

LETTER FROM GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, TO PRESIDENTS

W. S. PHILLIPS AND J. DAVIS.

Great Salt Lake City, June 25, 1853.

DEAR BROTHERS PHILLIPS AND DAVIS,—According to my promise, in my last letter, I take this opportunity to give a little of the account of our journey from the Bluffs to this lovely place. After taking our leave from brothers Jones, Daniels, Jeremy, and others, the ones I knew being more numerous than those I did not, we continued our journey, with our hearts happy, reflecting on the conversations and the interesting and edifying counsels we received from the aforementioned brethren, praying for our Father to bless all of them, in their dangerous and goodly endeavors, on land, and water and in the midst of our own nation. After arriving at Mountain Creek, and traveling about three or four miles, we decided to rest for the night, where there was plenty of grazing for the animals. The sun was about to hide its head in the west, and the mantle of night was drawing nigh, exhorting everyone, except the watchmen, to rest. We heard the noise of a wagon coming extremely fast, from the road of the City; by then, all were straining their eyes to see what was coming, and before long the watchmen shouted out, “Welsh from Salt Lake.” There was no need to repeat, for the first word pierced through us all, like an electric current. Everyone came near, racing to meet them. To our great joy, who were they but Thomas Jones, Hirwaun; Morgan Hughes, Pontyates; and William, son of Evan Jones, Mill Street, Aberdare. They had come from 30 to 40 miles to meet us, with a load of fruits of the Valley, such as *watermelons*, *mushmelons*, *potatoes*, *pickle cucumbers*, grapes, &c., to welcome us. The watchmen came over to the camp, according to the language of the ancient Welsh, “without a sword unsheathed against them.” They put their entire load under my care, and I had the honor of dividing the load among the brothers and sisters; and even though the divider normally gets the smallest share, I got plenty myself, and everyone else, even though we had not tasted such delicacies all during the summer. We went no further than the foot of the mountain the next day. The second day, we crossed the second mountain, as it is called here; by the time we reached the expanse that is between the second mountain and the first, there was a multitude of the brethren awaiting us, with the same presents that we received from the other brethren. I shall name some of them, namely John Parry, Newmarket, and his son; Dl. Leigh, Owen Roberts, Thomas James, Cadwaladr Owens, &c., too many to name. We reached the city on the last day of September, all healthy, and our hearts thankful to our Father for the privilege. We had traveled 1130 miles, without a civilized man owning a furrow of land, except in two places, namely in Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger. All, except these two places, is under the government of the various Indian tribes, and the *buffaloes*, thousands of them. It is not unusual to see four or five hundred of them, in one herd coming to the Platte River to get water. We killed five of them on our journey: their meat is similar, in its taste, to Welsh beef; salt is not needed to keep it from smelling

bad; drying it in the heat of the sun serves the same purpose, as the salt does over there, without the salting. The Indians are a kindly people, if one behaves kindly toward them. One day, totally unawares, I happened to come into the midst of about three or four hundred of them, namely the Sioux; as was my custom, I was on horseback riding ahead of the camp to look for the trail, and for a comfortable place to have lunch; and having gone ahead of the camp for about two miles, I saw two of them coming as fast as their horses could carry to them meet me; and as far as I knew I was like king Henry ready to say, “*Kingdom,*” not “*for a horse,*” for I had a good one under me, but “*for being in camp.*” It was too late to turn back; it was better to go forward, and it was not long before their Indian majesty and myself met one another; he greeted me, “*How do, Mormon good.*” I thought by then, that they were not as bad as I had believed; I went ahead between the two *chieftains*, who were in their official and pompous dress, till we arrived at their camp, which was about a mile and a half from the place where we had met: their camp was arranged in an astronomical manner, in my perception; their biggest *tent* was in the middle, and a picture of the sun had been drawn with something red, the same kind as is seen in the old country, and the others with pictures that I did not understand, which brought to mind the words of the prophet, that “people worship the sun,” &c., since they are totally ignorant of the “true and living God.” They behaved toward me in an extremely courteous fashion. Their chiefs spread their blankets on the ground, motioning for me to sit down, to smoke, what they called a “*pipe of peace,*” as I understood through the translator, Huntington. The manner is, that the pipe is handed around in each group, like the shilling *jug* in the taverns of the old country, handed around to the group that belongs to it, and each one in his turn takes a drink; so it is with this pipe; the chief takes two or three puffs, and then passes it to the next one and so on around the circle, until the *chief* has it again. Refusing to sit down with them to smoke is a sign among them that the one who refuses is envious. Well, Brother Davis,* how will you react if *you* are called to the pipe? I trust that brother Phillips like myself has not forgotten, and will take his turn. When the camp came, we took up a collection from them, such as a spoonful or two of sugar, cakes, &c., and their majesty accepted our gifts. Then our camp got under way, after I had shaken hands and spoken, and received suggestions that I did not understand, and I followed after the camp. All that I understood of their speaking was “*Good Mormon,*” and “*swap pongo.*” Although the red boys, from what I could observe on the journey, were quite harmless, yet I do not say that they will not steal, if they have the chance; but I can say this much, that after passing thousands of them, when some were sleeping in our camp, nothing was stolen from us, nor was an insult ever given to any of us. And although the journey was long, I considered it nothing but enjoyment every step of the way; so it was for me, and so it is for everyone who is fond of observing the wonders of the desert, and seeing something new every day.

Since I have spent one winter season in the city, perhaps you would like to hear a little of our account. The city is laid out in straight streets, from north to south, and from east to west in the same

manner; the land is in a square, or a “block,” as it is called, with ten acres of land within each block. The length of the town is, from two to three miles, and about two miles wide. There are splendid buildings here: the Storehouse of the Church is about 190 feet long, and three stories high, and is finished in a most excellent way; the Council House, and the Social Hall are grand buildings, in addition to the other splendid buildings that are under construction. It is intended to put a hundred masons, to work this summer on the wall that is to surround the Temple. The streets of the city are 130 feet wide, with trees planted between the sidewalks and the way for the vehicles, and there is water running along every street, with places to turn it out according to the wishes of the inhabitants. The flat land, on which the city is located is about 30 miles wide and 20 miles long, with mountains surrounding it on every side; and there is snow on the mountaintops now, and I am told that it is there throughout the year; and the view is beautiful to behold. The foot of the mountains is covered with plants and flowers, and their top is like white sheeting placed on a green table; and the Salt Lake is at their feet, in some places, like transparent glass. When the sun hides its face in the west, it reflects on the snow, the leaves, the flowers, and the water, and the sight is beautiful beyond description. Not much snow falls in the Valley; the idle animals can live through the winter on the plains. The foundation of the Temple is almost finished; the cornerstone was placed last April, and it is thought now that the building will be ready within three years.

Here is a segment of a letter of Brother Jones to Bishop Hunter:—

“Esteemed Bishop Hunter,—Many of my fellow nation are coming across in the 13th company; I do not know their condition; perhaps their money and their provisions are scarce. If so, when they reach the Valley, I shall be grateful to you for furnishing them their needs, through the hand of Brother Morgans, and I shall pay you in Manti, San Pete Valley.

I am, &c.,

D. Jones.”

Brother Jones gave that letter to me on the banks of the Bear river, and I shall not soon forget his fatherly care over his fellow nation; and on behalf of myself and my camp, I express warmest thanks to my brother and the nobleman Jones, although none of us was in need. I have been in Manti lately; Jane and the little girl were healthy, but Jane was expecting her baby any day. The Welsh who have come to the Valley, from the beginning of the emigration until now, are all alive and well, except for four, namely, the wife of D. Phillips; Jane Morgan, Cardiff; Lucy, the wife of Captain Evans, Llanelli; and Mary Ann, the widow of George Davis, Rhymney; the last two died in childbirth, Jane from cancer, but I do not know what Sister Phillips’s illness was, as she died before I came to the Valley. Everything is going along well in these valleys, and the land and the crops are abundant. Some wheat will be cut this week. If a diligent man comes here without one shilling in his pocket, in three years he will be self-sufficient, if no misfortune befalls him. There is plenty of work on the Public Works for those who have no animals; and

the wage for the *laborers* is 3s. 3c. per day, and 12 s. 6c. per day for the masons. The price of flour in the Storehouse of the Church is £1 5s. per hundred, and it does not rise or fall in price. Here is a better place for the workers of Merthyr Tydfil, is it not, together with those who have no animals; and the plants and flowers that spring from the earth say in their language, "Here is fruitful soil; till it and you shall have your daily bread." My paper is nearly full. My love to you, your wives, and your children, and to brother Jones, and all the Saints: Martha wishes to be remembered to you in the same way.

Your brother in Christ,

WILLIAM MORGAN.

* Answer: I shall make the pipe a chimney, and not my mouth.—J. D.