

**LETTER FROM LYMAN HINMAN OF WINTER QUARTERS,
DOUGLAS, NEBRASKA TO "BROTHER AND SISTER TAYLOR"**

Maurine Carr Ward

The story of the James Emmett Company, which left Nauvoo in August 1844 has been greatly confused and misunderstood. This company has now been fully explained in a new book by William G. Hartley, "*My Best For the Kingdom*": *History and Autobiography of John Lowe Butler. A Mormon Frontiersman*, published by Aspen Books, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1993.

The following letter, found in the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, was written by one of the members of the Emmett Group. The letter has been arranged into paragraphs for ease in reading:

Winter Quarters June 27, 1847

Dear Brother & Sister Taylor

I hardly know how to begin or what to write that will be pleasing or interesting to you. However I conclude that a sketch of our journey and experience may be as great a Novelty as I can write at present. We left Nauvoo on the 3 of August 1844 in company with two or three others expecting to fall in company with others going we knew not where we were going but desiring to find a place where we could breathe free and worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences.

The first night we lodged upon the ground about five miles east of Nauvoo in a tent. Our clothes in the morning were almost wringing wet from the dew. on the following day we bent our course for Fort Madison on the Mississippi River--and crossed it about 2 o P M. Camped about 5 miles west of the River the day following we put bows and covering upon our waggon and traveled about 8 miles and pitched [sic] our tents at the head of Los a Creek so called at this place. we lost 7 head of Oxen and of course among the lost I had One yoke and 2

cows. we hunted for them 5 days and then left them and pursued on our journey.

fell in company with 3 or 4 other waggons following up not far from the Iowa River crossed it and passed the City of Iowa on the 19th Recrossed the River--and proceeded up said River to the upper trading post on said River [around Marengo, Iowa] where we met and fell in with others amounting to 200 persons at which place we organized ourselves into a company for the purpose of traveling together and remained at said place until the last day of December on which day we left and followed up said River with our cattle whiche we had purchased with our fine clothes furniture and feather beds. We sold untill we put our effects and family aboard of one waggon

About the first of January, 1845, Brigham Young sent John Lowe Butler to locate Emmett and his group to see what they were doing and where they were going. After Butler's arrival, James Emmett decided to move the people farther up the Iowa River.

We traveled from bottom to bottom on said River staying from one day to three weeks in a place just as we found feed for our cattle digging wild potatoes artichokes and onions leeks and peas adding to our half pint of corn per head per day which was all the Bread stuff we had little or no meat for the Indians went before us and killed or scared all the game away from us. About the 18th of April we came to a place where the hard Maple trees were quite plenty we taped them and went to making sugar as fast as we could under our circumstances for I was so weak that I could hardly carry an 8 quart tin pail full of water and others were in a similar condition We continued making sugar untill the 15th of April in which day our camp was surrounded by a mob of 60 or 70

men or in the shape of men there was some men among them for I found friends with them. I and 3 others were taken prisoners and taken back to the city of Iowa 130 miles on the 19th about 10 or 11 o'clock P.M. we were lodged in jail and the key turned upon us and we had the solid comfort and pleasure of lodging upon the hard timbers for a bed instead of the ground as we had all the way down on our journey

The location where the group stayed near the Maple trees was at Albion, near Marshalltown, Iowa, in a place called the "Big Woods." This became their winter camp. While they were here, approximately one-third of the group decided to leave Emmett and return to Nauvoo. At the time each family joined up, they had signed an agreement putting all property into a communal holding. When they realized that they could not pull their original property back out and take with them, they returned to Nauvoo with reports of robbery and thievery. This led to the posse of seventy-five men, including some Mormons, traveling up the Iowa River to make the arrests herein mentioned. It appears, however, that the non-Mormons in Iowa City were not too anxious to condemn Lyman and his friends.

the following morning a stranger came to the window of the jail and talked a moment or two and ordered me out of jail and told me to go with a young man that stood near-by I followed him he took me to a tavern in the City told me that I could remain there soon the young man was missing towards night he came to the house again I told him I did not wish to confine him and would go with him back to jail any time he wished he said I did not confine him but wished me to enjoy myself as well as I could for he should not take me to jail any more he soon left me I saw no more of him he informed me that I was then boarding with the magistrate that gave the warrant and should be tried by him

on Monday the 21st the court convened and organized for the want of witnesses the court adjourned until 2 P M at said hour the court assembled and called over a list of witnesses but no witnesses appearing against us the states Attorney abandoned the case and the court discharged us and we were once more at liberty 130 miles from our families they in the wilderness and we among strangers although among

strangers I fared with the best I sat at table among the boarders of the house although so ragged as to have the tie on my pantaloons and coat with Bass wood bark to keep them on my body the charge that was preferred against us was robbery after our discharge two of our company left for home. Myself and Gardiner G Potter Evelines husband was invited to another tavern and remained until the next day P M for the purpose of obtaining something to live on while returning back to our families as we had not the first cent to obtain any thing with

Gardiner G. Potter was Lyman's son-in-law; he had married Eveline Hinman in December 1844, probably around Marengo, Iowa. Many people in Iowa City befriended Lyman and the other prisoners, giving them money, food and clothing before they returned to their families. A good part of these men were Masons, as was Lyman.

a gentleman gave me fifty cent the Landlord which I was then boarding and one of the boarders gave me some bread salt and boiled eggs We left the city and friends by bidding them good bye and hearty Master Mason grip and proceeded on our journey not knowing whether I could travel 3, 5 or 10 miles per day as my feet and legs to my knees were swelled as full as the skin could hold from over straining going down we proceeded on our journey through the wilderness until the 29 on which day we arrived at the camp and families about 12 miles farther up the River than where we left them remained at said place until the 2 of May

on said day the camp struck their tents and proceeded up to the head of said river and then of into the broad prairie west for the rocky mountain traveling every day but 3 miles until the 7 day of June which day we camped on the East bank of the River Missouri having little else to eat but the half pint of cut greens and roots for we killed but one Elk two deer--one eagle now and a turtle a few fish quite small and some fresh water clams and very little and five days not one kernel of corn did we get in that time and some of and some of [sic] our corn was musty mouldy and grown to the length of 6 inches on this tour we traveled six days to reach from one piece of timber to another we lived

almost six months on little else than a half pint of corn per day and that most miserable shrunk mouldy and rotten and grown I was so weak for months that I could neither undress or dress myself without holding up by some thing and the rest of my family in the like condition.

We attempted to cross the river but could not with the means that we had the place that we struck the river was called Fort Vermillion a trading post of the American fur company--the inhabitants both French and Native were anxious that we should stay until spring and recruit with them we agreed to stay as our provisions was almost gone although we lived on half pint per day we remained at said place until the 19th of February [1846] on which day myself and family and 6 others started for Council Bluffs said to be 150 miles down the River at which place we arrived on the 15th of March all well but Evelines husband G G Potter

Fort Vermillion was about one mile away from the trading post, near the little town of Blanchard, South Dakota. Most of Emmett's group of twenty-two wagons remained at Fort Vermillion after Lyman moved his family to Council Bluffs. In the spring of 1846, Brigham Young again sent two men up the river to check on Emmett. They reported that there was no trail at that time, that they spent part of the time in the river bed and the other part on the bank. They also indicated that occasionally they found traces of Lyman Hinman's trail. However, because he went downstream in February, it is possible that he traveled much of the time in the riverbed on the ice.

we remained at said place [Council Bluffs] until the 28th of April on which day we started for Missouri and went into the state in the morning of the first day of May we stayed about the line sometimes in the state and sometimes on the Indian lands as they threatened mobing us we moved about getting what work to do to recruit and fit out our selves for the Mountains on the 15th of June for the Bluffs to fall in company with the Camp of Israel for the mountains and arrived there on the 18th

Some people who had left Emmett's group were quite bitter about the experience. Even though Lyman had suffered greatly from being with Emmett, it appears

that his faith was still strong. Eliza Ann Peirson, a niece of Willard Richards, sent a letter from Council Bluffs dated July 19, 1846, to her sister, Susan Sanford Peirson, in Massachusetts. In the letter Eliza wrote the following about the Hinman family:

Think I mentioned in my last letter something about Bro. Hinman's family. It seemed good to see them for they seem cheerful and firm in the faith. And would not be willing to exchange places with any of their Eastern friends. I was much disappointed in not seeing Edna and was in another company when she came up to see her father. They are in Miller's company, are probably 50 miles or more from here. (*Richards Family History*, Volume 3, by Joseph Grant Stevenson, published by Stevenson's Genealogical Center, Provo, Utah, 1991.)

The letter continues:

On the 3 day of July we crossed the River [with George Miller and his group] and the 7 took up the line of march for the west we arrived at Pawnee Village on the 19th of said month the Missionary Station on Loup fork of the River Platte 125 west of Council Bluffs at which station myself and some 14 or 15 other families wer[e] stationed for the winter

on the 2 of September myself wife and youngest child Helen were taken with the chill fever and 3 or 4 days after the rest of my family Eveline husband and all not one able to wait on the other shortly the whole camp was sick but 2 women and three or four men able to do any thing in this condition we were ordered back to this place which is on the west bank of the Missouri River just above what is now called Council Bluff on the 26th of September we started on the 16 or 17 of October we arrived this place you will discern that I do not give the last date for a certainty it is in consequence of weakness and absence of mind at the time as I had had a chill and a shake followed of course by fever every day since the 2 of September and had not eaten so good one meal in two days on an average in consequence of breaking one of my waggon wheels to pieces was obliged to sleep on the ground in the open air for the last [week/month?]

became so weak I thought I should die the first night that [sic] but I have lived so long to the disappointment of all that knew me after I got into camp I had a swelling come on the cords on the inside of my leg contracted the cords so much that I did not straighten my leg for more than three months the swelling left the first of February by the time that I could straighten my leg and hobble out of doors 2 or 3 times on Crutches I was taken down with the scurvy or what some term the blackleg it is very painfull my feet and ankle turned purple and dark brown and a piece of flesh sloughed out and fell upon the ground after getting a little better of this I was attacked with the gravel all this without remedies for I have nothing to do with About 4 days ago I flung away my crutches and took a staff instead and hobble a little with that.

Aurelia has been through about the same with exception of the swelling is now hardly able to dress or undress herself or to get on or off the bed or in or out of her seat with out help she can go to her nearest neighbors about 8 or 10 rods without help of staff the whole family is troubled with the chills and fever more or less but Edna's¹ child.

A few words on our living through the winter we have lived in a tent untill the 9th of December--confined to my bed then taken on a chair and carried to a house shall I say house, or a place, a place I will say for it was a hole dug in the ground with some poles laid over and some grass and dirt thrown on top of the poles a hole to go in and out of for a door and window an old blanket hung up for a door and that was our habitation untill the 11th of the present month yet living on the ground in a log house our living through the winter principlly clear bread and water gruel somtimes flour somtimes wheat ground up on an old hand mill bran and all but principlly corn meal now and then a piece of meat no sweetening no vegetables. Bread and Breakfast for morning Dinner and bread for dinner or supper as we have but two meals per day and short at that frequently without a stick of wood in the coldest of weather having to go to bed and lie nearly 24 hours at a time.

By this time you may ask is there no grain or wood in the country nor cattle I would answer yes when I went in to the camp wheat, corn, flour, meal, shorts, Buffalo meat and one quarter of an ox but having no house but my waggon we lent our corn to have it again when we wanted the family that took care of us had 6 in family the first I knew and within 4 weeks all that we had on hand but some wheat was gone they moved out of the tent left us to shurk for ourselves I could with difficulty get off and on the bed not one of the family able to bring a pail of water or chop a stick of wood but Edna and she was gone from home and she was but little better she came home and we made out to do our cooking as we have not much else to do but make bread for we seldom had any thing else and in this condition we fell into the hands of the bishops are still living on the means of others our present living is about a pint of skim milk twice a day and bread between meals if we wish occasionally a piece of meat now and then a mess of beans also now and then a little butter I am brought to this through sickness and losses.

when I came into this camp I drove in 2 good cows 4 good Oxen I have now one Ox left one of the cows was suffered to stray out of the herd soon after I came in not being able to hunt for her I have never seen her--one of my oxen the Indians were seen dressing hide I suppose the rest went the same way. I have not mentioned all the sufferings of my family they all had the sore mouth canker or scurvy to that extent that their gums sloughed off to that degree that their teeth became lose and some of them dropped out. Hellens mouth is yet quite sore and lips mutch swollen under those circumstances I am put to my trumps for those that are helping me have all that they want to do to sustain themselves

What makes it more pressing at this time is that they have found out that I hold a Deed of some land in Michigan and some here acquainted with the place and men here anxious to buy it. some say it is worth \$3000 I am urged to Deed the place and they will start immediately for it I put them of saying I would write and collect my dues I suppose that I might sell it for much more than is actualy my due from

Benjamin. I direct my letter to you because you made mention in your letter to me bearing Date September 13th Richmond Massachusetts that you thought the money might be raised for me I received your letter on the 28th of January and one from Brother Richards at the same time with other reasons not worth mentioning the reasons why I have not answered yours before is I have not much of the time it is but a few days that I could shift my hands on account of stiffness and most of the time in a hole so dark that I could not see to write and my mind was so broken to pieces that I could not write and you will discover in this present letter a great many mistakes my cough has been very severe upon me this last winter.

I find that I am wandering from my subject. I want you to say to Brother Benjamin that I want the money that I helped him to I mean that part that I absolutely [paid] from out of my own pocket and interest which I think he can afford to that much if he will rais that for me I will reDeed to him or any other person that he and Brother Morgan shall direct I suppose that the money might be sent by way of Drought say on New Bank for a Draught in St Louis will fetch the gold on any good Bank in the City of New York although I should prefer it being brought by some of my friends and I would like see them.

you will readily see the necessity of Brother Benjamin's raising the money for me and the sooner the better for if I should be under the necessity of selling it here they would go and sell it to the one that would give the most for it and that would throw Benjamin out of a home although he would be as well of as I am then should his situation be as bad as mine now is or has been for the past winter I would not urge him to pay me one cent unless I am forced by those that have and do assist me to a living had my cows and oxen all lived I and my family should have been on my way to the Rocky Mountains some days ago with those that have gone about 130 started in April 570 waggons started this month had I had the good luck to have gone on with this company it would have been some time before I should have called on Brother Benjamin for money but I am left and

shall always be left for anything that I know unless I raise something.

I suppose that Brother Morgan could raise the money any day if he should think it best I wish you would write me soon informing me what the prospect is of raising money for me I want it can well be brought about for I probably should have to go or send to St Louis if sent me by Draught which is about 700 miles. My account against Brother Benjamin is (besides postage and so forth) \$190.74. November 16th 1838 the interest of said [note] for nine years that is up to the 16th of November next would be \$102.96 making \$293.70 in all. this is but simple interest of my own native state but I will be satisfied with it if I am made no more expense and paid within three months although I should have to be at some expense to get the Deed exeduted you may direct your letters to the Camp of Israel Austin Post Office Atchinson County Near Huntsuckers Ferry Mo

It will [be] somewhat necessary to pay postage on letters sent to me for the Post office is 60 miles or more from here and we get our letters by our people passing by there unless the postage should be paid they would not bring them for many are not able to pay the postage and many would not pay it for fear that they might no[t] get it again therefore I wish that you would pay the postage and take your pay out of the money that Benjamin may rais for me also two dollars that I owe you and interest for ten twelve years it was for an old saddle that you left with me I never thought of it when I had an opportunity to send it to you wich is the only reason that I have to offer for not paying you before

we probably shall remain in this place untill next may if we should live so long and then start for the mountains. I intend to live a good many years yet unless the Indians should kill me as they have one of our brethren the other day. Our people have made a demand of the Indians that killed the man and the chief says that they shall be given up.

Edna has a smart little daughter about 10 months old she cal's it Mary Aurelia. Aurelia

says that she intends to write to you as soon as she can get the use of her limbs I should like to have you or Benjamin or both come and bring the money for I should be glad to see you and all the rest of my friends Please urge the payment as fast as possible for I am almost destitute of clothing my old coat that I am wearing is an old Broad Cloth one that I had and wore one or two years in Massachusetts as to our cooking utensils we have one pot that we used up on our stove when we had one one Bake kettle without a lid one small spider which is all we have we have 4 or 5 old knives three old broken fork[s] to eat with as to earthen dishes we have none we have 4 three pint tin basins which we brought with us from Massachusetts nearly rusted out so as to have holes in them 3 or 4 tin pans 2 or 3 tin plates 3 brittania cups one tin cup one old tin coffee pot and old tea pot we have not a looking glass except a small pocket one given me by a gentleman

I intended to have wrote some to Benjamin but have not time nor strength the man that is to carry this is about to start therefore I must bring this to close we have to catch opportunitys to send letters to the Post office as we can it is a great distance in a wilderness country accept of our united respects and Brotherly and Sisterly love Remember Benjamin and

family I shall indeavor to write him when opportunity presents I was glad to recieve your letter last winter it made all things straight for I never believed you meant what the few words in a letter to Brother Morgan expresed I have ever wished to see you and still wish to have what with you I mus close by subscribing myself your friend and Brother

Lyman Hinman

should you send me a draught you would probably wish to send it to some other person I would mention Brother Levi Richards for Brother Benjamin to do his business through to me

L H

NOTES

1. Aurelia Lewis Hinman was Lyman's wife. His daughter, Edna Sarah, had married Josiah Moose (Mousseaux) on 9 Nov 1845. A friend of the family, Mary Haskin Parker Richards, writing in her journal at Winter Quarters, called her Edney Henman. Edna and Josiah were the parents of thirteen children. Edna died on 25 February 1896 and is buried in Parker, Idaho.

RECEIPT FOR PAINTING WAGON COVERS

In the 1st place make a Japan [a hard lacquer] for the following articles. (A proportion for 1 Waggon Cover) Take 2 Quarts of Linseed Oil. 10 oz Gum Shalac. 2 oz Red Lead. 1 oz Umber. 1/2 oz White Nitrol. Put them into an iron Kettle place it over a low fire (coal is best) Keep it sturing while over the fire until the Gum is all dissolved. Tak it from the Fire and add 1 Quart of Spirits of Turpentine let it stand till cold

For a Sizing for Cloth previous to Painting Take wheat flour mix with Water let it boil. then let it cool. then to 2 Quarts of the Paste add 1/2 Pint of the Japan. mix it well together & put it on the Cloth with a Painters Brush. let it dry

Then put your Paint into the Japan (any Color you fancy) and brush it on till you make a coat--say 2 Coats at least

Respectfully yours.
J. Eastman

The above recipe for painting wagon covers is found in "The Mt. Pisgah Journal," located in the LDS Historical Department Archives Division. It is dated May 31, 1846.

John Taylor arrived in Winter Quarters on April 13, 1847 from a mission in England. He brought with him 469 gold sovereigns, which were the tithes of the British Saints, \$500 worth of astronomical and other instuments which would be used on the trek to Utah, and gifts for the families of the missionaries in England.

Twenty-four-year-old Mary Haskin Parker Richards recorded in her journal on that date that Brother Taylor had arrived, but that she had received no letters from her husband, Samuel Whitney Richards, who was one of the British missionaries. On April 28th, Mary wrote:

rather windy was sewing Cooking &C PM Mother went visiting to Bro Herington. I did not go with her because I had to call at Bro Taylors first and get some letter Papper which my Husband has sent me by him he told me he had promised all the Elders that in Eng that he would go and see their Wives when he got back to the Camp but they had not given him a chance to go and see them for they had all come to see him, except me said I for I came to day to see Sister Taylor and shall live in hopes that you will redeem your word and come and see me, if Sister T has no objections. well said he I feel some affraid of going to see the Sisters for the truble is they all fall in love with me. I expect it is some what dangerous said I, but I should be happy to have you bring Sister T with you when you come to see me, and if I should happen to fall in love with you I will try to keep it to my self. Yes said sister T but they all ask him and never say one word to me about going with him &C & so on.

*from the Diaries of Mary Haskin Parker Richards,
1846-1848. LDS Historical Department, Archives Division*