by a liberal amount of "crust" and the knowledge that the worst that could happen to him would be to be thrown out on his neck.

That all of his pupils were not "mostly small" is evidenced by his autograph album which has lately turned up in family mementos. The book was begun in Springfield in 1839 and the latest entry was 1846, in Macedonia. On the flyleaf is pasted a sheet bearing the words, written in a rather boyish hand which had not yet settled into the flow-
ing or “undulating” penmanship which makes many of his later letters difficult to read, as follows:

NOTICE IMPORTANT

Let those who have this book in their possession be very careful that it does not come in contact with any species of dirt or grease, as heretofore, or be soiled by handling carelessly or by children.

April 15 J. E. Johnson.

A page decorated by the printer with flowers and scroll suggests that original work be inscribed when possible. Some of the effusions indicate that the writers have carried out the idea. Those written in Springfield were from older pupils and there is much of friendship, parting and remembrance, indication that school would soon be out for the season. There are two entries from a girl named Nancy Carroll and her signature is as pretty as her name. One rather suspects her of having something of a “crush” on teacher. At the end of the last one there is a stanza in another meter with an underlined title:

FRONTA MILLA FIDES.

If on these lines perchance thine eyes
May wander in some future year,
Let memory breathe a passing sigh
For thy true friend who traced them here.

Amicus

The chief interest in this verse lies in the signature, Amicus. Years later when Joseph wrote poetry and articles for the press, his favorite nom de plume was Amicus. What more likely than that he borrowed the pen name of his old girl friend in Springfield?
A fair sample of the "do it yourself" poetry is signed by Nancyann Vance. It reads:

True, sir, our acquaintance has been short
Yet loath I feel to leave
A school that is so well devised
To do young ladies good.
'Tis education I desire
'Tis what will do me good
And if possible I should acquire
A part of it from you.

Most of the verses rhyme and scan better than Nancyann's, and many end with a reference to the tomb. The word "tomb" seems to have been one of the verbal playthings of the poets of the period, including the Johnson devotees of the Muse. The older poets seem to have taken great pleasure in their gloom. Or else Death was always breathing down their necks and gloom was a natural corollary. The first two lines of the second stanza of the following sound a bit ghoulish but the concluding two brighten things up a bit.

Blest be the dear uniting tie
That will not let us part,
Our bodies may far off remove
We still are one in heart.

But let us hasten to that day
Which shall our flesh restore
When death shall all be done away
And bodies part no more.

Sylvia A. Carter
Springfield, July 1839

That "flesh restore" thing has a gruesome sound. Does anyone feel a slight chill creeping up the spine?
Just one more, the latest entry inserted July 17, 1846, no place given, evidently by an Indian who had been raised by a white family whose name he had taken:

Now I write I am a Indian  
Onea wakyaton kongweanwegh

I’ll say Now I am going home  
Wakiron Onea Shagaghteadi

My friend  
Dewatiaro shia  
Jos F. Herring  
My Indian name Nigeajasha  
Mohawk

This battered album almost 120 years old settles the matter of the spelling of Harriet Snider’s last name. We have always used the form Snyder. In this book both Harriet and one we believe to be her mother, Mary, spelled it with an I. Mary inadvertently penned her first name “Marry” in her four stanza insertion caption HEAVEN. The date is June 13, 1839, and while neither have given a place name we know from other pages that JEJ was in Springfield on this date. Harriet has inscribed two long poems not given as her own, “Forgive and Forget” and “Where is She?” This acquaintance with Harriet, as shall be shown later, blossomed into love and marriage.

Harriet’s father, John Snider, and family, were converts from Toronto, Canada, who were then living in Springfield. Joseph Smith, when on his way to Washington for an interview with President Martin Van Buren, tells in his diary that he “put up with John Snider.” When within a mile of the city (on way out) he met Wm. Law and company with seven wagons from Canada, “who returned with us to Springfield and tarried while we did until the 8th.” This was a fateful meeting for the prophet, for William
Law and his brother Wilson were to play star roles in the events which led up to his assassination and the exile of the Church.

During the time JEJ was in Springfield, Abraham Lincoln was practicing law there and it is likely that Joseph knew him since the town was relatively small. The fact that we do not have a single letter written by JEJ from that city perhaps explains why we do not have any reference to the Great Emancipator in such papers as we have. However, at that time the future president was but a struggling young lawyer and those who brushed shoulders with him never remotely envisioned the heights to which he would rise.

THE CITY THAT ROSE FROM A QUAGMIRE

In the spring of 1839 Almon and Julia Babbitt accompanied by BFJ arrived in Springfield from Missouri, where the embattled saints had been expelled and were seeking homes elsewhere. Prior to this Joel had established a home in Carthage, Ill., whither he was called, he said, by revelation. We assume he meant personal revelation since we know of no specific call from the Church. He had been to Commerce, a sad hamlet on a soggy bank of the Mississippi not far from Carthage. In his eyes it appeared as a location that could, by drainage, be made into a suitable home for the saints struggling northward from Missouri.

Although beautifully situated on the lower portion of an area that sloped upward to form a sizeable knoll, the land itself was little better than a swamp. Here and there were spots of firmer ground upon which a few cabins or shabby houses had been built by people who were probably too poor to move to a better place. The area reeked with swamp odors and teemed with mosquitoes of the genus Anopheles which carried the devastating malaria. In spite of these visual drawbacks which had kept others from
swarming over the land, Joel believed with a lot of hard work and a flock of drains this uninviting terrain could be made useful. We judge that he had been in touch with the leaders in Missouri and when Bishop Partridge and Sidney Rigdon came up looking for a refuge, they called on Joel at Carthage. It is a tradition and belief in the family that Joel was largely instrumental in the selecting of the site of the third major stage of the great Mormon flight to the west.

Joseph Smith probably accepted it for the same reason that Brigham Young later chose to remain in the Salt Lake valley because it was land that no one else wanted. Unprepossessing as it seemed to be he doubtless saw in it a place where the soul and body wracked saints could remain unmolested long enough to lick their wounds and revive their battered spirits. The tiny hamlet was purchased, all six houses; land was bought on the Iowa side of the river at Nashville and Keokuk. Larger tracts were obtained over the hill in Illinois. These were capable of producing crops and in a surprisingly short time the pluck and energy of this determined band brought about the building of a city that became the largest and most important in Illinois. This was Nauvoo, a word which translated from Hebrew means "Beautiful."
CHAPTER 9

RAMUS — MACEDONIA

JOSEPH TAKES A WIFE

After the school closed for summer vacation Joseph became acquainted with a man named Micham, who induced him to go into Iowa across the river from Commerce, soon to be Nauvoo, where the saints were now assembling after their dispersal from Missouri. They took JEJ's team and wagon and set out in June. On the way they visited Joel at Carthage, then crossed the Mississippi at Montrose. Near this place they made land claims and commenced to put the land in shape for farming. Joseph wrote that the surrounding country was admirable and that he had encountered many old acquaintances who had settled there. But fever, the old river scourge, was rampant and many needed his help. He began preparing medicines for them and spent much of his time nursing among the people.

When things eased up a little he went with Micham to a small place called Nashville, on the Iowa shore. This is probably where their claimed land was. They began to put up a store building but Joseph soon came down with a fever that prostrated him for weeks. Joel finally got wind of it and crossed over to see him, then took him home to Carthage. After a period of rest Joel moved him, by way of Quincy, back to Mother Julia at Springfield, "who embraced me with tears of joy, this having been the longest absence from her presence that I ever suffered. O! how I had missed her! Under her watchful care I soon became convalescent."

Later he was prevailed upon to again take the school at the fall term, although he still had daily attacks of ague and fever. He was fearful of his ability to handle the task
but he made the effort and at the end was satisfied with the success he attained. There is no record of what became of his team and wagon or the land which he had claimed at Nashville. No doubt Joel salvaged his outfit.

This excursion into Iowa was the first time JEJ had really been on his own. He had been pampered somewhat because of his supposedly frail constitution and the bond between him and Julia was very close. Now a new interest was slowly rising on his horizon which would loosen the bond. The meeting of Joseph and the Snider family has already been related. At some time which we cannot quite fit into the chronology of the story Joseph boarded with the Sniders and during one of his bouts with fever Harriet nursed him through his illness.

He wrote: “Between the daughter and myself an acquaintance soon sprang up ... and nothing intervened to hinder our often meeting and reunion. When sick, her lavishing and tender care won upon my sympathies and we were mutually betrothed.” This is the sole writing we have found of his first courtship. As far as we know there are no real love letters existing dealing with the early days of this affair of the heart. Of course, at this time they were never really separated for any length of time and love letters were not called for. However, there may be some in the possession of some of Harriet’s posterity but so far we have had no luck in turning them up. Later on when he was absent from the family his letters were addressed to all the flock. Such letters as we have which were sent to Harriet begin “Dear friends” or “Ever dear family” or something similar, evidently because Julia, Hannah and his brothers George and William would be in the group addressed.
ON TO PERKIN'S SETTLEMENT

As the school year closed in the summer of 1840 Julia and her family prepared to spurn the dust of Springfield from their iron shod wheels. Their goal was Nauvoo which had now been fully accepted as the gathering place of the saints. During their 100 mile trek across the prairies, green and flower bedecked at this season, Julia was impressed by the large areas of vacant land which abounded. The idea came to her that, they, the family, might be able to acquire land and establish a settlement all their own. Probably through Joel they learned of a hamlet called Perkin's settlement which was about 20 miles from Nauvoo. Upon visiting the spot Julia decided it was just the place in which to try out the plan. Land was obtained through purchase and the tiny hamlet was laid out as a town and christened Ramus, a branch, that is, a branch of the larger community of Nauvoo.

Shortly after the arrival Joseph began building a house for Mother Julia and the children, but his ancient foe malaria soon laid him low. About this time the Snider family moved to Nauvoo from Springfield. Joseph visited them there in following up his "case" on Harriet and it is probable that it was at this time that he "boarded with the family." In any event, he wrote that while yet an invalid in October (1840) at Nauvoo, he was married to Harriet by Joseph Smith. Family tradition states that this was the prophet's first performance of a marriage ceremony, but we have no written evidence that this is a fact.

We do not know just where the tying of the knot was accomplished, but the date was October 6. It was not in the Nauvoo temple, as some have written, because the building of the temple had not begun. Besides Joseph Smith and some members of the family, at least three of the Church big-wigs were present. These were William Law, 2nd counselor of the First Presidency; John C. Bennett, soon to be
mayor of Nauvoo and Major General Wilson Law, commander of the Nauvoo Legion. General Law acted as best man, or as Joseph described it, "groomsman." This trio, though at this time high in Church position and in the confidence of the prophet, later demonstrated extreme disloyalty to him and were excommunicated or left the Church. Uncle George in his writings labeled Bennett a "consummate villain" in spite of his earlier good offices in securing official recognition of the Church from the state of Illinois as well as a very liberal charter for the city of Nauvoo.

Next day Joseph and his bride, returning to Ramus with sister Julia Babbitt, had an exciting adventure. Their buggy was overturned in a "swollen slough" where all had a narrow escape from drowning. Some passers by came to their assistance and they were rescued from their unseemly dunking. No starry eyed bride should be thrown into a swamp on her wedding day, but at least it gave them a topic of conversation for some time to come.

Joseph wrote that Ramus began to grow rapidly and that in 1843, by his efforts the name of the town was changed to Macedonia. He gives no reason for the choice of this name and does not state why he was dissatisfied with Ramus. Could it be that it was meant for a permanent invitation to Nauvoo to "Come over and help us"? (Acts 16-9.) He wrote that a charter for municipal government was obtained and that he assisted in getting it into operation. He was elected trustee for two successive years and through his efforts a post office was obtained. He was appointed to be first postmaster. Profiting by his experience at Springfield he took on the first school that was opened in Ramus. In between, he "made" a small farm on which he planted seeds of fruit trees from which he ate peaches and berries of his own planting. One season he put in making bricks and he engaged to some extent in the building business. He acted as Church recorder, school trustee, and when Patriarch John Smith moved to Macedonia Joseph became
his secretary. This John Smith was known as Uncle John to the family. He was a brother of Joseph Smith, senior, thus being an uncle of Joseph, the prophet.

This is a good point to explain the part Uncle John had in the family history. Ezekiel was still living apart from Julia and he still stubbornly or valiantly, according to which side one is on, resisted all efforts to bring him into the Church. He was friendly to the people; he battled for them during the final days at Nauvoo and he helped the prophet on several occasions when he was in a financial pinch. Through it all he never accepted the gospel message, as is evidenced by his failure to apply for baptism. BFJ states that before the end of 1848 Ezekiel had forsworn the use of alcohol and that he DID request admission to the Church but death summoned him before the rite could be performed. It is possible that as he felt the end approaching he did yield to the importunities of his children, or it may have been merely wishful thinking on the part of Uncle Ben.

In any case Joseph Smith at Nauvoo in about 1843 advised Julia to become “sealed” to his Uncle John which in Church parlance meant that in the future all of Ezekiel’s descendants would thereafter be numbered among the posterity of Uncle John. Julia and the family, evidently without protest, accepted the new order of things, no doubt consoled, as was BFJ by the prophet’s words “that a better day would come for my father.”

It should be told that through the efforts of Milas E. Johnson (GWJ) and probably others, this sealing was annulled and Julia was sealed through Church ordinances to Ezekiel. Thus, from a religious angle, the family was restored to normal by the Church authorities and it can be hoped that a better day HAS come to the progenitor of the western American tribe of the Johnsonii.
Back again in Macedonia, Joseph rented a large shop where he carried on coopering, cabinet making and the manufacture of chairs. In this venture he was later joined by BFJ and they soon built up a good business in these lines. The building must have been of good size since it was used as a meeting place for the saints. Joseph Smith and other Church dignitaries often held meetings there. It was probably the only meeting house the town had. At this time Joseph wrote, “I built me a comfortable home in town and with good society lived happily with little means but (much) contentment. Soon was born to us Mary Julia, then Eliza Antonette and later Joseph E. We buried our second daughter when two years old.” Later baby Joseph died but Mary survived to become the mother of a fine family. Thus, at Macedonia, began the family of JEJ, which steadily increased in numbers until his 29th child was born a long way off in Arizona ten weeks before his death.

In addition to the already enumerated activities of Joseph in Macedonia, he was also town clerk much of the time. At the final expulsion of the saints the record book of the town meeting was given to him by the new trustees who took over. The book seems to have been only partly filled and as every ounce of weight in the wagon when he fled was precious, he tore out the pages that were inscribed and left the book behind. Some of these pages have survived. The last entry was Jan. 25, 1846 and was signed by M. W. Greene, Clk. It reads, “Some of the trustees were never sworn in, the President moved away, therefore they never have met.” Presumably this means that they had not met for a long time during the upheaval caused by the mobbings prior to the expulsion and that the new officials were beginning with a clean slate. Written in pencil after this entry are the words, “All the Mormons having been compelled by the mob to leave the state of Illinois, the election for 1846 never took place. And as J. E. Johnson was the person who originated the corporation and also gave
the name to the town and obtained its chartered privileges and was most concerned, this book was presented him by the authorities.”

Five leaves of the old book remain, the earliest one being page 7. At the top are section 5 and 6 of the town laws which were passed Jan. 26, 1844, signed by Otis Shumway, President and J. E. Johnson, Clerk. On the opposite side is probably the treasurer’s report of the earliest business transacted by the new municipality, unsigned but in JEJ’s handwriting:

Mar. 3rd, 1844

Of the treasurer of the town of Macedonia Five Dollars ($5.00) and by order of the board expended as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For record book paid</td>
<td>$4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For 3 quires paper</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was paid from the treasury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for iron for scraper</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer retained</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. G. Perkins claimed for timber</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for making bridges which was offset for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>license for one year</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$10.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This record of frenzied finance seems to reveal that they were off to a bad start, with the budget over expended and a deficit of $2.50 for the town to face. Then there is that item of $1.00 “retained by the treasurer.” Didn’t he begin “retaining” rather early in the game? How do we
know he didn’t squander it in riotous living? The young clerk’s fiscal accounts seem a bit involved. If Mr. Perkins was owed $3.00 which was offset, how come it is added to the deficit? Probably “there’s a reason.”

Succeeding entries list ordinances that were passed later regulating the sale of liquor “in quantities less than a quart” and providing fines for anyone “who becomes intoxicated with ardent spirits, or who disturbs the peace of the inhabitants or any one of these, or any public assemblage of individuals for public worship or for political, literary or pecuniary purposes.” One ordinance prohibiting the “running common on the streets” of hogs and fowls was defeated by a vote of three to one.

At the end of the entries is a short one signed by M. W. Greene quoted earlier and the penciler’s statement of the delivery of the book to J. E. Johnson. Mob violence began to increase until the municipal organization began to fall apart. On January 25, 1846 Mr. Greene wrote his terse statement and turned the record over to JEJ, who was probably already poised for flight from the settlement he had helped to create.
CHAPTER 10

NAUVOO, CALLED "THE BEAUTIFUL"

The old minute book of Macedonia has taken us ahead of our story. Almon and Julia Babbitt had remained behind at Kirtland after the general exodus and had done very well financially once the mob spirit had quieted down. This had provoked a blast from the prophet, given in Sec. 124:84 Doc. & Cov., accusing him of "setting up a golden calf." This, of course meant making money. He was charged also with setting up his own counsel against the Presidency. This charge, we believe, arises from the fact that at Springfield he had advised some saints from Canada not to go on to Missouri but that he intended to revive Kirtland and that they would be better off there. The prophet sent Lyman Wight to straighten the affair out and Almon yielded to his counsel. He had no desire to oppose the authorities, so he decided to close up his affairs in Kirtland and join the main body of the Church.

Early in June, 1842, Almon left Kirtland in a "train" of three vehicles. With him was his wife Julia, Ezekiel and his daughter Esther (now Le Baron), and Benjamin with his newly acquired wife, Melissa Le Baron. The party had much difficulty on the way, largely through the misbehavior of their horses. Twice they were endangered by runaway animals and at one time some of their vehicles were wrecked. Since both accidents happened on Sunday they all came to a conclusion that traveling on the Sabbath was not to their advantage. Most of the time they camped out at night, only seeking the shelter of taverns when a storm threatened. It took them just about a month to cross Ohio, Indiana and Illinois at the slow jog of team travel. They reached Ramus (it was not yet Macedonia) about July 1, 1842.
Ezekiel joined the family for the time being at Ramus, but a little later he turned up in Nauvoo. He was to learn of the death of his youngest son, Amos Partridge, who had succumbed to rheumatic fever some weeks earlier at the age of 14. News more welcome was the marriage of Joseph to Harriet Snider, and that of Mary to George Wilson.

"THE ROYAL FAMILY"

Sometime after this, what is known as "the Royal Family" incident occurred. With the advent of many of the in-laws into the community, the Johnsons became quite a strong unit numerically. They were also in business and in various ways were in the public eye. An advantage they seemed to have was the strong friendship between Julia and Joseph Smith. She had been an ardent advocate and supporter of the prophet from the first and he was a frequent visitor at the Johnson home. He sometimes came to Ramus to hold meetings in her son’s cabinet shop, or even to get a short respite from the hubbub that was Nauvoo. On such occasions he would "put up" at one of the family’s homes. In many ways it began to look to the people as though the Johnsons were becoming the "pets" of the authorities. Naturally this led to envy and sarcastic remarks were made about them being the "royal family." This was told to the prophet and according to Benjamin he remarked that they were a royal family and that the title bestowed in derision should be reality.

In blessing Julia he made a promise to her, the phrasing of which seems to be uncertain. The form given by BFJ is that not one of her children would ever leave the Church. We have always understood that he promised that when she should receive her ultimate reward "not one of the jewels in her crown would be missing." This, after all, means the same thing. Some 30 years ago we were told by Heber Johnson (BFJ) that earlier at a meeting in one of
the Mexican colonies, Apostle John Henry Smith, noting the large number of Johnsons present, had told this story while relating incidents in the history of the Johnsons in Kirtland-Nauvoo days. He had said that the promise was that "none of Julia's descendants would ever go to hell." It is more than likely that Heber used his own words to convey the idea he got from the speaker rather than that he quoted accurately. Of course, the Mormons do not believe in a literal Hell.

If Apostle Smith gave the impression that the prophet had promised that none of her descendants would fail to receive the higher awards, that would be a very large order, indeed. Perhaps we should stick to BFJ's version as given above. If applied to her direct offspring the promise was fulfilled, since all her children remained faithful to the end. In later generations, however, there have been some, who, while not apostatizing formally have done so by their indifference to, and failure to cooperate with Church requirements.

At the time this blessing and promise were bestowed upon Julia, the prophet, with full knowledge that Ezekiel was hostile to the church, predicted that the unhappy man would yet come into his own and occupy his rightful place at the head of his posterity. The critical may discern in this prediction an element of inconsistency, since he had previously advised Julia to have herself and family sealed to Uncle John. The staunch believer will assume that the prophet was aware that such a sealing could be a temporary one. The apostolic power could "bind" or "loose." The believer, knowing that by Church decree that which was bound is now loosed, can feel that Ezekiel's chance of standing at the head of his family has now been restored.
PLURAL MARRIAGE ENTERS UPON THE SCENE

The doctrine of plural marriage, or polygamy, to use the more common and less euphonious word, as proclaimed by Joseph Smith, played a large part in the lives of four of the five Johnson brothers who survived the Kirtland-Nauvoo exhibitions of “man’s inhumanity to man.” Let us point out that strictly speaking, no Mormon community ever practiced polygamy. The small percentage said to be 2% of the membership which embraced plural marriage actually practiced polygyny. Marriage comprises two major forms, monogamy and polygamy. The latter embraces polygyny and polyandry. Polyandry is a state where a woman may have more than one husband; polygyny is a state where a man may have more than one wife. Polygamy is a state where BOTH polyandry and polygyny may be practiced side by side. There never was a state of polygamy in any Latter-day Saint community. Of course, this is merely a technicality; a few Mormons DID enter into the order of plural marriage.

The story of any one of these four brothers cannot be told without reference to the manner in which the doctrine of plural marriage entered into their lives. Benjamin was the one who wrote in some detail on the subject. His account deals almost entirely with his own reaction to the announcement of this strange new practice and to the part he played in the drama. All were shocked, even appalled temporarily, by the complete reversal demanded of all their previous concepts of marriage. However, after the principle had been explained carefully to them, so complete was their confidence in Joseph Smith that the family, generally, accepted it.

After the revelation on plural marriage was published in Nauvoo in 1843, the prophet talked it over with Julia. He told her that after it had been given to him he delayed
any action either in releasing it to the people or putting it into action. He said the Lord then sharply directed him to get the movement under way. His first reaction to this, he told her, was to come to her and ask to marry some of her daughters in the new order. By this time in Ramus only one daughter Almera, was available; the other two unmarried, Nancy and Susan, had both died in the interval. Julia seems to have been converted almost at once, since she offered no objection to his proposed marriage to Almera, as far as we know.

As the story is told, the prophet did not go directly to Almera to ask her consent. The morning of a Sunday when Joseph Smith arrived in Ramus to hold a meeting in the cabinet shop he walked with “Benny” (as he called BFJ) into the adjoining wood. There they sat upon a log and Joseph explained to him the theory of plural or patriarchal marriage. He said the Lord had not only revealed it to him as a principle but had commanded him to take other wives. He wanted Almera for one of them and he wished Benny to carry the proposal to her. Naturally this unexpected outcome of their morning walk stunned the young man, and when he “came to” he tried to comprehend the explanation of all that had been given him.

Still in a daze, he told the prophet he would try to carry out the assignment, although he did not understand it and that to him it was all wrong. He made the promise that if it was a scheme to degrade his sister, he would kill him “as the Lord lives.” The prophet calmly replied that BFJ would “see the day when you will know it is true, and you will fulfill the law and greatly rejoice in it.” Score another hit for Joseph Smith! Benjamin did fulfill the law until he had taken seven wives, so he must have rejoiced in the taking. However he never had more than six at one time. We must be fair.

Not having had time to digest all that he had heard he was naturally dismayed at the thought of presenting the
proposal to his sister. To quote from his memoirs, “I only thought 'how dark it all is to me! But I must do it,' and so told my sister I wished to see her in a room by herself, where I soon found her seated. I stood before her, my knees trembling, but I opened my mouth and my heart opened to the light of the Lord; my tongue was loosened and I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I preached a sermon that forever converted me and her also to the principle, even though her heart was not yet won by the prophet.”

Almera apparently made up her mind quickly and shortly thereafter she went to Nauvoo and stayed at the home of her sister Delcena Sherman. The prophet met her there and in the presence of the family she was sealed to Joseph Smith by his brother Hyrum. In addition to Almera, Nancy and Susan, both of whom died unmarried, were sealed to the prophet, making, according to Mormon belief, three of the daughters of Ezekiel his spouses in eternity.

Joel is said to have faced the prophet squarely and threatened that if he learned that there was anything debasing in the new relationship he would kill him without fail. Of course, they all knew that such marriages were acts of bigamy under the state laws, but they believed this was a religious principle and that under the constitutional provision for freedom of religious belief it superseded the common law. It required many years and much tribulation to have this question finally settled by the highest court.

After Joel was briefed on the breadth and scope of the principle of plural marriage, and had found that it did not include the slightest element of bawdiness or illicit indulgence, he, too, became converted. His first wife had died and he had married again before the development of the new ideas on the connubial state. He later espoused three women and became the father of thirty children. Joseph and George were somewhat laggard in entering the new order but each accepted it, Joseph ultimately having three
wives and George two. William did not follow the example of his elders. The story is that his first and only wife would not stand at the altar until she had exacted a pledge from him that he would not take another. This pledge he kept, and while he could not keep pace with his brothers in adding to the population, he did nobly, withal. His 12, with Joel's 30, Benjamin's 49, Joseph's 29, George's 20, make a neat and tidy 140 grandchildren of Ezekiel and Julia from their sons alone! On the distaff side there were 2 Shermans, 5 Babbitts, 5 Bartons, 7 Wilsons and 5 Lebarons, a grand total of 164.

JOSEPH AND ALMON MAKE HISTORY

That blot on the pages of American history, the story of the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo, has been told many times and is familiar to most of those who may read this tale. We shall limit our telling only to those incidents wherein the Johnson family took part. When the treachery of trusted friends, the cunning of corrupt officials and the flame of mob violence began to close tightly around Joseph Smith in 1844, he made up his mind to look for safety for the Saints in the Rocky Mountains. He said the Lord had made it known to him that in this area would be found a haven of refuge for his once more beleaguered followers and this he expected to find.

With a few staunch friends he had already crossed the Mississippi on the first stage of the westward journey, when he received messages from his wife Emma, reproaching him for his flight and urging his return. Even his brother Hyrum advised him to go back and face his enemies. With a feeling of "If they do not value my life it is no use to me," he turned back to Nauvoo. Probably it was at this time that enunciated his famous statement, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter but I am calm as a summer morning, I have a conscience void of offense toward God and towards
all men. I shall die innocent and it shall yet be said of me ‘he was murdered in cold blood.’ ”

Near this point Joseph E. Johnson and Almon W. Bab­bitt enter into the picture. The story is best told by Joseph himself, in a letter to the Deseret News, Dec. 6, 1875 which reads as follows:

“Editor Deseret News:

“I read with great interest an article that appeared in a recent issue of your paper, a graphic though sorrowful account of the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the Carthage jail, together with events preceding and coming immediately after. As there are a few incidents intimately connected therewith recurring vividly to my mind, and with which no other person living was connected, I hastily re­cord them for the benefit of your readers and give a con­necting link between two important incidents.

“At the period of the difficulties in Hancock county I was residing in Macedonia (once Ramus) in the eastern portion of the county where the late Almon W. Babbitt also resided. The next day after the arrival of Governor Ford in Carthage, Bro. A. W. Babbitt asked me to go with him to Carthage and see the governor and if possible learn some­thing of his intentions.

“We arrived at Hamilton's Hotel near sundown. There were then encamped in tents and otherwise upon the public square from 10 to 15 hundred men accoutred as soldiers and under command of officers. Immediately upon visiting Gov. Ford, he asked us to go to Nauvoo with an important message to Joseph Smith, which he assured us looked to a settlement of the difficulty, and as other companies of mili­tary men were nearly every hour arriving, swelling the so­called military, the governor expressed the fear that soon the crowd might become uncontrollable and he wished to make arrangements for disbanding the troops and stop those on the way.
"We agreed to go and immediately hitched the horse to the buggy and started across the side of the public square. But before we had proceeded many rods our carriage was fairly surrounded by angry and violent men and our progress stopped. The rabble, swearing with the most profane oaths that we should never go a step farther, drew pistols and knives upon us, demanding of my companion the message of the governor and swore they would take our lives if we did not instantly comply. This we hesitated to do and began arguing the point to gain time, but only increased their anger and increased the numbers that surrounded us. With yells and shouts of blasphemy and threats, they cried out, 'Shoot em!' 'Kill em!' etc., and with their noise drowned out all we could say.

"About this time J. B. Backenstoss crowded his way to us, climbed into the carriage and made a harangue to the mob, ordering them to disperse and let us pass, but this had only the effect of producing mocking laughter and hisses. All this transpired in front of the window of Gov. Ford's room, and soon he, too, pressed his way to us, and getting up in the carriage succeeded, after quite a time, in getting the uproar toned down so as to be heard. He then told them he was their chief commander and commanded every man to his quarters, threatening with instant arrest all who did not obey.

"In about five minutes our way was opened and clear and we waited not for bidding to proceed. We had expected death so accepted our deliverance from the infuriated mob as a miracle. As the mob parted from around us in great anger, we easily overheard threats against our safety, and that we should never reach Nauvoo with our dispatches, so we were on our guard. It was now sundown, with the heavens dark with angry clouds and a light rain beginning to fall. It was three miles out on the road before we could turn off into open prairie. We knew that a mob of desperadoes intended to follow and assassinate us. We drove
away from Carthage at a moderate gait, but as soon as we gained a point out of sight from the town, we put whip and traveled as fast as we could, and when we came to open prairie we turned off the road to strike the road leading from La Harpe.

"It was now completely dark and the rainfall increased to a moderate shower. Fearful of sloughs and ditches one walked ahead to feel the way while the other drove. In about half an hour after thus leaving the road we plainly heard the thundering footfalls of a troop of horsemen riding at greatest speed toward Nauvoo. I sprang to the horse's head, stroked him and held his mouth that he should not signal our hiding place in the darkness by neighing. When the troop had passed on, we crept our way through the constant rain all the livelong night, having nothing to eat.

"When daylight appeared (and it seemed to us, wearied, cold and wet, that it would never come) we found ourselves not many miles from Warsaw. Changing our course, we hastened our steps and in two hours arrived at the road at the east boundary of Joseph’s farm. It had been raining for weeks so the mud was at least a foot deep. This, we started to wade, leading the horse, but in his weak condition he soon fell in the deep mud. We managed to raise him, let down the fence and turned him loose in the field, leaving the carriage in the mud hole. By this time we were not only completely drenched with rain but also with soft mud. Thus we waded through and came up with the outpost guard which we passed after some delay and scrutiny. When we came to a small creek, we laid down in the water, rolled, bathed, rubbed and washed our garments as well as we could and wearily proceeded. We soon came with another guard which we also passed after some delay and soon ended our four mile walk in the mud and about thirty over the prairie. Arriving at Snider's hotel I entered the house but was so completely exhausted that I fell to the floor and
was insensible to all that occurred until the evening shadows gathered. Then I partook of food.

"Bro. Babbitt had immediately after our arrival called upon Pres. Joseph Smith and presented the dispatch from Gov. Ford, and when I saw him at supper he told me that Joseph would that evening hold a council meeting and determine what to do.

"Next morning I was informed that Joseph Smith and his brother would go to Carthage and deliver themselves on the charge of treason under promise of protection from the governor, and that all troops should be disbanded and sent home and that he wished us to wait until next morning to bear him company. I was so ill from exhaustion that I scarcely left the house during my stay there and was barely able to sit in the buggy. When Gen. Smith was ready, we accompanied him until arriving near Carthage, when an officer sent by Gov. Ford met us with a demand for the state arms. After a short consultation Gen. Smith thought it best himself to go back and in person attend to the delivery so all of the party except Bro. Babbitt and myself returned. Adieus were hastily said and we parted there — the last parting with these good and great hearted men who gave their lives to save their friends.

"At the time of his last stay in this city (St. George) the lamented and loved Pres. George A. Smith asked me to write the foregoing incident and send it to the Historian's office, which I promised to do. The promise, as well as the incidents came vividly to my mind on reading the article first alluded to.

J. E. Johnson
St. George, Utah, 6 Dec. 1875."

Thus, by the mere chance that the prophet turned back to turn over the arms to state officers, Joseph and Almon missed being on the spot witnesses of the immediate events
leading up to the slaughter of the two leading men of the Church. Those who wish to read of these events in detail should read E. Cecil McGavin's *Nauvoo, the Beautiful*, (1946).

The testimony of one who actually carried the promise of protection to the prophet from the governor of Illinois is proof that such a promise was made and strengthens the case of those who would place the guilt of the subsequent assassination upon the head of Thomas Ford. According to Mr. McGavin, the governor left Carthage with a posse and went to Nauvoo to hold the Nauvoo Legion in check while a painted mob perpetrated the murderers. At the time of this visit he is said to have broken off a horn of one of the oxen supporting the baptismal font in the temple and taking it away as a souvenir. This to the accompaniment of jokes about "the cow with the crumpled horn," with a response from another ruffian, "that tossed the maiden all forlorn," followed by loud laughter from the accompanying bootlickers.

Although Thomas Ford was rated as one of the best governors of the state, his reputed end was as dismal as even his worst enemies could wish for, following closely the pattern set by a prophecy of John Taylor at Nauvoo. The following story was published by the *Millennial Star*, Liverpool:

"A lady was invited to attend a Methodist church at Peoria, Ill., and noticing a rough box or coffin resting under the pulpit, inquired concerning it and was told that it enclosed the remains of the wife of ex-governor Ford and was supplied at the public expense. Gov. Ford was present and looked gaunt and miserable, and his bones appeared ready to pierce through the skin. Two weeks later the lady attended again and was astonished to see a similar coffin in the same place. It contained all that was left of Gov. Ford, who had for some time lived and had now died a
pauper. The lady who saw this, though she had left the Mormon Church, remembered hearing Elder John Taylor say in Nauvoo that Gov. Ford would live until the flesh would wither from his bones and he would die a pauper.” *Millennial Star*, 37-15.

During the dismal days following the murder of Joseph and Hyrum, JEJ and others of the family lived through the grief, fears, uncertainties and confusion into which all had been plunged. They were present at the memorable meeting when Sidney Rigdon voiced his plea to be named Guardian of the Church, which fell on unresponsive ears. They also saw Brigham Young rise to begin his speech and they declared that they witnessed a miracle. As he began to speak his voice suddenly became that of the slain prophet, and they and the audience were electrified by the change in his appearance which became that of Joseph Smith. So lifelike was he that BFJ said he jumped to his feet in amazement and awe. They with the others of the congregation, convinced that the mantle of the prophet had fallen upon Brigham, voted to sustain him as leader of the Church. Later the rejected Sidney Rigdon, who was really a brilliant man in many ways, apostatized and formed a small church organization in Pittsburgh, Pa.

At this time a number of the leading Church members broke away to form factions of their own. Among these men were James J. Strang and Lyman Wight. We remember hearing in our youth that one of these men strongly urged JEJ to follow him, promising him an apostleship if he would do so. Of course, JEJ as well as all the rest of the family remained loyal to the Church with Brigham Young at the head. When the saints were driven from Nauvoo, two of the Johnsons were among the last to leave. George, with some others served as caretakers of abandoned property, including the temple, while BFJ was custodian of the Mansion House. George witnessed the burning of the temple.
CHAPTER 11

THE BREAKUP AT NAUVOO

Through the period before the martyrdom, Ezekiel lived in Nauvoo and was an observer of many happenings when "all hell seemed in commotion" as BFJ phrased it. Just what he was doing is uncertain but he must have been working, probably at carpentering. He still resisted all efforts to get him to join the Church, but he worked alongside the saints, being with them but not of them. Some years ago Heber Johnson, (BFJ) told a little story which showed that at times he went up and down like a thermometer in his feelings toward Joseph Smith.

On one of his visits to Salt Lake City from Arizona, Heber had gone to the office of Pres. Lorenzo Snow. It was merely a friendly call, because Heber's father and Pres. Snow were friends in Nauvoo. There were several people present and the president began reminiscing about the old days in Illinois. The talk turned to Ezekiel who was well known to him. He knew what a salty character the old man was and told of a time when Joseph Smith was trying to elude those who were out to capture him. Apparently Ezekiel had been helping him to some extent with money when he got into a tight spot and Lorenzo was sent to him on one occasion to tap him for another contribution. Ezekiel's thermometer seemed to be down toward the freezing mark, and when he pulled out his wallet he peeled off fifty dollars which he handed to Lorenzo, saying, "Now you take that to your blankety blank prophet and tell him that is the last he will get from me." Bro. Snow chuckled as he told this, because he knew that later Ezekiel fought right manfully for the saints and that he denounced the killers in the strongest terms.
The story of the old man's fighting is a small tale in itself. As with most family stories, there are several versions, some perhaps embroidered a little, but in substance about the same. As we heard it long ago, the yarn begins on a day when mobocracy was at its height in Nauvoo. Ezekiel got word of an approaching company of militia which was planning to enter the city, in a sort of "sneak attack" to hustle the Mormons out of the city before the time limit to which they had agreed expired. A close companion of many years was his double barrelled, silver mounted shotgun which he fondly called "Old Bess." Seizing this, he hurried out to the point at which the road entered the city where, according to the story, there was considerable woodland cover. As the company approached he stepped out from behind a tree nearest to the edge of the cover, and after cocking both barrels he shouted a loud order to halt.

Taken by surprise the captain halted the column and the old man in sizzling language that he never learned in Sunday School, said that they would enter Nauvoo only over his dead body. He shouted so all could hear that he was an old man with no home of his own and with few friends and that he did not give a blankety so and so what became of him. Then he used the old trick of calling orders back to confederates who were supposed to be hidden in the brush behind him, thus pretending he had ample support. Believing himself outnumbered, the captain withdrew his command and started it down the road. Ezekiel kept a wary eye on the column and figured that it would try to get in at another entrance farther around. That is what the militia tried. Yes, you guessed it! There was the old man ready for them again. After he had told the Captain to beat it or he would blow his thus and thus head off, the idea seemed to seep into the captain's thick noggin that his gang was not wanted in Nauvoo. Once more the column
about faced and as darkness fell it filed into a nearby meadow and pitched camp for the night.

Naturally Ezekiel's game was played out by morning and the company succeeded in entering the mob infested city. The delay caused by the graybeard and his double barrelled "Old Bess" was enough to permit the citizens to at least pull themselves together. When the intruders arrived a long parley was held and the militia finally agreed to withdraw, and not a shot was fired at that time.

Ezekiel paid a stiff price for his few moments of glory. Such an episode could not long be kept secret and soon the mobsters learned the identity of the man who had put the bee on them. Later he went to live with Joel in Knox county, but when Joel took off to the "Valley," the old gentleman decided to return to Nauvoo and share the lot of Esther and David LeBaron and his son George.

During the grand melee before the defeat of the saints at the hands of the mob, Ezekiel was recognized by his enemies, doubtless some of the militia whom he had humiliated with "Old Bess." They gave him a terrific beating, in fact he never fully recovered from its effects. It is said that his death was hastened by injuries sustained by this act of mob violence. We have no details of what was done to him by his captors or by what means the punishment was administered.

Rolla supplies a letter dealing with this affair which is interesting. It is from David E. Johnson, son of Sixtus, son of Joel.

"I have heard my father tell of his grandfather Ezekiel. He was there when he was whipped by a mob, which later caused his death. I heard father and Pres. Wilford Woodruff talk about it when I was only ten years old, but it made such an impression on me that I asked father about it when I was grown. I have often wondered who did his temple work. Pres. Woodruff was very anxious about it
and he told father to be sure and attend to it if it had not been done. Pres. Woodruff said to father, 'I know your father was one of the first martyrs of the cause of Christ in this dispensation.'"

What a precious family heirloom "Old Bess" would have been! It was given to David LeBaron when Ezekiel died and David brought it with him when he came to the "Valley." He lived in Salt Lake City, in Peeteetneet (Payson) and at last in Santaquin. He did much hunting, fishing and trapping and for years maintained a hunting cabin on the west shore of Utah Lake. In the early '90's our brother G. Will Johnson (JEJ) often visited David. He handled the ancient fowling piece and probably shot it. One day the old cabin took fire and was destroyed before anything much could be rescued. The historic gun was undoubtedly a victim of the flames. We have hoped that the barrel might have been retrieved from the ashes, but so far no one seems to know anything about it.

JOSEPH FLEES NAUVOO

When Joseph and Almon carried the message for Gov. Ford, both were living in Macedonia. Following their return after that episode JEJ built a small store and with a princely capital of five dollars, entered business. He was surprisingly successful and in six months had cleared over a thousand dollars. He had a comfortable home in Macedonia and for a time was happy there with his wife Harriet and two children. Up to this time the family had been relatively unscathed by mob violence, but now fate waited around the corner to give them a good clobbering. We cannot tell just when they left Macedonia but it was some time after May 13, 1845. It must have been shortly after this that a mob suddenly surrounded his house in the middle of the night and ordered him to leave town, or else. It seems that first he was given seven days, which after a parley was
extended to 30 days, in which to wind up his affairs and "puckerchee." This word is his own, and seems to be the Indian equivalent of "beat it." The days of grace given enabled him to realize something from his property but the major portion was lost. At least he did not have to flee in panic, and as there were yet many Mormons in Nauvoo, he decided to go there as one of the "new citizens."

Shortly after his arrival in Nauvoo he went down the Mississippi to St. Louis, where he bought a small stock of drugs and items which might sell in the "four penny" drug store he built and occupied after his return. He wrote that he "opened a little drug store, compounded medicines, made confectioneries, dispensed cooling beverages and attended the post office." We are unable to say what he meant by "attended," but it was probably as helper only, as we have no record that he was postmaster at Nauvoo. He had been so at Macedonia and in several locations later, but never, we believe, in the "city beautiful."

Writing of this period, he said, "At and prior to this time I had written some articles for publications which seemed to meet with favor. In my blessings under the hands of both patriarchs Joseph and John Smith, I was to be a noted writer. I began to reflect on this and became ambitious, wrote, studied and yearned to become literary. I had many times written verses, —why not become an author?" Here we see the budding of his ambition to enter the field of literature but his activities took the path of journalism instead of authorship. During his editorial career he wrote serials for his papers but never had a volume published. This may have been because he always lived on the frontier where life was from rare to raw, far from the centers where he might have made contact with book publishers. But perhaps the real reason was that he always had so many irons in the fire that it was a scramble to find time for the copy necessary for his papers, much less to find the calm necessary for book writing.
Joseph’s sojourn in the battered city was of short duration. The spirit of unbridled mobocracy had again risen, directed not only against the remaining saints but also against the “new citizens,” mostly non-Mormons, who had been allowed to settle in the town after the first expulsion. He joined the citizens and wrote that they had fought several battles and that a number of their men had been killed. Ultimately they had been defeated beyond hope. He was among those who were taken prisoner after the last encounter, but who were afterward released and ordered to leave town “instanter,” meaning not tomorrow or in a couple of hours, but NOW!

He ran home, broke the news to a distressed Harriet, and the two crammed everything of need or value that they could get into a couple of carpet bags. Each taking a child on a shoulder and with a bag in the other hand, they abandoned everything as it stood and began making their way down to the landing. Their destination was nowhere, or rather, anywhere to escape the scoundrels who had inaugurated the reign of terror. At this time JEJ probably had no team and wagon, as they made no attempt to ferry to the Iowa side as many of the fleeing saints had done.

When they reached the river they found a boat at the landing which was upriver bound. They hastily embarked with no destination in view and eventually arrived at Galena, Illinois, a town not far from the Wisconsin line. They had scarcely arrived when JEJ became violently ill, probably with his old malaria with its chills and fever. Here was a desperate situation in which to be placed for Harriet, a gently reared young woman who had never had to fend for herself. She must have been terrified to find herself in a strange town with two young children, a sick husband, no vestige of a home anywhere and out of touch with family and friends.

In spite of the panic which must have beset her, she made a quick decision. Fortunately they had some money.
Bundling all her charges onto the next boat going down river, she started downstream hoping to find friends on the Iowa side of the river. They landed at Montrose, where JEJ had attempted to take up land some years before, when illness played the same trick on him. Happily they found a number of friends and were given shelter until JEJ was on his feet again.

Montrose, opposite Nauvoo, was at this time a sort of "wits-collecting" point, where the pitiable evacuees who had struggled across the river paused long enough to decide where they would go and how they would get there. It was mosquito infested and the heat was terrific, and JEJ did not linger, though at the start they did not know whither they were bound. A team and wagon must have been acquired here, because they went on to Bonaparte, about 30 miles up the Des Moines river from Keokuk. Joseph discerned in the little place possibilities of bolstering up his battered fortunes. He decided to enter the merchandising game once more.

Their first dwelling was a tent pitched in what he described as a beautiful wood adjoining the town. He mentions a terrific hurricane which bore down on their sylvan home in August, uprooting a number of the trees which had sheltered them. His family escaped damage by what he termed a miracle, but a large tree crashed upon the tent of a neighbor, Bro. Hodges, crushing Sister Hodges to death and breaking a daughter's leg. He noted that his health was very poor during his stay in Bonaparte, sometimes so bad that he despaired of his life. In spite of this, he opened the inevitable drug store and soon began to prosper in a modest way. In October (1846) death again invaded the family circle and baby Joseph Ellis was taken from them. Of their three children this left only Mary Julia (Richards).

While this was going on, BFJ had proceeded farther west, reaching Garden Grove in south central Iowa. His
goal had been Winter Quarters, where he expected to join the group that led the way to the Salt Lake valley. Illness and other things interfered with his plans, and to his later sorrow he accepted an invitation from JEJ to return to Bonaparte until they could go west together. He returned and became a tent dweller in the Bonaparte wood. He set up a saddlery shop and worked hard until January, 1847, when Almon Babbitt and others passed through en route to Winter Quarters. Joseph showed no great anxiety to be on the road to the new Zion, so Benjamin decided to take advantage of the transportation offered by Almon to the gathering place on the Missouri.

Almon had brought the two brothers bad news. Their father, Ezekiel, had reached the end of his earthly trail on January 13, 1848 and was buried in the Nauvoo cemetery. We have never found a single word of the details surrounding his passing. BFJ reached Winter Quarters and was welcomed by the authorities, but as he wrote, he “had lost blessings and caste, and could not but feel it. The pioneers had gone without me, found the land of our inheritance and some had returned and even now I was not ready to follow. Where was I to obtain the necessary outfit?” But luck had not deserted him and he managed to wangle a wagon and two yoke of steers, and when Joel passed through on his way to Utah, Joseph and Almon sent a wagon and pair of oxen by him to augment BFJ’s outfit. The two brothers, Joel and Ben, with their families departed on July 4, 1848, arriving in the Valley Oct. 22, in Willard Richard’s company. Benjamin mourned to the end of his days that through his “disobedience” in going back to Bonaparte, he had missed being one of the original band of pioneers who entered Salt Lake valley in 1847.

Although Joseph remained in Bonaparte about two years, scant detail is available of his sojourn there. His brief biography from which we have quoted came to a close after his arrival in the Iowa town. In practically the last
lines of the sketch of his life he wrote, "Here I became acquainted with Miss H. G. Our feelings being mutual, a strong attachment was the result, which has not, nor ever will cease to exist." Thus at Bonaparte occurred one of the major events of his life, his meeting Hannah Maria Goddard, who was later to enter the covenant of plural marriage and become his second wife.

By this time Joseph must have given much thought to the new order of marriage. People all around him, including his younger brother, had taken the plunge and it is likely that he was now ready for the big adventure. We note the circumspection with which he chronicled Hannah’s arrival upon the scene by the use of her initials only. This indicates that he realized that from then on he must weave a certain secrecy around some of his actions. He knew that the unfavorable reception given plural marriage in Nauvoo was responsible for much of the opposition to the saints and it was still anathema to the great human wave that was surging westward.

Joseph’s business in Bonaparte was actually a miniature department store with emphasis on the medical angle. Later he wrote, as if speaking of Montrose, that he “pledged has face for a stock of goods and made clear about $2,000, half of which was lost in the great fire in St. Louis.” Of this fire we have no knowledge. It seems that he either moved the store back to Montrose or else he had a store in each place. When he made the next move westward, it began at Montrose, which seems to bear out the idea that his main place of business was there.

Joseph felt the westward urge in the summer of 1848, helped on by the fact that two of his brothers were already on the way, and by the implications of the dust raised by the stream of wagons which rolled by his door. Many of these paused for supplies and information, their drivers asking the inevitable question, "How are the roads?"
In one breezy reference to his departure from this region he wrote: “Started again for sundown with 50 head of cattle, etc.” The “etc” has to be left to the imagination, but it meant all the impedimenta peculiar to migration that could be jammed into the too-small wagons. The fact that he took a herd of cattle seems to indicate that at first he intended to go on through to the “Valley.” But that was not yet to be. The infant city of Kanesville lured him from this intention, if he had it, and proved to be for many years the “sundown” toward which he headed his teams. Though he was not the first on the scene, he appeared at an early date and he had much to do with shaping its destiny. By his wide advertising of the surrounding area, he helped greatly in “putting the place on the map.”

And now we find our Joseph and his family with a few friends, all packed up and ready to leave the region of the Big Mississip’ to see what they can find beyond that western prairie horizon. Their final words are a courteous, “Adieu, Montrose et Bonaparte.” (Sorry, but all this “Bonaparte” business just brings out the French in us.)

Bookplate from one of the few remaining volumes of JEJ’s library, a Geography published in 1836.
CHAPTER 12

APPROACH TO THE MIGHTY MO.

Nothing was found on the move to Kanesville until a little book turned up containing a list of merchandise at Bonaparte, also a day to day account of the trip written in faint penciling. It tells nothing startling but is an on the spot story of a journey across the almost virgin state of Iowa in 1848. The known names of the occupants of the wagons were JEJ, Harriet, Mary Julia, baby John Ezekiel, David Devol, his son Coleman and Frank Hall. There must have been others, no doubt including W. D. Johnson who was known to have been in Kanesville in 1848. The diary begins July, 1848, no day given. To save space we have condensed it to almost stenographic brevity.

Wednesday, 2 o’clock. Started from Montrose to the bluff. Took a slow and easy pace. Stopped at Charleston for a rest and got to the mill at dark. Slept in the wagon. Rained at night. Got wet but started early. Went to Bonaparte. Got my new coat, fits very well. Stayed about an hour, crossed the river (Des Moines), roads wet and rough. Stole some oats for feed and green corn for a roast. Saw a very fine horse but did not steal ’cause his owner had him.

Came on to Stringtown. Fine country, indeed. B’ot some oats, bacon, etc. Went on eight miles and encamped. Tea and ham for supper. Thunder and lightning, no rain. Got an early start and stopped at Drakesville. Bought some cigars. Go ½ mile and buy 9 melons for 40c. Went on a mile and overtook 2 or 3 wagons of Mormons. Stopped and ate melons. Stopped at noon and roasted corn under good shade. On to Soap creek, stopped for water and ate a melon. Stopped at Cold Springs. A cabin had been built there and
a family living in it. Encamped at Whisky Point with two teams going from the Bluff to Indiana.

Sunday. Started early, flies bad all day. Beautiful country! I commenced to drive. Met Pickett going with two wagon loads of election returns. (This might have been the ancestor of our relatives, the Picketts of southern Utah.) Noticed the grave of a Mormon accidentally killed. Coleman lost his hat. Passed Chariton Point about noon. Walked to Chariton river and down the ravine 1/2 mile and bro’t a bucket of water. Baited (fed the animals.)

Came into Garden Grove about 7 but decided to go on through. Drove until 10 on wrong road. Drove back to another road, came to a creek and camped. Big fire, good supper, ham and chicken. About 1 o’clock big shower wet us through. Hitched up, after ugly drive arrived at McKinney’s about 2. All slept in house. Too wet for travel next morning so we stayed. Pleasant visit, played euchre, drank cherry bounce. Got in good spirits, Irish poteen and danced with a heap of pretty girls until 2 A.M.

Monday. Started about nine, roads very bad, horses necks much galled. Slow. Went to sleep and lost my cap. Stopped to roast corn but didn’t relish it. Over a miserable road to Pisgah, 9 o’clock, stopped at Perrys.

Wednesday morn. Saw immense quantities of corn growing, also melons, beans potatoes and buckwheat. Saw good mill sites on Grand river. Got in for provisions corn, potatoes, onions, radishes and melons. Shot a chicken (sage hen). Stopped on prairie ... ate ... picked up nice geological specimens. Traveled 35 miles to camp at Turkey Grove. Bed early but soon heard wild cats yowling. Started early and saw a large flock of turkeys but could not catch. Stopped at a creek where there was a bridge ... Passed Indian Town (now Lewis, Iowa). Saw all manner of Indian trails. The Nishne Batena (Nishnabotna) is a fine

Woke up early and found horses and cattle gone. Woke up all hands. I went west on road, Hall east. Went five miles and found cattle. Returned. Hall had not come back. Built fire. Coleman went a mile for water. Cooked a chicken and when ready saw Hall coming with horses. Started at 1, drove 25 miles and camped on Keg creek. No supper, heard the wildcats.

Daylight start in rain. Traveled fast. Got 2 chickens in one shot. Arrived in settlement 2 miles from Cainville. Tremendous hill; horses could not get up but slipped back. Carried all things up slippery hill, then cut new road and got up. Loaded again, well pleased at our luck. In sight of Devol’s at 10. Saw Harriet (Devol) milking. She went to get over fence and spilled the milk! All very glad to see (each other). Coleman, Mary and Harriet had a nice crying spell. Had breakfast, dinner and supper all at once. Went up to Cainsville and saw heaps of folks.

Got up early and went to meeting, saw many friends. Promised to visit the Macedonians. Monday morning started for ferry. Went to G.A.S. (George A. Smith’s). Visited the J. Clark’s, G.A.S. with us. Passed through large bottom prairie. Saw Bidamon (the man who married Emma Smith?). Had a good view of Winter Quarters. Tuesday visited G.A. and Clark’s. Plenty melons and tomatoes. Supper with G.A. Went plumbing (sic), found plenty of plums. Climbed bluffs ½ mile, had fine view of country. Took brandy with G.A.

Wednesday morn. Nearly sick all night, felt bad all day. Think I ate too many melons. (Ah! Ah! Joseph, not melons. You have been sick every time you lifted your elbow, remember?) Went up town at night, got grain. Supper with the Colonel Johnson’s (probably the man who was considered candidate for vice president when Joseph
Smith was running for president. Sidney Rigdon was finally chosen. Plenty of chicken, grapes, wine, etc. Had splendid music on fiddle, sang songs, told anecdotes and danced a French 4. Thursday, up early, prepared for visiting Macedonians. Started at 10, arrived at Ute Perkins (you-te) and found a big melon patch.

Although JEJ’s writings are silent as to his activities in late 1848 and in 1849, we may deduce that he was busy at recouping his losses in the expulsion from Nauvoo.

He apparently operated a supply business in Montrose and had some other enterprise in Bonaparte, the demands of which may have left him little time or inclination for recording of daily events. However, as evidenced by the invitations reproduced above, he was active in the social life of the Montrose-Nauvoo community.

The Balls were held in the Joseph Smith Mansion House to which Emma returned after the martyrdom and expulsion. She rented it out for community social events.
CHAPTER 13

KANESVILLE

When most of the main body of the Latter-day Saints moved westward from Nauvoo on the first leg of their journey to the Rocky Mountains, they halted on the east bank of the Missouri river on June 14, 1846. The spot chosen for a tarrying place was one where earlier travelers had found favorable conditions for crossing the stream. It was planned to make the place a semi-permanent camp or way station for all the emigrating Church members that were to follow. Across the river, near where the city of Omaha was later to be built, Winter Quarters camp was established. The latter was to be the main jumping off place for the long flight to Zion.

The area that became Kanesville will be forever a notable spot in Church annals for many reasons, the most important being the departure of the Mormon Battalion from there on on July 16, 1846. There they began one of the famous marches of history, ending at San Diego, California, Jan. 29, 1847, after tramping 2030 miles over some of the most difficult terrain the country can produce.

The first settler of Kanesville was Henry W. Miller, who in 1846 squatted on the land west of the old block house which had been built for defense against the Indians. Soon after he built his cabin and created a farm, Mormon emigrants who were not ready for the long trip to the mountains began to drop off at Miller’s Hollow. As growth continued the saints named the place Kanesville, in gratitude to Colonel Thomas L. Kane, who was a staunch friend of the Mormon people and who had come to their assistance on several occasions.

When JEJ arrived in 1848, he and Henry Miller became fast friends. They were later associates in an Indian
mission, a round trip to the Salt Lake valley and still later were neighbors in southern Utah. One of JEJ’s early actions was to campaign for a post office, which was soon authorized and later he became postmaster. For some unknown reason he began to stir up sentiment in favor of changing the name from Kanesville to Council Bluffs. His efforts were successful and the Iowa legislature passed a bill making the change effective Feb. 9, 1853.

We can only speculate as to why JEJ wished to erase the honored name of the gallant Colonel Kane. Certainly it was not because of personal antagonism, since later on during a visit to Salt Lake City, the colonel became ill and Brigham Young sent him down to the milder climate of St. George to recuperate. He stayed at the home of Lucy B. Young, still standing at the southwest corner of 1st North and 1st West streets. Frequently he would go over and stroll around Joseph’s garden, chatting in friendly fashion with him.

Probably the chief reason for the change was that the area was known earlier as Council Bluffs, from a single “Council Bluff” farther up the river, where the Indians held a pow wow with the noted explorers, Lewis and Clark early in the century.* The name had become so well established that there was little chance of making the new label stick. Also, JEJ became interested in the red brethren and as a matter of sentiment doubtless deemed a name with Indian implications more appropriate. We are inclined to regret this change as the name of Thomas L. Kane is one which should be held in high esteem by the Latter-day Saints. However, Kane county, Utah, was named for him, so the memory of his kindly deeds will not die out in Mormondom.

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*Lamont Johnson (GWJ) has searched out eleven names which have been used to designate the Council Bluffs area, viz: Council Bluff (Lewis and Clark 1804), Hart’s Bluff, Kane, Kanesville, Nebraska, Council Bluffs, Trader’s Point, Miller’s Hill, Miller’s Hollow, Council Bluffs City and Council Bluffs. Miller’s Hill could be a misprint for “Hollow.”
SETTING UP IN KANESVILLE

We have found practically nothing written by JEJ regarding his arrival in Kanesville or his activities during the remainder of the year, or of 1849. We know that he was busy erecting a home and putting up a structure to serve as a store and bakery. In his brief autobiography of 1882 he states that he “built the first house in Pottawattamie county.” This assertion has bothered us somewhat because we know that Henry Miller had been there for nearly two years before JEJ’s arrival. Others had settled around his holdings. Surely these people would not have lived in tents or wickiups all this time. How could have JEJ built the first house? Another writing turned up that gave the explanation; the other people lived in log cabins and Joseph meant that he built the first conventional frame home and store building.

During this interlude of building and getting “dug in” generally, JEJ wrote for the Frontier Guardian, the paper then published by Orson Hyde. These men had known one another in Kirtland, but this was the beginning of a strong friendship between them. Under the nom de plume of “Amicus” Joseph wrote poetry, special articles on his travels and maintained an entertainment column, specializing in charades, rebuses, conundrums, enigmas and the like. This association paved the way for his entrance into the newspaper business and the subsequent acquisition of the paper, the name of which was changed by degrees to the Council Bluffs Bugle.

THE EMPORIUM OF THE WEST

Some time elapsed before the “first house in Pottawattamie county” and the store buildings (JEJ wrote it plural) were completed. It was a busy time for Joseph assembling the widely diverse stock for the new store. Sev-
Ice Cream SALOON.

The good people of Kanesville, and the public, are informed that a room has been fitted up in the

EMPORIUM BUILDINGS,
WHERE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

can be furnished with

ICE CREAMS, AND COOLING BEVERAGES,
and such other Refreshments, Sweet Meats, Fruits, and pastries, as can be produced in this market.

Strict attention will be paid to order, and the comfort of the Guests.

Kanesville, Iowa, July, 1851.
veral trips down the river to St. Louis were required before the many items were secured. The grand opening was set for early in April, 1850.

The advertisement in the Frontier which heralded the new enterprise bubbled over with verbiage but it seems worth printing as characteristic of the advertising of the period. It also shows that department stores are not entirely a modern institution; they existed on the frontier even in that era. The caption was in keeping with the times:

MORE GOLD DISCOVERED! TREMENDOUS EXCITEMENT!

A NEW VARIETY STORE

J. E. JOHNSON would respectfully inform the citizens of Kanesville, and adjoining counties, and Emigrants to SALT LAKE, CALIFORNIA and OREGON generally and every individual person in particular, that he is constantly receiving and will keep constantly on hand for sale at his LARGE and commodious NEW FRAME STORE where he has just opened at the SIGN of

EMPORIUM OF THE WEST

a general assortment of staple goods: consisting in part of Broadcloths, Cassimeres, Pilot Cloths, Cassinetts, Jeans, Tweeds, Velveteens, Vestings, Full Cloths, Moleskins, Brown and Bleached Domestics, all varieties, Drilling, Checks, Hickory, Plaids, Ticking, Prints, Muslins, Coat Trimmings, Linseys, Flannels and Velvets.

Also, the best assortment and most fashionable patterns and varieties of FANCY GOODS, Jewelry, Toys, Trinkets, Flowers, Laces, Dress and Bonnet Trimmings, Hosiery, Gloves, Musical Instruments, Dress Patterns, Delaines, Alpaca's, Lawns, Muslin and Cambrics, Bonnets, Shawls,
etc. and quantities and qualities of every variety, of buttons that can't be beat, and in fact almost any article that could be purchased in large cities.

ALSO, an assortment of School, Miscellaneous and Literary Books, Toy Books, Writing do., Mottoes, and an amusing variety of Cards, Stationery, Pens, Ink, Quills, Sand, &c. Boots, Shoes, Slips, Hats and Caps.

**TRUNKS! TRUNKS!**

Manufactured in any size, shape and quality for Emigrants. Also Spanish and Pack Saddles, Bridles, Belts, Sheathes and everything in that line. ALSO, a full general assortment of Drugs, Paints, Oils and Varnishes—every kind; Dyes and fresh and warranted good; Turpentine, Perfumery, Brushes, Glassware, Bottles, Vials, Corks, Glue, Sandpaper, Instruments, Snuff, Blacking, &c. WINES, BRANDIES AND LIQUORS of the choicest kind for medical use.

ALSO, a very large and splendid assortment of Family and Patent medicines, Thompsonian and Botanical do., Ague and Fever medicines, (warranted to cure) and every article in the medicine line ever called for in this country.

A variety of Crockery and Glassware, Tools and Cutlery, Powder, Lead, Shot, Caps, Soap, Candles, Salt, Flour, a variety of Ready Made Clothing, and a thousand articles too numerous to mention.

There is also connected with the same establishment and in the same row an extensive

**BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY ESTABLISHMENT**

**EMIGRANTS LOOK HERE**

The subscriber has opened an extensive Bakery and Confectionary Establishment in Emporium Buildings.
Where Hard Bread, Crackers, Loaf Bread, Pies, Cakes, Candies, Cider, Soda and other wholesome beverages, Tobacco Cigars, Nuts and Fruit and every kind of Refreshments that are to be had in the country are kept constantly on hand. Groceries and eating houses supplied on reasonable terms.

Kanesville, Council Bluffs, Iowa, April 3, 1850

J. E. JOHNSON

You name it, we've got it!
CHAPTER 14

FOUR MEN REACH THE VALLEY

The December, 1852 number of the Emigrant's Guide describes JEJ as an “outfitting commission merchant,” and also a wagon maker and blacksmith, proprietor of the Council Bluffs Mansion, a confectionary, bakery, eating house and cabinet shop. In addition to all this he at times engaged in teaching school! The “mansion” probably refers to an addition put up before 1852 and operated as a hotel. The “Grand Opening” of the Emporium occurred but a few months before he departed for the Salt Lake valley for a short stay. He had sufficient time to train his brothers, George and William in the art of store keeping. With a couple of close friends to check on them occasionally, he left them in charge of everything, as is indicated in letters of instruction written back from stopping places on the plains.

Now that the home was built, and we are sure it was a fair sized one because we know it had an upstairs room big enough for a wedding party, and the Emporium was a going concern, Joseph had time to accomplish two projects that had been long on his mind. The first was marriage to Hannah Goddard, something that he had long desired to consummate. Hannah was “willin’” and Harriet was in an amiable frame of mind, but Joseph had never had any experience with “plurality” and he was at sea as to how it could be accomplished. Had he been familiar with the way in which it could be done he probably would had the knot tied at an earlier date.

Having decided that the wisest thing to do was to get his information at the highest source, this required a trip to the mountains for a conference with Brigham Young. The second thing on his mind was a canny desire to look
FOUR MEN REACH THE VALLEY

over the new Zion before he abandoned his holdings in the states and joined the saints in Utah. Of course, caution was only a part of it; he really had a burning curiosity to see the Valley and the country in between. Besides two of his brothers were there and they kept urging him to “come out of Babylon.” Among JEJ’s friends were Orson Hyde, Henry Miller and Joseph Kelley. These men also were imbued with a strong desire to view the new gathering place in the mountains.

Orson Hyde was an apostle of the Church, also the owner and editor of the Frontier Guardian. Earlier, he had walked 600 miles from Connecticut, winding up in Kirtland where he found employment in the store of Gilbert and Whitney. He had been ordained to the ministry in another religion, but was converted to Mormonism in Lorain, Ohio, while gathering material for a sermon. Henry Miller has already been introduced as the settler of Miller’s Hollow. Except for mention in a newspaper clipping, we find nothing further about Joseph Kelley.

By July 5, 1850, the group was ready to take off on the great adventure of crossing the plains. Hyde, Miller and Kelley left on the morning of that day with one of the west bound wagon trains. Joseph was detained on business at the Bluffs and had to be rushed across the Missouri River to catch up with the train which was encamped about eight miles west of the stream.

On this trip Joseph recorded happenings in three ways; by stories for the Guardian, letters to the family and notes in diary form. The letters, though lengthy, give a more detailed account of the passage of the plains than do the press articles. Space demands that we condense the letters and diary. Joseph was greatly interested in the displays of nature along the way, particularly the botanical life and the scenic marvels. He was eager to shoot a buffalo, and he enjoyed hunting berries and fishing in the many streams.
His chief lament was the excessive rainfall which beset them and the incredible swarms of mosquitoes which made their lives miserable. We have omitted many references to these factors and many to his health at the moment, also to his lonesomeness for the home folks. The first letter is headed:

"Platte River, 150 Miles from the Missouri.

July 9, 1850

"Dear Mother, Harriet, Hannah & Friends:

"... I am seated on a buffalo skin on the ground, writing on a trunk, with all manner of cooking implements, harness, horses, wagons and men scattered in admirable confusion all around me ... I am constantly busy cooking, fixing and driving team. We are getting along very fast as this is Tuesday evening and we are over 150 miles from Kanesville.

"Left Friday at 11 O'clock, went to Bellevue and found company had crossed above; went to Martin’s ferry and crossed. Found company encamped 8 miles. Mosquitoes terrible, could not sleep. Prepared breakfast, started at 6, after a long time plagued with balky horses. Tried to sing, talk, laugh,—anything to forget, and finally went to sleep with the lines in my hands. Passed Bros. Heywood and Wooley’s company; saw Miss Spence for a few moments (note this) and passed on. Before noon caught up with 70 wagons of Bishop Hunter’s company ... came in sight of 7 graves. Left company and reached a nice stream called Weeping Water (now a town of same name in Cass county, Neb.) Next day saw 4 graves, making 12 in all since the ferry. Have traveled 43 miles.

"Sun. July 7, 1850. Lots of trouble with balky horses; about everyone is troubled by this disorder. Came up with part of the Government Train at Salt Creek, 12 miles on. Stopped at noon in an ugly hollow ... A hard drive of 45
miles, passed 10 graves. Laid on ground and covered the buffalo robe over me to protect me from mosquitoes. A poor night. Came up with our gold digging company and took breakfast. Camped at noon in country more level and ugly. At night camped in sight of the Great Platte. Beautiful ground and good water. Made shortcake, stewed apples, baked a big pie. Bed late in wagon. 46 miles today, passed 7 and 8 companies.

“Tuesday, July 9, 1850. Came to Sandy Bottoms and break an axle tree. Hauled wagon towards the river timber, I went ahead on horseback. Came up to Middleton and Riley’s teams, also to Capt. Markham’s company. Found George G. Johnston dying, saw no hope for him. Went back to our teams and fixed wagon. Muddy roads, saw plenty of sweet wild peas (wild sweet peas?) Came to the train and found George had died. I fixed a board for his grave while the others were digging it on a high knoll near the Platte. Gave two women some medicine and instructions, rode on, overtook the company near night. George had been sick nearly a week and was first one taken with cholera, the disease most prevalent now. There are eight helpless ones without a man to oversee them.

“Encamped after 35 miles. Find we have passed 46 graves that were visible. Our gold diggers conclude to go behind as they cannot keep up. Rice for supper. They say I am an excellent cook . . . am kindly treated by all, have not yet had to stand guard . . . River here 2 or 3 miles wide, timber, interspersed with little islands.

“Wed. July 10. Jogged along fast and came up with company of Bro. Snow . . . Turned out close to the river, ate dinner and went swimming. River averages 1 foot deep, fine gravel bottom. Fine spree running crosswise and up and down. Now I am standing by the wagon writing and feel much better for my wash . . . Go 40 miles, more graves, hot, 90 deg. Again camped on river bank. Good supper.
Perhaps you would like to know what we consider a good supper. It is first boiled rice fried and sweetened, crackers soaked and fried, fried ham, stewed elderberries, herring, coffee and ginger tea. This is what we call a feast. Have not tasted better."

Over a week elapsed before he got a letter off to the home folks. They had made their way up the Platte a considerable distance when this was written:

"Platte River, 150 miles below Laramie,
July 18, 1850

"Dear tho Distant Friends:

"There is a team in sight returning to the states and I will write what I can ... We passed Fort Kearney and have got along very slow on account of our horses giving out. We traded one, left another and shall be obliged to swap or buy more ... We have been constantly passing emigrant companies with many of whom I am acquainted. Came up with Bro. Foote’s company. Every attention was bestowed upon us and everything that could be produced to eat was set before us. We got plenty of buffalo meat and butter.

"For the last four days we have seen thousands of buffalo. Have had a few chases but caught none. At night came up with Capt. Wall’s company, the Macedonia camp. Fared the best possible. We are now encamped above Cedar Bluff, above Ash Hollow, south side of river.

"We passed Colonel Johnson next morning. Passed Fort Kearney about noon. Encamped 20 miles this side (west). Next morning two mail carriers came up with us going to Laramie. They stayed with us two nights, then went ahead. Next morning saw 3 buffaloes on the bluffs. Bro. Miller gave chase. Came up at noon, no luck! Encamped at noon in sight of 3 or 4 herds feeding on the bottoms. Had a fine chase but did not kill one. Cooked by
fire made of buffalo chips which gave a fine blaze and heat but too much ashes. Went 33 miles and encamped. Cooked and ate supper but were forced to hitch up and pull out because of mosquitoes. Drove ten miles and camped.

"Next day came up with Foote's company at noon. They gave us buffalo meat, butter, milk and anything we wanted. Saw West and his wife. She held an umbrella over me while I ate dinner. Immense herds of buffalo in afternoon. Bro. Kelley gave tremendous chase of 3 or 4 miles with pistol, but they are so hard to kill he did not bring any. Saw several graves dug out; saw the carcass of a man scattered around by the wolves. Yesterday I picked up the jaw bone of a man which had been cleaned by the wolves . . . Passed any amount of prickly pear the last 3 days. We also see wild poppies and hollyhocks that look like moss rose blossoms (probably *Sphaeralcia* sp.), sunflowers, wild pinks, etc.

"The river here is about two miles wide. After trying to cross on horseback, Bro. Hyde and myself stripped to wade over and each led a horse while the other drove the teams. But the horses sank in the quicksand and we had to double teams and pass twice over. I waded the river three times, a four mile round trip against the current and quicksand and it nearly exhausted me . . . Drove on 20 miles and encamped in Captain Bennet's company in Ash Hollow. Came on to this place, cooked dinner, shod horses, slept and are now going to start.

"Made 25 miles and encamped with Captain Evans company. Arose late, bad night,—insects. Passed over sandy roads. stopped for dinner of ham and eggs, fried crackers and tea. Came up to Captain Blair's company and concluded to stay. Company glad to see us and showed us every kindness. Early start. Stopped for dinner within 3 miles of famous Chimney Rock. The base is a kind of hard clay. It forms a pyramid to about 50 feet, then a rough pedestal of rock rises perpendicular. Saw it from
a distance of 30 miles. (More natural wonders are described.)

"Came up to one part of Bishop Johnson's company . . . Have just found that today is Sunday. However, we have been singing and have been quite civil. Traveled 30 miles; left 2 horses this morning with Bro. Blair as they failed and old Skewball was one of them. We have fed grain all along and have some yet. Tis about 60 miles to the fort (Laramie).

"Have not stood guard yet and all the company favors me much. Even Bro. Hyde takes more upon himself than he allows me to do. I am cook, steward, doctor, chambermaid and clown and they don't know how to get along without me! I had a strong invitation this morning to stop with Captain Fleming (Blair's company) and Miss F. said she would do my vittles and washing. But I concluded to go on so I ran to catch up a mile ahead."

"Bishop Johnson's Company, Tuesday evening
July 23, 1850

"On Sunday evening we overtook the back 50 of this company 30 miles east of Laramie. Stayed overnight, started early and soon came to Scott's Bluff, a curious and strange piece of rock earth. It suggests ancient ruins of forts, towers and pyramids towering to an immense height . . . Saw two large elk on the river, also a red fox. Wolves are continually in our sight. Came to a trading post consisting of 2 or 3 of the meanest kind of little low shanties, a few dogs and horses, 2 or 3 men and as many squaws. There are also 2 Frenchmen with an anvil and bellows ready to do any little job. Plenty of old and new, whole and broken wagons on the hill. One man invited me in to see his squaw. Bro. Kelley went in with me to the wigwam composed of raw hides and in the shape of a potato hole with a round crawl-in hole at the side. We were offered seats on
the ground. They had one very pretty squaw if she were fashionably dressed. Here we saw what is called the Service berry. We ate a few and found them like juicy whortleberries. They offered us common moccasins at $1.00 per pair.

"I took a ramble on the hills hunting berries; found a few. It was as far again as it looked; tired out. On returning had to go through 2 miles of arrowgrass. It annoyed me by sticking through my clothes. (This same grama grass kills many sheep) . . . Came on 10 miles, camped on barren plain. Mosquitoes, O dreadful night! I wrapped my head and hands tightly in a blanket as long as I could stand it, then took a corner to fan myself rapidly, or get up an run as fast as possible. Started at dawn and in 3 miles came up with the head of the Bishop’s company. Concluded to stop with them tonight. We got 2 horses yesterday and one from this company. They intend to celebrate the 24th (tomorrow) as the day of entrance into Deseret and are anxious to have us stay. We concluded not to stop for the celebration and left early loaded with favors of all kind of sweetcakes and eatables. Passed through an Indian village this morning; saw some fine horses and splendid ornaments and trappings. Tried to buy moccasins from them but could not, neither would they trade horses.

"We saw wagon tires and irons where wagons have been burned . . . All the horses that we started with have been left behind except 2 and we shall have to leave one of those at the fort. . . ."

Then follows at great length family matters, instructions as to the store, disposition of the crops and so forth. Evidently JEJ did not have a chance to send the above letter out so he filled four sheets more of the familiar long, blue paper used so much in that period. It is mainly on business matters, with a good bit of tenderness for the family and a big pep talk for George and William on how to run the business.
The next letter, dated July 26, 1850, gives its point of origin. He was feeling lower than low so we pull out the tremolo stop only briefly:

"Forty four miles west of Laramie
In camp on Horse Creek, Friday 5½ O'clock
July 26, 1850

"My dearest friends

Ht Hh Mary Mother et al.

"... We got here at 10 and it soon began to rain. I got in the wagon and tried to sleep but could not. Tried to read a novel that I bought at the fort but it was no use. My mind was far beyond the pages that my eyes traced o'er. I am so depressed that I must find something to drive away the gloom. I am in one wagon writing on the dinner box. Bros. Miller and Kelley have gone up in the hills for game and Bro. Hyde in the other wagon trying to sleep ... with the hardships of riding horseback or driving team over such hills as you never saw and in my feeble health, making me so tired at night that I sometimes drop down and go to sleep. After being out all night in a frightful storm, taking cold and feeling the worst kind, traveling 16 miles over very bad roads, then to have to stop a half day and a night in such a rainy, lonesome valley as this! I feel so entirely lonely I would give a year's hard earnings to spend this one gloomy night in sweet home with my friends.

"I wrote letters that I intended to leave at the fort but near there I met a mail carrier going directly down, who took letters for 50c, which I gladly paid. We came to the fort in the afternoon, left some things, etc. I bought a bottle of pickles for $1 and some cigars. They have a full and well assorted stock of variety merchandise, something such as my own when full, but prices are at least double what we sell for. There are a few fine buildings and the place bids fair to become a pretty one. We went on about 7 miles and encamped on a large plot that was literally strewn
with burnt wagon irons, harness and everything else, but everything destroyed that could be easily burned. We piled up nearly a ton of iron for fun.

"Stormy night. I stood guard for the first time. Next day traveled 22 miles and stopped before night on account of a dark storm coming up. Camp at Dead Timber creek with first rate water. Storm lasted all night; thunder and lightning. It was a flood, filled the numerous dry creek beds booming full . . . Next morning a deserter from the fort came into camp. We fed him and sent him back to the fort. A company left here yesterday. Much pine timber visible; sage and cactus grow larger. Occasionally see berries. Started early intending to noon on the La Bonte. Saw a buffalo but could not kill him. Saw 3 cattle left on account of lameness. I rode pony until 10 and was almost frozen. High mountains all around us.

"Came up with Thomas Johnson's company of 56 wagons. Reached river at 12 but found no feed. On 5 miles to a branch of the La Bonte, have cooked supper, made light biscuits—first time—pronounced excellent. I made Johnny cakes this morning.

"I will mention the names of some of my acquaintances who have died on the journey: two of Bishop Johnson's women and his son, John Shipley, Henry Wilcox, Edward Wilcox, the wives of Isaac Hill and Peter Shirts, Harriet Browitt, Charley Johnson, Dr. Braley (or Braby), Miss B. Dougall, Spicer Crandall's wife, Old Mrs. Call and some others I cannot think of now."

"10 miles west of the lower ferry of the upper crossing of the Platte, 700 miles w. of Kanesville, July 30, 1850

"Beloved Friends:

"... We have had an accident (mishap). We came here and camped at 7 last evening on a sandy place near the river
by a spring creek in the shade of a few cottonwoods. Our 6 horses and one mule were put out to pasture on the sand hills about a mile. We left them there and went to sleep. About 9 a mule team came up intending to travel with us,—family named Daniels from Montrose. When morning came our horses were missing and we know nothing of their whereabouts. Bros. Miller and Kelley have gone back toward the ferry to look for them. It is uncertain whether we will start today . . . Bro. Hyde has turned in to sleep; Bro. Daniels has gone hunting. I have cooked breakfast; made meal pancakes with eggs, soda and acid. Have washed dishes also a towel, my gloves and kerchief, repaired our provision chest and have put the wagon in order. Also have apples cooking.

". . . About 20 miles up the road leaves the Platte and strikes across to the Sweetwater river. The Platte here is only a few rods across, but is deep and turbid. We had a little scow or dugout to cross in and were obliged to swim our horses. Companies under Captain Andrews, Bro. Hawkins, P. Young (Phineas?) and a small group of 10 wagons were encamped near the ferry on and about Deer Creek . . . My last letter was sent back by a company returning from the capture of some deserters . . . Deer Creek on the Platte would be a good place for a person to stop with some goods during their emigration. Have liquors, with a blacksmithing and pack saddle outfit, build a good boat, do all ferrying, trading, repairing, and a large amount might well be taken. I have the idea of stopping with 6 or 8 hands and the necessary articles, come out early, should I have the blessing of prosperity next spring. (Note this Deer Creek entry.)

"As to native fruits, I have seen a berry sweet and nice growing on a bush much like the shad and tasting like it. There are plenty of white currants, also gooseberries and a bush and berry like red currant only more sweet. Chokecherries are yet green, also thorn apples (Crataegus sp.),
FOUR MEN REACH THE VALLEY

a kind of berry resembling the fire cherry. These are all the fruits we have seen except grapes way below the Platte."

"Independence Rock, Sweetwater River, Aug. 1, 1850.

"I have just come down from the top of the rock and have had a laborious climb. It is a vast rock ½ mile long and full of seams, cracks, gaps and crags, but one hard, rough granite rock standing singly and alone. On the bottom near the river there are thousands of names painted and engraved in every possible size, shape and color. I have read until I am weary but have found few of my acquaintances. A beautiful evening and a beautiful place. A company of 5 wagons is camped near us, and D. S. Baker left the place just as I came up. We did 22 miles today over sand and thro saleratus plains and ponds. I walked 3 or 4 miles to pay for running off after saleratus ponds. We stayed at Willow Springs,—poor feed and wood. Made 33 miles yesterday but horses are badly jaded today.

"The Sweetwater is a pretty stream, clear, swift and cold and is lined with good grass, just now cropped close. How the teams of 800 to 1000 wagons are to be sustained God only knows, altho he has sent an uncommon quantity of rain to make the feed grow.... I so dread the crossing of these plains twice again, but certainly I shall never set out in ox teams, 'tis killing....

"We have seen plenty of game, elk, buffalo, lion, sage hens, etc. Since yesterday we have passed over a hundred carcasses of oxen and horses. They lie and fairly dry up, as even wolves cannot subsist on these desolate plains. We have seen hundreds of gun barrels, log chains, staples and rings, harnesses, trace chains and the finest of wagons, buggies and carriages. We found 26 log chains in one pile. The ground where we are now encamped is literally strewn with irons, stoves, clothing, parts of harnesses, etc. Every pain seem to have been taken to destroy all property so that it will be of no use to anyone else. Even the finest of rifles
are broken and the barrels are smashed. The destruction of life and property has been terrible.

"This mountain air is different from any I ever breathed before. 'Tis sharp and it obliges me to put my hand to my face to guard my respiration, for it will make the nostrils twinge like hard, frosty weather even at midday in the hot sun. (Alkali dust?)

"(Written hurriedly with pencil) Sund. morning, 20 miles from Bridger, 135 miles from the Valley. All well and expect to be there in 4 or 5 days."

Thus ends what is apparently the last letter preserved that JEJ sent home. For some days after he kept a daily diary from which we shall quote excerpts. The 4 or 5 days so optimistically mentioned at the close of the letter lengthened into nearly two weeks.


"Aug. 4. Washed. Climbed the mountain to Summit Rock where I sat and wrote some verses . . . Boys had killed rabbits which I cooked for breakfast. Hot . . . had bath in the pleasant Sweetwater, wrote letters, shod horses, fixed wagons. Drove 15 miles, camp after dark. As we drove along our horses feet constantly clinked against irons. Had chicken and rabbits three times today.

"Aug. 5. Away early, drove 5 miles and the axletree of my carriage broke . . . stop and repair. Went fishing, no luck. Off at 3, encamped close to the river where there had been immense destruction of wagons and property. Plenty of currants, no game. Cooked bread and boiled our last ham which was nearly spoiled. Sat up late and sang songs."
“Aug. 6. Start about dawn, over high bluffs rough and rocky. Much game, antelope, elk, buffalo. Nice streams abound. Warm, with snow on mountains plain to be seen. Dug up a supposed cache and found it to be a grave.


“Aug. 8. Two of our men went out to hunt, to join us at Green River, which we reached at 10. Cool and rapid stream, saw currants large as cherries, found oscia (?), made kinni-kin-ic (some say dogwood, (Cornus sp.) to smoke, my last cigar gone. Went 3 miles down river, caught fish. Sat up late and smoked a lot of kinni-kin-ic.

“Aug. 9. Bros. Miller & Kelly went hunting, got nothing. Went down river 7 miles, then struck over the hills. I walked 5 miles. We reached Black’s Fork at 2. Rain, no fish, no feed. On 3 miles to pleasant little stream called Ham’s Fork. Large company near.


“Aug. 11. Arrived at Fort Bridger at 10. Large company encamped there. Nice mountain streams with some timber and plenty of shrub cedar in the neighborhood, road rough but plenty of grass and water along. Traveled 28 miles and encamped at the bottom of a deep, narrow valley where we found soda and sulphur springs. Slept on the ground . . . pleasant.
"Aug. 12. Left early . . . rough road to Bear River, 13 miles. On the way saw some fine cold springs, also sulphur, soda, tar and stone coal. Bear River is one of the most swift, clear, rocky and beautiful streams I ever saw. Caught no fish. Mr. Kincaid and Mr. Livingstone passed us here and Capt. Hyde took passage with them and left us alone. Country assumed an entirely different aspect west of Bear River. The land is rich and fertile and covered with green.


"Aug. 14. Late start, here we left Daniels . . . very rough roads. Found some berries and caught some trout. Much fatigued. Drove hard all day and encamped at night after getting sight of . . . ."

Here the daily notes come to an abrupt end, leaving us with that exasperating "to be continued in our next" feeling. Getting sight of WHAT? We hazard the guess that they were in sight, actually in sight, of their long sought goal, the mecca of their longing, the great, the beautiful, the Golden Valley!

There is a spot on Big Mountain above Emigration canyon, where for a short interval of travel on the old road there is a view of a portion of the Salt Lake Valley. Looking at the thing geographically, this could have happened. We note above that on Aug. 13, they arrived at "Weber ford." This could have been in the vicinity of the present town of Henefer. On the 14th they "drove hard all day" which could well have taken them up East canyon where they began the ascent of Big Mountain, reaching the point where the Valley was visible, then on a little farther to camp. But why the sudden break in the text? Here we can but conjecture that someone arrived in camp who had
come out to meet them. This was a common practice. Joel and Benjamin were in Utah and it is practically certain that one or both had come to welcome Joseph and his friends. Whoever came would camp with them, then accompany them to the city. With all the things they had to talk about, it is small wonder that writing should be pushed aside.
CHAPTER 15

THEY TARRY IN ZION

We regret that no writing, except poetry, has turned up regarding JEJ’s arrival and sojourn in the promised land. He remained there nearly two months, yet we know little of what he did. He had a host of friends to visit, many from the Kirtland-Nauvoo days, besides numbers whom he had “God-speeded” from Council Bluffs. We know that he accompanied Brigham Young and party to Ogden to lay out the city lots. Benjamin says JEJ’s visit was a time of great pleasure for him, and that they were together through all the holidays, reunions and dances. Joseph got a briefing on plural marriage protocol and doubtless told Brigham of his opinion of the possibilities at Deer Creek on the Platte.

We are told by BFJ, though not in the same words, that JEJ was all hopped up for a bear hunt when he reached the Valley. Quite a safari was organized for this jaunt, with a carriage, supply wagon and saddle horses. The carriage contained Joseph, Benjamin with two of his own wives and one of Joel’s. Others with the arms and camping equipment rode in the wagon or on horseback. The scene of the hunt was to be in the Oquirrh mountains, doubtless in Coon’s canyon. A crossing of the Jordan river was necessary and the party traveled southward for several miles to pick up a guide. Probably they intended to cross the river about 33rd South street. The unfriendly appearance of the stream threw a scare into them, but no one dared to “chicken out.” They bravely plunged in with the carriage, but the horses were soon beyond their depth. A small pandemonium ensued but while some struggled with the horses in the water, Nephi Johnson hitched a rope to one of the wheels to “hold it stiddy.” After the women were brought
to shore one by one on a saddle horse, all on the bank gave a heave ho! and everyone escaped. But, as the tale was told, "all the bear hunting fever was soaked or scared out of us." The expedition faced about and wended its drizzling way homeward.

At this time Joseph became a property owner in the Valley. He purchased a lot on the block where the then almost undreamed of railroad station was to be built, on Third West street between North and South Temple streets. Reference to this lot will be made later in this story. A lot in those days was much larger than present city lots. Apparently the Johnsons and their in-laws owned much of the land in the east half of this block, now all being used for railroad purposes.

Some thirty years ago we were shown a small ledger which had been found in a vault in the City and County building, among a mass of books and papers which had doubtless been placed there, from some other storage place, in 1893, when the building was first occupied. In the ledger was a list of property owners who had paid taxes in 1851. In the list was the name Joseph E. Johnson. Thus, at this writing, 1961, the Johnsons have paid taxes in Utah for 110 years. Joel and his family have kicked in three years longer, making 113 years of continuous yielding to the tax gatherers.

A FEW RHYMES AS THE VACATION ENDS

As the precious days of the vacation in the mountains began to draw to a close, Joseph felt rhymes bubbling up from the old fountain of verse. Some he wrote for the Deseret News. Here is one that was hastily written, but it was a part of the Valley interlude and so we print three of the six verses. It is called:
IN PRAISE OF THE VALLEY

Over a month had elapsed since this vale we descried
With its bright sunny peaks that rise in their pride
Where the fir tree, the pine and the white aspen grow
And their summits all summer are covered with snow.

The wonders you've wrought are all worthy of song,
You are free from injustice, oppression and wrong.
Your industry and skill drives want from your door,
And truly among you I see none that seem poor.

I go to the states, sweet vale, fare thee well!
And I hope ere another rich harvest shall tell
With my friends to return and dwell with you here
And twirl the old quill wheel for rhymes through the year.

Another poem is in much the same strain. For brevity
we cut its six verses to three.

FAIR VALE OF DESERET

Thy mountain peaks so wild and high
With cooling showers are often wet;
Their snow capped summits reach the sky
None wild and fair as Deseret.

Thy crystal streams are cool and pure,
I hear their rippling music yet.
With earth their fountains will endure,
Ye sparkling brooks of Deseret.

All dwell in peace in this dear vale,
With foes and fears no more beset;
No cries of want, nor poor to wail
Within thy borders, Deseret.
CHAPTER 16

THE MISSOURI BECKONS

So the pleasant hours stretched out into days and weeks and time ran out on our pilgrims. Now they must pull up their socks, grease their wagons and get going on the tedious “puckerchee” from the Mountain Mecca to the Mighty Mo. By the end of September plans were perfected, outfits assembled and they were all keyed for the take-off. They did not all leave together. John Brown, one of the first band of pioneers, took his place in the party, and with Orson Hyde joined JEJ, Miller and Kelley somewhere in the vicinity of Big Mountain, Emigration Canyon way. Their return route was the same as on their western trip, except that they traveled on the north side of the Platte.

To tell the story of the return passage of the plains, Joseph abandoned the letter-diary forms and told the whole tale in doggerel rhyme. It was written hastily, under snatched opportunities, and had no revision. Writing was done in the camp, sometimes on the wagon seat, or inside on the chuck box, often seated on the wagon tongue, made horizontal by an up-ended neckyoke, or close to the campfire for the sake of the light. Its merit, if you will, is novelty. Have you ever heard of anyone crossing the plains in doggerel verse? It is long and raggedly rhymed, but at least it is a change in narrative style. From thirty one verses we have picked at random twelve as a sample. It is captioned:

NOW WE’LL PASS O’ER HALF THE NATION, COUNCIL BLUFFS OUR DESTINATION

We left the Valley the last day of September
About two o’clock as near as I remember.
Five horses, two men and wagons quite light,
The day was serene, the sun shone warm and bright.
We raised a hill, and too, the last view of the city,
To leave such a Valley and dear friends, twas a pity
And travel o'er mountains, streams, deserts and sands
Mid storms, winds and snows and o'er cold, frozen lands,
However, our dear homes and near friends came to mind
And we thought us no more of storms, snow or wind,
And drove briskly along overjoyed that we'd started
For our homes that for many long days we'd been parted.

We camped at Brown's Creek, near the foot of a steep mountain
Twelve miles from the city, near a nice clear, cool fountain.
Here three men with another team joined us with our party,
We were all in good spirits, both jovial and hearty.
October the first, clouds overspread the sky,
We overtook one of our teams on the next mountain high.
But o! the sad toil to raise those steep places,
Streams of sweat mixed with dust ran down from our faces.
We passed down the mountain and met lots of teams,
Had hard work to pass them thro the narrow ravines,
We camped where a nice stream from the mountain came down,
There we supped with O. Hyde and Captain John Brown.

Upon Bear river's pleasant bank we made a halt for night
Found pine in plenty for fires which made pleasant light.
Today through accident a gun discharged but did no harm
Tho it made a deal of bustling round and gave a quick alarm.
This morning I on horseback rode to see the famed tar spring,
It is a very curious place and some tar to home I'll bring.
At noon we dined at Soda Springs; I bottled up some water
To carry home and treat my friends, my women and my daughter.
We ate at noon a melon large, the last one of the season,
Twas delicious, yes indeed, and what could be the reason?
We encamped for the night on a beautiful site
On Sweetwaters banks so delightful.
We found plenty of wood and the feed was real good,
But from the mountains the cold wind blew spiteful.
Here a man joined our train who had sought us in vain
Alone in our rear for a week.
My turn to watch came tonight in beautiful moonlight,
When weary for rest I did seek.
I made some pies here, they said it looked queer
Such luxuries away in the heather.
The morning was sunny, the teams were quite funny
With such glorious feed and fine weather.

Next day was rough land and the road was all sand,
We ten miles for our dinner did go,
A buffalo crossed the Platte and we toppled him pat,
One o'clock brought us cold wind and snow.
We dined on buffalo steak and nice buttered pancake
And we had a most glorious dinner.
The feed was so good and so handy the wood
We waited for the snow to get thinner.
We at length took the track with the wind at our back
And soon passed the lower Platte ferry
And went on ten miles over hollows and hills
And the new road was rough, o! yes, very!

Our next evening's port was forty six miles from the Fort,
'Twas quite late when our grub we did sup;
The weather and roads still are fine for our loads;
We have buffalo chips for a fire . . .
Next day on the sand we met a Sioux band,
But their hullabaloo did not mean fight,
They gave us some sass, but they allowed us to pass
And we chalked up a small bit of fright . . .
And today quite a train we saw very plain
On the opposite side of the river
But we could not quite see just what it could be,
White men and horses we could plainly "diskiver."

On Monday, as usual, the buffalo abound
Upon the plains and hills around.
All hands take guns to try their skill,
A calf to take or a cow to kill.
John Brown discharged the lucky round
That brought both calf and cow to ground.
It kept us busy most all day
To cut and stow the meat away.
I laid in ambush for a cow to show,
I snapped the gun but it wouldn't go!

At all events our pace was slow,
On such food horses would not go.
And here the Pawnee Indians, too
Came round, a starving, begging crew.
At night they'd come within our camp
And beg for grub, tho now grown scant.
Tuesday we reached the Platte once more
And soon we found a crossing o'er.

A Pawnee village was in sight
Near which we made our camp at night.
Next day we passed the Loup around,
We tried but no ford could be found.
We often tried and tried in vain,
No more could we the north side gain.
Bad luck enough be seen we had
No road at all, the ford was bad.
And O! the swamps, the mire, the swale,
Believe me, thereby hangs a tale.
And then our course was roundabout
As bluffs or river shut us out,
Sometimes we found among the bushes
Peavines, a little grass, and rushes,
Sometimes we cut the cottonwood,
The horses gnawed the bark for food.
At fort we learned our Kanesville chaps
Had left their homes and brought their traps,
They came to meet us up the Platte,
Sorry to say this all fell flat.
They became impatient at our delay
And started home one last fine day.
Our hearts are sad that this is so,
They yearned to slay the buffalo.
To reach the Loup gave us a lift,
We found it deep and running swift,
We tried to cross, but in the sand
Our teams the current could not stand.

The bottom fell from out their feet
Which much our calculations beat,
And oft we tried to cross the stream
And put on every inch of steam.
Horses would snort, would sink and pant,
The leadsman cry, “The bottom scant!”
Oft, oft to ford the quicksand tried
But never reached the other side.
The reason was, I think ’tis true
The bottom was out and we fell through!
We traveled down the river side
And oft to find a ford we tried.

With ditches, gullies, rough terrain
And our poor teams, how great the strain,
More swamps and bogs, more mire and sand
O’er sloughs and creeks and gopher land.
A raft we had to make, O drat!
With rope and cord and lariat
To haul it back and forth with traps.
It took us near all day to cross
Our wagons, gear and every hoss.
The ice ran briskly in the Platte,
But never mind, no stop for that!
(Ends abruptly.)

Here the chronicle in doggerel of crossing the plains in reverse comes to a sudden end. The double crossing of the Platte may appear puzzling to some. They were traveling east on the north side of the river, and when they reached the Loup, it was too deep to cross. Then they turned south, following down the Loup to its confluence with the Platte, crossed the Platte, swung around the mouth of the Loup on the south side, then recrossed the Platte to get on the north bank, which placed them on the east bank of the Loup. The Platte was very wide but shallow, while the Loup was narrow but deep.

There is nothing further until their arrival in Kanesville. After “looping the Loup” they passed on without adventure to Florence, whence they were ferried across to the Iowa side of the Missouri.
CHAPTER 17

BIG HURRAH AT KANESVILLE

At this double passage of the Platte and the Loup mouth, our Pilgrims were yet about 75 miles from the Kanesville ferry. Either JEJ abruptly stopped writing or a sheet or two are missing from the long saga. While there is a gap in their story from the Loup onward, their arrival in Kanesville was played up in grand style by the Frontier Guardian of December 11, 1850, from which we have abridged the following:

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT ORSON HYDE AND COMPANY

On Monday evening about 8 o'clock our favored guest and company arrived here in a covered wagon. They endeavored to proceed to their different homes, but . . . we espied this wagon at a distance and remarked, "There is a wagon from the plains!" We soon learned that President Hyde was at home. Mr. Joseph E. Johnson was caught about to enter his gate and Mr. Henry W. Miller, the "old pioneer," trying to get home, was hindered by friends, but he got away. Soon afterward cannons roared, guns fired and our town which minutes before was silent, teemed with men, women and children to welcome our long looked for and much respected friends and brethren.

At noon the Marshall, aides and an escort of mounted men were on the public square where citizens erected a Liberty Pole topped by the Stars and Stripes. (Then followed a speech by the President of the Day, who gave the names of the Marshall, his assistants, band leader, various committees, Speaker of the Day, reporter, High Council and Gentlemen in Waiting. The ladies of Kanesville, dressed in
white, were present with a beautiful banner, as were the Kanesville Male and Female Academy with banner, and the Working Men of Kanesville, also well bannered, followed by gentlemen carrying implements of their various trades. Escorts, citizens, carriages.)

At 2 o'clock the procession moved down Hyde street to Race street, with the St. Louis Brass Band at their head, playing favorite tunes until they arrived at Elder Hyde's residence. Pres. Hyde was waited upon and conveyed to a carriage drawn by four beautiful white steeds. Our guest being seated five guns were fired from "Old Lazarus" in salute. The procession marched to Mr. Henry W. Miller's where he and his family were waited on to the carriage and the usual honors given. The company proceeded up Main street to Mr. Joseph E. Johnson's, at which place he and his family were waited on to the carriage. . . . All then moved forward to the stand where the guests were seated.

John Gooch, Jr. called the multitude to order and the banner was brought forward. Mr. D. Candland, in an appropriate speech, presented the banner to Bro. Hyde as a mark of respect from the ladies of Kanesville. Elder Hyde tendered thanks to the ladies and praised them for their virtues and accomplishments "in the midst of trials and troubles unnumbered." He made other edifying and instructive remarks, then took his seat amid deafening applause.

Brothers Miller, Johnson and Brown each made remarks suitable to the occasion, then the band played . . . after which the procession re-formed and escorted the guests to their homes amid the roaring of cannon, loud cheers and to the satisfaction of all. . . . The day will be long remembered by the citizens of Kanesville, Pottawattamie and surrounding counties.

Daniel Mackintosh, reporter.
Thus, in a small blaze of glory the curtain falls on Joseph’s first foray into the really rugged west. Of course the lion of the celebration was Apostle Orson Hyde, but Henry Miller was the first settler and JEJ was close on his heels as storekeeper, business man and what we now call “columnist” of the Frontier Guardian and both rode high in the esteem of the people.

OTHER HONORS FOR THE TRAVELERS

Shortly after the arrival welcome at Kanesville, another big time was had at Ferryville, a little up river about opposite Florence. This was reported in the Frontier Guardian under the heading:

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT HYDE
AT FERRYVILLE

...a small company left Kanesville Friday... consisting of Pres. Orson Hyde, John Brown, H. W. Miller, Joseph E. Johnson and Joseph Kelley, who have lately returned from the Valley... proceeded to Ferryville... to the center of the village, where was unfurled a beautiful flag which was inscribed, “Truth and Liberty. We Welcome Home.” Amid firing of cannon and shouts the company was received.

(Then followed: Band music... tasteful banner... escorted to tables... good eats... Pres. Hyde asks blessing... everybody stuffed... lovely song by chorus of ladies dressed in white... in evening all travelers made little talks... told stories of Salt Lake, buffalos, mountains, etc. ... fine time everybody happy. Next morning all were awakened by an extra loud report of a cannon. This firing blew up a big gun made from the metal of Mulholland’s bogus (counterfeiting) press, part of which was found buried in the sand near Ferryville. The explosion caused much
excitement but no one was injured. Bro. Hyde expressed gratification at the final destruction of this "infernal machine."

(Next morning, excellent breakfast, admirable ladies . . . hospitable feeling . . . praise for the band . . . day long to be remembered . . . arrived at Kanesville at 11, giving three cheers for Uncle Sam for his manifest friendship for the outcast Mormons by giving them a territorial government, and three cheers for Utah and her officers. Big day!)

What a lot of fun they had back there with their sashes and badges, their banners, booming cannon, banquets and marching! And the ladies, bless 'em, with their bright smiles and white dresses, marching three abreast! Much of their fun was outdoors. They had sunshine and laughter, bantering, hurrahing, martial music and skylarking, often a good lunch with a hilarious dance afterward. They went home in a glow of pleasure, to sleep soundly and next day have so much to talk about. But after all, their pleasures were primitive. They lacked our great advantages. Beside the good things of Radio and Television, they were denied the boon of our horror films, the sex movies, the dirty magazines and the raucous jungle jangle that goes by the fraudulent name of "music" which it is our privilege to hear and see.
CHAPTER 18

JOHN BROWN OFFICIATES

When the tumult and the shouting died and the dust of the welcome home settled, Joseph set about the consummation of one of the prime purposes of his trip to the Valley. This was entrance into the covenant of celestial marriage, more bluntly, polygamy, or more softly, plural marriage. His choice of a partner was Hannah Maria Goddard, who has been mentioned earlier in this narrative.

Two of Hannah’s grandchildren, who heard it from their grandmothers lips corroborate our traditional belief that at this time she was the plural wife of a prominent man who held a high position later in the Church. This man’s wife was a Goddard and when he was advised to take another wife, she persuaded Hannah to be sealed to him, although she was still in her early teens. After the ceremony she became frightened at the thought of marriage and ran home to her mother. We are confident that they never lived together, and later she turned up at Montrose and Bonaparte where she became attached to the Johnson household. This is where she and JEJ first met. We have understood that she was avoiding the man to whom she had been sealed, and possibly even her parents, which may explain why she lived so long with the Johnsons at these places and later at Kanesville.

When Joseph became convinced that he should take another wife, he requested the man to divorce Hannah, since she did not desire to be his wife. The man was, as someone described him, “a bit canny,” and JEJ had to make concessions, but after considerable negotiation a Church divorce was granted and Hannah was free to marry the man she really loved.
Joseph was uncertain how to proceed in this new relationship. He was not sure that the local officials of the Church had authority to officiate in the rite, though he knew that such unions would be Church marriages only and were not legal under the laws of the various states. Thus no license could be obtained from the civil agencies. The principle was new, and with the Church on the move for so long, no well understood protocol had been established. Due to the fluidity of the membership and their scattered condition no special formulas had evolved and action in this field was largely a matter of the time, the place and the individual. To Joseph's mind there was a casualness about it that made him uneasy. He wondered if a marriage performed by one of the brethren (most of the men were elders) without sanction from a higher source, would be ecclesiastically binding. After his conference with Brigham Young in the Valley, he did not make a statement but it was established in his mind that an apostle could unite people in this relation, or he could delegate the power to a member of a lesser echelon of the priesthood.

With Apostle Orson Hyde and his three companions on the return journey to Kanesville was Elder John Brown, who was one of the first band of Utah pioneers. He was prominent in the exploration of the Valley and surrounding country. At this time he was on his way to serve as a missionary to the southern states. He was delegated by Bro. Hyde to tie the nuptial knot for Joseph and Hannah, which he did some time before the 14 of December, 1850, at Kanesville. This fact is attested by John Brown in a letter to Joseph in 1880. Apparently some need had arisen for the date of the marriage, or for some evidence of it, and JEJ had requested a statement of the fact from Elder Brown. This letter has been preserved and it reads as follows:
"Pleasant Grove, (Utah)  
Dec. 27, 1880

"Jos. E. Johnson

Dear Brother

"Yours of the 20th instant is at hand and contents noted. I remember very distinctly the marriage you speak of. It occurred early in the winter of 1850, in the upper room of your house in Kanesville or Council Bluffs. Yourself and the lady, I do not remember her name, (but I suppose it to be the name you mention) being the contracting parties. Elder Orson Hyde asked me to attend and officiate, he prompting me as I did not remember all of the sealing ceremony. He told me it was by Brigham Young's sanction and counsel. I remember very distinctly the reasons that Elder Hyde gave me for asking me to officiate on that occasion. It occurred before the 14th of December. On that day I started to the southern states and did not return until spring.

"Hoping this answers your purpose, I remain, your brother in the gospel, John Brown."

How interesting it would have been to many of us if Elder Brown had told us what Bro. Hyde's reasons were for not officiating in person. They were doubtless of slight importance, yet it leaves us curious.

This joining in celestial marriage, as well as Joseph's first and third marriages, was made of lasting record in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City, Nov. 17, 1861, soon after his arrival in the Valley as a permanent resident.

This, then, is a brief account of JEJ's entrance into the ranks of honest-to-goodness Mormons. Later he was to find that this action would hamper his movements to some extent, impede his growth and expansion in business affairs and prevent him from advancing in positions of public pre-
ferment. Harriet and Hannah soon lived separately, each in her own home. They had been good friends before the marriage; they remained the same all their days. As the years rolled on they lived variously in Council Bluffs, Ellisdale and Crescent City, always near one another until the family reached Southern Utah.
CHAPTER 19

A GIRL NAMED MARTHA

Some time before Joseph left Kanesville for the Valley, a girl named Martha Spence had been staying at his home. We do not know how she happened to be there; all we have is that she came from Rochester, N.Y., and was an ardent convert to the Church. She was anxious to join the body of the Saints in the mountains. She became very friendly with Harriet and Hannah, and incidentally with Joseph. Finally she accepted an opportunity to journey to Salt Lake with the Joseph L. Heywood company, which took off a little in advance of JEJ and his three companions. Heywood was the man who, with Almon W. Babbitt, negotiated and signed the articles of capitulation at Nauvoo.

Mention was made by Joseph early in the story of the plains trip of catching up with the Heywood train and of his having seen and talked with Martha. It is quite likely that he met her several times during the long trip, and perhaps traveled along with the Heywoods some of the time. In the covered wagon days there was much catching up, "coming up" they called it, falling behind, catching up and so on until the rolling wheels were stillled.

Martha kept a diary of this journey, and part of it has been quoted by Andrew Karl Larson in his admirable book, "The Red Hills of November" (1957). At the time envisaged she was the first teacher of the Washington, Utah, school. The author is "reading" Martha's thoughts, as indicated by her diary, as she sits in reverie at her desk. Her mind dwells on the boorishness of the driver of Frank Heywood's wagon, beside whom she sat day after day. She remembers his abysmal drabness from a standpoint of companionship, and the author goes on thus:

"Martha thought of Joseph E. Johnson and the pleasure she had felt whenever he chanced to exchange a few
words with her. Intellectually, Brother Johnson was a kindred spirit with her, a lover of the beautiful in the world which she cherished. He talked so easily of books and plays and pictures, and listened so courteously to her comments. And then, when he spoke of having made arrangements for her to live with his relatives in the Valley, her heart confided to her diary, "How kind, how free hearted, how confiding his friendship, how congenial his spirit! He is a noble soul and I feel warmly interested in his welfare, and why not? I feel I owe him a debt of gratitude for his kindness to one when a stranger.

"His kindness opened up a new prospect which she welcomed. Joseph Johnson was already married, but Martha Spence had already accepted the principle of plural marriage, and since her age precluded the probability of marriage on any other basis, she was entirely willing to assume its obligations. But despite Martha's hopes, Brother Johnson's attentions were resting on a purely platonic basis. He never asked Martha to marry him."

Lack-a-day! In spite of Martha's intelligence and charm this wished for union was not to be, one strong reason being that at the moment he was on his way to learn how to marry another girl as wife number two. And, as fate would have it, about this time, a young English girl was walking about Trafalgar Square and over Waterloo Bridge in London, soon to depart for America, whom destiny had earmarked for spouse number three.

However, Martha became the wife of a very good man, none other than Joseph S. Heywood, who captained the train that brought her to Zion. Unfortunately, her husband died early in their life story, and she was left to rear two children, one of whom died in childhood. She taught school in many places, was highly regarded everywhere and remained a staunch Latter-day saint. That she retained a warm spot in her heart for JEJ and family is attested by the letter she wrote to him, dated April 12, 1857. Some excerpts follow:
"The opportunity of sending a few lines to you by your
dear sister Julia prompts me to prepare them. To com-
mence, I would say that the remembrance of your kindnesses
at a time when you had an opportunity of administering,
and I a need of receiving them has been indelibly impressed
on my mind. I am only one of many who have had the same
story to tell, and if our desires and good wishes in your be-
half would avail, you would have been here in Zion long
before this. Who can think of you, speak of you or write
you but this feeling is uppermost?...

"Seven years ago ... I was in your house and in great
anxiety and trouble of mind regarding my chance or oppor-
tunity of coming to these valleys. ... Now, with the experi-
ence I have gained in the kingdom of God, I can say that
all who desire purity of life ... ought to be here. This is
the place. ... And does not Joseph E. Johnson, where he is
in the midst of temptations, sigh to be in the vales of pur-
ity. ... Does he not long to stand in the presence of the
greatest men that now lives on earth? Brigham Young, who
loves Joseph and desires to do him all the good that lies in
his power, and that is more than any other has. But a few
days ago he said he wanted you to come on and it would
be a blessing to you, and much more that I cannot now
repeat. ..."  

"Bro. Brigham again says COME, all your relatives
say, COME, all your acquaintances say, COME! And I say
in the fullness of my heart from the debt of gratitude that
I owe you, COME TO ZION; help to rear her temple and
help to build up the Kingdom. ..." (Then follow six four
line verses in religious strain, with the refrain, "COME"
repeated.) A closing note says, "A few lines in rhyme. I
thought it would remind you of past times, but the senti-
ment is all the same, which is, COME!"

"Martha S. Heywood."
CHAPTER 20

RETURN TO KANESVILLE

With Joseph's long absence on his trek to the Valley, one wonders how his various business interests were maintained without running into trouble. Who attended to all the details of the "Emporium," who rolled the pills in the drug store, who dished out the ice cream and peddled the jelly beans in the "refreshment saloon," who baked all that "hard bread" that was sold to the emigrants? It seems that considerable credit attaches to William D. Johnson, JEJ's stout young brother. He it was who wrote letters to the chief to keep him informed on how affairs prospered, and who did battle with creditors and stock shortages which inevitably arose when the boss was away. Joseph trusted William implicitly and made him his right hand man in general. This trust rested on a good foundation, and William remained a loyal man throughout their association.

Brother George assisted, and possibly he was the pill roller, since he later practiced as a country doctor in Utah. Several of JEJ's friends acted as adviser to the two young men, and it is almost certain that it was Jane, Williams wife, who operated the ovens in the bakery. Soon after Joseph's return, George began to prepare for the big move to the mountains. His wagon wheels jarred the dust of Kanesville (it was not yet Council Bluffs) from their fel­loes in the spring of 1851. His presence in the Valley later raised the tally of Johnson brothers in Zion to three.

Some years after this, after Joseph took over the Council Bluffs Bugle, and became involved in various other activities, he turned the Bluffs stores over to William, who, by 1856 was advertising in the Bugle under his own name. Later he moved his store to Florence, on the opposite shore of the Mighty Mo.
It is now the early part of 1851; Joseph has returned from the Valley and has just got his marriage to Hannah safely tucked under the wing of the Church. Now he can resume the old load of business cares and at the same time continue to write special articles for the Frontier Guardian, as well as his regular column devoted to entertainment. Fortunately for Joseph, the cross word puzzle had not yet been spawned upon humanity, but he had quite a number of gags and gadgets and managed to build up a following who endeavored to figure out the many brain teasers he dreamed up.

A certain prestige attached to JEJ after his trip to the Rockies, and he wrote a number of articles describing for the constant stream of emigrants the things they would see and do as their wagons lurched westward. He wrote also for the Emigrants Guide, and became something of an authority on what to take and what to leave behind. But one of his favorite occupations was writing articles describing and praising the country around the Kanesville area. These were first printed in the Guardian and later in its successor, the Bugle. He was an early day proponent of publicity, a primitive chamber of commerce secretary on his own. One lengthy story of Kanesville and vicinity we would like to print in full, since it is descriptive of the whole area. Portions of it follow:

KANESVILLE AND WESTERN IOWA

JEJ in Council Bluffs Bugle

"Almost every mail that comes brings us letters of inquiry respecting the country here, the facilities, trade, conveniences for outfitting for California and Oregon, together with interrogations..."

"Some five years ago, a large emigrating company of Mormons from Nauvoo and adjacent country, arrived here
On their way to the west. On their route they established and left a considerable colony at Garden Grove, and another at Pisgah. Arriving too late to proceed across the plains, a large proportion of the company crossed the Missouri river to the Indian country and built a temporary place of some 500 houses, where they remained over winter. In the spring part of the mass of emigrants went on their way westward, the remainder settling and opening farms in the vicinity. From that time the Council Bluff country has become noted for the richness and fertility of its soil, for the sublimity of its scenery, for its facilities for settling, merchandising, stock growing... and for its great local position at the mouth of the Platte, making it the last great Outfitting Depot on the California, Utah and Oregon thoroughfares.

"Four years ago one or two stores were established on the site where Kanesville now stands, which was then called "Miller's Hollow," from the fact that Henry W. Miller first opened a large farm at the mouth of the hollow. The next spring a large emigration took the "Mormon Trail" through Iowa on their way to California and made their outfit here. The report of these emigrants to their friends behind brought multitudes of others through this place in '50, established beyond a doubt the advantages of this route, continuing on the north side of the Platte, in regard to health and good natural locations for roads, and the superior facilities for outfitting here.

"Instead of the one or two cabin stores, there are now near, or quite, 20 mercantile houses and a number doing wholesale business with heavy capitals. Instead of a little cluster of cabins that were here in 1849, a respectable town of some 1,000 inhabitants, stretching its wings through the neighboring dales and over the hills may be seen. Four regular ferries are in constant operation... one at "Trader's Point," eight miles below, one at "Winter Quarters," ten miles above, with two others in intermediate distance."
"Kanesville is situated in the mouth of a large hollow or valley, through which meanders a clear, cool stream called Indian Creek, which is made up of various springs gushing from the hillsides, which, though high and lofty, are still fertile and covered with luxuriant undergrowth, herbs, grass or good timber. Directly west... the far famed Missouri, the river of rivers, the longest... the most difficult of navigation, flows in silent majesty towards the sea. ... A mile from town may be seen the silvery surface of a clear, cool lake surrounded by prairie and timber.

"Adjacent to the river on both sides... cottonwood and other timber... loom up, showing through the interstices of their verdant boughs rich openings and lawns. Back from these valuable bottoms a few miles the country is varied, with high bluffs, rich valleys and rolling prairies... Emigrants from the east to California and Oregon will probably find it a better route up the Des Moines river to Fort Des Moines. They will have a beautiful road 150 miles through Indian Town to this place. Some come by way of Garden Grove and Pisgah but we think the northern route preferable. Anything that an emigrant needs in making an outfit for the plains may be obtained here and at lower prices than if transported, in most cases. Wagons ready for hitching can be had at the shops for from $50 to $75. Oxen generally range from $40 to $75, horses and mules (good) from $60 to $80, cows $12 to $20. Corn is now 30c per bushel, flour superfine, $6, sugar $7 to $9.

"... Persons unaccustomed to travel across the plains will often make wide mistakes on many of their calculations. For instance, their wagons are most invariably too heavy, lumbersome and inconvenient. They should be made very light, with a capacious, light box, well ironed, with projections and a good rubber cloth, or two covers of drilling, white outside (an anti conducting color for heat) and a blue inside, to protect and shade the eyes, with preparations for close fastenings for the ends to protect from storms and
mosquitoes ... General information as to the required and indispensible articles can be learned here from persons who have crossed the plains repeatedly, viz: the kind and quantity of medicines and acids for man and beast; the varieties and amount of provisions; the kind of weapons and tools necessary for game, protection and convenience; the presents and articles necessary for Indian traffic; the articles necessary for cooking, etc."

The above is merely a sampling of one of his columns. The real chamber of commerce spread we have passed over. With all the play up of many rivers, with their marvelous mill and factory sites, the terrific agricultural opportunities, the great future of this "crossroads of the west" and the fortunes to be made, one sees that JEJ was an early practitioner of community ballyhoo. A great many people in the United States learned about the boundless west from him.

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MAN

Another means of spreading the story of the Western frontier which JEJ adopted was the answering of letters from inquirers, both in the Bugle and by personal missives. Naturally the queries were largely along the same lines, but in various forms they were answered many times. One letter which arrived when he was in a whimsical mood was answered in a jocular vein. We have selected a number of the queries to print as in spite of the "kidding" the questions are actually answered. This column is captioned:

OUR COUNTRY

"We are in regular receipt of letters of inquiry in regard to our country. But one from a Milwaukee man rather takes us. The writer wants a dollar's worth of foolscap written over without even sending stamps to prepay post-
age,—presuming that our anxiety to secure settlers would be sufficient incentive to give the desired information. He makes over fifty interrogations which we have much condensed and make answers full as we are paid. (Note: JEJ cut down to 24 queries, we reduce this to ten.)

"Which is the quickest, best and cheapest way of getting to your place?

"Get some of your editors to blow you up, then be sure and light down here. Otherwise take railroad to Iowa City, and stage to this place, five days drive. Or take boat at St. Louis, pay $20 fare and $1.25 per hundred for freight and come up in ten days.

"How often do boats make trips to your place?

"As often as they find it more profitable than to go anywhere else, averaging perhaps once a week through spring and summer.

"How high do boats go above your place?

"When they get blown up, some portions go a hundred feet or more above, but when there is no obstruction, boats go up to the Yellowstone, many miles north.

"Have you rock, and of what kind?

"Our pockets at present are almost destitute of rock, but neighbors seem better off and are generally "flush" though occasionally some get "a little tight." As for stone, we have quarries of lime close to city.

"What is the material and character of your buildings?

"Our buildings are utterly devoid of character, except of a bad kind. They contain bedbugs, fleas, cats, dogs and small children, generally in great abundance. There are exceptions, however, as we have many good houses built of brick and frame. Log cabins are getting out of date.
"What can farms and wild lands in your vicinity and lots in the city be bought for?

"Cash—cash down and nothing else, at a good price. Say for farms with timber, 6 to 10 miles out, from $6 to $10 per acre. Wild lands, so wild you can scarcely manage them for the luxuriousness of the vegetation, about $5 per acre. Lots in the city, 60 x 120, from $100 to $1,000 each.

"What is the population, its character and of what is it composed?

"The population is the number of inhabitants. Just now it is about 3,000 human beings. As to the character of our population, if you believe all your hear, we are fresh out of any kind of character except an awfully bad one.

"How is the navigation of the Missouri river?

"By steamboats, flats, scows, barges, broadhorns, fur-boats, ferries, yawls, skiffs, sawyers, cottonwood snags and terrapins; late in the summer and fall the largest of these crafts can’t swim on account of immense bodies of sand anchored out in the stream, but in good stages of water all sorts, including geese, ducks and swan go it with a rush.

"How is the health of the city and country?

"Pretty well, thank you. How are you? We have the greatest kind of health here, never sick unless we feel bad, and that is seldom. In the country the doctors have hung up their pill bags and gone to farming. Any one with a sick conscience had better stay away, however, as all rogues are strung up as fast as they come here.

"Is that a desirable country and a good place for residence?

"Yes, a first rate place to gouge and be gouged, as there are plenty of greenhorns and sharpers, one to be fleeced, the other to fleece. 'Tis a first rate place to get into a scrape
by meddling with other folk's business and also a good healthy, pleasant country, where industry and perseverance and attention to your business will soon make the poorest rich. Come and try it."

Occasionally the Bugle editor received a little instruction from a brother scribe. Here is a brief lecture from one who took JEJ's joking seriously:

"The Western Bugle, published at Council Bluffs, Iowa, tells a rather tough fish story about a "little fishing excursion" on one of the sloughs in the neighborhood. In one draw of the seine they hauled up three or four acres of catfish, bass, pike, sunfish, etc., got four wagon loads and let the other nine tenths go. The Bugle thinks this is sport. Try a hook and line, man!"
INJUN JOE AND HIS WILD WEST SHOW

Who was the father of the Wild West Indian Show? No, it was not “Buffalo Bill” Cody! Thirty years before Cody made his presentation, Joseph Ellis Johnson led the group of white men who plucked a band of wily Omahas from their prairie haunts, pepped up their dancing, raised the tom-tom beat, daubed them with war paint, dressed them all in Chief’s regalia and toured the major and minor cities of the Atlantic coast to edify the inhabitants thereof.

This venture wound up in the national capital, where a special show was given for the president of the United States, and many interviews were held with the governmental somebodies of the period. We cannot say whether this enterprise was the first of its kind but we are certain that it would rank among the very earliest. The purpose of this Indian mission to Washington was ultimately accomplished although the pace was slow and tedious. Joseph was shown to be not only a pioneer showman but a friend and benefactor of the ill used Omaha Indians.

Almost from the beginning of his life in the Missouri river country, JEJ was a storekeeper, and as such he was thrown into contact with many of the red brethren. To them the white man’s store with its wealth of wonders was a paradise, an Aladdin’s cave of marvels to which they sometimes flocked in such numbers as to become a nuisance. Joseph became familiar with their problems, lent a sympathetic ear to their laments and became more than casually interested in their troubles. He was fully aware that the redman was getting much the worst of it through the sudden great influx of whites who were passing onto and through his lands. The unbelievable number of wagons which poured in five streams over the same number of roads were
the cause of the great destruction of what he considered his own property. The buffalo and other major game was decimated, his grazing lands were being rapidly depleted and alarming quantities of already scarce timber were being consumed by the white "invaders."

On many nights during the pilgrimage to the Valley, these things were doubtless discussed around the camp fires. Joseph became imbued with the idea of doing something to give the Indians a better break. Henry W. Miller became a willing disciple and it is likely that Elder Hyde gave them encouragement although he did not figure in subsequent events. Soon after the return to Kanesville Joseph and Henry began stirring the matter up and soon enlisted the aid of Francis J. Wheeling, Martin L. Benson, David Candland and a few others who are not listed in the notes we have. The Omaha tribe was anxious to send a delegation to Washington and took kindly to the idea of being sponsored by Joseph and his associates. In the summer of 1851 they held a big pow wow during which the plan of sending an "embassy" was ratified. The Omahas probably had some money in their tribal chest, but when the sponsors totaled up their resources, there was not enough to underwrite the transportation and maintenance of the sizeable delegation the redmen wished to send. It was then determined to work up an exhibition of Indian dancing, singing, attire, weapons, customs and practices, the proceeds of which might defray a part of the expenses and perhaps show a little profit. By September they had assembled teams and wagons for transportation to a railroad and had rehearsed their performers to a point where they could produce some interesting entertainment. The wagon feature may seem old, but this was the west of 1851 and the nearest railhead was probably Cleveland, Ohio.

There is no written story of this rather unusual enterprise; we can discern its outlines only by piecing together clues found in letters, brief diaries, newspaper clippings
and telegrams (magnetic telegraph). Conjecture, supported by these clues, has to cover some situations. For instance, a letter from F. J. Wheeling from Indian Town seems to apprise us of the fact that it was his job to line up and "herd" the Indian personnel. The letter reads:

"Indian Town, Sept. 28, 1851

J. E. Johnson, Esq.

Dear Sir:

"We are all well. I am in hopes you have everything requisite for our journey. I have written for a lodge and some ponies (?) to pack it up. If its possible that Soucie (Louis San Scouci, interpreter) can't come, get Henry Fontnell (Henry Fontenelle), and if Soucie thinks it best to have Henry in case of sickness bring him along. You want some saleratus, you want coffee 20 pounds. Be sure and give Soucie any encouragement you can. Hurry, my friends. Be as speedy as possible. I presume that this will meet you on the road. You can have your order filled and sent by stage on Monday.

Your friend,

F. J. Wheeler."

Well! well! If they needed only soda bicarb and coffee they must have been pretty well lined up for the initial stage of the "jorney" as Francis spelled it.

We believe this Fontenelle to be either a brother or son of the noted chief of the Omahas, Logan Fontenelle, who was half French. Logan's father was a refugee nobleman who left Louisiana at the time of the French Revolution and married a woman of the Omaha tribe. He became chief and was influential in keeping peace between the white men and his people. The name Fontenelle is well known in the River country. The Fontenelle branch of the Church is a lively organization near Omaha.
We find no later mention of Henry, so he may not have gone along, although the company divided into two sections and it would seem that an interpreter would have been needed for each. San Souci was the lingual go between when the delegation pow vowed with the President and the Indian Commissioner in Washington.

From an old newspaper clipping and from an advertising poster we learn the names of most of the Indians. Perhaps the list is complete, since we never learned the exact number of the party.

Head Chief MUN-CHA-ON-A-BA, or Two Bears
War Chief GI-HE-GA, or Great Feaster
Orator THA-THAUGH, or White Buffalo
Medicine Man WASH-COM-A-NEY, or Great Traveler
Fire Chief WA-NE-TA-WA-HA,

AL-GO-HOM-ONY, or The Life Guard
SHA-DO-ME-NE, or The Tireless Man
A-DA-MIN-GA, or The Fearless Warrior
TA-DA-NIG-AUGH,
SHA-DO-MAU-NA,

Squaws PA-COO-SA,
MEE-CHEE-NOO-KEE,
TA-SON-DA-BEE
Saun-SA-SEE,

or Two Bears or Great Feaster or White Buffalo or Great Traveler or Great Master of all animals or The Life Guard or The Tireless Man or The Fearless Warrior or Mountain Bear or One who Dies for a Friend or The White Swan or Mountain Dove or Flower of the Plain or The Interpreter

THE WILD WEST MOVES EASTWARD

Details of the barnstorming trip of the wild men across Iowa are lacking. Their route lay almost directly east of
Muscatine, Iowa, on the Mississippi river, where Joseph’s first known letter was written. Doubtless they camped at night on the prairie where there was free feed for the horses, unless they happened to be giving a show in one of the few towns along the way.

The salutation on the letter mentioned is directed to “Harriet Johnson, Hannah (dash) and Mary.” The dash indicates that he is being canny in not writing anything that might become an acknowledgment of his new state of “plurality.” He tells them that he has stayed at the camp alone in order to be able to write to them. Says he has written all the news to William, which probably means that he has told about the caravan’s passage across Iowa in that letter. There are a few crumbs of information. He wrote: “I had a hard time when all were sick, Indians and all. I then was teamster, physician, cook, nurse, commissary and everything else. . . . Well, here they come back to report, favorably . . . took about $30 tonight. Not sure whether we will stay here tomorrow. . . . I suppose I am to go ahead to Davenport and Rock Island. . . . I may get on a boat . . . or a stage. Remember to take care of Mother (Julia) and take her all sorts of necessities. Kiss all the babies and pretty gals for me. . . . This in haste from your warmest friend and companion,

J. E. Johnson.”

There is nothing further on the drag across Iowa and Illinois except that we learn from a news clipping that “the delegation crossed the Mississippi at Rock Island.” JEJ had gone ahead and arranged for the ferrying. This put them on the Illinois shore, and from then on it was a long drive northeastward to Chicago. No record was found of how many places they stopped to give exhibitions. The first letter from the rapidly growing city is dated Nov. 2, 1851 and is addressed to the family. Here it is with omissions:
"I received very joyfully a letter last evening from you, first written by Harriet and a line from H. . . . I hope to get more (letters) before I leave here, which may be a week or ten days, can't tell. Prospects look flattering, but winter is close on and I dread the cold away from home. . . . I have written to mother. . . . I was down to the lake shore (Michigan) and beheld the dancing and sparkling waves dash high upon the shore, the misty and foaming spray sprinkling with autumnal cooling waters those who chanced to come within its reach. How it reminded me of my childhood when oft I have strayed with my brothers and mates upon the sandy beach of one of this line of lakes (Erie) and at some unlucky moment when too long remaining to pick up a desired pebble, or shell, have been overtaken by a huge wave and dumped hard on the shore. . . . I hope you have received the letters and papers I have sent from the places where we stopped. . . . We have had the Chippewa band here this afternoon to see us. It is an old chief and his two sons who are exhibiting all around the country. We gave him a dance and sing which took him and the rest of the company.

"I send inclosed some of the new three cent pieces,—one is for Mary. I also send one of the daily papers, where you will see a notice of our Indians. It costs us a great deal to get along with our big family, and only for that we could make a fortune (!). I sometimes think of running away home, but finally I will not leave until I have proved one way or another and become satisfied. . . . I want to learn all about the press and who is going to edit the paper, and whether A.W.B. (Babbitt) wants me to take it. . . . Tell William an advertisement should be put in the paper for those soldier claims. Copy the pension one. . . . I want that saleratus (which he picked up in what was later Wyoming), that specimen of rock and other curiosities, buffalo horns, the lariats, some pipes, a lot of moccasins, various kinds will do. Send to N.Y. if any way is practicable. . . ."
The mention of the Chippewa chief and his sons indicates that there were others in the field of redskin showmanship, but the Chippewa outfit was only a three man band. We are taken by that word “took,” which probably means that the Omahas’ dance and sing routine made the old chief think, “Gosh, I wish I had thought of that.” The reference to the press and Almon Babbitt not only fixes the ownership of the Bugle setup at that time, but foreshadows Joseph’s debut into the newspaper world as an editor rather than a contributor.

Joseph puts on an optimistic front in the above letter to the home folks, but a letter marked “Confidential,” dated five days later, addressed to his brother William, permits a glimpse of a skeleton in the closet. It reads:

“Chicago, Nov. 7, 1851.

“Dear Brother:

“I scratch you a hasty note to inform you that we have made arrangements to start on this evening. We have sold our horses for about half what they cost us. Harnesses and wagons fetch nothing. Wagons would bring about $10, harnesses $4 or $5, but we think now of shipping them home. I tell you we have a mighty hard time here and have not near paid expenses, but we have learned a few lessons that will do us good. We all go on from here. They are the most devilish lot of sharpers here I ever saw... you may expect to hear from me again soon. Good bye, J. E.”

Naturally the Chicago market for horses and overland travel equipment would be much weaker than that of Council Bluffs, where there was still a scramble to get to California, Oregon and Utah. Also, the “devilish sharpers” would have them in a cleft stick. Since they were about to travel by stage coach they would have to sell cheap or give the stuff away. There is no further mention of the har-
nesses and wagons, so we shall never know what happened to them.

After leaving Chicago, the next stop was Cleveland, Ohio. A letter from there is interesting because it tells of a visit to Kirtland and a meeting with some of the old friends of a dozen years before. It begins:

“My dears:

“We are here. Came in last night, exhibited and had no luck. Weather awful. Rained like blazes.

“I stayed at Mrs. Bond’s in Kirtland night before last. Had a good visit and found many friends very kind and glad to see me. I took the R.R. from Cleveland to Mentor and walked in. Next morning Hester Johnson (no relation) took me over (back to Mentor) in the carriage. (Gives names of a number of friends visited) I shall write mother shortly and give the particulars. Tell Mrs. Hyde and Luke, that their brother and sister, as well as their friends, send them best respects. . . . I am outrageously disappointed at getting no news from home. . . . I fear I shall not see David and Susan . . . cannot get time to go and see them but have written for them to come here and see the Diorama of the Creation and Deluge . . . also group of statuary representing the Last Supper . . . splendid . . . interesting. I start in a day or two for Rochester. I don’t intend to write to you again until I get a hatful of mail from home . . . have books to send you. Today was Thanksgiving, no great stir. Love to all, Joseph E."

There is no date to this letter but we judge it was early in December. Joseph’s caption of his poem, “The Graves of my Kindred,” gives December 1851 as the date it was written. This indicates that the visit to the graves and the poem were the result of the stopover at Kirtland. The mention of Thanksgiving shows that the day was fairly
well recognized, although it was not officially adopted until 12 years later. Mentor is the town where David and Esther Lebaron and Ezekiel lived about 1838. It is three miles from Kirtland, a pleasant walk, provided there was no December blizzard! An interesting thing about this letter is that an unused page bore a poem written by JEJ titled, "The Dreamer." Later he revised it and it was published in "Jottings by the Way."

THE DREAMER

Mine eyes the God of Sleep did close,
And all was hushed in deep repose;
My dreamy thoughts made quick their flight
Beyond the shades of gloom and night.

I saw my dearly cherished home
From which, far distant, now I roam;
My kind though aged mother dear,
My wives and children all were near.

My sisters loved and brothers kind
All came distinctly to my mind.
I kissed them each, and warmly pressed
Their hands, and clasped them to my breast.

So happy in their joyful smile,
All seemed so real, so free from guile.
I told the places where I'd been
And talked and laughed at what was seen.

But list! what music breaks the spell
It is the Porter's breakfast bell
That breaks the pleasant, magic chain
And sends me far from home again.
The mention of the Porter’s breakfast bell makes us wonder if they actually had a primitive form of dining car on the early day trains. This “breakfast bell” sounds very pleasant, but Joseph later got a sort of “down” on these new fangled railroads, as we shall see. Somewhere about this period, Detroit was visited and exhibitions given.
CHAPTER 22

THE BIG RUNAROUND AT WASHINGTON

As indicated by the Muscatine letter, the next show must have been at Rochester, though we have nothing on that city. Our guess is that the railroad, after leaving New York, poked westward to the Delaware river, maybe on to Binghampton on the Susquehanna, then angled northwesterly to Rochester. At least, that route in reverse is the one followed by our wildmen. Having sold their wagons they showed only along or close to, railway lines. The remainder of December was spent covering the area from Rochester to Owego (not to be confused with Oswego) a town in Tioga county, close to the New Jersey border. This is the first pickup we have of Joseph after Rochester. Here he had a very good friend, Judge C. P. Avery, who was president of the historical society of that area. While visiting Judge Avery JEJ wrote a passionate poem in defense of the Indian, which was read before the annual meeting of the society and later published in their periodical. Six stanzas have been omitted.

THE INDIAN CHIEF'S LAMENT

By Amicus

(Written by J. E. Johnson during a brief stay at the home of Judge C. P. Avery, Owego, N. Y., Dec. 1851.)

The white man sought undying fame
And ploughed the trackless deep,
For weary years he toiled in vain
Where howling tempests sweep.
At length he found the Indian's land,
In joy he trod the shore,
The redman took him by the hand
And Freedom knew no more.

We strove in vain! 'Twas vain to try
The white man's knife was long,
Thickly in death our warriors lie
Hoarse winds their funeral song.

The pale face took our food and land
Our game is killed and gone,
They've left us only sterile sand
To leave our children on.

How sad the tear that dims the eye
As o'er these vales we tread,
Here! Here our brave forefathers lie,
There sleeps the mighty dead.

O sacrilegious, powerful race
How oft your ploughshares bring to view
The bones from their long resting place
Of kindred warriors brave and true.

To many sophisticated "moderns" much of this will be dubbed "corn," yet there are many good lines and phrases, and there is no doubt that it represented JEJ's earnest and honest reaction to the injustices perpetrated against the redman.

About this time JEJ received a letter from Henry Miller, who, with Francis Wheeler, had taken the road with the second company. They were not too happy about the trend of things, but were learning the ropes. Excerpts follow:
"Syracuse, Dec. 25, 1851.

... White Blanket has been sick ever since we parted. He has been very low but is mending now. Yellow Smoke has not been able to dance. He is getting better. We have made an engagement with the manager of the theatre in this place for this afternoon and three evenings following for $50.00 hall rent. We shall leave here Monday if all is right and try to make an engagement in Utica ... and I think we can. Let us know where to write to you. Frank and I are about but neither is well. Yours in haste,

Henry W. Miller."

At Union, a few miles up the Susquehanna from Owego, we pick up mention of the first exhibition of JEJ's company in eastern New York. Here he began in brief diary form a day by day notation of events. Probably he made similar notes of the preceding period, but if so the book has not turned up. The book we have begins at Union, Jan. 1, 1852. The dates run to Mar. 30, so we shall quote only enough here and there to keep up with the story, with interpolations wherever appropriate.

"Jan. 1, 1852. Came here to Union yesterday. 'Tis a small place, weather rainy and muddy. A very gloomy and unpleasant day. Got no room for exhibition and lost the night after sending out bills. . . .

"Jan. 2. Came here to Binghampton yesterday expecting everything ready to give an exhibition, but no room could be had. Some friends succeed in getting a room. Stop at Phoenix Hotel. Had a good house and took in near $50. O! how sick I am, but can't stop.

"Jan. 6. Took cars in the morning. Stormy today. Stopped at a little place called Hancock, very cold. Bad night. Took in only about $20.
POSITIVELY ONE NIGHT ONLY.

GRAND EXHIBITION OF

WILD INDIANS.

Nine wild O-ma-la Savages, just arrived from their Rocky Mountain Home, and on their way to Washington to have a talk with the great "Pale Face Chief," will give a specimen of their Wild, Exciting, Rude and Popular Entertainments, at

TOMPKINS HALL,
Friday Evening, Jan. 2nd, 1852,
At 7 1-2 o'clock.

The Exhibition consists of their Wild and Unique

War, Wedding, Harvest, Hunting,
Scalp, Worship

DANCES AND SONGS.

Their curious

WORSHIP AND PEACE SMOKERS
Will be performed with their GREAT RED CALUMET.

Many of their

Native Curiosities and Instruments
Will be exhibited with explanation of their

Manners, Customs, Modes of Life, Wedding and

BUFFALO HUNT, &c.

Target Shooting with Arrows.

SPEECH BY THE

GIGANTIC WAR CHIEF,
WITH INTERPRETATION.

This Tribe makes no use of Intoxicating Spirits, and only dress the lower portion of their body.
The names of the Males are as follows: Gii-he-ga, is the great war chief. Al-go-hom-ony, "great medicine" or prophet. Sau-sa-sce, one who talks interpreter. Wa-ne-la-wa-ha, master of all animals. Ta-da-nig-ah, mountain bear. Sha-do-man-na, one who dies for his friend.
The Squaws are: Pa-coo-sa, the white swan. Mee.eche.nook.kee, mountain dove. Ta.son.da. bee, flower of the plain.
The proceeds of their Exhibition are applied exclusively to clothe them and defray their expenses while travelling. The patronage and favor of the generous, benevolent and humane are solicited.

Admission 25 Cents, Children under 10 half price. No postponement on account of weather. Doors open at half past 6 o'clock.

J. E. JOHNSON, Agent.
"Jan. 7. At Mrs. Ward's. Still stormy. Went to depot early and had to wait nearly all day. Went forward, found two places where there had been trains run off. Had to change cars. I was taken with pleurisy from great exposure. Came to Port Jervis.


"Jan. 9. Have to lie over by reason of sickness. No business at evening exhibition. Mean crowd, only $14."

During this lie over, JEJ wrote home:

"Port Jervis, on Delaware Erie Railroad, N.Y.

"Kind Friends:

"I am slowly recovering from a sudden attack of pleurisy, or something very painful... which nearly prevented my breathing. But thanks to a kind, protecting Providence I am spared with a reasonable prospect of a speedy recovery. This is the third day I have been here and hope to be able to leave in the morning. There have been 5 or 6 smashups, cars off the track or collisions of some kind within three days. Reasonable winter weather,—good sleighing. I have walked out today and expect to give an exhibition this evening. I have employed a young man to help me.

"Country is slightly mountainous for 100 miles back, scenery beautiful, dark pine and hemlock flourish on the slopes of the high hills, deep chasms, cataracts and deep, gurgling rills,—how enchanting if one has the health to enjoy! We are within 100 miles of New York City, but hear nothing of Messrs. Wheeling and Miller, nor any more from N.Y. or Washington. I received $37 last night. Interest high, and if I were well and had a picked company, we
could “pile.” But these are Indians, and I have taken the worst part and company. Never mind, we may yet make a pretty as it is!

“I send you an interesting paper giving ... geography of this road. You can trace out all the towns where I have been on it. I shall send you some papers when I get to New York, the Tribune, the Dutchman, etc. . . Must close. I am wearied. You need not let mother see this, or tell her that I have been sick, for I am much better and am about now. Good bye.

J.E.J.

“P.S. Later. O! such a time as we had yesterday in the cars. Stop, wait pull other onto the track, change cars, go round others and finally be jammed in our small caboose where we have to stand and be pressed, squeezed, jammed and pounded to slivers and then get out sick at near midnight. But this is better than the broken necks some of them get. So I concluded not to complain but be thankful for meeting no worse fortune. Railroads are a curse to this country and almost any other! In haste, J.E.J."

(My word! One might suspect from JEJ’s parting shots that he was not completely enchanted with the luxury of travel on the Delaware and Erie Railroad! But who would thrill at the thought of being sardined with standing room only, in a caboose sweetened with the fragrance of a band of early day Indians? We have no statistics as to how frequently the redmen sought the pleasures of the bath. In justice, however, as we remember it the aroma of the redskin was more one of pine, juniper and sage smoke with nuances of buckskin and delicate undertones of fried rabbit. His was not always the soul searing effluvium which emanates from some races of the children of men.)

(We wonder what these occasional “mean crowds” did to deserve the name? Probably it was a compound of general rowdyism, which is present everywhere, a primitive
antagonism toward the Indian which lurked in many minds, and the attempts of local yokel "comedians" to get into the act. Or he may have meant small, meager.)


"Jan. 14. Start for Chester. Have an opportunity for evening,—found no decent place to put up. Stay at depot all day and take cars in evening and stop at Paterson, N.J. Large place, cold.


Jan. 16. Moved down to Passaic. Went myself to New York. Lots of letters but heard nothing from other company. Returned and exhibited in evening."

About this time Henry Miller was not too happy about his part of the show which was then exhibiting in upstate New York. His letter to JEJ reads thus:

"Albany, N.Y., Jan. 12, 1852

"I take this chance of writing you to inform you we are in Albany. We had hard work to get here after two weeks at Syracuse. Three of the Indians have been sick all the while. White Blanket and the Roman Nose one are both sick now and they have not been able to do anything for the last three weeks. We have exhibited here two nights and had to pay $20 a night for the hall. We took in $39.62, and we think of trying it here another night. If you have got to New York you had better see Barnum and see what he will do for us. My health is poor and I am tired of the cares I have... no letters... write.... We shall leave here I think on Wednesday for Troy and then for Hudson. H. W. Miller."

"Jan. 18. Took sleigh with 15 others for New York. Got upset and almost killed. Found the folks and stayed all day and night.

"Jan. 19. Tremendous snowstorm in New York. I stayed in the city to deliver letters, etc. Babbitt started for Newark to meet the other company. Wheeling takes the party here and goes on at 11. Henry starts for Albany to Jake's sister. I tramp about all day and take the cars for New York in the evening.

"Jan. 20. Last night when I arrived I found the company all waiting and the baggage left behind on account of $500 being claimed by the coachman. I had to return for it. Visited Heck's again to see Brown and Candland, but was disappointed. Took cars in the morning and after being nearly frozen arrived in Philadelphia in the evening.

"Jan. 21. Waited until 11 p.m. then took the cars for Baltimore, and in the morning about 11 arrived in Washington and were conducted to the Indians quarters at the western Hotel.

"Jan. 23. Visited the Capitol. Saw Henn, who is very kind and sociable. Were noticed in the paper. The Indian Agent (D.D. Mitchell) called to see us, talked very disparagingly, but promised to see us again."

Under this date there is a brief letter from Mr. Mitchell addressed "To the Person Having Charge of the Omaha Indians, Western Hotel."

"Sir:

"I had a brief conversation with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs this morning, in relation to the Omaha In-
dians now in the city. As nothing definite was determined upon, I concluded it would be best to postpone seeing them until tomorrow.

Respectfully,


This was evidently again postponed and JEJ was being introduced to the Great Run Around which is such a prominent part of the American political system. There was no mention of "seeing them tomorrow" on


"Jan. 25. Went to Church at Capitol with Indians. Wrote many letters. I visit Babbitt's room a mile away every day, also the P. O. Matters look discouraging."

On this date Henry W. Miller wrote to JEJ from Lexington, N.Y. in this wise, abridged:

"... I am at my sister's at this time and shall remain in this county 6 or 8 days. If you can, write to me and let me know how you prosper at Washington and what the prospects are there. ... I have a good many relatives here and they all want to see me and hear about the west. I can hardly get time to sleep. When I leave here I shall see Kanesville as quick as steam and stage will take me there. Yours in haste, H. W. Miller."

With this letter Henry disappears from the Indian Mission scene. The two show groups had come together and they were now in Washington with JEJ, Wheeling and Babbitt. This was the trio that was to battle the thing out and get the redmen back to their tepees near the Big Muddy.

On January 27 they were visited in their lodgings by Sam Houston, JEJ reporting "a good visit with Houston in
the evening." Houston was a Senator from Texas, and because of his great fame during the Mexican War, was quite a big wheel in Washington. He was a good friend to the Omaha Delegation and helped the three white men to get a proper hearing.

About this time JEJ received a long letter from his brother William giving details of family life and of the big job they had completed in renovating the store, bakery, saloon and wareroom, also of their job of putting all four of the family homes into good shape for the winter. While all this is interesting, the important news items were that Apostles Grant and Benson had come to the Bluffs with instructions that all who were going to the Valley must do so as soon as travel was feasible. "If they have nothing to make an outfit with, come with a handcart or wheelbarrow for the man to hitch himself in the shafts and the woman to push behind." A more pleasant item was that Almon Babbitt intended to bring a printing press to the Bluffs in the spring, but a disturbing news note was that the mob spirit was rising once more against the Mormons. William wrote, "An armed force forbade the circuit judge to sit in Mills county (adjoins Pottawattamie) again.... They ran Hillman off and stuck up notices forbidding anyone to sell, rent or buy houses or to hold court, signed by the gentiles. On court day an armed force of 30 to 40 men rode through the streets of Coonville (now Glenwood). This all transpired within the week and what will happen in the week to come I know not.... Mother seems more anxious to go on (to the Valley) next spring even if you... do not go."

Somewhat irked but apparently not alarmed by news of mobs forming in the Kanesville vicinity, Joseph, showing a slight touch of the lion, answered, "... You seem to be much frightened from what I can gather, but be assured mobs nor devils will not hinder me from bringing my business to a consistent and satisfactory termination. We here laugh at the idea of a mob taking... Pottawattamie. This
is done for diverse reasons. One is that they may get the land claims and reduce the value whilst they are purchasing. Babbitt will undoubtedly bring a press and this will make him more sanguine and earnest."

"Jan. 28. After running about all forenoon we went en masse to the Department at 12. Had a long talk and went away dissatisfied. Want to go home and see Ma."

At this time Washington papers carried the Indian story. The clipping we have is a long one and the name of the paper is not given. It furnishes much history of the Omahas and their complaints but we can give only excerpts. It is captioned

**INDIAN INTERVIEW**

"On Wednesday about noon the Omaha Indians now in Washington paid their first visit to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Col. D. D. Mitchell. They were accompanied by J. E. Johnson and F. J. Wheeler of Council Bluffs, as their friends and advisers, and Louis San Souci, their interpreter.

"The delegation includes ten chiefs... six squaws.... The principal chief Mun-cha-on-a-ba, or Two Bears, is accompanied here by two of his five wives, thought to be favorable specimens of Indian beauty.

"Their story... About 20 years ago the Omaha Tribe concluded a treaty with the U.S.... whereby they deeded certain lands in the present state of Iowa, and known as the Pottawattamie district, extending north to the Sioux river. All north they claim to have reserved as hunting grounds... but the whites were settling on this very ground and disallow the tribe... even the liberty of seeking the scanty remnant of game left upon its surface.... Since the great rush of emigrants to California, Utah and Oregon five roads have been run through the country of the tribe, which are
fed by almost a score of ferries across the Missouri. Along these roads thousands of wagons annually pass causing... the destruction of game... consumption of timber and the spoliation of their grazing lands."

(Then follows a description of other wrongs, their geography, the nature of their lands, their desire to learn the use of the plow, etc. In conclusion the article mentions the informal, or "not according to Hoyle" aspect of the delegation, but with these encouraging words.)

"We have reason to believe that though the visit of this delegation has not been conducted according to the established form, the Government will overlook the irregularity, at least to the extent of instituting an investigation into the circumstances, and applying whatever remedy the case might appear to demand.

"In personal appearance and demeanor these Indians are, comparatively at least, prepossessing and exhibit much mental scope. The address of the chief before mentioned and the Orator, White Buffalo, to the Commissioner were bold and spirited and couched in appropriate and manly terms."

THE DIARY IS RESUMED

"Jan. 29, 1852. Mr Babbit had a talk with the Commissioner. Looks a little brighter and we have some hopes. Attend theatre with the Indians, by request. Merchant of Venice was played. We got a good piece in the paper. (No doubt the one abridged above.)

"Feb. 2. Today had a very agreeable interview with President Millard Fillmore. He conversed with the Indians in the presence of many of his cabinet for several hours, admitted the justice of their claims and promised them relief. As a good man he sympathized with their miseries. Prospects brighten."
"Feb. 3. . . . visited the Capitol and both houses with the Indians. . . . Had a number of visitors and gave them a dance. Wrote to BFJ (in Honolulu).

"Feb. 4. Visited Judge (Stephen A.) Douglas. Had a good time. Indians spoke well and the Judge answered. All well pleased. Visited the Capitol."

THE OMAHA MISSION NEARS ITS END

The diary has now reached the date of February 7, 1852. Instead of continuing it with a daily date we shall condense by giving key lines from appropriate phrases without date up to the diary's end, March 17, 1852.

"Walked near the Navy Yard. Saw Secretary Harris (late of Utah). Had a talk with the Commissioner. Wrote and figured all afternoon.—Went to the Department and laid in our bill, near $8000. Had discouraging talk. To Capitol, got documents and took them to Commissioner.—Learned nothing worth relating is to be done for us. Letter to Lea (Senator Luke Lea, of Tennessee?). Dissatisfied and out of humor.—Early to Capitol. Waited anxiously till noon. Nothing done in Committee.—Conclude to start home tomorrow but are requested to wait and visit Comm. on Memo. which we conclude to do.—Took Indians up for Daguerrean likenesses. Sat yesterday myself.

"Visited Commissioner. Got medals and clothes for the Indians, who gave dance. Did not get started yesterday. Got Indians more clothing.—Closing business to leave tomorrow.—After working up a fever we were late at the depot ten minutes.—Left next morning, found six Indians missing. Wheeling went back for them.—Arrived at Cumberland after all night travel. I started with 3 Indians in mail coach. 85 miles to West Newton, Penn. Stayed hotel. Started down river in morn, arrive Pittsburgh at 1. Met Babbitt.—Passed rapidly down the Ohio.—Spent day read-
ing and gazing upon beauties of the River,—scenery. Arrived Cincinnati in the night.”

This fascinating trip paralleled in part the journey made by JEJ’s brother Joel and his uncle Joel Hills 35 years earlier. In this case they passed down the stream in a real boat rather than in an archaic “ark.” The Cumberland mentioned is in Maryland and West Newton is on the Youghiogany river, a branch of the Monongahela. The latter stream joins the Alleghany at Pittsburgh and creates the wide and beautiful Ohio. From Pittsburgh our party went down the Ohio to Cairo, Illinois, up the Mississippi to St. Louis, thence up the Missouri to Kanesville. In Cincinnati JEJ and Babbitt selected a printing press and equipment for use at Council Bluffs. This purchase was evidence to Joseph that he was to be editor of the “Bugle,” and was an important milestone in his life. The pair also visited the Cincinnati Tafts, who were relatives through the Hills family. We return to complete the diary condensation.

“Find ourselves in Louisville, Kentucky this morning. Strolled in town. Boat good but crowded. River high, water up to shore timber. Full of flood wood. Passed two steamboat wrecks. Had to lay up, foggy. Rain next day. Tremendous squall about noon came near blowing boat over. Landed at St. Louis 2½ P.M.—Went to church. Babbitt preached, large audience. Indians arrived evening. Anxiety over Gihega who was missing. (Gihega, The Great Feaster, must have showed up soon, as he is not mentioned later. We hope when he showed up he was not lit up.)—Wheeling and the Indians started last night. (This was the parting of JEJ and the red men, at least until some years later when they visited him at Council Bluffs. Francis J. Wheeling took them up the Missouri and saw them safely to their wickiups in Indian Town.)

Here we mention a clipping from the Bugle detailing the death of Mr. Wheeling, which occurred at Fort Kearney
while he and his family were en route to California. He was attacked by "something like cholera" and died within six hours. He was the owner of the ferry at Traders Point and a much esteemed business man of Council Bluffs.

Joseph's diary continues until March 30, when he and his friend Wm. Spoor arrived at Weston, which was practically home. The intervening days tell of the purchase of drugs, fancy goods and groceries for the Kanesville store. He comments on the events of the river passage, on losing his stateroom, the Kansas (boat) being crowded, a little race with Clipper No. 2, the Alton being stuck on a sandbar, and the stopping to discharge freight. He became really ill; Spoor nursed him until he himself took on the malady. Both recovered in time to arrive at Weston at 7 A.M. in a storm.

So ends the saga of the Omaha Delegation. Joseph had been six months away from home and business. But in spite of the illnesses, the hard winter, the gloom and the long wait in the Capitol City, it was doubtless the most interesting period of his life. He learned all about railroads (!), saw many fine plays and heard much good music, saw the Atlantic coast cities, met the "devilish sharpers," visited old friends in Kirtland, met and conversed with the President and many of the great and near great in Washington, obtained a new press and set up for an editorship, then capped it all with the romantic steamboat trip described above.

In spite of all this, Joseph returned home somewhat down in the mouth. His various indispositions had placed his physical condition at a low ebb. Depressing news had come to him a few days before leaving Washington from his sister Esther Le Baron. Albey Sherman had a bad case of smallpox. William was exposed and feared he was coming down with it; David Le Baron had also been exposed, though he was assisting at the store. The pustuled blight might strike him at any moment.
All were worried about what to do about mother Julia, and mother herself was worried about Joseph and wished he would come home. Then there was the puzzling news of the newly risen mob spirit and the political crackdown because of the sale of liquor. Liquor was sold almost as freely as watermelons at a camp meeting; he knew someone was out to make trouble for him. Yet we believe that none of these exasperating things bogged down his spirit as did the haunting fear that he had failed in the Omaha Mission. He seemed to feel that he was sending his barbaric charges back to their villages empty handed except for the medals, clothing and other gifts which they had received.

Could Joseph have looked into the future he would have been of better cheer. The mission had not failed; it was really a success. He was cast down because he had listened to disparaging remarks from the Indian Office people. Naturally they would be against him because the whole proceeding was an affront to the Department, a sort of "butting in" on its particular business. They would probably have turned it down cold but fortunately Joseph, his associates and the Indians had made a good impression on President Fillmore, senators Douglas, Houston, Clark, Dodge, Durkee and others. Not only was a treaty made with the Omahas, but later the white men received from Congress the amount they were out and possibly some remuneration also.

From a letter addressed to JEJ we learn that the Omahas received a grant of $25,000, to be paid at $5000 per year for five years. Louis San Souci, interpreter, was given $1000 in addition to the wages paid by the organizers. A new treaty was made, giving a right of way to the whites for passage over Indian lands.

THE WIDOWS OF PIGEON CREEK

A story of the Kanesville period comes to us from Mr. O. J. Pruitt, for many years an official of the Council Bluffs
Historical Society. He writes that in 1848 many people living near old St. John died during an epidemic of smallpox. A man named Polk Roach furnished cabins to a number of widows of victims of the epidemic who lived on North Pigeon Creek, and helped them in other ways. He had purchased claims from departing Mormons and had sowed the newly turned sod to wheat. The story is that the leader of a family at Downsville charged Roach with being a polygamist, claiming that he had two wives. He arranged a party to mob Roach by riding fifteen miles to give him a horsewhipping, or worse. A courier tipped JEJ off to what was going on; he drove hurriedly to the spot and organized a defense. When the mobbers arrived they were met with a volley of shot gun fire and the raid fizzled out.
CHAPTER 23

THE “BUGLE” CALLS

After an absence of six months in the eastern states, Joseph found plenty of work awaiting him at Kanesville. But he soon had all the new stock he had purchased in St. Louis on the shelves, and got the various entanglements straightened out so that he could turn his energies to his new love, journalism. The printing press and equipment which he and Almon had purchased in Cincinnati soon arrived and his first big job was to set it up and get the plant in operation.

There is much misinformation, or rather lack of information regarding the early history of Kanesville newspapers. This lack also spreads over many of the “firsts” of the area in nearly all lines. Two things helped to bring this situation about. One was the fact that the early population was nearly all Mormon, and was therefore fluid; the people were constantly moving westward. The majority of those who were on the spot at or shortly after the beginning were soon gone. Later when writers looked for information on the town’s origin there was little to be had except such records as the Mormon Church officials had kept, or the doubtful memories of the few old timers who had remained.

One historian states that in the ’50s the office of the county clerk of Pottawattamie county was destroyed by fire and very few of the county records were saved. This was a second cause of the scarcity of facts. As an illustration, the book “Early Days at Council Bluffs,” by C. H. Babbitt (1916), probably not a relative of our Almon, only one reference to JEJ was made, that in connection with his ownership of the Bugle. Only this scant mention, in spite of the fact that he had arrived in 1848, when only a few log
cabins decorated the site, had been a merchant almost from the start, also postmaster, city councilman, emigrant outfitter and town "booster." This shows that the historians had practically nothing to work with. It is a good thing for our tribe that many of Joseph's letters, clippings, records, etc. have been preserved.

In spite of the material we have it is difficult to follow the changes in the Kanesville newspaper world in 1852. As we piece it out from Mr. Babbitt's history and Joseph's notes, the Frontier Guardian was still being published when Almon and JEJ bought the new press and, as we supposed, established the Weekly Western Bugle. However, we have found a clipping from what we assume to be the W. W. Bugle which indicates that it, also, was being published before the advent of the new press. It reads in part as follows:

TO OUR FRIENDS AND PATRONS

"Circumstances over which we have no control demand of us to leave our editorial labors for a season, and did we not think we had entrusted it to faithful stewards, we should reflect upon ourselves for leaving a field of political labor when a full harvest was ripening.

"We have engaged the services of J. E. Johnson, Esq., a man well known to the community, not only as a business man but also of more than ordinary literary acquirements. We trust that under his management the Bugle will receive that embellishment which will place her among the older journals of the west." (Then follows a political paragraph, telling how triumphantly for three years the paper had, without fear or favor, "erected the standard of Democracy against a strongly fortified fortress of Whiggery.")

This is evidence that Almon was editor as well as owner of the Bugle and apparently JEJ did not assume the
editorship for nearly nine months after his return from the east, which was early in 1853.

The Frontier Guardian had been published for a long period by Orson Hyde. We are at a loss to know how it came into the hands of JEJ. Our guess is that it was through Almon Babbitt who was the “angel” in supplying the new press. Or it may have still belonged to Elder Hyde, who was a good friend of JEJ, and might have been obtained from him. At any rate, C. H. Babbitt wrote that at a certain time the Weekly Western Bugle had become the Weekly Western Bugle and Frontier Guardian. It thus remained until the Guardian’s advertising contracts were fulfilled, after which it became the Council Bluffs Bugle, owned by J. E. Johnson, with L. O. Littlefield as printer. There is no hint as to how and why this merger came about.

Four presses seem to have been involved in JEJ’s printing history, viz: the Frontier Guardian press (Old Guardy), the one used on the contemporary Weekly Western Bugle, the one obtained in Cincinnati and a fine new one which was purchased in 1856. We lack space to speculate on the fate of these items; all we know is that JEJ wound up with only Old Guardy in his possession.

When Joseph cut all ties with the river country in 1861 he was unable to transport Old Guardy in his heavily laden wagons. He arranged with others to carry the press to the Valley, but the plans fell through and someone shipped it by regular freight carriers, at 25c per pound. This ran up a terrific bill which was quite a shock to JEJ, but we remember hearing that Brigham Young helped him either by lending him money or assuming part of the expense.

The press, type and other material was taken to Spring Lake Villa, Utah, thence to St. George, later to Silver Reef, and finally sold. After the boom at the Reef collapsed, and with it the Silver Reef Miner, Charles Ellis Johnson purchased it and took it to Salt Lake City about 1883. There
he used it in connection with the manufacture of the Valley Tan Remedies until he obtained more modern presses. Later he placed it in the old Utah State Fair building standing on the block bounded by 5th and 6th South, 6th and 7th East streets, as a permanent exhibit of Pioneer interest. Prior to the exhibition of 1893, when CEJ went to prepare his regular exhibition space, Old Guardy was missing. The most painstaking inquiries failed to reveal its whereabouts. As time passed and not a trace was found it was finally decided that it had been sold as junk by a misinformed or rascally caretaker.

Thus ignominiously passed an object that would now be regarded as a valuable heirloom and a close link with the pioneer past. We have found a piece of paper time worn and soiled but written in JEJ’s hand writing as the following:

The old press has printed:

Frontier Guardian Republican Farmer’s Oracle
Council Bluffs Bugle Dixie Times (Rio Virgen Times)
Omaha Arrow Utah Pomologist & Gardener
Crescent City Oracle The Cactus
Council Bluffs Press Silver Reef Miner
Huntsman’s Echo

The space left in front of the word Republican possibly represents “ditto,” in which case the name of the paper was Frontier Republican. We have found no mention of such a paper but news publications rose and fell rapidly on the frontier and someone might have put it out for a time after one of the older sheets had written 30. The Council Bluffs Press was the one Joseph was editing when he made a trip to the historic site of Denver, Colorado, in 1859, when a flattering offer was made to him. More of this later. The Huntsman’s Echo was printed at Wood River, Nebraska
SOME TOOTS FROM THE BUGLE

We have never had access to a file of the Bugle, nor are we sure that a complete one exists. We have but a tattered copy of one number. Fortunately JEJ saved many clippings from its columns and these give us an idea of the style and trend of the new editor's effusion. He admitted that he was a "new hand," but as with most efforts he improved as he went along. As before stated, he was a rock ribbed Democrat and was frequently in hot combat with other editors on political or other questions, and at that period scribes assailed one another in a much more personal fashion than is the custom today.

At one time it appears that the editor of the Burlington Telegraph found fault with the Land Board of Kanesville and JEJ had gone after him editorially. Under the caption "Too Quick On the Trigger," he answered with a long semi-apology but his concluding paragraph showed that JEJ had got under his hide and he could not refrain from spitting a little venom:

"As for the miserable Mormon who publishes the Bugle and passes for its editor by printing whatever is handed to him, we pass him by as beneath contempt, leaving him to the duplicate consolations derivable from the 'spiritual wife' system of his persuasion, which we understand he practices up to the handle. Though a fit medium from 'social relations' through which to eke out the vile instincts of personal and political prostitution, his paper is not one which can reasonably expect to challenge controversy at the hands of white folks."

The Bugle's comeback was titled: "The Wounded Bird Flutters," and it really digs into the past of the Telegraph
man. It explains what the argument is all about, then proceeds:

"The vain and oft disappointed ambition of the editor makes him keenly sensitive to his own popularity as a politician and his unwon honors seem to sit heavily on his heart. . . . The fling he takes at us is really too contemptible to notice . . . he preaches the doctrine of free toleration of religious belief, but now that a bee has stung him he yelps 'Mormon' . . . Talk of associating with white folks? We are not aware that he, himself had become naturalized since his long residence among the 'Winnebagoes.' The squaws report him a gallant fellow, if he was 'too quick on the trigger' at the false alarm of attack. If half what we hear is correct, this editor may find a host of 'social relations' among that tribe of colored 'folks.' We confess our ignorance of 'the spiritual wife' doctrine of which he speaks and which he seems perfectly to understand. Well he might after years of tutelage of Disney, Cut Beard and Bundy (keepers of red light dives?) where his duplicate consolations have doubtless been realized. We do not seek controversy, least of all with so unrefined and dirty a party; but should he prove belligerent we could introduce him to 'May,' or the old quarters of the 'Ram Pen,' or at the Disney House, where the Ace of Spades presided (Negro dive?) where he can, in memory, again live over the vile instincts of personal and political prostitution. . . . Upon matters of a more general and national character we may be more retiring, but when attacked in so low and dastardly manner, we have descended for a moment to use the weapons thus he has placed in our hands.'"

Joseph knew that by "spiritual wife doctrine" he meant "plurality," but he was technically correct in saying he knew nothing of a doctrine of that name. We surmise that he sidetracked the question by reasoning that the Church had no "spiritual wife" doctrine; that what he had entered into was polygamy, therefore the charge could be parried.
A sophistry perhaps, but in those days the newspaper feuds were a matter of fang and claw, knock down and drag out!

We find available a number of comments by editors of various papers upon the debut of the Bugle. These are much more complimentary than the one previously quoted. For instance, from the St. Mary's (Ohio) Messenger:

"Council Bluffs Bugle. We are in receipt of a paper with the above title published at Council Bluffs, Iowa, by J. E. Johnson, editor. The Bugle is decidedly a spicy paper, and its humorous and poetical editor seems to enjoy himself vastly 'out there' in the 'wilds of the west,' from the manner in which he talks...."

From the Coshocton Democrat:

"We are regularly in receipt of the semi weekly Bugle, a neat and spirited Democratic paper, published in the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, opposite Nebraska Territory. We look upon it as one of our best exchanges, and from it get all the news from the Far-out-west. We hope Mr. Johnson will continue his (Bugle) favors."

The Advertiser, Alligator, (no less!) Florida:

"We have received the first number of a neat, well filled and ably conducted semi-weekly paper, the Council Bluffs Bugle, published in Council Bluffs, Iowa."

New York Sunday Dispatch:

"The editor of the Council Bluffs Bugle must be a smart fellow. He has performed all his quill and scissor duties, and with the help of two hands raised 75 acres of corn, five of oats, four of potatoes, ten of wheat, five of buckwheat, one of melons, one of pumpkins and squashes, one of garden and a half of millet. Council Bluffs will go ahead if the rest of the citizens are one quarter as efficient."

The above was reprinted by JEJ, who adds:
“Yes, Joe is ‘some pumpkins’—more potatoes—any amount of wheat and above all, we ‘acknowledge the corn.’”

J. Sterling Morton, “father” of Arbor Day, and Governor of Nebraska:

“‘Josing Jonseph,’ as our friend Shon Jerman (John Sherman) of the Nebraskian facetiously styles him, is a fellow of ‘infinite jest,’ and he makes the Council Bluffs Bugle very entertaining and readable, as well as a useful and instructive paper. Joseph congratulates Mr. Morton, the editor of this paper, upon his ability to employ a servant girl, and he regrets that he cannot do likewise. Now Joseph, we think you have no reason to complain. Thou art a goodly man and well favored, and if thou canst not support a servant girl, there is an article of household luxury in which thou canst indulge, to an extent that Mr. Morton could not well think of without endangering the tranquility of his domestic relations.”

Just in case there may be a few readers who are as dumb as we were when we first read the above and who fail to see the point of Morton’s sly dig at once, let us blurt out that the “article of household luxury” means another wife.

Unidentified paper:

“The Western Bugle came tooting along the other morning looking as neat and pure as ‘gold tried in the fire.’ People wishing to get posted on Iowa and Nebraska affairs should inclose $2.00 to J. E. Johnson, Council Bluffs, Iowa, and have the Bugle forwarded to them. The following, which appeared in the columns of the Bugle is, we fear, a bad note; the instrument probably being out of order:

“The fact is, the bottom of the soil has never been reached in this neighborhood; but the report has been, No bottom, scant. We dig for our vegetables until we are tired, then break them off and let the ‘rest of mankind down below’
have the rest. Pumpkin, to be sure. We had one in our office before the fire that got beautifully roasted to the tune of $20,000; a nice, plump little thing that a herd of hogs might have roosted in, weighing the round numbers of 80 pounds. The distance around we have forgotten, and if we had not, should hardly dare tell the circumference, for fear our friends would be doubting our veracity."

Golden Age:

"Council Bluffs Bugle. This excellent frontier sheet, through the politeness of its musical editor, we are permitted to number among our exchanges. We consider it a valuable addition to our list, as through it we will receive all the thrilling news incident to border life."

Joseph could not resist nibbling at the bait thrown out by the word "musical" in the above, so he unlimbers his Muse, takes down the Bugle and toots the following: "Yes, neighbor. We have nothing to do but raise our vegetables, prepare our stove wood, hunt for our meat and gather from the passing prairie breeze the stirring incidents attending the pioneer in a new settlement. To give zest to our enjoyment, we take our buffalo robe and blanket and strike out for a few days or a week to where we find Nature ungar­nished and full of all the sweets of poetry, music and real enjoyment. To take the wild and bounding doe, the sure winged wild goose or swan; to take the unwary, floundering fish; to revel in the prairie flowers and gather wild fruits, —ah! ’tis excellent and agreeable."

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FAMILY

During the early period of Joseph’s career as an editor, many of the Johnsons were living in Kanesville, later Council Bluffs. Joel, Benjamin and George were in Utah at this time. Joseph with his two wives, Harriet and Hannah, had not yet moved to Ellisdale, and only one child of the six born to the duo was living. This was Mary Julia (Rich-
ards), who lived until 1928. She was always a great favor-

ite of her father and was known to him affectionately as

"Mollie." In the family's early years "on the river" infant
mortality was terrific.

Mother Julia lived much of the time with Joseph, but
she had a home of her own. At times she stayed for inter-

vals with the Le Barons. In addition to the Le Barons in
the vicinity lived Almon and Julia Babbitt, Delcena Dia-
damia Sherman (Lyman R. was buried back of the Kirtland
road), William Derby and Jane C. Johnson and Reuben and
Almera Barton. Most of these soon fared forth to the dis-
tant Valley. Almera and Reuben parted company, and
only Almera made her way later to the ever beckoning
Rockies. William and Jane followed closely the fortunes
of Joseph during all of his "tarrying on the plains."

The death of Mother Julia, which laid a wreath of black
roses on the souls of each of them, occurred May 30, 1853.
Few details of her passing have been brought within our
ken. She was scarcely seventy years old, but she has passed
through a Mill of Life that "ground exceeding fine." She
was truly a matriarch, but a benevolent one, and the entire
family was under her sway. Joseph, who was early de-
clared to be the ailing one, was particularly under her
watchful eye, and in many writings he has paid tribute to
the tender and loving care she had given him through all
his growing years.

The only passages we have found regarding her death
are in a collective letter sent to Benjamin several months
after the event, to the Sandwich Islands where he was serv-
ing a Church mission. Four members of the family each
wrote to some length and JEJ inscribed a terse marginal
message. The first writer was Julia Babbitt, who began
her letter October 28, 1853, and who wrote in part:

"Oh Benjamin! I cannot describe my anxiety to see
you or of my joy to hear of your prosperity. We are still
here (Council Bluffs) in comfortable health, though we have been sick much of the time. . . . I suppose you have heard of our dear mother’s death before this. She is gone and we are left to mourn her loss, no not her loss but ours. We know she cannot meet with loss; she has gone to receive the crown that was prepared for her, which must be glorious. Oh if I had but one short hour to see you, how much more could I say than with this slow pen of mine.” 

Next to write was Delcena and her penmanship is labored, showing that it was difficult for her to write. She told him of her poor health and that she had been disappointed in not going to the Valley the past summer. She had son Albey and daughter Susan with her and all wished they were with the saints in Utah.

At this time, Reuben Barton, husband of Almera, dropped in at the Babbitt house. The women persuaded him to join in the “mass” letter to BFJ, although he was not anxious to do so. His part of the missive showed a terse, chip-on-the-shoulder attitude which indicated that there was no strong friendship between the two. Most of the family had an unflattering opinion of Barton, and his later desertion of Almera seems to show that they had sized him up properly. The gist of his message was that BFJ knew where he was and that if he would signify that he wished to correspond, Reuben would “reciprocate the favor, for I shall consider it a favor, by writing in return.”

Esther Le Baron’s letter is of some importance because it is all we have found on Mother Julia’s illness, and it definitely fixes the date of the disastrous fire which destroyed most of Joseph’s holdings. It was dated:

“November the 10th, 1853.

“Dear brother Benja:

“... You have certainly heard ere this the news of our dear, dear mother. Yes, Benja, our mother is no more.
When I beheld her severe sufferings for a few of the last weeks of her life, I dared not wish her to stay. She seemed perfectly willing to go, although she expressed anxiety about little David. She wished him taken to his father in the Valley... November 13. I have neglected to finish this, and now I find I have news that is not of an agreeable nature. Night before last a fire broke out in one of the stores and before it could be subdued it consumed 15 to 20 of the best buildings, including Joseph’s store, saloon, printing office, warehouse, bakery building, etc., which was almost a total loss to him.

Esther LeBaron.”

The David referred to is undoubtedly David Johnson Wilson, son of Mary M. and George Deliverance Wilson. Mary died in Nauvoo, June 11, 1845, leaving this one child. He was ten years old and had been left with Mother Julia for safety’s sake while his father went on to the Valley. The “saloon” mentioned was not one where shaggy whiskered men went into jam their sun-tanned carcasses with coffin varnish. Nay! It was a genteel saloon, advertised by large yellow posters telling that “a room has been fitted up in the Emporium Buildings where Ladies and Gentlemen can be supplied with Ice Creams and cooling beverages... and such other refreshments as can be produced in this market...”

The big fire was disastrous to many people, and to Joseph it was well nigh ruinous. But even disasters produce a laugh now and then. The family story in this case puts the joke on Hannah’s brother, W. P. (Bill) Goddard, who was among the men running in and out of the store while it was burning, saving whatever they could from the flames. Bill was very excited, and when someone saw him coming out with a lot of flat irons and called out, “Hey, Bill, don’t bring out the stuff that won’t burn!” Bill turned about face and lugged the irons back into the store!
Joseph figured his loss at $20,000, which in those days to a Mormon, was tidy money. However he had kept his credit good and was able to muster enough financial support to begin at once to restore the Bugle office, then the store and other branches of the business. We find a letter that was written some time later regarding a loan he had asked for. The amount was small, but the letter indicates that he was regarded as a safe risk. It is on the letterhead of the banking house of Green, Weare and Benton, and reads in this wise:

"Dear Sir:

"I have yours of the 29th ult. You can get the $1000.00 of the Fontenelle Bank of Bellevue by calling on the cas. Mr. John J. Towne, Monday or Tuesday or about that time. I do not know what Mr. T's terms are but have advised him that you will probably call and that your paper is O.K.

Yours respectfully,

Thomas H. Benton, Jr."

The signer of the above might be none other than the son of the noted Senator Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri, father-in-law of the great pathfinder John C. Fremont. It is interesting to note that the symbol O.K. was in use in the early '50's; we thought it appeared a little later on.

Returning now to the "gang" letter, the next writer was JEJ, who inscribed on the top margin: "13. A great fire has occurred. I am all burnt out, See Bugle." Then to put a final touch on this multisignatured missive, Benjamin has written, "Rec. Apl. 23, 1854." It was posted Nov. 14, thus over five months was required to get a letter from the Missouri to the Sandwich Islands.

EDITORS AND FRIENDS RALLY ROUND

The burning out of the Bugle office was noted sympathetically by many newspapers of the area. A number of clippings found were on salvaged leaves of JEJ's scrap book
which touch on the matter. Here is one from the Fairfield Ledger:

"Council Bluffs Bugle. This sheet comes to us enlarged ... and is now issued semi-weekly. We do not know Mr. Johnson, but we do know that some six weeks ago he was burnt out of house and home, printing office and all, nothing left but enough material to print a small Bugle about 10 x 12. The issue of a semi-weekly so soon after his loss speaks well for his energy in carrying out a previous announcement. He deserves the patronage of the public, for were he not "all sorts of a fellow," he would not have so soon arisen Phoenix-like from the ashes...."

To which Joseph added:

"Thank you, neighbor Fulton; though not overstocked with vanity we feel an honest pride in the above compliment. ... We are working people out here, which is the reason of our rapid advance in wealth and importance. Only think, our little Indian village of five years ago is now a city of about 2000 inhabitants,—doesn't that look like energy and industry? When we shall have erected a spacious and convenient building of brick on the site of the Emporium for our sanctum, we shall be happy to make your more immediate acquaintance."

The Kentucky Flag had this to say:

"Our friend and brother who edits the Council Bluffs Bugle away up on the confines of Nebraska has a hard time of it in sustaining his useful and interesting paper. He has had his office destroyed by fire, which, in that new country, must have been a serious loss. He complains of having 300 exchange papers merely to gratify those who wish to obtain the news from the 'Far West.' This is a great tax upon any office, and an insupportable one for a young office in a new country. He has entirely too many exchanges, but like us, he cannot curtail his list without doing violence to his own
feelings, so he grins and bears it. We are one of the 300 who have the satisfaction of reading the Bugle, and we would not be without it for its weight in gold. It is a good paper, well conducted and on the right side. Every man interested in the ‘Great West’ should subscribe for it through its columns obtain reliable information from that region.”

Another little offshoot of the fire was a circular letter which was gotten up by some of Joseph’s friends, printed and sent to many people and firms with whom he did business. It does not amount to much, but it is at least a friendly testimonial from some of the prominent people of the town. Here it is:

“Council Bluffs, Iowa,
November 15, 1853.

“We, the undersigned, are personally acquainted with Mr. Joseph E. Johnson, and believe him to be an industrious, enterprising business man and a good citizen.

“His loss by the recent fire has been severe,—the whole of the Emporium block, together with all his books, papers and nearly his whole stock in trade were consumed. To those with whom he had business relations, we would say we consider him in his misfortunes deserving the sympathies and favors of all his friends and business connections, and cheerfully award him this slight token of merit.

S. H. Riddle, Judge of the Circuit Court
S. T. Cary, Clerk, Circuit Court
Pottawattamie Co.
E. Ellsworth, Sheriff of Pottawattamie Co.
William Turner, Treasurer & Recorder do
N. T. Spoor, School Fund Commissioner do
J. P. McMahon, M.D.
M. H. Clark, M.D.
David Devol, Justice of the Peace
Samuel Eggleston, Justice of the Peace
Several editorials from the Bugle found in JEJ’s scrap book seem worth printing for their historical and literary worth, but space permits only brief excerpts. One is titled The Graves of the Pilgrims and tells a story in beautiful language of the settlement of Winter Quarters and the unhappy events preceding its abandonment. The tale begins with the building of Nauvoo and the flight of its citizens to the west bank of the Missouri where the town later known as Florence was erected. Here are a few paragraphs:

“Seven thousand souls, tired and worn, here reared a town, yes, an extensive city, with streets, squares, public grounds, buildings, school and churches. Here they vainly hoped to pass the dreary winter in peace and domestic happiness, but alas! this the angry fates denied them . . . pinched for want of salt and standard provisions, an unmanageable disease in a few months carried many hundreds of its victims to the grave.

“Away from the world and alone, here the father buried his partner or only child. The mother became childless or perhaps a widow. The helpless child or germ of budding manhood or womanhood were left upon the cold world as orphans. How many tales of heart rending grief and unavailing woe could those green turfs on the hillside reveal could they but speak? What anguish of soul have they experienced! The very grass, herbage and flowers have been moistened and bedewed with the tears from life’s fountains of the bereaved! Now there they lie in the silence with the greensward grown smoothly over the forms of the lovely, the loved and the talented, victims of the vengeance of their persecutors and martyrs to their religious belief.

“... Thousands still visit this spot to note the relics of the suffering pioneers who first opened the country to the notice of those who have followed and now own the lands.
The sepulchre of the fallen should be ornamented and preserved as a monument to the indomitable energy of the persecuted Mormons."

A MONUMENT RISES

An interesting footnote to this graphic and withal touching description of the tragedy of Florence is the fact that almost exactly one hundred years after it was penned, an admirable piece of statuary WAS raised at Florence as a tribute to those who suffered and died there. On a plaque on the reverse side of this thrillingly beautiful work of art is depicted a pioneer train. At the side of one of the waggons a woman is walking, holding to a small hand that protrudes from under the wagon cover. These figures, while emblematic of all the human tide that made up the great Mormon migration were nevertheless drawn from life. The woman who enacted the scene in the flesh was Eliza, wife of Joseph Ellis Johnson; the child was Charles Ellis, oldest son of JEJ and Eliza. Charlie was three years old and Eliza was twenty. They were being sent to the Valley a year ahead of the family exodus, under the care of Joel, who had charge of Joseph’s wagons as well as his own.

Eliza walked much of the way across the plains, partly because her wagon was heavy laden with trees, cuttings, seeds and other plant material which was destined for the Valley. One of her tasks, when camp was reached, at night, was to keep this material moistened in order to keep it alive on the long, dry journey. In addition to Charlie she had the care of four Babbitt children who were being sent to the Valley after the death of their parents.

Charlie was ailing on much of the way. The wonder is that any small children made the crossing without illness, considering bad weather, myriads of flies and mosquitoes, unsuitable food and lack of any preventative of food spoilage. He was insistent that his mother hold his hand as the
wagon jounced along, and she trod many an uncomfortable mile in order to bring him a small meed of comfort. She has related that the necessity of walking beside the wagon brought her into contact with weeds and brush to such an extent that the lower portion of her skirts would often be in tatters. She was compelled to “rebuild” several times on the way with sacking or any materials obtainable. Sometimes when camp was reached in the evening her knees would be bleeding from the scratchings of coarse brush.

Another fact of interest in connection with the Winter Quarters monument is that it was created by the noted sculptor, Dr. Avard Fairbanks, whose handiwork is revealed in many outstanding figures of statuary in various parts of the world. Dr. Fairbanks is the husband of Maude Fox, who is the daughter of Rosemary Johnson (Aunt Rose) and the granddaughter of JEJ.
IT'S NOT ALWAYS DULL IN A PRINTSHOP

Life in the Bugle office was not always one of hard work, unpaid subscriptions and inky fingers. The "genial editor" was something of a joker (he called himself "gleeful") and every now and then something happened to put the kibosh on dull care. The tale comes to us via a clipping from the Chicago Pathfinder, which had taken the yarn from the columns of the Bugle. We eliminate preliminaries and abridge the account somewhat. The headline reads:

LET'S DIE TOGETHER!

... The editor, whom we will call Quill, having business to engage him much of the night, had wisely provided a nice broil to strengthen the inner man, and having carefully stowed it away, stepped out for a short time on business. The foreman and typo, whom we shall call Quad and Rule, came in and chanced to find the steak. What a fine chance to play a joke on Quill; eat the delicious morsel and when too late, laugh at him! That's it, bright idea, we have him on the hip! The juicy steak was broiled and eagerly and hastily devoured, after being given a fine brown roast. Quill enters and goes to his labors suspecting nothing wrong. Quad and Rule could not long retain their mirth over the rich joke. The secret must out! Thanks to the careful, provident Quill, "the steak was fine."

Quill, comprehending the state of affairs determined to richly repay the boys for their left handed joke. Assuming the gravity of an owl and the solicitude of a matronly Shanghai, he eagerly grasped Quad by the arm and exclaimed, "Good heavens, Quad, you haven't eaten that poisoned meat?" "Y-y-yes," responded Quad, whilst his face assumed an ashy paleness, his limbs were seized with a trembling and his eyes stood out an inch from his forehead. "Good Lord! Then you are poisoned! In a few minutes you
will be a dead man! Strychnine was put on that meat to kill wolves."

Every person in the office knew that strychnine had been prepared that day to silence some wolves that had been making the night hideous with their howling. Everyone rushed to the scene, business was suspended and all stood by awaiting breathlessly the termination of this tragical scene. "Poisoned!—strychnine!!—death!!!," moaned the thoroughly affrighted Quad. "Oh, Lord save me!" and he rolled his eyes beseechingly heavenward. Then, placing both hands on his stomach, he howled, "Ow-ow-ow! I feel the deadly gripe. The poison has hold of my vitals! O-h-h-h Save me! What shall I take?" Quill prescribed grease, oil, lard, soap, anything, as an antidote. Devil jumped down to the press and instantly returned with a large bottle filled with oil, the article used on the press. Quad grasped it spasmodically, disengaged the cork and placed it in his mouth. The limpid stream flowed rapidly toward its level, and the bottle would have been emptied had it not been arrested by the hand of Rule, whose quick eye measured the remains of the fast disappearing, life saving antidote. The remainder was hastily gulped, together with all the grease that could be found in the office.

Consternation and fright now reigned in that once happy office,—prayers were breathed for the sinful souls of the two unfortunates. The crisis was hastily approaching when another entered and quickly learned the awful state of affairs. "You must take him to the doctor, hurry! hurry!" screamed the newcomer. This was something unthought of in the bustle before. Quad sprang to the door when Rule moaned out, "Stop a moment, Quad. Wait, I will go, too. If we die, let's die together like men!" The office of Dr. M. was reached quickly—the victims examined. Doc said there was little danger—the poison, if taken, would have done its work before. Quad was not satisfied; he saw only death before him; he needed more oil! Pale, haggard,
trembling in every limb, he rushed out, followed by all the boys from the office, breaking through two doors of a neighboring establishment, he shouted to the proprietor, "Oil, grease, lard—quick! strychnine—hurry or I am a dead man! The pains are more than I can stand! Ow-oo-oo-oo!"

The frightened keeper could find only a little lamp grease on hand, and he hastily put a pan of pork on the fire. The wretched victim, almost in the agonies of death, his knees like Belshazzar's, smiting together and with his breath half cooling the accumulated fat, rapidly drank it as if it were the sweetest morsel. The overburdened stomach could not endure everything, a tenderness and upheaval ensued, and the victim was led back to the office physically prostrated. Quill was absent—the secret had leaked out—the boys couldn't hold—they tittered, giggled—laughed—the thing was out! Quad and Rule smelled the mice strongly—their strength and vigor returned at once. No oil, the press could not run that night, no one dared to mention the name of it. Doctor called next morning, bill was promptly met. Weather was exceedingly cold, yet that house was too hot for Quill for a number of days. The boys can't endure the sight of pork, grease or butter.

On Saturday, Quad still pale, was passing down the street. A stranger called from behind asking the location of a drug store, said he wanted some strychnine to poison wolves. With murder in his eyes, Quad turned upon him. Stranger took him to be a madman and hastily fled—hotly pursued, hats flew off in the wind! still bareheaded, as for life each nerved himself—away—away, until lost from sight. We have heard from neither since. Meantime, Quill has returned to the office.

Oil has gone up in the city, but for strychnine,—no sale.
CHAPTER 24

OMAHA AND THE ARROW

When the magnificent Mormon Pioneer bridge over the Missouri river between Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Florence, Nebraska was dedicated in 1953, the official program booklet bore the pictures of two men only, Henry W. Miller and Joseph Ellis Johnson. Henry opened the first farm on the site of the subsequent Kanesville and Joseph followed in 1848. Joseph had predicted in the columns of the Council Bluffs Bugle that a bridge would be built on this site. Speaking of Florence, he wrote:

"First and foremost in advantages as an important town site, at this place the river has a solid rock bottom, extending ad infinitum into the banks on either side, which is here brought to the nearest compass . . . only 700 feet wide . . . the solidity and durability of the bottom is sufficient evidence that this will be the great crossing for the Pacific Railroad. This is the only place discovered where rock bottom extends in a continuous unbroken chain across the river, giving ample room for abutments and fastenings; it is here the bridge will be extended . . . from shore to shore, upon which the long trains bound for the Pacific will cross and recross laden with merchandise from the two extremes of the hemisphere."

The picture mentioned recognized these men as practically the founders of what is today the important city of Council Bluffs. A few years later Joseph was to achieve similar prominence as one of the founding fathers of an even greater city, Omaha, Nebraska. We were told some sixty years ago by our family oracles that JEJ was one of the eight men who chose "Omaha" as the name of the new settlement that was taking shape on the Nebraska shore. We do not find written reference to this episode in such
family records as we have, nor can we turn it up in any of the meagre accounts available of the city's genesis. However, it has been for so long an established tradition with us that we do not hesitate to accept it as a fact. Since JEJ was a "tenant at will" of the Omaha Indians, and had spent much time with them during the "Omaha Mission," we would not be surprised if he it was who proposed the name.

Certainly he knew the country well and was on the ground at an early date to establish a newspaper even before there was a house for him to dwell in or in which it could be printed. With himself as editor and J. W. Pattison as publisher, he launched The Omaha Arrow when Omaha boasted only six houses. The printing was done in the office of the Council Bluffs Bugle across the river. It was conceived primarily to advertise the infant town and the surrounding area, and to proclaim its great future, in which JEJ manifested a most passionate belief.

The Omaha Arrow was the first paper to be edited in Nebraska Territory. The first number was issued July 28, 1854. Seldom, if ever, has the opening editorial of an obscure paper, emanating from an as yet unbuilt town, situated on the fringes of nowhere, caused as much jovial comment as did the Arrow's initial offering. It was reprinted by various papers over a wide area, some of the editors devoting one or two columns to it, with their own comments sandwiched in. Joseph saved many clippings from these papers for his scrapbook, thus enabling us to quote most, if not all of the editorial, although we do not have access to a copy of the first issue. We quote the main part of the salutation from The Southern Rights Advocate, of Anderson, South Carolina:

"THE OMAHA ARROW. We have received the second number of a neat little paper bearing the above title, published at Omaha City, Nebraska Territory. . . . The Arrow gives a glowing description of life in Nebraska,—
upon reading it we have been almost persuaded to "shut up shop" and be off for Nebraska. Just read our article, 'Nebraska Going Ahead,' on our first page, taken from the Arrow, and you too will feel like making tracks for that country. From the first number... we are enabled to give an interesting chapter... as to where and what Omaha City is, and how they are situated."

NEBRASKA GOING AHEAD

Romance of the Frontier

"Well, strangers, friends, patrons and good people generally, wherever in the world your lot may be cast and in whatever clime this Arrow may find you, here we are upon Nebraska soil. Seated on the stump of an ancient oak, which serves for an editorial chair, and the top of our badly abused beaver for a table, we propose inditing a leader for the Omaha Arrow. An elevated tableland surrounds us; the majestic Missouri, just off on our left, goes sweeping its muddy course down toward the Mexican Gulf, whilst the background of the pleasing picture is filled with Iowa's loveliest, richest scenery. On our left, spreading far away in the distance lies one of the loveliest sections of Nebraska.

"Yonder comes two stalwart sons of the forest, bedecked in their native finery. They approach and stand before us in our sanctum. That dancing feather which adorns one's head is the gaudy plumage of the mountain eagle. The shades of the rainbow appear on their faces. They extend the hand of friendship with the emphatic "Cuggy how" (this means How yuh doin', pal? in modern English), and knowing our business, request us by signs and gesticulations to write in the Arrow to the Great Father that the Omahas want what he has promised them, and ask us to write no bad about them. They watch the progress of the pencil as we proceed."
“Yon rich, rolling widespread and beautiful prairie dotted with timber looks lovely just now, as heaven’s free sunlight touches in beauty the lights and shades, to be entitled the Eden land of the world, and inspires us with flights of fancy upon this antiquated beaver. But it won’t pay! There sticks our axe in the trunk of an oak, whose branches have for years been fanned by the breezes that sweep from over the oft-times flower dotted lea, and from which we propose to make a log for our cabin and claim.”

Beautiful! beautiful! What a glorious country is this of ours! Sitting in the midst of the prairie upon a stump, writing editorials on the crown of an old beaver. And so here he goes again in the description of;

A NIGHT IN OUR SANCTUM

“Last night we slept in our sanctum, the starry decked heaven for a ceiling and our mother earth for a flooring. It was a glorious night and we were tired from the day’s exertions. Far away on the different portions of the prairie glimmered the campfires of our neighbors, the Pawnees, the Omahas, or that noble and too often unappreciated class of our own people known as pioneers or squatters. We gathered round our little camp fire, talked of times in the past, of the pleasing present, and of the glorious future which the march of civilization should open to the land upon which we sat. The new moon was just sinking behind the distant prairie roll, but slightly dispelling the darkness which crept over our loved and cherished Nebraska land.”

And mark how he moralizes upon the “unalloyed pleasure” of sleeping in the open air of Nebraska:

“We thought of distant friends and loved ones who, stretched upon beds of downy ease little appreciated the unalloyed pleasure, the heaven blessed comfort that dwelt with us in this far off land. No busy hum of the bustling world served to distract our thoughts. Behind us was
spread our buffalo robe in an Indian trail, which was to serve as our bed and bedding. The night wind swept in cooling breezes around us deep laden with the perfume of a thousand hued and varied flowers. Far away upon our lee came the occasional long drawn howl of the prairie wolves. Talk of comfort..."

Good! Very good! That is the stuff for an editorial pioneer. He next describes a dream in which Omaha appeared a great inland commercial emporium, all noise and confusion from steamboats, railroad locomotives, and the busy overland commercial exchanges of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. He may live to realize the vision. Who knows? (He DID live to see much of the dream realized, even before he left the river country for the far West).

The following is refreshing and suggestive of the "comfort" etc., of Omaha and Nebraska:

"Why, sirs, the St. Nicholas, New York, is no circumstance for comfort, ease and cheap living, to its namesake in our city. Here you may get venison, fowl, bird or fish cooked in any manner you wish. You may smoke in the parlor here, put your heels up on the sideboard without injury to the furniture, or for variety may spread your buffalo (robe) on the green prairie grass and take a comfortable snooze without fear of being run out by a score of woolly headed servants. Omaha City, indeed! Why, we have editors, squatters, deer, turkeys, grouse and other 'animals' aplenty, and will soon show you that we will be one of the cities of the west."

The reference to "St. Nicholas" is explained in a letter from JEJ to the Nebraska Horticultural Society, which had invited him (in Utah) to attend the convention of 1878. He wrote: "I established the first log cabin on the site of Omaha, corner of Jackson and 12th, also a store and resting place facetiously named St. Nicholas." This name was taken from a famous place of entertainment in New York, and
was applied jokingly, as a person now might name a way­side cafe Delmonico’s or Maxim’s.

One of our family once discussed “A Night in Our Sanctum” with someone in Nebraska. This person men­tioned that it was not signed and intimated that it could have been written by J. W. Pattison, associate in the “Ar­row” enterprise. This, we are confident, is not a fact. One clipping from an exchange, in JEJ’s scrapbook, in quoting the “sanctum” story, gave the authorship as Mr. Pattison’s, but JEJ had crossed out the former’s name and written in ink the letters J.E.J., thus indicating that Pattison had no part in it. There was but one other person, name unknown, initials R.S.W., who wrote a little for the Arrow. If there was any collaboration, this nebulous person was the only one who could have furnished it. But it is definitely JEJ’s style with many of his phrases, pet words, verbosity and mannerisms plainly in evidence. We do not question his authorship.

MORE FLIGHTS OF THE ARROW

On May 1, 1895 the Omaha Daily Bee ran a long story by Mrs. Charles B. Thompson, captioned “Nebraska’s First Paper.” It described the style and make up, type of news and advertising, with excerpts, quoted from the salutation and the opening editorial and even printed some of the jokes. It is too long to give in full, but we quote a number of paragraphs:

NEBRASKA’S FIRST PAPER

A most Creditable Publication

The First Editorial Ever Written on Nebraska Soil

Forty one years ago . . . the first newspaper ever born on Nebraska soil opened its eyes on the gateway of an em­pire that was to be. Its birthplace was the gnarled stump
of an ancient oak and its swaddling clothes the caressing winds of the perfumed prairies.

Although cradled on the breast of a foster mother, its lusty shouts for the land of its adoption were loyalty itself and its prophetic forecast of the future of Omaha and the west have been more than realized in our magnificent present.

It is an offspring to be proud of, and taking the time, its environments and objects for which it was created (to boom the newly laid out site of Omaha City, N. T,) it was a most creditable progenitor of the great metropolitan paper of which our city is so proud. . . .

The editor was a Mr. J. E. Johnson, who is described . . . as a tall, spare, wiry man, with dark hair and eyes, genial, generous, popular among his townsmen, public spirited and enterprising, and somewhere between 35 and 40 years of age, a typical westerner of that early time. He was a Mormon, having a real and a spiritual wife, whatever that means, and came with Brigham Young from Nauvoo, Illinois. . . .

He was the proprietor of a flourishing general store and also editor of a most creditable journal for that time, the Western Bugle, Council Bluffs, Iowa, when he started this new enterprise. He was a ready writer and could write editorials and hustle for business with equal success. . . .

The name of this first newspaper ever published in Omaha or Nebraska was the Omaha Arrow, and its buoyant flight proved that it had been shot from the bow of a skillful archer. . . . The reading matter which graced its columns was of much better character than one would expect to find in a frontier journal forty years ago. The variety was surprising, considering the limited field to be drawn from. The arrangement, or make up, was the same that is usually followed by papers of its size. The general appearance was
rather better than would be expected . . . and what is called the mechanical part would compare favorably with many so-called modern newspapers.

The thermometer stood at 103 in the shade on the day of publication, a temperature which Omaha still retains . . . Mr. Bloomer, whose wife discovered (designed?) the costume which bears his name, visited Omaha about that time. From present indications, it would seem that Mr. Bloomer reached Omaha about forty years ahead of time. (Note: The last line, written in 1895, means that there was a craze for bloomers in that year in America, brought on by the sudden mania for bicycle riding by women. We were 13 at the time and remember being scandalized when a girl on our block appeared in them, actually showing her legs from the knees down, the hussy! Incidentally, we have a letter from Amelia Bloomer in our file addressed to JEJ.)

Even the irrepressible humorist of the 1880's, Bill Nye, heard of the Arrow. We have a clipping dated May 11, 1889, from what seems to be a San Francisco paper, so worn that it cannot all be read, in which Mr. Nye is quoted in this manner:

"The Arrow was the first Omaha newspaper. . . . It was devoted to the arts, sciences, letters, climate, resources, agriculture, mean temperature and politics. Mr. Johnson was the business manager and had four wives besides. It is needless to say that he was a man of great ability. All day long he would manage the paper, and then weary and exhausted, take up the task of managing his four soul's idols. He also practiced law. Incidentally, he ran a blacksmith shop and preached. He was an insurance agent and kept a general store. On a cold day he would frequently, while drawing a gallon of molasses, shoe a broncho mule, write a sermon on humility and whip a wife. He would then put up the molasses, wipe his fingers on his whiskers,
and write an editorial, entitled 'We Have Came to Stay.' He remained in Omaha and Council Bluffs until he saw a man enter the store wearing a new high silk hat. The next morning Mr. Johnson sold out his varied interests and went to Salt Lake City, where he became the head of several more families."

Of course, this is the good natured spoofing which was the kernel of Bill Nye's humor and it is shot through with inaccuracies, but it ties in with earlier references to JEJ's many activities. Supreme Court Justice Horace E. Deemer described JEJ in these words, "Mr. Johnson was the most versatile and ubiquitous and probably the most unique figure in Nebraska journalism." (Annals of Iowa.)

James C. Olson in his History of Nebraska (1953) has this to say of the early Nebraska editors:

"They were a vigorous breed of men, never at a loss for words and never without an opinion. . . . They had an inexhaustible store of adjectives with which to describe the present condition and future prospects of state and community. One of the most vigorous editors was Joseph E. Johnson, a Mormon, who had taken the trek to Utah, but who turned up in Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1852 as publisher of the Bugle, an ardent advocate of the Nebraska Territory. He began publishing a paper in Omaha, the Arrow, a few weeks after the Kansas-Nebraska bill was signed."

He goes on to say, "The Arrow's valedictory illustrates both the vicissitudes of early territorial journalism and the characteristic quaintness of the editor's style. The ready imaginations, the lively sensibility to the salient features of the writers environment, the happy conceits and the quaint simplicity of style which are illustrated in this untutored product of the plains would be remarkable as specialties in the most pretentious periodical of today. Even the workaday incidents of his bucolic life, which he enjoyed with a relish as if he and his rural world were designed
especially for each other, he pictures in his naive fancy." (By permission of University of Nebraska Press.)

Returning for a moment to the "Night in our Sanctum" story, we find this:

"Mr. Johnson was a pioneer, a rustler and a man of business. 'Johnson,' says Hadley D. Johnson (no relation), who was familiar with the facts, 'wrote The Dream (part of the 'Sanctum' piece) spoken of as Pattison's efforts. He foresaw a brilliant future for Nebraska.'" (Proc. & Collec. Neb. State Hist. Soc. 2nd ser. Vol. 5, page 53.)

MISCELLANEOUS EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE ARROW

The Bellevue Palladium:

The first number of the Arrow has made its appearance. It comes with a cheerful open countenance, a kind of care-for-nothing aspect, ready stripped to enter the strife at all hazards. It arrogates unto its self the right to adopt its own method of attack and defense. It enters upon it a work with zeal and pleasantry, and we have no doubt but that these needful features will continue to characterize this paper.

The Pioneer, West Union:

Omaha Arrow. This is the name of a newly established and perhaps the only paper published in Nebraska Territory. the first number of which has been issued at Omaha City, the anticipated capital of that Territory, which is laid out on a beautiful piece of rising ground some distance from the river, opposite Council Bluffs city. The site is claimed by a company of eight and each share is now held at $2,500. May the Arrow reap a rich reward. (Could it be that the "eight" were the same eight that we have mentioned in connection with the naming of the city and
that JEJ was one of them? Certainly he claimed many lots and plots, and we have a book of surveyor's notes and descriptions, showing that he had much to do with real estate.)

The Iowa Sentinel, Fairfield, Iowa.

Omaha Arrow. This is a paper published in Omaha, N. T. We wish the editor success, and hope their Arrow may go forth well feathered, well pointed and with a true aim.

Unidentified Exchange:

The editor of the Omaha Arrow has a good time of it out yonder in Nebraska. He says he sleeps in his sanctum, which has the starry decked heavens for a ceiling and Mother Earth for flooring. The stump of an ancient oak serves him for an editorial chair and he writes his articles on the top of his hat. The natives gaze on him as his pencil travels across the paper, and they request him to say to the Great Father that the Omahas want what he has promised them. May they get it, and that speedily and here's our (cut of a hand) to the jolly editor of the Arrow.

Another clipping from an unknown paper, captions an article thus:

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING IN NEBRASKA

We have before us the first number of a paper called The Omaha Arrow, bearing date "Omaha City, N. T., July 28, 1854." It is edited by J. E. and J. W. Pattison, who judging from the specimen copy, are men of genius and enterprise. We have been no little amused by their opening leader, and as many of our readers might similarly be gratified, we will make room for a few extracts. The following is the introductory fire, and may excite no little merriment, even among the gravely disposed. (Then fol-
allows the "stump and beaver" opening editorial previously quoted. (Note that the typesetter has here omitted the word "Johnson" after the J. E. In correcting this, Joseph ran his pen through the "J. W. Pattison" and wrote in "Johnson" after the J. E. This we understand to be a second denial by JEJ that Pattison had any part in the salutatory editorial.)

Davenport Commercial:

The Omaha Arrow, the first newspaper issued from Nebraska is before us. . . . Of his platform the editor says, "The Arrow's target will be the general interest and welfare of this highly favored, new and beautiful territory, upon which we have now for the first time established a regular weekly paper. Our caste is decidedly "Young American" in spirit and politics. We are in favor of anything that runs by steam or electricity and the unflinching advocates of the "sovereigns of the soil." The pioneering squatter and the uncivilized redman are our constituents and neighbors, the wolves and deer our traveling companions, and the wild birds and prairie winds our musicians . . .".

If thou would'st steal, still spare this Book of mine,
Or it shall brand the thief throughout all time.
CHAPTER 25

OMAHA INTERLUDE

The Nebraska Horticultural Society, in 1878, remembering JEJ's part in the settlement of Nebraska, sent him an invitation to attend the convention of the society held in that year. He was then in St. George, Utah, and was unable to accept, but he wrote a long letter to the association, parts of which give us an idea of what he was doing in Omaha during much of 1854-55. In addition to the Arrow and his restaurant-store, he was still publishing the Bugle across the river and maintaining the store, outfitters business and other enterprises. Besides, he was deep in politics and still postmaster, although his brother seems to have relieved him of much of the onus of this activity. Yet he found time to do some exploring and other things mentioned in the letter above referred to. Somewhat abridged, the letter reads:

"St. George, Utah, Dec. 30, 1878

"Your note received and thanks for the remembrance of an old pioneer of your beautiful, prosperous state. . . . In 1848 I removed to Council Bluffs, then Kanesville, entered into mercantile business and built that year the first frame building (a store) in Pottawattamie county. In 1850 I crossed the plains to Utah and returned . . . and from then onward thought, wrote and published much in favor of the railroad up the north side of the Platte . . . meanwhile, from my office was issued one volume of the first paper ever purporting to be printed in Nebraska, the "Omaha Arrow." This was in 1854. . . . I traversed wilds of Nebraska north south and west for a hundred miles or more examining the topography of the country for agriculture, railroads, grazing, mills, etc. I established the first squatter's log cabin on the site of Omaha, corner Jackson and 12th, also a store and resting place facetiously named 'St. Nicholas,' planted
a garden of vegetables, and broke land by plowing a farm I located half way between Omaha and Bellevue.”

In a thumb nail biography written in 1882 JEJ reiterated his statement regarding the building of the first house in Omaha, by writing flatly that he “opened the first store on the site of Omaha.” . . . In 1854 he was invited to and did accompany the first party of explorers who were seeking a crossing of the Missouri river and the Loup Fork of the Platte. He wrote the first article published favoring the North Platte route for the Pacific Railroad, and contended for it until it was so located, (vide files of Bugle). He stated that the Bugle had much to do with the capital of Nebraska being located at Omaha.

The strong advocacy of Omaha as the capital of Nebraska by the Bugle, an Iowa paper, was termed the “Iowa idea” by Governor Morton, who said it was “pushed” by JEJ. This bears out the above claim. In the fracas over the naming, the Palladium urged the choice of Bellevue for the capital site, which stirred up a little battle between its editor and the Bugle. In the first number of the Arrow, JEJ discussed the proposed locations thus:

“Omaha City may be considered among the first in importance. It is situated directly opposite Bluffs City (C. B.) upon a delightful and sightly eminence overlooking the country for miles around, bringing in view the city of Council Bluffs, town of St. Mary’s, Trader’s Point and Council Point in Iowa and Winter Quarters in this territory, It extends directly to the river landing and back upwards of a mile, and some mile and a half up and down the river. There is some 1500 lots surveyed, together with a large square on the summit of the elevation for the Capitol . . . there are a number of cool springs of water in various parts of the townsite, a heavy body of timber lies immediately below and adjoining the city, and wide open prairies which will make delightful farms, stretch back from the river.”
In another issue, answering the Bellevue brag-up of the Palladium, he wrote: "... nevertheless Omaha is a handsome place. It occupies a beautiful plateau sloping well to the river. ... The view is extensive and picturesque, taking in a long reach of the river both up and down, the broad, rich bottom lands dotted over with fields, houses and cattle, and a strange, romantic and bewildering background of indented and variously formed bluffs."

In answer, the Palladium editor told of going to Omaha to see all of the sights mentioned by the Arrow. He said he looked around to see where he could find the city. "We were at a loss at first to satisfy ourselves that it actually spread out before us, and much more to identify the commanding point, the focus of business." To this JEJ snorted, "Focus of business, indeed! Four months ago there was not a family upon this spot, nor a house reared. Now there are two stores and some twenty houses, with a score more in progress. Query: Where is the focus of business at Bellevue? When there has been one house reared on the site, we shall not intrude so pertinent an inquiry. The city of Bellevue is easily found, not a building or a pile of material obstructs the vision!"

Anyhow, Omaha won, although in later years the capital was moved to Lincoln, where it still rests.

THE RAILROAD CREEPS CLOSER TO THE RIVER

As early as 1851, JEJ was appointed one of the members of the State Railroad convention, held in the legislative halls in Iowa City. He was an ardent booster for rail construction and was included in many meetings and incidents connected with their appearance on the local scene. Two invitations to railroad ceremonies addressed to JEJ have been preserved, one was from the citizens of Dubuque, Iowa, who were celebrating the completion of the Illinois Central R. R. to their city, also the lighting of the city by gas. An-
other, more elaborate, invited him to attend the celebration at Iowa City of the opening of the Mississippi & Missouri Railroad on January 3, 1856. This one boasted "Iowa City and Atlantic cities connected by railway! The National Trunk Road Half Completed to the Pacific! On the Parallel of New York, Chicago, Platte Valley and South!"

These were signed by groups of committeemen and each contained a pass on other lines which would get JEJ there.

THIRTY FOR THE OMAHA ARROW

With all the whoop and hurrah which accompanied the launching of the Arrow, we have often wondered why it "went off the stands" with but one volume to its credit. From the Nebraska Historical Society we have received a copy of a paragraph from the last issue, Dec. 29, 1854 which gives an explanation of the chief cause of the foldup. The paper had not been issued with strict regularity, due, as one source explains, largely to the uncertainty of the newsprint paper supply on what was then the land "out back o' beyond." It is likely that there was no issue after Nov. 10 until the final one on the date given above. The rather brief valedictory editorial begins with the salutation:

GOOD MORNING!

"Well, friends, it has been some time since we last met here, but here we go again.

"Providence and the bad state of navigation in the Missouri river, has played smash with our calculations, and we have not been able to 'come up to time' in the issue of the Arrow, but expect before long to make it permanent at Omaha, or place it in hands that will do you justice and honor to themselves. In the meantime, we send you the
Bugle in its place, which contains everything of interest in Nebraska. Each subscriber will receive his just and true number of papers and in the end will lose nothing. We are sorry for this unavoidable state of things. We had press and equipment purchased but on account of exorbitant rates of freight (these) are detained below."

This short adieu proved to be the obituary of the Arrow in spite of the editor's hope that he might "make it permanent in Omaha." He had too many interests on the other side of the river.

HO HUM! BACK TO THE ST. NICHOLAS AGAIN

In several instances writers on the early Omaha scene have asserted that the "St. Nicholas" cabin mentioned by JEJ's letter was built by the Ferry company, and that in the summer of 1854 a man and his wife named Snowden began to operate a hotel there. The fact that these writers tell the same story does not necessarily make it a fact. One writer makes a statement, succeeding authors lift it, and if it is an error or only a partial truth in the first place, it is still an error even though a dozen writers perpetuate it.

It is quite possible that the Snowdens operated a hotel "shortly after midsummer," but that phrase could easily mean "after" JEJ had turned the business over to them. He could have had the business going when they arrived and they could have purchased it from him. He was on the scene right at the start and had every opportunity to get in on the ground floor.

It is our belief that he erected the cabin and started the store and "resting place." Even if he were a liar we cannot believe he would make such a bald claim if it were not true, especially to an organization which could, as he well knew, easily disprove it if it were false. We have already quoted the invitation from his paper for all to come
to St. Nicholas for fine foods and to put their feet up on the sideboard if they wished to feel at home. It is not likely that he would do this if the place belonged to someone else.

Even the name, jestingly bestowed, smacks loudly of JEJ's doing. There is small likelihood that the name would be familiar to the Iowa couple, but it was known to JEJ, who had but recently returned from New York where he had made the rounds of the places of entertainment and was familiar with the original St. Nicholas, quite.
We have remarked before that little has been found in the way of love letters, poetry and other scripted niceties of courtship in the story of Joseph's first two marriages. In the initial instance, the twain were ever near one another, that is, there were no separations of length or distance which would call for written communications. One rarely writes poems or tender missives when the two are constantly together. In the second case the wife had lived with the family for an extended time previous to the union and she continued to do so afterward. Thus, the two were together so much that he could not pen endearments to one without the other becoming aware of it. This made it necessary for him to write circumspectly, bottling up within himself whatever enthusiasms he may have felt at the moment. Even the salutations were carefully guarded in his epistles, these being in fact, letters to the family rather than to individuals. Here are some of the types of greeting: "Dear Harriet, Hannah and Friends," "Dear tho distant friends," "Beloved friends," "Ht. Hh., Mary, Mother, etc.," "My dearest friends." How could he pen sweet nothings or endearing salutations when his letters were practically a matter of public concern? What chance did Dan Cupid have in a setup of this kind?

Joseph's restraint in this regard may help to explain why, when a third girl appeared upon the field of love, unencumbered, the flood gates were loosened; poetry and romance flowed from him in a rose tinted tide.

Some time in the mid 1850's an event occurred introducing a new element into the life of Joseph (and to all the others for that matter,) which caused him much travail,
sentimental anguish, no doubt some joy and loss of some golden opportunities. This was his meeting with a rosy cheeked young English girl, with whom he fell in love, to whom he wrote reams of love letters, poetry, and whom he called variously Eliza, Lisa, Elise and on occasion just plain Lizzie.

WHY DEAN BECAME SAUNDERS

Early in the 1840's the English family of Charles Dean lived in a short street now called York Place, not far from Trafalgar Square in London. The family consisted of Charles, his wife Elizabeth (Perkins), a stepdaughter Eliza and a daughter Emily. The father was a liquor dealer, not the keeper of an "ordinary," or "pub," but having what was known as an "off license," meaning that all purchases must be consumed "off" the premises. One evening a man somewhat under the influence of intoxicants entered and demanded liquor for immediate consumption. When Mr. Dean explained that no drink could be served, the man became loud mouthed and abusive. He was ushered to the door and at the top of a few steps a light struggle ensued. The man lost his footing and fell to the pavement, resulting in a fractured skull and ultimate death.

Dean was absolved of blame by the court, but close relatives of the dead man threatened his life so menacingly that he became frightened. Hastily disposing of his business, he gathered his family and emigrated to America. The voyage by sailing vessel was long and tedious and landing was made at New Orleans. Thence they made their way up the Mississippi to St. Louis, and ultimately up the Missouri to the Council Bluffs area. As a further deterrent to being traced by his enemies in England, Charles Dean became Charles Saunders, by which surname the family, including Eliza, was thereafter known.

Just how the youthful Eliza and the mature Joseph met, we never learned. It might have been in St. Louis
when the Saunders lived there and where Joseph often went to purchase merchandise for his stores. One letter, with no place or date, written later, shows that much of their early association and possibly their first meeting occurred in the Council Bluffs area. It reads in part:

“I have just returned from C. (Crescent City) around by the B-s (Bluffs) where I have seen all the old familiar haunts that made endeared (to us) these hills and vallies, years when first we saw and loved.”

That he knew her when she was quite young is evidenced by some lines in two of the many poems with which he deluged her. This young girl could not have been much over 15 years old when this unusual courtship began, which was probably in the spring or summer of 1855. Joseph’s letters of this early period have been lost in the various moves and fires which have beset the family, and those that have survived are mainly of 1858 to 1861. Thus, we know but little of the formative period of their association.

We do know that there was strong opposition from the Saunders to a marriage, not only because of her youth, but because they could not absorb the “plurality” principle. They were not unfriendly with JEJ otherwise, and later on when the union was an accomplished fact, they lived in friendly relations with each other.

There is a lingering memory of a story heard in childhood that the Saunders had made an effort to avoid plural marriage by having her wed to a man in the community who was trying to win her affections. It seems that they had pushed the matter to the actual point of a wedding when somebody tipped JEJ off to what was going on. He arrived at the scene in time to rescue the reluctant maid. We dimly recall that the tale envisaged her climbing out of a window while the happy bridegroom was on the premises. Anyhow, the audacious Joseph “abscondrelled” with the near-bride, and the pair made tracks from there to be married. Do not ask where, when or by whom. The whole
transaction was kept under the deepest wraps until the family was all safely together in Utah.

Of course this marriage could only be a Church union, since they could not legally apply for a license from any civil authority. But Joseph had learned at the time of his uniting with Hannah that the Church knot could be tied in the states and that he could find one who had the ecclesiastical authority to perform the ceremony. It could very well be that Almon Babbitt was the person who officiated. Whatever records were made were maintained in strictest secrecy. What might be termed the more binding union was consummated in the endowment ceremony after JEJ and Eliza were reunited in the Salt Lake Valley. Joseph and Harriet received their endowments in the Nauvoo temple in 1846, while Hannah received hers at the same time as Eliza did on Nov. 17, 1861.

LIFE WAS UNDER THE ROSE

After Joseph and Eliza joined forces the latter apparently lived most of the time with the Saunders, who were looking for a location where they would be satisfied to settle, and so moved from place to place. They were probably living in St. Louis in March, 1857, for that is where Eliza’s first child was born. He was named Charles Ellis for Charles Saunders and JEJ. At one time they evidently lived in Sarpy county as JEJ in one letter refers to the fact she was “out on the Papillion,” a small stream which enters the Missouri midway between Omaha and the Platte-Missouri confluence. Later, “Saunder’s Ranche” was created farther out on the Platte as a traveler’s way station. The “Ranche” seems to have folded up as the rush ceased and the emigration farther west dwindled.

The Saunders “stayed put” longest at Genoa, a Mormon settlement at the junction of Beaver creek and the Platte, in Nance county, Nebraska. Several years later
this area was taken by the government under the pretext of using it for an Indian reservation. Once the saints who had settled it were ousted, the noble experiment seems to have collapsed and we believe little was ever done with it for the Indians. Here young Charlie spent his babyhood, and here JEJ came as frequently as possible to visit mother and son.

This frequent moving and living much of the time in remote places made it less embarrassing to account for a young child with an apparently unmarried mother, also it was made easier for JEJ to visit the family without exciting comment. At Genoa the people were mainly Mormon, although there were some “Josephites” (Reorganized Church of L.D.S.) and no trouble was encountered. But there was one place where Eliza assumed the role of nursemaid to the child. As he was just learning to talk, he was taught to call his mother Eliza, instead of Mama or Mother. Since he lisped, this came out “Litha,” and he never learned the precious word “mother” until he was safely behind the great mountains. We are not certain that the main part of the family knew of his existence until they all gathered at Wood River to prepare for the long awaited journey to the Valley. It is known that Eliza visited Ellisdale, also Crescent City, but we do not know whether Charlie was presented at court or not.

Joseph’s new domestic relation put him on the spot in several ways. It had all been very hush hush as far as the public was concerned, and of course he was chary about subjecting the new angle to the view of the family. In fact, he kept the actual marriage a secret for a long time. He probably lacked the nerve to tell them right off that he had taken another wife. Even though the others might have believed that “plurality” was a religious principle there must have been both heartburnings and wrath at the tidings of his latest adventure. The settings were very different when he embarked upon his second marriage. Har-
riet and Hannah lived together in friendly fashion for a long period, they were about the same age and had grown accustomed to one another. That union was discussed, threshed out and agreed upon. Both undoubtedly knew what was one of the chief objects of JEJ's trip to the Valley in 1850. But this latest launching upon the sea of connubial bliss was a dish of tea of another flavor. They seemed to look upon it more or less as an escapade and one cannot surmise that the news was received with acclamation.

Mary Julia (Mollie) unbags the kitty to a small degree in a letter to JEJ from Ellisdale, when he was at Wood River, where he had taken Eliza. She tells that John Snierder, Harriet's brother was acquiring horses, hoping to start for the Valley, then goes on:

"The report from the Bluffs and Florence is that you passed Eliza off as your wife going up there. Whether it is so or not, Mother and Hannah believe it so you may make up your mind to be received very coolly and to take what comes. You know very well what will be H & H's feelings toward you when you are up there with Eliza. They say "D--n it!" all the time. When they dream of you they are quarreling and so it goes. ..." In the same letter she gives another indication that Harriet was not too happy over the whole thing, in these words:

"Mother says for you to bring down some cattle and wagons, for she is bound to go to Salt Lake, and says she will not go out there (Wood River) to stay, never." Here was faint rebellion, but it soon passed over and there was no flareup or suggestion of a break. Dear old Aunt Harriet! (The wives were generally known to the children of other wives as "Aunt"). She was an admirable person, a kind, good soul, and when the time came to assemble at Wood River for the passage to the Valley, she was right there with her family. As far as we have ever heard, there was never any lack of harmony and human kindness among any of the three women.
CHAPTER 27

“NEVER AT A LOSS FOR AN ADJECTIVE”

Most of the letters of Joseph to Eliza that have escaped the rigors of a plains crossing and the pioneering of new lands, with the accompanying difficulties of transportation and preservation, were written after their union. Yet they were like those of any high strung young man in love, with all the usual fears, jealousies and misgivings, even though during much of the period they cover, it was a settled fact that she was already “his’n.” Naturally because of her youth he was fearful that she might not remain constant. Once when she told him of meeting a young officer from Fort Kearney he was fit to be tied. To him, her great sin was that she did not write to him with every mail. He used quires of paper chiding her, albeit humbly, for this neglect and urging her to keep her promises to write. He pointed out how many letters he had written to her one, and found in this a stark fear that she did not love him. He was painfully aware of the difference in their ages but he was enough of a psychologist to refrain from belaboring this fact. He played up the pitfalls along the path of life and the ease with which one could be led into bye and forbidden paths. In his zeal to keep her on the narrow one, which meant no association with personable young men, we are pained to state that he preached considerably, though in humility and self abnegation.

However often he was “vexed,” he did not fail to refer to her grace, her sweet voice, sparkling eyes, her gentleness and other angelic attributes. He wrote copiously of their many rambles on the verdant prairies; of them being in shady groves and on grassy banks where flowers flung their fragrance on the summer air. Or of wandering by hill and streamlet, often in the moonlight, of culling the
many hued flowers on dale and prairie and of seeking wild plums and grapes in season. In many of these effusions his language waxed lyrical, flowing on and on in nostalgic rhythm, proving that, as one described him, he was “never at a loss for an adjective,” or any word or phrase that might bind her more closely to him and assuage the deep anxiety that laid like a pall on his heart.

Well he might be fearful, for certainly the odds were against him. More than twice her age, with two wives and several children in the offing, strong parental opposition and the displeasure of the law, how could he hope that a young, attractive girl could be persuaded to join an already crowded family circle? She doubtless experienced many qualms and was herself afraid that plural marriage would be a mistake. That she loved him is evidenced in the way in which she treasured every line and scrap that he wrote to her, (though much was lost in later years) even some which he told her to destroy immediately. These periods of blowing now hot, now cold, probably account for some of the “Partings” which punctuated the romance. Each parting called for a poem of renunciation and farewell, some of which possess a tender, poetic quality that clearly shows how hard hit he was. Here is one which is called:

**IMPROMPTU TO ELISE**

Adieu! ’tis hard to speak the word to those adored and truly dear.
Alas! the sound is never heard by friends beloved, save with a tear.
’Tis hard, but now thou lov’st me not, and why should I thy vows retain,
Though it should break my inmost heart, I’ll free thee though I suffer pain.
And shall I blame thee? no! oh no!, because as once thou can’st not love,
Tho oft we've roved where flowers grew, thro scenery wild, blue sky above.
How sweetly sped the pleasant hours as by moon's pale light we've strolled,
In sweetest bliss with whispers soft, "I love! I love!", the tale was told.
And then awhile, obliged to part, a bitter tear bedewed thine eye,
Deep anguish wrung thy youthful heart, thy bosom heaved a heartfelt sigh.
But now, alas! How art thou changed, at least to me who loved thee well,
Thy love, thy heart, is now estranged, broken with thee is the magic spell.
But not with me, I am not changed, as ere I loved, my love still tell.
And ah! how could'st thou be estranged from one who loved thee but too well?

Still another parting resulted from the strong opposition of the Saunders to a plural marriage. Because of her youth they seemed to have the upper hand for awhile, and another Impromptu emanated from his torn heart and mind:

FAREWELL TO ELISE

The days are gone, the halcyon days, when hope and love was bright,
The clouds have gathered quickly o'er and dimmed the pleasing light.
The morn that dawned with hope and bliss and love serene and gay
Hath gathered blackness dark and drear, nor lifts a pleasing ray.
I loved a maiden when a child; she said she loved me well,  
How well I loved to please her will! 'tis vain that I shall tell.  
As months rolled on our love increased and blossomed with the years,  
The angels heard our constant vows and witnessed parting tears.

Cans't thou e'er find a love like mine, so permanent and true  
So pleased to meet with every wish as I would be to you?  
You answer, "Nay! none loves like thee," but parents bar the way,  
Tho years have passed since first we met, now they our bliss would stay.

Adieu! It pains my inmost heart and makes the tears to flow  
That thus we part, if part we must, unkindness makes it so.  
But never can my heart forget the scenes of youth and love  
Nor angels blot from heavenly page the vows of truth above.

How blest those days! Can'st thou forget we've walked the pleasant lea  
Picked the flowers of every hue, naught but love I spoke to thee.  
When by Pale Luna's mellow light we talked of days so sweet  
When we would dwell in bliss,—love and happiness complete.

I loved thee well, methinks too well! You bade me never fear,  
I loved with deep confiding love, tho distant far or near.  
The bitter tear drops often fell through loneliness for thee  
And knowledge grim of the lonely road that lay ahead for me.
The following short one we think is an appealing trio of stanzas. It runs smoothly and has a lilting simplicity that is pleasing. If the gentle reader begins to grow restless and complain that we have pulled the poetry stop out too far, we shall say only that that is the kind of courtship it was. Who are we to push young Cupid’s arrows aside?

I THINK OF THEE, LISA

I think of thee, Lisa, when shadows of even
Fall gently around me and scatter the light.
I think of thee always when thoughts rise of heaven
And dream of thy love on my pillow by night.

I think of thee, dearest, when lonely I’m sitting;
I dwell on our happiness now long passed by;
I think of thee oft as time’s wings o’er me flitting
Gives promise and hope of that happiness nigh.

I think of thee dearest, when moonlight is laving
The groves and the trysts, the prairies and bowers
Where fruits became ripened and grain fields were waving,
I oft think of thee and our favorite flowers.

This set of stanzas was sent to Eliza after she reached the Valley.

MOUNTAINS HIDE THE PATH SHE TREADS

The forests late of verdant hue
And spangled o’er with sparkling dew
Are leafless now and cold and bare,
And winds oft howl a requiem there.

With stirring thoughts of years gone by
When life was young and hope was high,
I sit me at my window case
And gaze out on the wintry waste.

Then thoughts of other days arise
When earth seemed glad and bright the skies,
Yet dearer far than earth or flowers
Was her I loved in those glad hours.

Who wept when sorrow pierced my heart,
Whose tears were balm to every smart.
But distant now our lonely beds
And mountains hide the path she treads.

JOSEPH'S LETTERS OFTEN ROMANTIC

Naturally JEJ’s letters to Eliza were in part on every day matters, but there were few that did not abound in paragraphs of endearment or nostalgic yearning. Often pressed prairie flowers were inclosed, some remnants of which exist after 100 years. Poems were frequent, some polished to some extent, others were impromptu, yet all exhibit a certain poetic quality and exude a haunting tenderness that makes them to us, at least, memorable. Here are a few passages culled at random from the letters that remain:

“It is noon—the sun in glowing tints looks down on flowers—rich odors are returned to the god of summer for the life restoring warmth. Birds are nestled in the verdant boughs in the grove, their sounds are as the sound of sparkling waters to the thirsty. Whispering zephyrs from the south are laden with perfume.... I wandered today whither my footsteps would lead; I came to the bank of violets,—ah! but a short time ago SHE stood, then sat beside me here . . . and many tears flowed ere we parted. Here we sealed our vows. The sacred spot often pressed by my feet with hopeful joy looked sad today, nor smiled as before,
tho the flowers she loved were smiling around. Not a year has passed since she sat in happiness, yet grief, beside me.

"The moon shines clear and bright,—this is one of those lovely autumnal nights we so much loved and enjoyed together. I have been moongazing and thinking of the happy past, weaving golden hopes and plans. . . . O! the bright, glorious orb of night! How I love to gaze on it and wonder if you, too, are under its spell.

". . . the flowers are now in their most profuse bloom, O! how charming—delightful! I never look upon them but I remember with pleasure that SHE planted them here with her own hands, Then I love them the more, and when gazing upon their brightness I almost imagine I can see her face in their glowing masses.

"(Trading with the Pawnees). The twilight is gathering—the season in which we so loved to walk hand in hand together. O! that we might again enjoy that bliss tonight! I look from out the door of my lonely hut and gaze upon the groves that we have often viewed and that have shaded us in our happiest moments, but alas! may never shelter us again. The shades that we shall seek will be in a more fair and peaceful clime where we may sit in the shadows of our own grove and fruit gardens,—will we not be happy then? Pray often, dear Lisa, that we may both live and be prepared to enjoy the fruition of so great a happiness.

"O! my dear girl! I had scarcely dried my eyes after writing the above when a horseman rode up to my door. I ran out; he handed me a bundle of letters and papers; the first my eyes fell upon was your dear letter. I read and wept alternately for half an hour when McGeath came in and I had to lay it aside. . . . It seemed sacrilegious that anyone should have disturbed me and much more to be present whilst I read it. How inane seemed the earnest words he pronounced; he had been to the council, but I knew nothing
of what he said about it. I prize this letter more than any you ever before wrote; it has an earnestness, a determina-
tion that I felt when I read. How strong was the woman-
hood now developing within you to love, to do, to endure all, all for my love!

“(Denver, 1859). Three weeks ago today! How well I remember the happy time we were together—nearly all day. What happy conversation, what beaming eyes, what joyous smiles! Then in the evening we walked together, sat close together, and in low, happy converse at this hour we spoke of love ever enduring—of bright hopes of the future—of parting and of a happy reunion. On the morrow the twain part ed, one to traverse the broad plains and des-
erts ... the other to make him a quiet home and await the return of him she says she loves more than all else on earth....

“It would be so much nicer, more pleasant and quiet in the shade of the leafy groves, when the song of the wild warblers will blend with the words of confidence, hope and constancy in low and harmonious cadence, as the soft breath of summer fans green herbage and flowers and the ruddy cheek of her I would fain now press to my bosom.

“... started for Omaha, left the team and crossed on foot (Missouri was frozen). The road to the post office seemed long—found bundles of mail and a letter from Her. I tore it open and greedily devoured its contents. In two days absence she was lonely, she had so soon missed one familiar face—she wondered if he thought of her. Aye! he did—he does, often, very often! Not only in moments of leisure but even in hours of business or among friends, in sunshine and in shade, asleep or awake, often, often, and sigh when I realize that we must part again for a season—must be torn asunder. I often ask myself, will She so much
as take it in sorrow? Will She care, or if away, will She prove faithful, constant and true?"

But, lack-a-day! There were mild quarrels, and when she failed to write "according to promise" there were reproaches, and if a letter arrived and was cold he became enshrouded in gloom, the sun paled and the sky became gray and forbidding. Then would come a golden morning when the plodding mail coach became a shining chariot bearing a letter tender and loving. Ah! then the universe took on resplendent glory, blue returned to the sky, the birds sang their hearts out and God was in his heaven!
CHAPTER 28

SHORT SOJOURN AT CRESCENT CITY

We are dimly informed as to the causes of JEJ’s relinquishment of the Bugle, but late in 1856 or early in 1857 he turned it over to Lysander Babbitt, who as far as we know, was not related to Almon. In the book, “Early Days in Council Bluffs” by C. H. Babbitt it is stated that the Weekly Western Bugle was founded by Almon Babbitt in 1850, but our letter to JEJ from W. N. Spoor, Nov. 24, 1851, shows that Mr. Babbitt was in Kanesville at that time announcing his intention of establishing a paper. It is all very confusing. Anyway, after it passed to Lysander, publication was continued some time in 1870. It was succeeded by the Council Bluffs Times, a sheet which faded out in a comparatively short time.

After Joseph waved “good bye” to the Bugle, he became engrossed in the large area of land which he had taken up, or probably more accurately, squatted upon. This land was situated a short distance north of the Bluffs and he wrote that he had 1000 acres fenced and a farm established. This site was named “Ellisdale” and here he built a house, or more likely two, as we gather from letters that Harriet and Hannah had separate homes. In 1856 he laid out the town of Crescent City, where he built a store and office for the publication of the Crescent City Oracle. This is one of Joseph’s papers about which we are utterly at sea. We have never seen a copy of it and the scrapbook which he must have made during its life has never turned up. It was not long lived, since we find him returning to the Bluffs in 1859 to set up the Council Bluffs Press. From other sources we can quote a few paragraphs from the Oracle.

Crescent never caught on as a townsite, although it still exists on the main highway about ten miles north of the
Bluffs. It is still a hamlet, but we have been told that because of highway changes, it will soon stand a chance of having a boom. Knowing the short distance between Crescent and the Bluffs it is easy to understand what had previously puzzled us, namely, how could members of the family apparently be at Crescent, the Bluffs or Ellisdale at almost the same time. With horses to ride or drive, with wagon or carriage, it was no trick to come and go such a short distance with relative freedom. Also, walking was not too bad in that pleasant country much of the year and people had not lost that fine art as they have today.

The homes at Ellisdale must have been built prior to the laying out of Crescent, as, while JEJ was still with the Bugle, the editor of a rival paper at the Bluffs gibed at him by calling attention to the “pleasant groves of Ellisdale,” and the charms that were to be found there. This had reference to the “plurality” situation, of which the public was beginning to be aware. We have no record of the disposal of the house at the Bluffs, but William seems to have taken over the store, bakery, etc., and for a time JEJ seems to have made only occasional visits there for business purposes. His letters were dated mostly from Ellisdale and Crescent City.

Although JEJ gave 1857 as the year he laid out Crescent, actually the beginning was made in the fall of 1856. This we learned by finding an isolated entry in one of his diary books, thus:


“Sept. 30. Frank Welch left the store for the last time.

“Oct. 3. Frank died at 5 o’clock, A.M. Buried at 5 P.M. Poor Frank is gone. He was an excellent fellow and I mourn his loss as that of a brother.”

This is the first knowledge we have had of this partnership, which was of such short duration. It must have been
established but a few weeks before Mr. Welch's death. There are letters written later from Hillsdale, no state given, from his daughter and her husband thanking JEJ for his kindness in the matter and asking details of the business arrangements. All this shows that Crescent was on the map before 1857.

While on the subject of the store, we mention a later partnership in the Crescent mercantile enterprise. The new associate was Charles Blake, a young man who had been either in business or who was trained in the art of store keeping in New York. Andrew J. Williams served as clerk and general assistant. He had worked in the Bugle office, from whence he was appointed clerk to Almon W. Babbitt at the time the latter was named secretary of State for Utah. He went to Salt Lake but his tenure was short, and he returned to Council Bluffs and joined JEJ. Note these names, as both were associated with Joseph in a historic undertaking which will be detailed later.

The opening of the new store was heralded with some hurrah. One item was the posting of cloth banners listing a prodigious array of goods of the finest quality, at, of course, ridiculously low prices. One of these has been saved, showing no damage after its hideout of a hundred years in cellars, attics or other storage nooks. It is possible that the pictures, text and dialog on the banner were dreamed up by young Blake and were passed on to the horny handed frontiersmen as the latest thing in advertising from New York. The so-called "comic" strips of today's papers show that the old type of conversation issuing from the mouth in the form of a "balloon" has not been improved upon. However, JEJ had many comic cuts for newspaper use and the onus of this ad may rest upon him.

However it was, our story is still in the year 1856, and there is yet one major item of family happenings in that year to chronicle. With all the comings and goings of the
CRESCENT CITY AHEAD!

The Mormon War goes on, and Supplies have arrived at the Universal Emporium, CRESCENT CITY. Competition defied by the system, and Foggy Competitors having Old Stocks of Goods, in demand, and Hard Times kicked out of the way. The Good Time has come, and so has that tremendous Stock of exquisite, low-priced Goods, at the Store of

JOHNSON & BLAKE

Sir, Trains of Cars were employed to transport them across the country, and five Steamboats to bring them up the Missouri. They have every thing new on hand at prices that would make the best manufacturers blush with shame for those who would thus excite them to labor and toil. They have sent with an one-coach a complicated Memorandum, and museums of rare kinds, sorts, patterns, and quantities as have never been seen teetotal since old Noah and his Boat evacuated the Ark, and they sell better than over those Old Patriarchial Land Speculators ever absent to that they are once more brought to them. They have brought the Goods, and then such smiling, good-natured, sensible clerks, as those Goods are nice young men—Ah! well steel on Steel, where they possessed the Goods, and then such smiling, good-natured, sensible clerks, as those Goods are nice young men—Ah! well steel on Steel, where they possessed the Goods, and then such smiling, good-natured, sensible clerks, as those Goods are nice young men—Ah! well steel on Steel, where they possessed the Goods, and then such smiling, good-natured, sensible clerks, as those Goods are nice young men—Ah!

DRESS GOODS


HATS

From the great GIDEON, and

BONNETS

From the Sable of Young,

FINE LIQUIDS

From Russia, Egypt, and China, and the

GREAT BAY 441's Hot Elizabethe.

CUTLERY

and the most rare from France, Reputed

NOTIONS

from the Tanners and Generous.

SHOES AND BOOTS

From the Patina, and

CLOTHING

From the Temple of Fashion

TOBACcos

From the Turks

CIGARS

From the Islands of the Sea

GOLDEN ORNAMENTS

From India, and

CORAL & PEARLS

From the Empires of the Ocean.

Their DRUGS are from Ceylon; BALSAM for the Sick from Mount Gilead; and rare INCENSE and MYRRH, from afar off; their SCENTED from Orange Groves and Roses of Roscando Jassamine.

CARPETS

From Turkey, and the finest LINEN from Egypt and Siberia. All that is good for Man, that will make Woman more beautiful, or Children more pleased, from the Lakes, the Seas, the Ocean, the Rivers, near or afar off. All that Earth, Air, or Water contains that was pronounced good for mortals has its representative at the Bazaar of JOHNSON & BLAKE, in the New and Charming Town of Crescent City.

Not particular about size, they take anything but PRAMINES; and they wish it distinctly understood that they do not take the above to pay for Advertisements, but will with pleasure receive every variety of Country Produce and Grains; and until times get better, will take Current Paper as pay, and Gold and Silver at half per cent. discount.
family between the River and the Valley during the pioneer period only one plains tragedy occurred to cast a blight of sorrow over the tribe. This was the slaying of Almon W. Babbitt, husband of JEJ's sister Julia and sort of legendary hero of the family, which came to pass early in September, 1856, just a short time before the goods were unloaded at Crescent City and the opening of the store as described above.

A SHORT INTERVAL FOR LETTERS

With the Arrow signing 30 and the St. Nicholas in other hands, JEJ still had plenty to occupy his energies on the east bank of the Big Muddy. His withdrawal from Omaha was only the termination of the Arrow; he was still enthusiastic in praise of the area in the Bugle.

We return for a moment to 1855, which with 1856, are the two leanest years, biographically speaking. We have a number of business and personal letters dealing with these years, many of which are interesting but hardly of sufficient import to include in this already voluminous narrative. We shall give but a few excerpts. There are two mentions of Mary, as a child, indicating that she was attractive and intelligent, as, indeed her later letters prove her to have been. Joseph's good friend Judge Avery, whom we met on our trip with the Indian Mission in Owego, N.Y., wrote interesting letters, from which we quote a few paragraphs:

"... my thoughts often revert to the pleasant moments I spent at your place—rendered doubly pleasant by your many acts of kindness and hospitality.... I have engaged recently in an enterprise at Flint, Michigan, which will require me to reside there.... My mother and sister will continue to live at the old homestead on the banks of the beautiful Susquehanna river, but my star is westward...."
"When I left Council Bluffs I left two very good pistols with my name engraved upon them. Colonel Test had one and the other Sam Payne had. I let them take them the morning following the stealing of our horses by the Indians and they were not returned. I hereby invest you with all my title to the same as keepsakes. ... I often think of you and your polite little daughter, whose gentle, ladylike deportment I can never forget. She was like a ray of sunshine to me when I was in the land of the strangers. God bless you, dear Johnson, and tell me how you get on."

One dated at Flint over a year later (what if he could have seen what Flint would be noted for in the century to come) gives him legal advice on land sales and returns to Mary in these words: "Please say to your excellent little daughter, little at least when I made her acquaintance. I suppose she is a stately and dignified young lady now, no longer to be regarded as a little girl. I should very much like to see you and your family. My mind often wanders back to my Nebraska trip, so full of romance as it was, not forgetting the night when the rascally Poncas stole our horses. What a time we had, didn’t we? Our chivalric friend Babbitt (Almon W.) slain by the very hands in which he expressed to us that he had so much confidence! It was hard, truly it was. Regards to Miss Mary and all of your family. . . ."

Another close friend who addressed JEJ as Colonel Johnson and once as "Dear better half," was D. H. Huyett. He was on the same level as far as education and "quality" goes as Judge Avery. He also took a shine to Mary, and since his great interest was art, he offered to teach her the first principles of this gentle acquirement. In part, a letter from Little Sioux, Iowa, reads in this fashion:

"I have hastily sketched a few samples of the elementary part of drawing for your daughter, also a few rules which may assist her in copying. I will take great pleasure
in giving her all the instruction necessary for her to attain a high position in the 'Art Divine' if she desires it. . . . Any further information she may wish before I get to Ellisdale again will be happily given by your addressing me a line. . . . All I ask in return is that she progresses rapidly. Whenever I find a taste and a talent for art I am never happier than in trying to cultivate it and bring it to a high standard."

Whether or not Mary achieved skill in painting, she later lived in an atmosphere of art. Her daughter Harriet was the wife of the noted Utah artist and teacher, John T. Harwood, and she herself lived in Paris for some years and was familiar with many of the European galleries.

Here is a reference to an early trip made by JEJ to Massachusetts, penned by Hiram Wheeler, husband of Diadamia Hills, sister of Julia Hills. This from Northbridge Center, Mass., a town not far from Grafton. It is addressed to "Dear Cos. Joseph" and begins by expressing sympathy for the loss of his sister Julia Babbitt, then continues:

"There is one favor that I wondered I did not ask you when you were here. That is a picture of yourself in the same dress you wore when you were here, hat and all. Be sure and have the same. Do not forget to have a cigar in your mouth. I was . . . so stupid not to think of it when you were in Boston. . . . I tell you Cousin, that was one of the happiest weeks of my life . . . but I anticipate it being repeated another season. . . . We are all well and have enough to eat at present but do not know how long we shall if times continue as hard as now. Business of all kinds is entirely suspended." (This was due to the panic of 1857 and the subsequent period of hard times.)

There are letters from the Valley, each one urging JEJ to come out of Babylon. Several were from Esther Le Baron, who with David had settled at Peeteetneet, now
Payson, Utah. Joel wrote from Fort Johnson, now Enoch, Utah, of his belief that gold was to be found in the mountains of Iron county, with a tale of Spanish mines along the lines still found in western magazines. Almon Babbitt wrote discouragingly of conditions in the valley, and wished to the Lord that his new house, then abuilding, was back in Council Bluffs. Benjamin’s letters were more optimistic. He was at that time colonizing in Santaquin, having returned from his mission to the Sandwich Islands. There is one long letter from him written earlier when he was awaiting in San Francisco for a chance to be taken to the Islands with his companions, who are named. His major theme was the unspeakable wickedness of the inhabitants of the city by the Golden Gate.
CHAPTER 29

DEATH LURKS ALONG THE PLATTE

The dramatic slaying of Almon W. Babbitt early in September, 1856, was the most tragic event in Joseph’s life during the time he dwelt in the plains area. It deprived him the association with a valued relative and friend and it indirectly hastened the death of his beloved sister Julia, Almon’s wife.

The name of Almon W. Babbitt has appeared many times in this narrative, beginning with his first appearance within the family circle at the time Joel and David tramped all the way from Amherst, Ohio, with him to bring the family a copy of the Book of Mormon. He was born in Cheshire, Berkshire county, Massachusetts, in 1814. This county, in all its distance, abuts the state of New York. Thus, Almon lived fairly close to “Mormon country,” and could have heard of the “golden bible” and become interested at an early age. He was barely 17 when he appeared at Pomfret, already preaching. Here he met Julia Johnson and here began the attachment which led to their marriage in Kirtland in 1834.

Almon later became closely associated with Joseph Smith, and was a business agent for the Church as well as the prophet’s lawyer and one of his secretaries. A forceful speaker, he caused the conversion of many men and women who listened to him during his many missionary interludes in various parts of the country. When Zion’s Camp set out upon its military mission into Missouri, Almon marched with them, side by side with JEJ’s brother Seth.

We are told by Benjamin that when the survivors of the Camp struggled back to Kirtland Joseph Smith gave each of them a blessing. When Almon’s turn came he was
promised that he would do much good in spreading the restored gospel; that many souls should be drawn to him and that he should attain a certain greatness. But there was a barb in this praise and promise. He was told that in the end he would be cut down and perish at the hands of his foes. It was written by BFJ that Babbitt was shown all this in a dream and that he related it a long time before the prophecy was fulfilled.

Almon was a strongly opinioned man, an individualist, and it was said that he was one of the few who would face the prophet and argue it out with him. Naturally, this would smack of insubordination, and Almon's star dimmed somewhat with the higher ups. After the flight from Kirtland he returned to that place, wishing to build it up again after the mob spirit had died down. The prophet had resolved to abandon Kirtland, and after Almon established a business, and especially after he had advised a party of Canadian converts to stop off at Kirtland, the Church leader smote him with a revelation which reads as follows:

"And with my servant Almon Babbitt, there are many things with which I am not pleased; behold he aspireth to establish his counsel instead of the counsel which I have ordained, even that of the Presidency of my Church and he setteth up a golden calf for the worship of my people." Doc. & Cov. 124-84.

This means that he did not immediately obey instructions to follow the Church, he probably argued and he began to make money, all of which were contrary to the policies of the moment. Almon bowed to the edict, closed out his affairs in Kirtland and made his way to Nauvoo in June 1842, where he and the prophet were reconciled and were once more friends, as related by BFJ in his memoirs.

We shall not attempt to detail Almon's activities in Nauvoo, except to state that at the time of the expulsion he was appointed with Joseph L. Heywood and John S. Full-
mer, to represent the Church in drawing up the articles of capitulation, a copy of which was found in JEJ's papers. Though interesting, we shall not use it here since it has been printed in L.D.S. books.

After serving the Church in Nauvoo until 1849 Almon began to move his family to Utah. They made Kanesville the first stop, where JEJ had already settled. By May 24 they were ready to depart for the Valley, which they reached on July 1, 1851. This was a rapid trip made possible by the use of mules as motive power instead of the shambling oxen. A few days after arrival Almon was elected by the General Assembly, "Delegate and Representative to Congress from the State of Deseret." He was sent to Washington thus accredited from the hoped for state, with a memorial to Congress asking admission of the state of Deseret to the Union.

Acceptance as a delegate was not granted since actually there was no such state, but he presented documentary material which provided a government for the people of Utah. The plea for statehood was denied, largely some have said, because of complications growing out of the slavery question. Later Babbitt was succeeded by John M. Bernhisel and Congress granted territorial status to Deseret, although not by that name. "Utah" was selected to succeed it because the Uta, Utah, Ute or Youta Indians were the dominant inhabitants of the area.

Brigham Young heard the tidings of the new governmental unit and his own appointment as its governor while he was visiting in Cache Valley. A man had read of it in a San Francisco paper shortly before leaving for the east and upon his arrival in Salt Lake City he gave the information to Church officials, who rushed it to Brigham in the north.

Due to Almon's association with governmental matters in Utah it is said that he crossed the plains twenty times.
This would add up to ten round trips, a real record. After his arrival in the Valley in July, 1849, he was ready to start back with his family in September of that year. Julia and the children stayed with JEJ while Almon went on to Washington. By May 16, 1851, he was back at Council Bluffs with $20,000 which was to be handed Governor Young, ready to return to the mountains. This money was to pay for the erection of a building for the use of territorial officials.

Remaining but a short time in the Valley Alon again pulled out for the east on September 23, 1851. Several tales of happenings on this trip are interesting. One is from a thesis, “Almon W. Babbitt,” now in the Church Historian’s office, by Jay D. Redd. It relates that after Almon’s wagons had been on the road for about a day, Rodney Badger, a peace officer from the city, overtook the company with the intention of arresting James L. Babbitt, doubtless a relative of Almon, for an unpaid debt. It seems incredible that an officer would have that right, unless the old debtors law was in vogue in Mormonism. Almon was a peppery man and at the height of his protests against the action he drew a pistol on Brother Badger, who hotfooted back to the metropolis to drum up a posse.

The fiery Almon was overtaken in Emigration canyon by the hastily summoned riders, and was hustled back to the Valley to answer for his indiscretion. The charges were: (a) Interfering with a police officer while said officer was making an arrest; (b) Drawing a deadly weapon against a representative of the law while he was doing his duty. Almon rushed through a writ of habeas corpus, and since business was slack among the legal eagles, he secured a quick trial by the Supreme Court (fancy getting such a thing now!) and was acquitted! Once more he hit the dusty trail to the east.

The above is only part of the story and the principal cause of the return to the city is told in the following letter
written to JEJ by his friend and sometime assistant, N. T. Spoor. It is dated:

“Kanesville, Iowa, November 24, 1851

“... A. W. Babbitt arrived here about a fortnight since all very well but himself afflicted with boils... Babbitt had rotten hard luck returning from the valleys. After he got 30 miles on his road the magistrate sent a writ after him, charging him with having with him $23,000 in gold and the seal of Utah Territory, and they took him back to trial. Well, he got cleared, for he hadn’t them.”

Later it developed that Secretary B. D. Harris had taken money and seal when he left the Valley in a huff. It is surprising that Almon should have been considered the villain in the piece since he had held many appointments of trust since the earliest days of Kirtland. Why was not an accounting required of the secretary before he made himself scarce? Too bad his baggage was not checked,—eleven hundred and fifty gold eagles require more space than a clean shirt and a few pairs of socks. We do not imply that the money adhered ultimately to the secretary’s fingers; doubtless it was returned to the national coffers. But the loss was a severe one to the infant territory. Naturally Almon was more than ordinarily peeved at the indignity, as well as the loss of time and extra 60 miles to travel.

Mr. Spoor’s letter went on to say that he had seen a letter to Babbitt from Washington which “decided in his favor $50,000 due him.” He told that a Mr. Right (Wright?) who had gone to the Valley with Almon came back with him. When within a few miles of the Bluffs Babbit suspected him and cut open his carpet bag. In it he found various articles to the value of $300, some belonging to JEJ and some to himself. Mention was made that he had announced his intention of starting a paper in the spring at the Bluffs and that Orson Hyde was going to sell the Frontier Guardian, but not to Almon.
We wonder if Almon really fell heir to that $50,000. We have never heard that he or any other member of the tribe ever thumbed that many shin plasters in one beatific swoop. He may have received part of it since it was after his next amble to the Valley that he began the erection of an $8,000 house. That was quite a much in that day when a dollar looked as big as a full moon. In March, 1852 Babbitt returned to Kanesville with JEJ and the Indian actors, pausing in Cincinnati to buy a press, as related. He established the Western Weekly Bugle which he edited until he turned it over to Joseph. The Babbitts again goodbyed the Bluffs for Zion in the autumn of 1853 and in Almon’s pocket was an appointment to the secretarship of Utah Territory, signed by President Franklin Pierce. He had made good use of his time in the Capital and demonstrated that he still had political pull and good friends there.

Back in 1851 Almon had purchased from BFJ a part of the latter’s property on Third West street, between North and South Temple streets in Salt Lake City. He paid $700 in cattle, wagons and goods which he had brought from the states. The entire east half of Block 83, Plat A was then owned as follows: BFJ owned lots 5 and 6, JEJ had lot 7 and Babbitt built his “big brick” on lot 8 and the house stood just south of the east end of the present viaduct. The lots had 150 feet frontage and ran about 300 feet to the center of the block.

In a letter to JEJ dated June 1, 1855, Almon wrote that the family was living in the barn while the house was being built. The closing paragraph read, “Times are hard, money scarce, all the crops destroyed. The poor must suffer for bread beyond doubt. You may be thankful you are where you are.” In August he wrote, “We will move into our new house on the 2nd. . . Oh! God, that it stood at the Bluffs. We are all well but homesick. What the grasshoppers have not taken the blackbirds and other varmints seem to have
put a tax on so that we will have but little cooking to do this winter."

We learned the location of JEJ’s lot from a letter to Eliza, who was in the Valley, in 1860, “David (Le Baron) had best take charge of my lot and have it planted for his, yours or our general benefit. It is the lot south of the one Mr. B. built his big brick upon.” This identifies it as the area north of the present Union Pacific depot, now a parked section. We understand JEJ’s brother William had a store on the southwest corner of South Temple and 3rd West, and the Le Baron home stood on the northwest corner of Second South and 3rd West. The Saltair Beach depot was later built where the Le Baron home stood, and remnants of their orchard lasted into the boyhood of this writer.

ALMON BABBITT’S LAST CROSSING

On April 22, 1856, Almon drove out of the Valley headed east to transact territorial business and to purchase goods and general supplies for governmental use. He particularly wished to obtain furniture and other items for his own office. We have no details of the passage eastward and do not pick up his trail until he was on the return journey. He had at least two wagons, and he traveled in a carriage, which permitted him to lag behind when he wished, then catch up with the others.

On the way back he tarried at the Bluffs as his wagons advanced, but came on at a swifter pace, expecting to overtake them near Wood River. When not far from this place he received the tragic tidings that his company had been attacked by Cheyenne Indians about ten miles east of Wood River. Several people had been killed, wagons were plundered, cattle driven off and much of the freight stolen or burned. He hastened on to Fort Kearney, where one of his teamsters had taken refuge. From here he wrote a letter to JEJ, which was probably the last one he ever dispatched.
The letter shows his agitation, as both composition and penmanship indicate that he was under strain. This is the letter in full:

"Fort Kearney, Sept. 1st, 1856

"Editor of the Council Bluffs Bugle

Sir

"Yesterday I arrived at the fort being two and one half from Florence, the best time I have ever made. When I arrived on or near Wood River I found that my train had been attacked by Shiann Indians. Mrs. Knickes, the child and the Pennsylvanian, was killed, one of my teamsters wounded, the other Orin Parrish escaped unhurt. My whole train goods are become a spoil to the Indians. On hearing of this sad catastrophe and upon the arrival of Parish Capt. Warton dispatched some 50 of the government troops to the scene of action. They recovered some 3 yoke of cattle some of my goods and four wagons in a mutilated condition.

"The kindness of Capt. Warton (Wharton) and Lady will long be remembered by Me. Mrs. Warton is a lady beyond all disguise free frank & sociable. Capt. is a man filled with the milk of human kindness and well adapted to his station in life.

"I have some things from the general spoils, to wit, 3 yoke of my cattle 2 wagons & some goods at Laramie. When all circumstances are developed I will write you in full.

Your friend

A. W. Babbitt."

"J. E. Johnson, esq

Council Bluffs

Iowa

"Confidential

"Capt. Warton & Lady have treated me with great kindness. Give them the best Buff of the Bugle.

A. W. Babbitt."
Almon's last letter gave scant details of the first tragedy; probably he learned but little in the short time he was on the scene. As time passed further information was gathered, and we are able to quote JEJ in the Bugle, although it comes by way of the Millennial Star, Vol. 18:

"By the arrival of D. B. Cleghorn, Esq., from California via Salt Lake, which latter place he left on the 2nd of August, we have news of a terrible tragedy of murder and robbery of Col. A. W. Babbitt's train of government property by the Cheyenne Indians. Mr. Cleghorn met Mr. Babbitt in camp at Wood River, some 15 miles from New Fort Kearney, of whom he learned the following painful particulars of the murder of his men and the breaking up of his train.

"On Monday night, 25th of August, with Alexander Nichols, one of our citizens, as captain and conductor, and Mrs. Wilson and infant, from St. Louis, a young man named Orrin Parrish, from Pennsylvania, and another, name unknown accompanying, were encamped upon Prairie Creek, ten miles east from Wood River, neither fearful nor dreaming of danger, were attacked by a band of Cheyennes, which from some cause had been attacked and driven by the soldiers of Kearney. Orrin Parrish only, escaped to the fort, whilst the other young man received a dangerous wound in the leg. Some days after a detachment was sent from the fort, twenty miles, who found the dead body of Mr. Nichols some 200 yards from the wagon, also the dead body of the man from Pennsylvania close by and the body of the child with its brains dashed out and horibly mutilated. The pillow where the child and mother slept was bloody and a portion of the torn wardrobe on the ground was not to be found.

"The oxen, ten yoke, and all the mules were gone and the wagons rifled of much of their contents. It seems, however, that a band of Omaha hunters happened near just
after the murder and in time to stop the pillage and recover the money and some other valuables stolen, which were honestly turned over to the Colonel in command of the corps.

“Mrs. Wilson had undoubtedly been wounded and carried away captive. The young man who escaped with the word is in the hospital at the fort, and the wagons and what property remained were also taken to the fort. In a few days we shall no doubt get an account of the matter from the pen of Mr. Babbitt himself. . . . The Cheyennes are a warlike and cruel race numbering several thousand who inhabit some of the wild valleys in the Rocky Mountains southwest of Fort Laramie, and seldom come out except to rob, plunder or go to war with other tribes. Our emigrants will never be safe until these merciless pirates are exterminated.”

Almon did not remain long at Kearney. He was warned earnestly by Orrin Porter Rockwell, who was at the Fort at the moment, as well as by Captain Wharton, not to proceed, as the Cheyennes would be on the road between Kearney and Fort Laramie. But he was anxious to be off, saying that he knew the Cheyennes and they knew him and that he believed he could handle the situation. We believe he departed with one wagon, two men and his own carriage. It is clear that at least two men were with him, as it is recorded that “one man got away” from one source, and that the killing occurred “while one man was away” from the other.

We have two versions as to the spot where the attack took place. The party had traveled but a short distance upriver from Kearney and made camp. According to information given to JEJ while returning from Denver in 1859 by a Mr. Darling, whom he met at Cottonwood Springs, their camp was on Dry Fork, a little below Ash Hollow. The latter had long been a favorite camping place of the
emigrants. Darling was but a few hours travel apart from Almon when the catastrophe occurred. He caught one of Almon’s mules, but it was later stolen from him by the Indians.

The following spring Joel H. Johnson, on advice of Brigham Young, took Julia Babbitt and four children to Council Bluffs. Her purpose was to transact some business connected with the estate and to make a general investigation of the whole situation. Joel’s diary for July 7, 1857, reads:

“June 7, 1857. Started early and camped for the night on Prairie Creek, near where A. W. Babbitt’s train was broken up last fall by the Indians. We saw the graves where those that were killed were buried, but the wolves had dug their bodies up and devoured them, for we saw the bones and hair and grave clothes scattered about the ground. We camped for the night at that crossing of the creek.”

This seems to contradict Mr. Darling’s story, yet if we were familiar with the geography of the area it might be cleared up. Dry Fork may be a tributary of Prairie Creek, which also may be a part of, or near Ash Hollow.

This is the story that came later to JEJ and which was printed in the Bugle:

MURDER OF COL. BABBITT CONFIRMED

“The arrival of a train on Sunday evening from Salt Lake under command of Capt. W. J. Hawley places beyond question the murder of Col. A. W. Babbitt. . . . From Mr. Hawley we obtain the following information:

“Near the Sweetwater he met Messrs. Kimball and Ferguson. This is about 200 miles west of Fort Laramie and 300 miles east of Salt Lake. He heard from them the
rumors, and in order to get the facts from Mr. Trist, the Indian Agent, he remained for several days.

"The Indians had come into the fort and reported that 12 of them had attacked Col. Babbitt while one of his men was away, and after the Colonel had fired his double barrelled gun and his two revolvers, one of the Indians crept behind the wagon and tomahawked the Colonel. The Indians said the Colonel fought like a grizzly bear. While in Fort Kearney, Capt. Hawley learned that Maj. Wharton had in his possession the papers, including a draft for $8,000 and some of his hair. His watch was obtained by a Frenchman from the Indians. Altogether about 18 whites have been killed. . . . Col. Babbitt was well known in the community and was on his return home to resume his duties as Secretary. He had with him a valuable collection of books, astronomical and other instruments and was supposed to have a large amount of money. . . ."

The following is quoted from Mr. Redd's thesis:

"The Indians charged with the murder later acknowledged that they had committed the crime because they had been insulted and abused, and even killed by the parties in charge of the mail and by the soldiers stationed at New Fort Kearney. Therefore they had planned revenge against these wrongs. They stated that a company of 12 Indians had fallen upon Babbitt's ox team as being the first met, to avenge the wrong. In confessing their crime, they further stated that they had seen Mr. Babbitt arrive at the fort and knew him, and that Babbitt was a big man, and by killing him they would be able to plunder and get revenge at the same time. The Indians claimed that they went ahead of his wagon train and waited for the premeditated attack. Major Wharton . . . sent out a detachment of soldiers when he received news of the attack. The soldiers found Babbitt's carriage, trunk and many valuable papers, however, only a few bones of the unfortunate victim could be located."
Some of the murdered man’s jewelry and other valuables, had been, since his death, seen in the possession of the Indians.”

How sadly ironical! The very reason that Almon gave for his confidence that he could “handle” the Cheyennes was that “they knew him and he knew them.” It was that very knowledge that he was a “big man” that caused them to select him as the symbol of their revenge against the actions of others.

When Governor Drummond, successor of Brigham Young, was practically drummed out of the Territory of Utah, he and others charged that certain deaths, including Almon’s, were accomplished at the behest of the Church authorities. Of course, this was the height of fantasy, and Almon’s demise was investigated by two of his brothers-in-law, each of whom reported that the redmen and the redmen only, were the perpetrators of the slaughter. Here is a paragraph from the Crescent City Oracle, edited by JEJ, who had sold the Bugle:

“We notice in the letter of resignation (Drummond’s) that he there, among other grave charges, asserts that the Honorable A. W. Babbitt was murdered by white men, disguised as Indians, by order of the authorities (of the Church). In justice to the parties thus maligned, we will state that we have taken much pains to gather all the information possible calculated to throw light upon the death of our relative, Mr. Babbitt, and with the particulars connected with the same; and we have not the shadow of a doubt but that the Indians of the Cheyenne Nation murdered him for revenge and plundering.”

Thus, the prophecy uttered in Kirtland, that Almon would “fall by the hand of his enemies” found fulfillment near the grassy banks of the Platte over 20 years after its pronouncement. His was a strange destiny; he was an odd person in some ways and was always, as we have said, a
strong individualist. It was this quality, perhaps, that made him rub some people the wrong way and kept him from advancing to higher positions in Church officialdom. In any case, he met a cruel death while yet a youngish man, just as he was entering what seemed to be a snug harbor. As far as we know, no stone or marker indicates the spot where the few pathetic remains of his mortal shell were given back to the earth.

As related, after the grim news reached the Valley, Julia decided to go to the scene of the disaster in an endeavor to find her husband's body and to salvage whatever might be left of his possessions. Her brother Joel furnished team and wagon, left his affairs and family and took her and the children back to the River country. We have little account of how she fared from a property standpoint, but we do know that she recovered some remnants of her husband's body. She is mentioned several times in letters as being in various places, mostly at Ellisdale with Joseph or with the Le Barons at the Bluffs. The next news we have of her is contained in a letter from JEJ to Eliza, which bore the startling tidings of her rather sudden death. It is written on small sized stationery, with a heavy border of black, dated:

"Crescent City, Iowa, Oct. 23, 1857

"Dear Eliza

"I have to announce to you the painful intelligence of the death of my dear sister, Julia Ann Babbitt, who departed this life this morning at 4 o'clock.

"My feelings of grief and sorrow for the so sudden loss of a sister most dear I need not attempt to describe. It seems as though my last mother had gone. It is a time of sorrow indeed in our little family circle for the loss of our beloved by all who knew her, and most devotedly by all her relatives."
"She had been slightly sick ever since she left Boonville, but had kept about and taken care of her children who also were sick. I came over on Friday in the night after my arrival, and she had been about all day. The next day whilst I was absent receiving goods she had a sinking chill and was getting worse daily, and I have been with her night and day. I cannot write more now... Joseph."

Double tragedy had now orphaned the four Babbitt children. Since there was no one in the Valley to whom they could be sent, it was decided that they should remain with JEJ’s family. This they did for nearly three years, and in 1860 they were sent to Utah in the care of Eliza, as shall be related.

In January, 1857, Senator George W. Jones of Iowa nominated Joseph as Secretary of Utah Territory, to succeed his brother in law, Almon W. Babbitt. Senator Jones sent JEJ a letter press copy of his letter to the President, which read as follows:

"Washington, D.C. Jan. 24, 1857

To His Excellency
Franklin Pierce
Presdt of the United States.

Sir:

"The death of Col. A. W. Babbitt having created a vacancy in the secretarship of Utah Territory, I take great pleasure in recommending to your Excellency my esteemed friend, J. E. Johnson for that position.

"He has been for some time past the editor of the "Bugle," a staunch Democratic Journal published at Council Bluffs, and has filled the office of postmaster at the same place."
“Mr. Johnson is an influential and most reliable Demo­
crat, a man of strict integrity and one eminently qualified
to discharge the function of the office in a manner to do
much honor to the Government and himself. He is intrusted
with the settlement of Col. Babbitt’s affairs, to whom he
bore the relation of bro-in-law.

“Hoping earnestly that yr Excelly. will regard this
with favor, that it might result in having Mr. J. appointed
Secretary of Uta.

With great respect,
Your Obt. Servt & Friend
George W. Jones.”

Of course, there was no chance for success of this nomi-
nation, as Brigham Young had appointed, probably pro tem,
William H. Hooper as secretary. In the spring of 1858,
President Pierce sent Alfred Cumming to be governor of
Utah, and with him came John Hartnett to serve as secre-
tary.
CHAPTER 30
A LITTLE OF LIFE AT ELLISDALE-CRESCENT CITY

We find but few letters written in 1858 and it is difficult to follow the family closely. It is unfortunate that JEJ's first two wives names began with the same initial. He was addicted to the use of initials and frequently wrote that H. did this or H. did that with rarely a clue as to WHICH H. is referred to. But we can piece out that the main home, where Harriet lived was still at Ellisdale, but that Hannah was living in the house at Crescent City. Eliza and Charlie were still in Genoa with her parents. We deduce these things from three letters written to her there. A few excerpts from these give some glimpses of family life "on the river" at this period. Joseph was about to make a trip to Genoa.

"C.C. Aug. 7, 1858. I have just arisen from an attack of sickness... but am much better... severe pain in my right breast, but that is all gone and I have such a blister (mustard plaster?) to nurse. O! dear! and then so much company! The house has been crowded from early morn till late at nights, sometimes as many as 20 people at once. They nearly killed me with kindness. Thank heaven I am up and nearly well. I shall doubtless start on Monday next. I have a good careful set of fellows to go with that will take care of me. There is a nice company just starting for Utah with whom I am to go. Judge Appleby, Mr. Young and family, including two beautiful and accomplished daughters and some other families. Brother Joel is down and Bro. William is here... business more cheerful. I am going over home to stay Sunday, nurse the flowers, play with the babies and frolic a little with Mary and H. Flowers are getting beautiful, but the birds, poor things, two are dead, leaving but two pairs. How pleasant it would be to have you here
tomorrow, that we might walk over the gardens and grounds.

"You have no idea what a crowd of company we have over home, a constant throng of visitors who go to the country to rusticate a day or a week. ... H (annah) has a nice comfortable place here now, but no help. J(ane) has not yet returned. I have fixed her some mounds in the front yard and have planted flowers thereon that are blooming now. ... Nephew D. B. is going out to Utah with the Judge and Mr. Y. I have him fitted out now,—he was so unstrung it was thought best. ... I hear glowing accounts of the Loup Fork country. Hope F. ("Doc" Farnes, a sort of employeefriend) has got the cow for you and will trade for a team."

The large number of "company" does not mean all personal friends. At Ellisdale they kept sort of a rural hotel, which not only took in travelers but week end visitors who liked "the groves of Ellisdale" and the pleasant countryside. The reference to going with the Utah company meant that he would travel with them as far as Genoa, which was about a week away from the River. Bro. Joel being "down" meant down from Genoa. Going "over home" meant over to Ellisdale from C.C. Remarks of going "up" or "out" usually meant up or out on the Platte. The "frolic" was to be had with Mary and Harriet. The next H. was Hannah who had moved to Crescent. We believe this Jane was William's wife, who had much illness at this period and had gone somewhere to recuperate, but it could have been the wife of Harriet's brother, John Snider, who also was named Jane. Nephew D. B. was Don Carlos Babbitt, one of the children of Almon and Julia. He was to be sent to Utah, but the other children were kept with the family. The "Loup Fork country" was a large area west of Genoa and north of Wood River.

Here is part of a letter from Crescent City, Oct. 15, 1858:
"I have just come over and have an eye so inflamed and painful that I can hardly see what I write, having to keep it blindfolded with a handkerchief. . . . Our election is over and Fair also. In the former we were abundantly victorious and carried off the honors most decidedly. Next day we went down (to the Bluffs) in procession with banners and songs and took them all. . . . I believe our ticket was fully elected, at least county and township. Had a big, nice fair. I carried off 10 premiums, double that of any other person, on printing, vegetables and flowers. I have been somewhat envied on account of my extensive success with the last two items and I am vain enough to feel a little bit proud. All (the family) went down, and if you had been there I should have felt exactly right. Mary "really wished Eliza were here" also Mrs. Ballo (Ballo’s Band was prominent in the Valley in pioneer times). They had a Grand Tournament to close, 8 lady riders vying for two splendid saddles. Miss White got the first and Mrs. Mart Robinson second, though everybody said Delia Jackson should have had it. (Twas ever thus, nobody agrees with the judges!) They have made up a purse for a much finer saddle for her, and last night she was presented with a gold watch as well. Thanks for a grand rage for ladies equestrianship, a Grand Tournament is to come off in about ten days. . . ."

One letter is dated C.C. Ia. 24 Oct. 1858. It is largely a typical letter to Eliza, but there are a few paragraphs relating to life at Ellisdale:

". . . I have come over from Ellisdale where I have been all the week working at the sugar cane sometimes from daylight to 12 O’clock at night. We have made nearly 100 gallons of syrup. (More news about the coming tournament and party, hopes they will have a party when he goes up to Genoa, thinks they will.)

"I am having the house finished and will have a nice ‘girl’s room’ for Mollie and you, and I am also putting up a
fine barn, a greenhouse and a woodshed. Judge Avery has just come and is moving in tonight. Mrs. Eldredge called upon me today and has gone on. (Doubtless wife of Horace S. Eldredge of the Valley who was in the east on business and who was in correspondence with JEJ about a matter which we shall presently disclose.)

"... Be a good girl and remember the counsels I have often given you, and be careful and not be too familiar with the party I spoke of in a former letter. He is a very good fellow and a friend of mine, but he may not always be a friend to both or either, so be cautious and all will be right. People sometimes have designs and will work any way to accomplish them, but I do not judge him, only be distant. I like him, in many respects he would do more for me than anyone else in the world." (In other words, he is a prince among men, a gem of purest ray serene, but for the luulla mike, keep him at arm's length! We believe this guy was Doc Farnes.)

Prior to this time Joseph had decided to purchase a house at Genoa for Eliza and Charlie, who had been living with the Saunders. He commissioned Mr. Hudson and Joel to find a suitable place. This letter deals with the subject:

"C.C., Oct. 3, 1858

"Dear Eliza:

"Your note from Plattsmouth was received 3 days since. ... I hope you are safely arrived at home and that you are pleased with your new neighbors, but am sorry to hear that Mr. Hudson did not succeed in purchasing a house before they left. They waited to consult me and did not expect you so soon. Joel will arrange the matter soon after his return and I hurry him off expecting to be there as soon as yourselves. . . ."

"Today I went up where the old house stood—a house and spot fruitful with old memories that will live whilst
I exist. (This is the often mentioned house, probably the place where they met, which we have not been able to identify.) . . . Joel starts tomorrow.”

The Mr. Hudson mentioned above was Henry James Hudson, a convert to the Church in 1847. He was called by the Church to establish colonies in Nebraska. In April, 1857, he and his wife settled at Genoa, Nance county, with some 110 families, mostly from St. Louis. In 1859, the Hudsons, with many others left the church and threw in their lots with the Reorganized L.D.S. Church. Hudson seems to have played quite an important part in the organization of that body, along with Joseph Smith III. Our interest in the Hudsons is that they were friends of JEJ and were very kind to Eliza during her sojourn at Genoa. They, on occasion, took her down to the Bluffs area and back after visits with the family at Ellisdale.

Two important new projects opened up for Joseph in the autumn of 1858, relating to a new colony in Wyoming, then Nebraska, the other to do with the early history of Colorado.
Before proceeding onward from 1858 there are a couple of tales which had their beginning in that year though action in each continued for a year or so longer. The first is a story told mostly in letters, of what was to be a pioneer city of the plains located in a spot where a small but beautiful stream called Deer Creek enters the broad Platte. At that time it was described as being in Nebraska Territory, but modern maps place it in Wyoming, which was carved out of Nebraska. Earlier in this narrative we have given JEJ's reaction to the charm of this site while on this first passage to the Valley. We mentioned his thought that he might return the following spring and establish a trading post there. During his stay in the Valley in 1850 he doubtless revealed his enthusiasm for the place to Brigham Young, who also was familiar with it. The great leader must have tucked away the item of Joseph's liking for it, for eight years afterward a letter reached JEJ in Council Bluffs bearing on the subject. We shall present the letter in full:

"Great Salt Lake City, U. T., Oct. 17, 1858

Joseph E. Johnson, Esq.,

Sir:

"Your note dated Genoa August 10 came to hand on the 15th inst. per Brother Appleby, who safely arrived on the day previous with his company, and just previous to a heavy snowstorm which fell the night after their arrival. The weather has continued quite cold and disagreeable since, the snow entirely covering the mountains and benches and still being in spots in the valley. I do not think, how-
ever, that it has done much damage to crops, but will be severely felt by the government trains that are yet on the road—and their poor animals. As usual all is quiet with us, the most desperate ruffians having failed thus far, in getting up the least agitation in our midst.

"You observe that you intend to come through in another year and say that you would like to have advice from me. We would like to have you locate and take charge of a settlement at Deer Creek in Nebraska territory near the crossing. You are already aware that a settlement at that point has been long contemplated and was commenced last year, and was abandoned as were all of our settlements upon the advance of the troops. You could bring your printing press and every kind of farming and mechanical implements necessary to commence a settlement, with all kinds of grain and seeds to plant. You should gather up your company from below, which you are aware would promote the emigration, and start early in the season so as to be able to raise supplies for the year after arriving at your destination. You should also bring mill irons and machinery for a saw and grist mill.

"It is probable that if the right course is taken and a county formed that it will be entitled to a representative in the legislature which position we would like you to fill. Your brother Joel might come up and act in concert with you.

"We propose to strengthen up Genoa also, as it is a good point for our emigration to get supplies, rest, etc., and we expect an emigration another year. If the suggestions above meet with your views and you will act in accordance therewith, or otherwise, please to inform me as soon as possible, that we may make arrangements accordingly.

"I shall take great pleasure in extending to Don Carlos (Babbitt) any advice or benefits which he may need, and I am glad that you sent him here."
"Trusting that you will be able to wind up your affairs and shape matters for the west, and that the Lord will bless you and give you wisdom,

"I remain truly your friend and brother in the Gospel Covenant,

Brigham Young."

Don Carlos Babbitt whom B.Y. mentions was the oldest child of Almon and Julia Babbitt and was about fifteen years old at this period. He was sent to the Valley and was later taken back to the River country, and was one of the four Babbitt children who were taken to Utah in the care of Eliza in 1860.

Joseph appeared to have accepted this "mission" with enthusiasm, and forthwith began to write to many friends and acquaintances in the area surrounding Council Bluffs. He also sought information on the Deer Creek situation from various sources, particularly from H. S. Eldredge who was a prominent businessman in the Valley, and at this time was business agent of the Church, with an office in St. Louis. His endorsement of the Deer Creek project no doubt encouraged Joseph, who was already working to enlist helpers for the new settlement. Some letters in answer to the invitations to join which he sent out have been saved. Some recipients "find it impossible" to pull up stakes and start afresh, others hem and haw and might be able to go "later." One group at Polk City, Iowa, a few miles north of Des Moines, seemed to be the most enthusiastic. Charles A. Rogers was the correspondent, and Bros. Beebe, Davis and Buzzard (yes, that's the name; we tried to make it Blazzard, but it comes out Buzzard, every time.)

In January, '59, Rogers wrote from Polk City thus:

"Dear Bro. Johnson:

"At the request of Bro. Beebe, I write to report his safe arrival home. All well. Bro. Buzzard will send one
horse team and his son in the first company. Bro. Davis, probably one team, Bro. Beebe two horse teams with farming implements, tools, etc. Bro. B. thinks the mill irons had better be left until the ox teams come on, on account of their weight and the fact that the mill can be nearly completed without them viz: dam, woodwork, etc. and tools. Seeds and provisions are of first importance.

“All the saints here that are permitted to know of this ‘movement’ are anxious and sanguine of its utility and success as a Church operation, also of its being profitable in a pecuniary point. And we all rejoice that Brothers Beebe and Buzzard are in the matter. You will find them men of experience, nerve and no back out in them, a kind of Mormon you cannot shake.

“I will come in the first company with Bro. Beebe. Excuse these pencil lines as ink is no longer a fluid in Polk County.

Yours in the Cov.
Charles A. Rogers.”

So much for the Polk City contingent in January. Alas! for Bro. Rogers estimate of the “all hell resisting” qualities of the Polk folk! On February 19 he wrote painfully of a defection in the ranks. He began with the statement that the task of writing his news was one he could hardly fulfill; that it wrung his heart and grieved his soul to report that Bro. Beebe had decided not to go with the Deer Creek pioneers. This, he opined, amounted to abandonment of Polk City’s participation in the affair, since Beebe would influence Buzzard and Davis, and this trio were the only ones who had any real capital to put into the venture. Someone had disparaged the Deer Creek area to Bro. Beebe, Rogers wrote, but he did not wish to reveal the name of that person. He said he could not convey the depth of his shame and disappointment and he enumerated his small holdings to show how little he had to contribute. He could “hardly
remember any event in my life that has given me so much real anguish.... God knows all that I have or am I thought was in the new settlement and nothing but stern necessity compels me otherwise."

One could almost shed a scalding tear at the utter abasement of honest Bro. Rogers because the horses he had so strongly touted jumped over the fence for bunch grass. This letter must have been quite a jolt to JEJ, and he was probably as curious as we are as to the identity of the person who put the sand in the gear box. Joseph was disappointed at Polk City’s failure to rise off the launching pad, since he had counted on them for a mill and many tools and implements. But he had other fish in his basket and he kept up proselyting for followers to his outpost on the Platte.

Joseph had pointed out to Brigham Young the need of wheat for spring seeding. This had been promised and was to be sent by a train which was to leave the Valley for Florence in the spring. But conditions altered this, as is revealed in the following letter from the leader:

“Great Salt Lake City, U. T.
May 4, 1859

“Mr. Joseph E. Johnson
At Deer Creek Station or en route to that point.

Dear Sir:

“Your brother Benjamin favored me with perusal of your letter to him concerning wheat, etc., at which time I thought it probable that the train to Florence would be able to take the wheat. Since then circumstances have transpired to so lessen the intended number of that train that it will not be able to do any but its own hauling.

“You can probably manage your land and time with such seeds as you may have with you, and those which per-
haps, you can procure in that region, and will doubtless, be able, after the hurry of work is past, to send here for your fall wheat, and winter and spring’s supply of flour, etc. as present prospects are very flattering for abundant harvests in Utah.

Respectfully yours,

Brigham Young.”

From this point there is a gap in other than family letters and we find no reference to the Deer Creek enterprise until the final one which thrust the whole thing into the realm of absolute kibosh. In the meantime there had been several hostile acts by government officials and others wherein the saints had been deprived of property and lands of which they had claimed ownership. As an example, Genoa, a thriving Mormon colony in Nance county, Nebraska, was seized by the government on the claim that it was a part of an Indian reservation. The Saints were ordered to vacate in what was palpably a predetermined plot to prevent the Mormons from gaining possession of any land along the trail to the Rocky Mountains. One branch of JEJ’s family is especially interested in Genoa because of the many times the name appears in this story and of the frequent visits he made there.

Things reached such a point of oppression that the Church gave up the dream which would have been an admirable thing for it if it had been successful; that of building a series of strong points all along the perilous route to Zion which would serve and sustain the throngs of emigrants which were pouring westward. Joseph found it hard sledding to find volunteers who were willing to leave the fleshpots of the River area to start from scratch on a remote creek half way to the promised land. There were plenty of people who wanted a chance to go to the Valley, but no half measures, thank you! Our guess is that when the decision was finally made, and Brigham Young went to the
trouble to fully explain the whys, JEJ was really relieved to receive the following letter from the Mormon leader:

"G.S.L. City, April 19, 1860

"Elder J. E. Johnson
Ellisdale, Pottawattamie County, Iowa

Dear Brother:

"Your brother Benjamin F. forwarded to me for perusal your letter to him, March 3, from which I learn that you are anxious to know the conclusion in regard to Deer Creek.

"The experience at Genoa, were even that needed, had convinced us that, at least for an indefinite period, it is altogether unsafe for 'Mormons' to make any description of investment with a view of permanency or profit, at any point between our eastern boundary and the Missouri river, for, should we do so, we would do it under the foreknown certainty that some Indian or Military reserve would be located upon and around it, or some other device hatched up for dispossessing 'Mormon' occupants, or failing all those plans, that a mob would be raised and permitted to drive and plunder at their pleasure, as heretofore.

"Even within our borders br. Lewis Robison was dispossessed of Fort Bridger, and still remains so, after he had purchased it of the rightful claimants and paid them thousands of dollars in money, and now can neither possess the property lawfully bought and paid for in good faith nor be allowed a cent of rent for it by the government which had pounced upon it. At Camp Floyd our citizens are and all the time have been forcibly deprived of their rights. Under such circumstances we shall use our men and means for strengthening and enlarging the present settlements within our borders, with the exception, perhaps, of occasionally stretching a little beyond the neighborhood, but not beyond the reach, of some already secure settlement inside our ter-
territorial lines, and that too mostly along the western foot of the Wasatch mountains. This plan, you will at once perceive, precluded our operating in any manner in making any settlement, on our line of travel between the Weber and the Missouri rivers, as before mentioned, and for the reasons above stated.

One of your brother Joel’s sons will start next week to help his father across the plains, and Don Carlos Babbitt starts in the same company to bring his brothers and sisters to this place; both have mule teams.

“We are sending an ox train to Florence to haul machinery and other freight this season, loading out with quite a quantity of flour. This course will enable us to do more freighting and assist out more of the poor than we otherwise could, unless we had more cash funds. The train expects to start on the 24th or 25th inst.

“I deem it advisable that you be making your way to Utah, with your family, as speedily as prudent and consistent.

Trusting that misfortunes will not discourage you, and that you will be guided and blest in every laudable effort, I remain

Your Brother in the Gospel,
Brigham Young.”

Thus the head of the Church fairly and dispassionately brands government officials for their perfidy and outlines the new Church policy with regard to settlements outside Utah. Down the drain went Joseph’s plans of a sturdy small town on a sweet little stream which poured its crystal water on the muddy bosom of the Platte. Wild roses grew lush on its mint scented banks; black currants and buffalo berries flourished there. Pentstemon, Castilleja, wild iris, lupines and other bright blossoms native to the land where the prairie begins to meet the mountain were undoubtedly
in evidence. But be of good cheer; a town DOES exist at Deer Creek and the Platte, close to where Joseph's would have been. It is called Glenrock, and boasts 1100 inhabitants.

Lack-a-day! Ashes to ashes! Joseph's little city that was to be still lies in the planning stage on the drawing boards of eternity!

This tree flourished from one of the black willow cuttings Eliza nursed through the plains crossing and planted here. (See page 332)

(Photo appeared in April 15, 1906 edition of the Intermountain Herald Republican.)
CHAPTER 32

BIG GOLD STRIKE AT CHERRY CREEK

The description, “ubiquitous” bestowed upon JEJ by Justice Horace E. Deemer of Iowa, received further confirmation when he spread his activities to the newly opened up country which later became the state of Colorado. In the summer of 1858 the news began to filter down from the mountains of a big gold strike on Cherry Creek, a small tributary of the South Platte river, in what was then Kansas territory. This interested Joseph keenly, not only as a newspaper man, but also one who was eager to keep abreast of what was going on about him. He gathered information from all sources, especially from those returning from the area. This he published in the Council Bluffs Press and the Crescent City Oracle, and his stories were among the early accounts of this exciting event.

The first reports from “the mines” were rather glowing and his “write ups” were correspondingly optimistic. Later on, as the boom subsided and men who had made no strike began to straggle back, threats were made against our editor on grounds that his stories had been misleading. Two excerpts from his letters in May 1859 illustrate the situation:

“Returning parties are swearing vengeance on all here and have threatened me in particular on account of some lies Jack (?) has been circulating industriously. They say I am marked if I am caught out... I do not fear them nor their threats. Returning emigrants are very mad and are swearing vengeance on C.B., Omaha and C.C.; that they will burn them and kill those who have published encouraging reports from the mines. It is deemed unsafe for any
prominent individual who has had to do with that matter to start out now (to Denver). Curtis and others have fled back, so I hear, and I have been warned not to be caught out that way. I think it is all bosh.”

Joseph defied the obstreperous ones, declaring that he printed the news as it came to him and that he would continue to do just that thing. The lynching threats petered out, though they were mentioned several times in his letters. If he was ever hanged, he left no record of it.

The entrance of JEJ into the exciting drama of the country’s second major gold strike occurred when he decided to send loads of merchandise to the mines as a commercial enterprise. He chose his two associates in the Crescent store to carry out the venture. Preparations were begun immediately to get it under way. As fresh stories of the strike kept coming in, excitement increased. The two young men were fired with dreams of riches, to be had much nearer than California. All was hustle and bustle around the Crescent store getting goods ready. The task of assembling vehicles and draft animals was no small one, but finally four wagons were loaded high and were ready for the long drag which might turn out to be a bust.

Only sketchy references to the take off are given in JEJ’s letters. But the date of the start was predicted on Sept 21, 1858, quote:

“Have just returned from the Bluffs, having been there to attend court. . . . Boys have not started yet and all is bustle and hurra for the golden realm—they cross tomorrow.”

The official story of the departure is told in the C.C. Oracle of Sept. 24, although JEJ does not reveal his own part in the happenings described:
OFF FOR THE MINES

“Our place has been for ten days in a state of excitement, caused by News from the West, and preparations for emigrating to the new El Dorado.

“Yesterday C. H. Blake and A. J. Williams, Esqu.’s, two of our most energetic and prominent citizens, with four well laden wagons, fourteen yoke of cattle and two ponies, started for the South Platte to trade with the diggers and mountaineers.

“From this place also went in the same company Messrs. McGlashean, Avery, Willoughby, Gordon, Clark, Conant and others, making about a dozen who expect to meet companies from Florence, Council Bluffs and Omaha at the Elkhorn, making an advance guard to the new mines already a hundred strong.”

We have no account of the travels of this party, nor can we find documentary trace of them until they turned up one month and 5 days later on Cherry Creek. This we learn from the Rocky Mountain News of Jan. 18, 1860, in an article entitled “Early Days in Jefferson” (it was expected that the state would be called Jefferson) reading as follows:

“Messrs. Blake and Williams, from Crescent City, Iowa, brought in a supply of goods and provisions on the 29th of October, 1858, and opened the first trading house in the country.” (Most accounts make the date Oct. 27.)

In the same article another statement is made, “On the 29th of October a company from Bellevue, Omaha and Florence, Neb., and one from Crescent City, Iowa, arrived. . . .” The party from Crescent City were Blake and Williams, with JEJ’s merchandise, the others were those described in the Oracle, and they were prospective diggers and adventurers. Thus B. & W. were the first to arrive on the scene
with goods and provisions from JEJ’s store to be sold to the public.

**BLAKE AND WILLIAMS**

Charles H. Blake hailed from New York City, where he had been in the fur business. He arrived in the Bluffs area about the time JEJ’s partner, Frank Welch, died. He seemed to be a bright fellow and JEJ took him in as a partner. Business in the new town of Crescent had not been too lively, and by the time the Cherry Creek story broke he was ready for something more exciting than store-keeping. Andrew J. Williams appeared at the Bluffs in 1851, where he obtained a job on the Council Bluffs Bugle, working for Almon W. Babbit. Here he learned something of the printing trade. When Babbitt was appointed Secretary for Utah, he appointed Williams as clerk and took him to Salt Lake. He returned to the Bluffs in 1855 and worked in the milling business until 1858, when he joined JEJ as a clerk in the Crescent City store.

**THE DENVER HOUSE**

From various sources we learn that immediately upon arrival at Auraria, the tent and shack village that had not yet been named Denver, they set up a store of sorts. One account says it was a tent at first, another, perhaps later, places it in a structure with log walls but no roof other than makeshift canvas covering. This was probably on what was later named Blake street, which still exists in what might be termed the warehouse-tenderloin district of Denver.

The four wagon loads of goods were not a mountain of stock, but JEJ had chosen material well adapted to the needs of the place and moment. It commanded high prices and the net take-in, added to the proceeds from the sale of the wagons and thirty head of animals, produced a very
tidy sum. It was large enough to enable Blake and Williams to erect the first hotel of the diggings, situated across the stream, which they named Denver House. Later JEJ was to register at this hostelry.

Denver house was described as a narrow, barn like structure, 36 feet wide and 130 feet long, though one account gives 110 feet. It is said the roof was “shingled” with spliced wagon covers at first. Possibly the covers of the four wagons from C. C. furnished at least a part of that “shingling.” Quite a generous area of the floor was devoted to the saloon, which had no flooring except terra firma. This space required frequent wetting down to keep the dust from choking the customers. At the long bar shaggy whiskered men blotted up their horse liniment at the advertised rate of $8.00 per gallon for the milder 40 rod, while the more sophisticated 20 rod was galloned out at $16.00 a throw.

Card playing went on constantly and the sharpers kept a large percentage of the unenlightened easterners “lightened” of a good share of their substance. No languishing damsels hung over the bar or tables as in modern movies allegedly depicting the olden times. It is said that there were but two Mexican and two American women in the diggings at the start. One account says the Americans were from the Rooker family, another states one was a Miss Allen, daughter of JEJ’s old friend from Council Bluffs, Henry Allen. The Rookers are said to have been Mormons and the first family unit to appear in the camp.

Blake and Williams branched out into many activities after closing the store. They entered a number of businesses and enterprises, each held offices and appointments of trust and in general they were considered to be among the first citizens of Colorado. They received credit in the histories of the period of being the first to arrive with goods but we find no mention of the fact that it was Joseph E. John-
son who was the proprietor of the expedition, that it was he who conceived the idea of sending merchandise to the new frontier. That it was he who rustled the 28 oxen and two horses and who stacked four wagons with goods most appropriate for a raw camp in the wilds. Or that he placed the whole shebang in charge of his two associates and got them on the road in time to make the merchandise THE FIRST TO ARRIVE IN CHERRY CREEK FOR PUBLIC SALE.

These four loads of merchandise rate high in Colorado history. They rate high in the history of our family, and they crown Joseph Ellis Johnson as the FIRST MERCH­ANT OF DENVER.

THE LONG ROAD TO CHERRY CREEK

However much Joseph was concerned about his investment in the merchandising enterprise, he was extremely curious about the gold country, wondering if the Denver area might be worth investigating as a possible place for future settlement. He began as early as May 1859 to make preparations to view the spot and to check on the general situation as well as on his associates. Many obstacles stood in his way and he had difficulty in finding companions who would join him in a trip of short duration. At one time he told Eliza that if she would go with him a certain woman friend could go along as a companion. A tedious trip in a cramped wagon on a jouncing road had no charms for her and she declined. A Dr. H. was ready to go and several others were mentioned but each time something intervened to hold up departure.

Finally JEJ “concluded” to take along two of his faithful servitors, Vant and Oscar, who for many years had been members of the cast of any production he undertook. He closed his office at the Bluffs, left the “Press” in the hands of W. & W., whoever they were, and placed the store in
charge of his brother-in-law, John Snider. Harriet dwelt at Ellisdale and Hannah had moved in April to Council Bluffs. Eliza was "in the west," which meant Genoa.

Shortly after the first of August, 1859, all was in readiness to hit the prairie road to the gold mines, and the story will be told by Joseph's diary, which is lengthy but should prove readable to the family and to anyone interested in the early Colorado scene. We have cut it considerably by either trimming daily entries or by eliminating whole dates.

Diary of Joseph Ellis Johnson, Aug. 3 to Oct. 1, 1859:

"Left Ellisdale, Iowa, Wed. noon, Aug. 3 for Cherry Creek. Vant and Oscar went by the Bluffs, whilst I, accompanied by wife and John Snider (wife's brother) went to Florence ferry. Crossed over and went to Brother's where our team, four horses with light wagon, soon arrived. Finished outfitting and agreed with two gentlemen to take them in our party, viz: Messrs. McNeely and Nelson.

"Fri. 5. Got up early, loaded & started out at 10½ o'clock just as Snider came over. Lost Mc's boots first four miles, went back but couldn't find them. Stopped on Elkhorn, 20 miles, to dine—forced. Flies hurt horses cruelly. Drove to Fremont, 15 miles. Short stop, drove six miles out to camp 45 mi. from Florence. Stop'd at Mr. Barbers. Fine pool behind the house, springs.

"Sat. 6. Caught fish for breakfast. Roads a little rough, country well settled. Meet many from the mines & some from Salt Lake. Lost my hat & one carpet bag—the last found. Camped at Shell Creek at 11, 20 mi. Over excellent roads and through beautiful valley 25 mi. to Columbus. Made small purchases and passed on 3 mi. to Cleveland and camped. Found our friend North & lady. By urgent request took tea with them. Slept in wagon.

"Sun. 7. Early breakfast and passing through a most delightful valley, reached Monroe, ten mi. Genoa 8 mi.
on, possessing one of the most beautiful sites in the whole Platte valley. Arrived 8, found Bro. Joel had gone on Friday. Felt much disappointed. (Joel had started for the Valley.) Found folks (the Saunders and Eliza) all well. Camped before the house. Walked out afternoon (with Eliza) visiting the fields and strolling by the Beaver (creek). Sat with friends till late hour singing, etc.

"Mon. 8. Arose early—went earnestly to work in preparation of starting. Made horse covers—shelled corn & repacked the wagons, assiduously assisted by our friends. ... E(liza) baked bread for us and purchased coffee.

Tues. 9. Arose early, bright morning. Left after calling at Hudsons and eating hearty breakfast. Bid adieu to warm friends. Crossed the Loup Fork at 10, having on the wagon bushels of corn, also meal, beans, cucumbers & other things, considerably increasing load. Road lay up the river through fertile bottom. Camped 13 mi. Horse broke loose. Vant pursued whilst I went fishing—wrote & read. Staid all afternoon but got no horse.

"Wed. 10. Morning fine. Took bath in the Platte & waited for the runaway horse until 10. Left note and started onward & camped for dinner at Spring Lake where I won wager of bottle of wine from John by catching 35 fish with whipstock for rod. Got nearly swallowed up in sink hole whilst trying to cross lake at what seemed a dry spot. Afternoon, saw many buffalo, deer & antelope. Camped 14 mi. at slough and cooked with buffalo chips. Two men camped with us, one from Cherry Creek & one from Monroe. Lay down on blanket and fell asleep as Me favored us with some popular airs. Awoke at 12 and found I had forgotten to go to bed...

"Thur. 11. Started early to make Wood River, 40 mi. Walked 4 mi. in morning—roads heavy with sand 10 mi. Many game animals—took a good sleep and camped for noon on Prairie Creek—caught good mess of fish. Wrote
for Press and brought up my journal. Camped for night 10 mi. from Wood River. Wood, & plenty good water, clear moon. Buffalo came into camp. Started at 2, got the wrong direction and traveled back some five mi. and at daylight found ourselves near our old campground—turned back and made Wood River in the rain. Found Bro. Joel with axletree broken—had given up going to Utah. Stopped at Peck’s and got tire set. Some 10 families here, beautiful country. Wrote letters—left some of load with Joel. Got bushel of meal and went on to Hewys ranche and camped. Two buffalos came near the houses. Town laid out here, and P.O., Nebraska Center. Had buffalo meat.

"Sat. 13. Came up 15 mi. to the ford at Kearney. Raised the goods all to top of wagon bed. Stripped off and waded in & crossed in safety, 8 channels and about 2 mi. Stopped for dinner and got dry clothes. Passed on to Morrow’s ranche and stopped for night to give Nelson time to buy a pony. Came near buying a herd of young stock but could not arrange. Present of fine pair of moccasins from Mr. Morrow and sub. for Press.

"Aug. 15. Started at 7, bad roads. Begin to meet a multitude from gold mines. Passed one small merchant train from Leavenworth. Valley very wide. Passed two companies of dragoons from Fort Randell for Kearney, with wagons and much stock. Encamped 17 miles from river, found rare flowers. Wrote letters—journal. Nelson rides jack whilst his pony goes into harness. Went 15 mi. to Plum Creek sta. Stage passed in night. Express passed up while we were at Rankin’s Ranche. Here (Plum Cr.) we were presented with buffalo meat and saw some of the animals sporting away on the bluff. Met 94 teams today. Cooked cakes and boiled beans, played seven up and sang songs.

"Tues. 16. Breakfasted on buffalo meat, pancakes, onions, fried crackers and tea. Roads sometimes fine and
smooth, then muddy & bad, constantly reminding me of the superior route on the north side. Very little timber on Platte. Some beautiful flowers. Walked 1/2 hour and gathered new specimens which I pressed, also seeds. Passed 1 company of dragoons in camp 21 mi. from Plum Creek. Camped 22 mi. for dinner—passed 52 wagons & much stock. Stop at Coldwater station—fine flowers and all around—valley broader & seems to be rich, fertile land. Travel on this road is immense—men & teams in sight all the time. News from the mine encouraging. Passed camp of 1 company dragoons in camp stationed on the river. Large company of Cheyenne Indians & some 150 lodges near—lots of them come to camp, gave them supper.


Sat. 20. Had breakfast by sunrise. Cloudy & sundogs, (fragmentary rainbow). River rising. Gathered handful of flowers and tossed them into the current which will likely waft them near my happy home. Road rough & sandy. Walked several mi. & gathered flowers. Passed several dog towns, (prairie dogs) and the upper crossing. Met
many teams and stopped for dinner on bank. Caught a
dozzen fish with whipstock for pole. Walked several mi.
Met several Cheyenne chiefs going down to bring up their
tribe to receive presents from their agent. Merchant train,
5 wagons in camp. Valley stretches wide, a broad ocean
of green. Some hilltops look like miniature mountains;
more often bluffs slope back so gradually one can scarce
tell where they commence. Camped some 15 mi. on. No
wood and few poor chips.

Sun. 21. Horses much ganted & jaded. I felt cross—
walked a long way over sand & found two new flowers.
Wolves in sight — they howled hideously last night. Many
deep chasms cut by water from the hills. Many teams re­
turning. Camp above Lilian station, 15 mi. on river bank.
Had cool, refreshing bath. Put jack into harness today.
Fished, no luck. Passed 15 mi. & camped with poor grass
& no wood at all. Four other camps in sight.

Mon. 22. Started at 6—sand gets worse. Two new
flowers—walked much—passed a train of merchandise, 24
wagons. Belongs to Jones & Courtright, comes from Leav­
enworth and consists of staples, viz: Whisky, flour, bacon,
etc. Turned out at 11 and went on at 2. Wrote letters the
whole stop. Many teams passing. Camped on river bank
—went fishing.

Tues. 23. Off at sunrise, fine roads to Beaver Creek,
8 mi. Station here and scores of Indians. Passed a charac­
ter walking toward the states with his whole outfit strapped
on him. Over a horrible road 20 mi. to Krown Creek. Fine
camping place. I took first watch & boiled beans.

Wed. 24. Started at 3 over 10 mi. of sand. Walked
most of way. Much fatigued. Saw scores of antelope.
Met express coach. Men take their guns to try for ante­
lope, but in vain. I found a new flower & wild onions. Much
cactus. Stopped in timber 3 hours. Caught a big rattle-
snake. Bathed, combed my head and ventured to look into the glass. Not as badly shocked as I expected to be.

Thur. 25. Off at daybreak—went 8 mi.—overtook ox team and camped. Team all right. Passed on over sand to St. Vrain’s Fort. Very hot—I walked 7 mi. & got mad. Mountains are in sight since yesternoon. On—Camp at Fort Lupton, an old deserted structure. These forts were private trading posts built 31 years ago & deserted 6 years since, built of adobes. Stage passed down and to my astonishment and disappointment WILLIAMS WAS ABOARD, met within 7 mi. of our ranche. I saw him only 5 minutes, driver would not wait. I was mad. Sun very hot—tried fishing, reading writing, but to no purpose. Gave it up and started on foot to a ruined Fort, supposed to be Vasquez’s trading station. On 10 mi. to our ranche Ft. Lancaster. Passed another ruined structure. At the ranche we just had time to turn out before the storm broke, which lasted till night. We killed another rattlesnake today. This old fort is some 200 feet square with ground houses and lookout at inverse corners, some 20 rooms and open courts—two corrals, powder magazine, etc., a good rope ferry & fine boat. An admirable ferry. Excellent place for stock & for cutting hay. A supply station is kept here.

Fri. 26. Rainbow this morning. Breakfast in house—started on at 8. Took an extra horse to Denver. Killed a monstrous yellow rattlesnake—found the land all along the river claimed & many houses erected. Met some 40 or 50 teams returning and a train going out with steam mill.”

CHERRY CREEK TO BECOME DENVER

“Camped at noon on the South Platte, 5 MILES FROM DENVER. Paused 1½ hours, passed on, reaching Denver at 4 o’clock amid the kind greetings of many friends. I was much astonished at the great advancement of the place and the amount of money already expended. Several hundred
houses are erected & some really fine & comortable. Took tea with Esq. Ford and put up at the Denver House with C.H.B. (Charles H. Blake. A. J. Williams had gone "down" on the stage, remember?)

"Sat. Sept. 27. Finished writing—put on clean clothes, chatted with friends and sauntered around town and over to Auraria. Visited the News office, John G., H. A. Allen and others, & took a look over the town sites which are quite attractive. Felt dull & sleepy afternoon & took a nap. Shower in afternoon and a horse was killed by lightning within two rods of where I lay,—was considerably shocked.

"Sun. 28. Walked out, gathered flowers & traversed the town, calling upon half a dozen friends—wrote considerably—found a woman in male attire—made acquaintance with a score of citizens, Vant and Click went to ranch with stock. (To rest them up for the trip home.)

"Mon. 29. Collected a few flowers. Clancy came and we went out four miles to Spanish diggings. Washed out several pans and got fine prospects & beautiful gold. Several specimens—felt quite sick & scarce able to return.

"Tues. 30. With Clancy went below a mile to look at garden. Found fine melons, potatoes, tomatoes, squashes, beets, carrots, parsnips, onions, radishes, lettuce, beans, peas, cabbage, etc. Was treated to an excellent melon—found some choice flowers. Jones & Co's train came in—went around town visiting all afternoon after writing an hour or two. Went to party last night, 15 ladies & 100 gentlemen. Took tea with Mr. Allen & ladies. Had serenade & big oyster supper last night, amused with Capt. Moore & saw very rich specimens of quartz and gold.

"Wed. 31. Was to have started for mountains, but wet & rainy. Felt very glum and staid in. Saw a fist fight in the street, quarrel about buying a horse from an Indian.
Terrific rain afternoon & night. Houses wet through and through. Sat up most all night, writing for Press, etc.

"Thur. Sept 1. Company gives up going into the mountains. Visited Richards of Platte Bridge. Heard strange stories about Utah miners over the mountains. Visited Allen & others and started on a little mule with CHB (Blake) for the mountains at 2. Rode over an even plain, crossing So. Platte on a bridge. Arrive at Golden City at 7, very tired and lame from riding. 30 houses in town. Stopped at F---- good fare & slept on floor. St. Matthews, founder of the town, is much of a gentleman & intelligent.

"Fri. 2. Fine morning. Rambled out—found new flower. Golden City is on Clear Creek, a rapid river at the foot of and in a little cozy valley. Town progresses and is built finely . . . start out at 8, scenery beautiful & wild. Up the mountain, turned in a narrow, rocky kanyon. A cool, clear, dancing rivulet rushes down with banks covered with shrubs and flowers. Noticed gooseberry, currant, rasp­berry, plum, hazel, alder, maple, snowdrop, gold cactus & many others in wild profusion. Gathered many new & fine varieties of flowers. Overtook a horseman who kept us company. 10 mi. up found ox teams and all the boys camped for dinner. Stopped to dine—found abundance of fine ripe cherries which we feasted upon. Climbed up a mountain. Ate dinner, then started on foot, plucking flowers, communing with ourself and in the wild excitement feasting upon enjoyment. Walked over every character of road mid tall pines, firs & poplars, some six miles. Sat down to rest & hum "Life in the Mountains." Party came up & I, again seated in the saddle, pursued the remainder of the road without incident,—remarkable! Raising upon a high di­vide we saw away in the distance westward, mountains en­tirely covered with snow. Others we saw composed of high, craggy rocks. Whilst on the road I alighted to pluck some flowers—my mule pulled away and ran off & we had much
trouble recapturing him. Arrived at Mountain City before night and partaking of a miserable supper, slept well at Jack Kuler's with Charlie (Blake).

"Sat. 3. Called upon Br. Birdsall & others. Company go up mountains to examine mines—Saw some interesting operations, gathered specimens of quartz & diamonds (!). Returned to a late dinner. Ox team with quartz mill came in. I gathered small trees to take home, then went up to mill & camped with boys. Rain, hail & snow. Slept in mill—wrote late.

"Sun. 4. Snowed all night. Cold & ugly. Dr. Willing stopped with us & I went up to his shanty. Washed dirt from one pan & got 19 Oz from one pan. (must mean .19 oz.) Staid till noon & returned. Snow again—I had to come in & remain idle all afternoon. No feed for cattle & horses. Cold time. I was homesick & lonesome.

"Mon. 5. Morn opened slowly & snow began to disappear. Mud enough. Went up on quartz hill to see Stuts & Howe—found the latter. Very kind, showed me around and gave me many specimens. Went to see Dr. Roberts of VT. He gave me specimens, pleasant time. Went back, got pony & went down to Jack Kulers. Election Day. I voted for Territory, justice of Peace and Sheriff. Got pan of dirt from Kuler's claim. Washed it and got .12 oz. dust. Took dinner & started back at 2½ as it began to storm. Vast sums of gold being dug, far better than I hoped. Several hundred houses & cabins in Mountain City. Friends kind, good time, fine specimens. Ox team started back this morning with steam mill. McGlashen gave me deed of claim on Topeka Lead. Hurried on over mountains & escaped storm. Came up to teams 6 mi. and stopped to bait (feed mule). Pulled (seedling) trees, etc. Scenery beautiful. Mule got away from me. Kicked up, threw me down the mountain with some damage. Tore the saddle all to pieces. Caught the cuss, picked myself, saddle & saddle bags up, mended
up & started on. Met emigrants going into the Mtns. Re-admired the scenery, looked away down a valley & out upon the broad plains. Rode after nightfall by dim moonlight—scenery wild, chaste & beautiful, & absorbed my mind as I rode along. Thought much of friends (family) far away and prayed earnestly for their welfare. Crossed one stream coming down 68 times. Arrived Golden City at 7. Got a good supper & learned that the citizens had hung a desperado who had been shooting at quiet citizens. Read a paper from home I chanced to see, & went to bed to sleep firmly, to arise on

"Tues. 6. Weather fine. Saw some old acquaintances, got a good breakfast—first rate Lady cook. With Mr. Adams, went up Clear Creek and prospected for gold & got some, very fine. Got fine cactus. Returned, visited 2 steam sawmills & fine garden. Started down at 11, mule lame in the back & can get along but slow. Did not enjoy the ride, but got a good view of the country & arrived at Denver at 4, glad to have completed my mule ride. Called upon Mr. Allen by request. Got 1 letter and saw 2 copies of Press—read all through—went to visit a gambling den. Found Clancy, Tomnsley, John Brown. Was invited to an oyster supper by Mr. Rogers. Then wrote & smoked till 12. Vote for state in minority. Wrote till 2 o’clock.

"Wed. 7. Clancy came over & Haines drove around with invitation to ride out. Took on rocker and went to Spanish diggings & ranged about. Dug and washed a little. Got beautiful scale gold—old man with sluice makes $4 out of loose dirt. Flowers, seeds, etc. Got specimen of alum from mountain. Noticed with admiration the many snow covered peaks whilst warm and pleasant here. Returned near night. Shafer came in with long string of feathered game, chickens, grouse, pigeons, etc. Saw Clark, Conant, Gordon. Wrote awhile—dressed & went to party—some 20 ladies. Stopped short time—returned (to Denver House) & wrote till 1 o’clock. Two young men tight & pleasantly cutting
up. Went to bed & dreamed of gold, gold,—mountains of gold!

"Thur. 8. Entrance of O. B. Smith awakened me. Was invited to dish of fat grouse but felt under the weather. Sunshine on the mountain snow away in the distance glitters beautifully. Walked out to the mine. Old gentleman called and took letters down to Williams (A. J.) Drs. Ford & Willing came down last night. Yesterday was introduced to Hon. Mr. Graham, late delegate to Congress. He called upon me this morning with invitation to dinner. (Mr. Graham was the man JEJ was slated to succeed, as we shall see)

"Fri. 9. Business in Denver & Auraria. Visited Byers (Ed. Rocky Mtn. News). Took dinner by invitation at Vasquez House & tea with Mr. Graham’s family. Inv. to dine with Mr. Allen tomorrow. Express came in but not a letter or one word from home. Exceedingly vexed and out of humor. Called to see Byers, who gave me specimens. Packed up pine & fir trees boys got in mtns. Vance went down to ranche—conclude to start Sunday (home).

"Sat. 10. Haines came with inv. to go troutng. Accepted—went around town to find amt. of business done in gold & current prices. Got News at office & read Byers flattering notice of my visit. Also got Gold Republic with like notice. Charlie (Blake) & Orson (?) go with us (fishing). Went up other side of Platte—some ranches—rough road followed up mountain creek. Got some small fish, also cherries & currants, found verbena and new cactus. Chased wolves—had fun and returned at dark hungry. Found Courtwright, gave us fine gold specimens. Went over to Auraria and to bed.

"Sun. 11. Hasten to get ready. Went over & saw Allen & agreed about Press. Am to have 34 good lots, 8 choice, and good office space, & deed of property to new Press. Gave also some claims in mountains, etc. . . . Allen pre-
sented fine specimens of quartz & gold. Ford got some fine purifications—Courtright sent gold to Curtis. Took dinner with Slaughter & started at 2. Took in arms to carry through for Blake. Another (man) goes horseback to travel with us. Jim goes down to Ranche to drive back ox team. Street, Oaks & Co. go along with horse team & (they) carry my evergreens, flower roots and cactus down to Ranche. Arrived about dark, 27 mi.”

**CHERRY CREEK IS LEFT BEHIND**

“Mon. Sept. 12. Overhauled load and packed things. Look about, walked around grounds. Washed some pans of dirt. No colors. Were to start at 2. Pony broke whiffletree & we had to make a new one. Finn started with ox team & had runaway, put all right & was off—traveled over 17 mi.

“Tues. 13. Sunrise breakfast, mutton, pork, bread and coffee. I started on foot to get roots of some fragrant flowers & walked 5 mi. Got in wagon, read, slept. Overtook Street & Co. & stopped 2 hours. I went on foot through a dog city 4 or 5 mi. Passed through beautiful wild flower garden, found 2 round cactus. Passed large train, Jones & Co. and camped on river bank. Two skiffs landed, one with 2, the other 6 souls. Began to be seriously homesick. Seems to be so great a distance home, team poor, travel slow.

“Wed. 14. Early start, I walked—flowers adorn sand hills—many colors. The pink & purple excite admiration & I unconsciously go to gathering them to take home. I am looking for flowers & roots constantly and wish I could carry a huge bouquet without withering. Walked ahead and caught nice mess of fish in small lake by the road. New cactus, shoots growing from side, put it in wagon—camped at Fremont's orchard. Tried to cross river but found it too wide & deep. Caught 3 fish. After dinner, wrote,
walked on. Saw no game—are 95 mi. from Denver. Skiff with six pass—they have been upset. Six wagons camped near us. . . . I push on afoot over 10 mi. of sand. Bijou (creek) is a clear, cool brook. On 3 mi. we camped on river bank near road. No wood.

"Thurs. 15. Arose late, found horses gone. Searched with much anxiety and at last found them back on the creek 3 mi. Started 8, more roots, flowers, walked on 8 mi. Team getting poor, worn down. Drove 20 mi. to Beaver Creek, found spring—good grass—ranche deserted. Cooked cakes for dinner—ate last loaf of bread last night. Passed 3 skiffs floating down. Ranche station 4 mi. below—traveled 10 mi. & camped early. Tried fishing in river—plenty chips. Oscar watched.

"Fri. 16. Started before daylight, made 15 mi. before breakfast. Saw a buck this morning—antelope & wolves. Saw two trains other side of river. Met Cooper's train, delivered letter. Have walked till exhausted. At 4 o/c stop 1 hour—10 mi.—went to sleep. Drove 8 mi. & camped by river, nice place—good chip fire. I took watch till 2—heard deer whistle & duck quack on river.

"Sat. 16. How very long the journey seems. I often think I will never again take such a journey without my family. Started half past 4. Went 8 mi., camped for 2 hours; I cooked breakfast. I walked much. Stop 12 mi. on river—dinner & ate sardines—played euchre & wrote. Slept, woke up in terrific wind squall, sand & dust terrible. Soon went into camp & rain began to pour. Wind came near upsetting wagon. Storm all night & all 5 had to huddle in wagon & sit up. No sleep—hard, cold night.

"Mon. 18. Left at daybreak, shivering. Horses much jaded—went 5 mi. to lower crossing. Stop 2 hours—got breakfast on stove at Beauvais' store. Cooked biscuit. Dug roots of lily—passed returning Salt Lakers. Noon on river, 12 mi. Stay 3 hours—grease wagon—peas for dinner. Got antelope meat from Indians. Little that is new or interesting is now to be seen. Am constantly scanning the prairies for new or pretty flowers & today threw a bouquet in the river thinking it might go near those dear ones before me. Started on ahead and walked 4 or 5 mi. Pencilled my thoughts as I walked along. Continued on till after dark & camped at a slough. No wood, little grass & cold as the D---l.

"Tues. 19. Cold-white frost. Started at daybreak—over fine roads to a delightful camp beside clear spring lake with fish, birds, game, & flowers around. Cooked cakes & antelope. Saw antelope this morning—wolves last night. Salt Lake train passed while we were breakfasting. Found fragrant flower like a lily—took up roots (plants) to carry to Ellisdale. Started about 10 passing mail station—3 mi. to Williams ranche, where we found a change of horses. Sold Wms. the ponies to pay what I owed him & 40 dollars to boot, including last dollar I had. Waded over to an island & found abundance of flowers. Took up many (plants) to take home. Four horse team in camp—also Murphy of Omaha. I am indebted to Wms. $10, to be paid in printing, bills etc. (Loss of a day here. Think they stayed over at Wms.)


"Thur. 22. Start daybreak; fine road; picturesque bluffs full of Cedar groves—mountains. Made 18 mi. to Cotton-
wood Springs—here are several ranches, 3 trading houses and mail sta. Abundant groves of cottonwood on the river & islands. Fine grain & grazing grounds just above of sufficient extent to sustain a large settlement, the only one we have seen west of Wood River. Here is the place! Found Mr. Fox and young Mr. Darling, who came to Omaha with Estabrook,—has for several years been on the plains. Says it is less than 20 mi. over to Republican Fork where there are fine groves of timber & plenty of game. Says he was only a few hours from A. W. Babbitt when he was murdered, that Indians said one man got away on a mule, that he caught one mule, but Indians stole it from him. Says B. was killed on north side of Platte, a little below Ash Hollow on Dry Fork. He knows well the place & will see Indians and learn all the facts. He was very kind—gave us potatoes, melons, beans, candles, etc. & me a fine pair of moccasins and plenty of ‘Red Eye.’ Started at 1, drove 15 mi. & turned in intending to cross the river & go down north side. Couldn’t find the ford & drove over wild prairie bottom till dark, then camped near other wagons. Caught small fish—lost a bolt—split & mended whilffetree. Vant watched. Wind in night nearly upset wagon.

"Fri. 23 Daylight start. Drove 10 mi. camped fine place by river. Cooked green beans & carrots. Saw plenty of buffalo. I wrote, & when riding read a novel—one of Ned Buntline’s poorest. Vant & Oscar went over upon an island and shot a huge, white wolf. Brought him over & skinned him. Favor chased a buffalo. I slept & dreamed of loved ones at home. Anxious to hear and still fearing to do so. (illness of baby son). Camped 5 mi. below Plum Creek in poor place. Restless—Wolves kept up an incessant howling all night Sat. 24, & buffalo crossing the river kept a continual splashing of water. At daybreak learned that sorrel horses were missing—thought stolen. All hands out to look but not light enough to see. Many buffalo grazing—horses found 2 mi. above. Started on—found the valley
alive with buffalo. Some of party tried to shoot several whilst we waited, but failed. On 20 mi., overtook Mike Murphy & Co. & all camped together. He had plenty of buffalo & gave us some fine hump rib steak. Started at 2 & came 10 mi. to Rankin's Ranch 2 mi. from Kearney. Stopped ½ hour. Passed on to Kearney, where I found one letter, that from A. J. Williams, giving me important information but very unpleasant. Felt exceedingly cast down & annoyed at the black ingratitude of the people of C.B. With a heart full of trouble passed on to the ford, which is here 2½ mi. wide. Crossed after breaking doubletree & getting quite wet. Found J. Huntington with broken whiffletree, in the river. Helped him out & by invitation took seat in Dr. Henry's buggy and rode 9 mi. to his ranche where I arrived at sunset. Walked over his grounds, garden etc. & ate tomatoes & melons. Had inquired for letters first thing but got none. Greatly disappointed & dissipated. Took tea with the Dr. by his friendly invitation & just as I arose from a meal which I much relished, I was presented with a letter in feminine handwriting. With heart throb­bing between hope and fear I hastily opened it & quickly learned that little J.E. was no more. I felt as if I should sink & for a long time was uncertain. It was the only son (meaning of Hannah's family). Few can comprehend the feeling that harrowed my heart; away from my family & every earthly being I love, hunted and proscribed, and then, O! sorrow, my little one had gone & I am held in fear of going to those who remain.

"I do now indeed feel lonely & almost alone in the world. I know not what to do but go forward and perhaps brave all dangers. Life has no charm without a home to enjoy, and now after years of labor, fatigue & toil, I have no resting place. The part of a home I had at G. (Genoa) I also learn is broken up by Indian reservations, and the one I expected to welcome my perilous return gone & deserted against her earnest promise. 'Such is Life,' and such
the finale of earthly hopes. Such the reality of all the bright illusions I had fancied, awaiting a joyous and happy return. I seem to be a plaything, the jest & mockery of fickle fortune. This unmans me—I am sick, sick at heart and here will sit the night long—not to sleep—but in despondence & grief—disappointment. When the sun again awakens to light I will haste to see brother Joel H. & vainly seek consolation. Sullen thunders are rolling overhead & fierce lightning illumines the inky clouds, whilst wind & rain are fast coming over me. All is dark—unnerving—yet not more rending the thunder than what overwhelms my soul, nor the storm cloud darker than the shadows on my heart. Today I gathered flowers as sweet as mortals could wish, & placed them in safety, that each loved one might inhale the intoxicating fragrance. Would they were in the grave with him. Emotions choke & tears blind me. I can do no more."

At this point we break the continuity of the diary to point up the bludgeoning which rained upon the head of this unhappy man. Probably in all his life JEJ never had a blacker day. Life appears to have hoarded up a number of catastrophes with which to smite him all at once. While the death of Josy was the most poignant happening, the all shattering blow came from William’s letter. This was the tidings that the Council Bluffs grand jury had found a bill against him for polygamy. We do not know precisely how he was charged, but this would have been the base of it. This was his first knowledge that the immunity from molestation he had enjoyed for nearly ten years had come to an end. This news drew his bitter comment on “the black ingratitude of the people of Council Bluffs.” He was doubtless thinking of all he had done to build up the city, almost from its origin. Perhaps he overlooked the fact that so many of his friends had moved on. The population of C.B. had changed so much in the later years and now there were
so many who "knew him not." There was a lot of politics as well as religious opposition to it.

Andrew had heard the news while at the Bluffs and had sent a letter to JEJ to warn him of impending trouble. We do not have his letter, but Mary had sent the same message, although it had not been received at the time by JEJ. It told him of both of the heart breaking happenings. Some excerpts follow:

"Ellisdale, Sept. 11 (1859)

"Absent but ever remembered Father:

"I received a letter from you by Andrew,—he arrived Friday night. . . . Little Josy is dead. He died Tuesday morning . . . he had seemed better Monday . . . slept all night. He waked up. . . . Hannah gave him a drink and laid down and went to sleep . . . when she woke he was dying. Hannah is reconciled . . . although she took it very hard."

Then she tells of the work at Ellisdale, about the garden and flowers, the frost they had, of Jane’s sickness and of the great barbecue and ball the town was to have, of Eliza’s being there, and finally looses her bomb in these words:

"It is true about their having a bill against you. Everybody is talking about it, most, that is, your friends. They all think you had better find out about things before you make your appearance. Mother (Harriet) says she does not want you to come home under present circumstances. She thinks it is better for you to stay out there in Nebraska than to come home and have everybody pointing at you, and have all the papers in the United States talking about the Great Polygamist. The grand jury men were keeping the secret so nice but it leaked out some way. They intend to catch you when you get back and make you pay $10,000 bail
and when next court comes up take you to the penitentiary. Everybody does not know what I have told you but I have found out by close inquiry. The Republicans are bound to ruin you, they have such a spite at you for leading the elections so much."

While Mary’s account shows the naiveté of youth, it probably tells the tale as graphically as is necessary.

Some discussion of the icy winds which practically froze our Joseph in his tracks is required to make the extent and seriousness of the situation clear. This is the order in which those winds blew:

The death of Joseph Ellis, Jr.
The indictment.
The attachment of the Press plant.
The knowledge that all the possible advantages of the Denver group’s offer would be lost.
The loss of his half established home at Genoa.
The fact that he thought Eliza had “deserted” Genoa.
The grief and shock caused by the death of an oldest son and namesake is too well understood by every normal human being to require discussion.

To better understand the far reaching effects of the indictment, we must turn back to the diary entry of Sun. Oct. 11. There he tells that he had seen Henry Allen, that they had “agreed” about the “Press”; that he was to have 34 lots, 8 of which were to be choice, a deed to property for office room, also deed to mining property. He does not explain what this is all about in the diary, but in a letter to Eliza he told her, (and she was to keep it quiet), that a group of business men had promised him the things mentioned above, worth at least $8,000, if he would bring his printing plant to Denver and start a paper there. The big
plum, however, was their promise to send him to Congress to replace the Mr. Graham, with whom he took tea on Fri. 9, and who had resigned from his congressional office.

In the letter to Eliza he said he had the matter under consideration, but from the diary we learn that he had accepted it and had come to terms with Mr. Allen. He began his return to the River with big ideas of a bright future, but how he expected to get by with it is a mystery we shall never solve. What disposition could he hope to make of his three families that would make it possible for him to become prominent in the community and even be elected to Congress? Yet he must have had something in mind or he would not have made the deal with Mr. Allen’s group. Whatever his plans were, they were knocked sky high by the bad news at Kearney. News of the tying up of the “Press” plant added to the debacle, although he knew he could replevin that.

He saw that his enemies had cunningly taken advantage of his absence to lay him low, and now gone were his hopes of becoming a prominent citizen of the upcoming mountain state. Not this alone, but at the first shock he was actually fearful of returning home. He was homeless, “proscribed” indeed. The home he was making at Genoa was wiped out by government decree and the happy reunion he was anticipating with Eliza and Charles was not to be. In his chagrin over this he was a little harsh in saying Eliza had “deserted” the place. Actually she had gone down to Ellisdale and by mischance did not get in touch with the people who were to take her back, and they had to go on without her. Mary mentioned in her letter that Eliza was there waiting for a chance to return. Add to all these things a wearied body, ultra lonesomeness, and yearning and a roaring storm outside of the frail wagon shelter, then one comprehends the starkness of the long night that faced this stricken man. Truly this was his noche triste, a dolorous night indeed!
We now proceed with the diary, which is nearing the end:

"Sun. 25. The storm last night was truly awful—the thunders shaking the very earth to its center. The lightning was one vivid flash from every side, whilst the unceasing torrents of falling rain fairly flooded us. I was doubly sad & spent the most of the night with my own miserable and misty thoughts. This morning 'tis very wet & breakfast late. I tried to rally my drooping spirits but in vain—could eat nothing & finally started on foot to Bro. Joel's & was much wearied by a walk of some six mi. Called at Mr. Peck's and ate part of a watermelon (if he could eat watermelon on an early wet morning, it shows that he wasn't licked!). A team came up & I rode a mile and a half to Joel's. Found him in a small cabin at the bridge crossing of Wood River with some goods, building & doing some trade. Walked out several times, talked much with him and was advised to move to this place, a counsel I had previously concluded to do. Slept in cabin.

"Mon. 26. Arose early, hitched up and drove off to look at the location. Across river found 3 sorts of prickly pear, an abundance of fruit, also some spirea lily. Never saw a country so beautiful nor land so rich. Went over on island to see rush beds, which are wonderful. In Creek kanyon found ash, elm, hackberry, etc. abundant besides grape, gooseberry and the largest wild plums I ever saw. Returned over smooth dry land—beautiful & fertile bottom about 7 mi. Got in at sundown and concluded to take claims on the S. east side of creek near the bridge on Wood River. Went in and slept on feathers with Joel, after 12.

"Tues. 27. Hastily prepared for starting & was off before 10. Left note for Jim to stop with team & go to work. (They were evidently riding in the light wagon, and had a regular outfit following with most of the plunder.) Took down $110 from Joel to invest as per memorandum.
Left flour & every thing did not need. Concluded to go down the Platte & see that road—went 20 mi. for dinner. Found Huntington—he gave us buffalo meat & I walked five mi. with him. Camped 15 mi. by the river & got plenty of grapes on an island. Played & sat up late—anything to amuse or distract the mind from the misery of loneliness that has seemed to envelope me.

"Wed. 28. Off daybreak. I drove 10 mi. to Lone Tree near many cedar islands. Where house was building at old Pawnee ford could discern timber on the Loup. Yesterday passed through a region settled & much improved, known as the Dutch colony. Fine corn & other crops. They have contracted 10,000 bush. corn delived at Kearney at $2 per bushel. Ames was taken sick at morning camp with pleurisy. Favor sold his pony and both stop'd to take the stage. Good luck for us for we were heartily tired of them. Intended to strike across from a mile below Eagle Island station for Genoa, but not knowing the place passed down to the bridge on Prairie Creek, 12 mi. from Columbus, where we camped at sundown.

"Thur. 29. Terribly windy all day & last night. At daybreak started on toward Genoa over trackless prairie. Went up P. Creek 3 mi., found a slough with beaver dam across; signs of abundance of beaver. Stopped to breakfast without wood as a heavy storm came up. Tried fishing—caught nice fish of about 1/2 lb. weight, as fast as I could take them from the hook. Caught about 50 in an hour; snatched a mouthful of breakfast and hastened away before the shower burst. Going northward we avoided the storm for a long time whilst we drove 15 to 20 mi. of bottom & sand hill to near the ferry at Genoa where the rain almost deluged us. Waited an hour in the storm at the ferry but finally crossed as the shower fairly drenched the ferrymen. Went up to S's (Saunders), found them moved and the house carried down into the prairie. Got dinner & boys
went to shelling corn whilst I went out to the field to see the crops. Hudson gone, E. away & I felt lonesome & much disappointed, wearied-ennui. Lay down on the floor early, unpleasant night.

"Fri. 30. Gathered a bouquet from the old garden She planted and tended. All gardens in town destroyed by cattle. Indians are expected soon to take the town site as a portion of their reservation, and all are hurrying to gather & secure crops & move houses & everything off the ground. All around looks like desolation & distress & I hastened some business & left the place. Boys shelled the corn & took lumber from 2 houses to send up to Wood River, but we left at 2 without team arriving. Took wrong road and had to cross some miles through the grass. Arrived at Cleveland & stopped at North's for night, 18 mi. Stopped on the way at Col. Stevens and got all the melons we could carry. Col. is a very clever fellow & always seems pleased to serve me. Was invited to take tea with the family by Mrs. North. All were excessively sociable and highly pleased that I was intending to become a nearer neighbor. Slept comfortable in the house.

"Sat. 1st of October. Arose early, visited grounds & garden, started soon after sunrise. Traveled 25 mi. to Shell Creek, where I found Huntington again. He gave me a nice chicken and some plums. Had an unsuccessful tour with rod & gun, got grapes. Ate dinner & left, met several German families from C. B. on their way to the mines. Bought a pistol & 2 guns, rifle & double shot gun, with lead, shot, powder & caps, for $15. Shot 2 chickens & saw plenty more. Camped 20 mi. at Mr. Barber's—44 mi. from Omaha. . . . Expect likely I may meet Hudson and E. tomorrow. Intend to reach Florence tomorrow night." (End of diary.)
Some Notes from Denver Letter

While Joseph was roaming around the Denver area he wrote several letters to Eliza. One of four finely written pages, on pink paper, was doubtless interesting to the recipient, but contained few references to mundane things. Another told of being at the Denver House, with Charles Blake lying on the bed talking to him while he was trying to write, also about the inducements made by the local group for him to bring his Press and settle in Denver. A third is nearly narrative, which we print because it furnishes some local color of the gold strike scene:

“Denver, 9th Sept. 1859

“Well, we have safely returned from the mines, having on the date of last writing attended the election at Mountain City and saw nothing wonderful. Men drank, of course, and many got jolly, as men always will on election day, but “nary a fight.” Stepping to the window, however, to note the internal arrangements, we were startled at the display of weapons offensive and defensive, piled upon a stool in front of the judges, four Colt revolvers and four long daggers.

“Before starting, whilst dinner was being prepared, we picked up a panful of gold (dirt) from the claim of Jack Kuler & Co., on the Bates lead, washed it and obtained $2.70. Dinner ready and we hungry,—seated upon a rickety stool before a rough table covered half with a cloth—one could not swear whether its original color was white or black,—leather biscuits and rewarmed steak from some venerable animal, the butcher of which must have little respect for old age, a can of nauseous New Orleans molasses, rusty tin plate, broken knives and forks and a glass of water covered the inventory of food, drink and furniture.
"We set out for Denver as a 'right smart sprinkle' began to fall, making the road very slippery up the mountains. We could not attempt to compare our trip into the mountains or the incidents of our stay at Denver with those of the immortal Greely but certainly by some strange coincidence, WE are an editor traveling to obtain information, WE came to Denver City, WE stopped at the Denver House, the Astor of the mountains, WE reclined under the torsorial operations of Count Murat, didn’t get sore leg dressed nor invest a dollar, WE rode to the mountains on a mule, WE didn’t cut a great swath among the miners, WE didn’t get either salted or pickled, WE started home and got thrown from a mule without sustaining any immediate damages in our elastic limbs. WE didn’t make temperance speeches and then worry off a half score glasses of brandy per day, and last, not least, We did not find that beautiful, accomodating landlady to cater to our wants, of which our illustrious predecessor makes proud mention. (All of this refers to the experiences of Horace Greely, who visited Denver a short time previously.)

"But we did pass the Rubicon,—left the aromatic breath of the fir trees and sighting pines behind. Had a most charming moonlight ride among the Rocky Mountains. Arrived at the door of our sociable host at Golden City in time to hear the clock strike nine. Got a good supper and learned that a man named Vanover had that day been lynched by the citizens and hung dead upon a butchers shambles, for attempting the lives of several of the inhabitants. Such is life,—he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword. We dreamed of rope, oak beams and men dancing upon air.

"Sunday morning we walked a mile up Clear Creek with Samuel Adams, Esq. a gentleman who has showed us every politeness... Found several companies digging fine and beautiful specimens of scale gold & were making two to five dollars to the man. The Alton Co., showed us much
attention and gave us specimens. Visited the mills, looked for flowers and cactus; returned and mounted to our saddle and was off, coming to our lodgings weary, with a down on all mule flesh and miners boarding houses. . . . Wednesday. In company with friend Clancy, Haynes and others, we visited South Platte; washed some very handsome gold from the head of the same.

"On Thursday we made fraternal call upon Mr. Byers of the (Rocky Mountain) News office, where we were kindly received. . . . By special invitation we dined upon a sumptuous repast at the 'Vasquez House,' a new and commodious public house kept by our generous old friend Slaughter. . . ."

Editor Byers, of the "News," mentions JEJ's presence in the camp in this paragraph in the issue of Sept. 10, 1859.

"J. E. Johnson, esq., editor of the Council Bluffs Press called on us yesterday. He has just come down from the mountains, looking in excellent health, and most favorably impressed with the country. Mr. J. assures us that he will be a citizen among us the coming spring; may the time come soon. We have known Mr. Johnson for some years, first as editor of the Bugle, then of the Oracle and now of the Press, and can truly say that no man lives who has done more for Council Bluffs and Western Iowa than he."

BACK TO OLD MUDDY

The meeting of Joseph with Eliza at Florence, mentioned by him at the close of his diary, and the arrival at Ellisdale were far less joyous than he anticipated when he left Denver. All the gold specimens he procured, all the plants, pressed flowers, cacti and trees which he had collected and all the souvenirs of the mountains with which he had expected to entertain the family, now seemed of little consequence, due to the apprehension which filled his
thoughts. But he conquered his timidity, put on a bold front and stood ready to face the now hostile array against him. He told Eliza shortly after his arrival that when he appeared at a political meeting, many congratulated him on his return and some threw up their hats and cheered. Some of the opposition had spread the story that he would never be seen again at the Bluffs. He was not only welcomed and cheered but they elected him secretary of the convention. This bucked him up considerably and he felt a little more spunky when he wrote the next time, saying:

"The weather is wet, cold and gloomy and I have been in the house all day—have been at C.B. My press office was attached and shut up on Saturday by those who are seriously offended at the political course it has taken. I shall have it replevined in a few days and going again. They shall not dog me out. I have friends plenty yet, I hope."

He quickly secured bondsmen in the attachment case and he wrote that they had told him "his word was good" and that he could take the Press whenever and wherever he wished. He apparently did not start the paper going again, or if he did, it was for a few issues only. By this time he had decided to move bag and baggage to Wood River, as counseled by Joel.

In early December, a number of JEJ's friends in Council Bluffs addressed a letter to President James Buchanan which is self explanatory:

"To His Excellency
James Buchanan
President of the United States

Sir:

"In view of the probable organization of the Territory of Jefferson at the present session of Congress, we respectfully request that Joseph E. Johnson of Council Bluffs,