

(Kanesville (Council Bluffs))

Iowa Apr. the 23rd A.D. 1850

Dear Friends:

I embrace this opportunity to inform you that I am well at present, hoping these few lines will find you enjoying the same blessing. We are now camped among the bluffs about one mile and one-half from Cainesville where we intend to stay until grass comes. We intend organizing tomorrow.

It is five weeks today since we started. I have passed through a variety of country since I started. On the third day we crossed the Father of Waters at Burlington. The second river was the Skunk which we crossed at Lowell. The third one that we ferried was the Des Moines. We crossed at Keosauqua.

I will give you a description of the country which we have passed through. The people of Iowa do very well until you get among the Mormons and of all the people that I ever saw they are the most wretched. As we passed through Pisgah I witnessed a scene that sickened my very soul. I saw just what Mormonism will lead a man to.

There is a collection of huts 150 miles from any settlement the inmates of which look like beggars. The only thing they excel in is children which are growing up in ignorance, superstition and hatred towards all other people.

There are some of the big greasy Mormon girls that all the way they can be kept in a bed is to roll them in ashes--otherwise they would slide off the bed.

I have not got to see any of the red skins yet. There was seven of them in town yesterday, delegates from the Omahas and Otes. They came to make peace with the emigrants. There has been hundreds of wagons left the settlements and gone out on the plains and if this weather continues their teams will starve to death. Grass has not started.

Provisions are very high here. Bacon is from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 cents per pound, flour is \$10 per barrel, corn is selling \$2.25 per bushel, hay \$20 per ton. We got here in time to secure our grain at \$1.00 per bushel. We have our stock of provisions laid in.

I have been cook for in the first commencement of my operations it made me think of old Darby. But I can now make my dough take form of loaf or cake.

You must not wish that I was at home for I am at home. I am comfortably seated in the tent. My seat is a sack of salt and my writing table is a feed trough.

As soon as grass comes we shall cross the Missouri, leaving the United States. Well can I then exclaim in the language of the poet:

I love thee my country fair, land of my birth
The fairest, the brightest, the happiest of earth
Twas here that the blood of our fathers fell free
That the home of their children unsullied might be
Here firmly they planted blest liberty's tree
My country, my country, my heart clings to thee.

But for a time I must be as it were banished from civilized society, my friends and acquaintances to roam in the most distant realm of our wide domain. But I trust and hope that in the course of two years I shall be able to return to my country and friends blessed with a recompense for my hardships and labor. Resign yourselves as much as possible and take it for granted that I will do the best I can and you shall hear from me as often as possible. I should love to hear from you all but I cannot at present.

Show this letter to all of our friends. What I write to one I write to all.

In passing through Iowa I saw no part of the country that will compare with Illinois. The country through which we passed is mostly a barren, broken waste with but little timber. The streams in the western part are clear and beautiful. It is no farming country here. Kanesville is a collection of log houses, the inhabitants all Mormons.

The grain is all brought up throughout the country and the Mormons say that the gentiles are going to breed a famine here.

Mother, I hope that you will not mourn the absence of a son although he is going a great distance from you. I know full well how to sympathize with you in your.... I most dreaded to leave for I knew full well your disposition. But as I fought against the dictates of my own conscience and started from home with a stout heart so I hope to continue until I again return. As soon as I shall arrive in the land of gold I shall let you know where I am and then you must write to me likewise. I want to hear from my friends. Dr. Boardman, I should be happy if I could have you to accompany me through, but such things as that I must now deem impossible. I flatter myself that in the course of a year I can give to you and the rest of the folks a description of the land to which I am now going.

With these few remarks I will wind up my scribbling. Excuse the bad writing and correct all mistakes. I remain your affectionate friend.

Ziba Smith Tuttle

Letter addressed to:

Mr. Smith Tuttle,
Elmira, Stark County, Illinois

Kane, Ia., Apr. 29

Letters obtained from Mr. Ries Tuttle, Des Moines, Iowa, who has the originals written by his great uncle, Ziba Smith Tuttle.

Transcribed by Marilyn Brittenham 8/53

Chimney rock as viewed from the road 260 ft. high. (notation at top of Page 3).

May the 25th A D 1850
Fort Larima

Dear friends once more seated on the bank of the Platte with a distance of 1000 miles lying between us I embrace this opportunity to send a few hasty lines to you informing you that I am well at present, hoping those few lines will find you enjoying the same. On the 30th of Apr we crossed the Missouri River and on the 1st of May we started on the plains for the far west. Since we crossed we have ferried 3 rivers, the Elkhorn, the Loup Fork, and Platte. We struck the Platte just above the mouth of the Elkhorn, the Broad river, the extensive bottom and the distant bluffs presents a grand scene to the beholder. We have traveled 500 miles up the river, the last 200 miles without any timber, but I did not feel the want of it, we had plenty of Buffalo chips which answers a better purpose than wood that is for stoves. The Loupfork is a very bad stream to cross it being so broad and shoaly that you cannot float a raft and the quick sand so bad that horses and man mire down together. We all got safely over, we did not have to grieve the loss of seven of our men as the Knoxville Company did last spring. I have seen many of the curiosities of nature. When we got to castle rocks I there saw a grand scene. The rocks here bear the resemblance of stupendous fortifications of ancient days. By climbing those rocks you can see chimney rock which is another curious work of nature. I can now see the Black Hills whose lofty summits are covered (top of Page #2--"I sent you a letter from Kaneshville) with snow. We have passed through three nations of Indians, the Pawnees, the Sioux, and Shawnees. The Sioux are a noble race of Indians, their noble form and their cleanly appearance gives to them a noble look I have seen five thousand buffalos at a single sight. We are now one third of the way from the frontier to the gold mines. We have only seen 7 graves on the route. I think that those who wrote back that the graves would average 1 per mile could not have been men of veracity. The very air seems pregnant with falsehood. The hills and mountains begin to present themselves to us and if the power of gravity does not prove too strong we shall scale them all and I hope that in the lapse of 50 days we shall be in the mines of California. There has been 1500 teams passed the fort. Our teams are in good condition, grass is not yet very plenty. On the evening of the 23rd we experienced a severe hail storm. It came upon us just after we had turned out the horses to graze. We secured them all but seven and they went off before the storm as fast as their legs could carry them but they returned after the storm had abated. I was cooking supper and it blew the tent from over my head, leaving me in the storm in my pantaloons and shirt sleeves rolled up to the elbow. About that time I should like to have been in a house. I do not want you to think that I have suffered innumerable hardships and privations for I never enjoyed myself better. Game is plenty. It is no more of a trick to