

# NEW FRIENDS, OLD MEMORIES

## 1863

### Letter #10

Though her brother Perry sent Mollie money for the trip to Illinois, it is not known whether he actually met her in Keokuk as he planned. Cousin Amulek Boothe did accompany her all the way to LaGrange, Missouri, where they were made welcome at the Bonney home. From there, Mollie went across the river to the Stewart farm.

Now in Illinois, Mollie divided her time between working as a hired girl in Payson and visiting the Joseph Bonneys in LaGrange. Her usual employer was the well-to-do Nathaniel Carr. Her dislike for her aunt Rachel Stewart kept her away, as much as possible, from the Stewart farm, though it was nominally her home.

Deborah Ann Morey writes the first letter in 1863, a melancholy one full of accounts of sickness and unusual deaths. It is addressed from “9 Eagles.” An area in Decatur County, near Pleasant Plains, is known as Nine Eagles. Most of Mollie’s Iowa correspondents were from Decatur County. Nine Eagles, Pleasant Plains, Boothtown, Eldorado, and Spring Valley all appear as post office addresses for those in virtually the same part of the county. [See map on page ix.]

In her letter, Deborah answers Mollie’s request for advice about going to school, most probably in LaGrange. Whether Mollie ever attended school there is not known.

The photographs (“likenesses”) Deborah mentions may have been some that Amulek and Mollie had taken while in LaGrange or Quincy. Amulek brought the photographs of himself, Mollie, and Joe and Sallie Bonney with him when he returned to Eagleville [See

Letters #11, par. 13 and #13, par. 13]. All kinds of photography—ambrotypes, tintypes, and paper prints—were becoming very popular in the 1860s.

Deborah confidentially tells Mollie what everyone in Iowa suspected: that Amulek and Mollie would marry. Despite their being first cousins, such a marriage was not unheard of. Deborah's command about what to do with this letter indicates the hush-hush nature of what she has to say.

9 Eagles

Jan. 26th, 1863

Dear Cousin,

- [1] I now attempt to write you a few lines in answer to your letter of December 29th. I was glad to hear that you got through your journey so pleasantly, and although I miss your society very much here, I was rejoiced to hear that you were happy in your home that is now separated from mine by many a weary mile, but, dear Cousin, imagination takes me to your side this evening and I fancy I see you, light-hearted and gay, happy in the society of new friends, while I pass my time in bewailing the past and dreading the unseen future; yet Cousin, I try to put my trust in that Supreme Being who holds the destiny of all mankind in his own hand and to say, "Thy will be done," but at times I feel to murmur at the hand of providence, yet it is wrong to feel so, and pray to be forgiven.
- [2] Well, I will change the subject, lest I weary you, and talk of something more cheery. Your friends are all well or nearly so. Jane Moffet has not been well since you left. They thought she had the dropsy of the heart, but she is getting better and they think she will get well now, and I hope she will, for she has suffered a great deal.
- [3] You recollect the Sabbath that Grace [Robinson] was baptized that Ann Peters and Horner were there. They were married the day before New Year's. She was taken sick with

a fever the 18th of January and died the 22nd. It is a heavy stroke to her husband, who went in opposition to his family when he married her. None of his people came to see her during her sickness, and none but his mother came to follow her to her narrow home and help comfort him in his sorrow.

- [4] There has been a great deal of sickness in this country since you left. James Alfrey lost their oldest child. Your teacher, Mr. Brown, was killed in one of the late battles. There is another one of Mr. May's boys died. His name was John, I believe. Perhaps you were not acquainted with him. John Clipp[inger] is a nurse in a hospital somewhere in Mo. I have forgotten the exact place. We got the news through a letter written by John Gambol.
- [5] The weather has been so bad that we haven't been able to go down to Cousin Ad[am Dennis]'s since you left.
- [6] I am well-suited with the likeness, except yours. I am very much of Amulek [Boothe]'s opinion about that, but I think that Cousin Sarah [Bonney] is very good looking and so is Joseph [Bonney]. Tell them I am proud of them. Tell Perry [Works] that I think that he was a little partial about his likeness and guess he had better send me his yet or I shall call him a bad boy. We will get ours taken as soon as we get the means and send to you and Cousin Joseph. Tell Joseph I think his babies are handsome.
- [7] If I were in your place, I would go to school even though it should deprive me of the society of a brother. Your absence will be regretted, to be sure, at the time, but the opportunity to gain knowledge passing unimproved may cause you more regret in time to come.
- [8] You will think from the blots and misspelled words that I am getting absent-minded, I expect. But perhaps I shall do better next time. Tell Cousin Joseph and Sarah to write

soon. I shall be glad to hear from them. Tell them to excuse me for not writing first for I haven't wit enough to write anymore for a while. I have answered 6 letters, with yours, and I shall have to rest a while, and perhaps I won't make so many mistakes.

- [9] David [Morey] sends his regards to you, also to our other cousins [the Bonneys]. Tell me is Joseph ever lost any children, for I thought they had 3. Tell Sarah that I think more of that roll[?] she set me than I would have 5 dollars. Give my love to all my relatives and accept the same for yourself.

From, D. A. Morey

- [10] P.S. The story was that you and somebody else [Amulek Boothe] would marry before you got far from home. How did it happen that you didn't, for what everybody says ought to be true? I think they will keep silence now for a while, don't you? Somebody asked me if you wrote whether you were going to send your likeness to a certain person or not. I told them that I had forgotten what you wrote about it but guessed you would. Will that do?
- [11] Tell me if you have heard from George [Rockwell]. The girls send and Eunice [Morey] says you must write. Read this and burn it up. For I don't want anybody to see it.

## Letter #11

The second letter of this year marks the first of a life-long correspondence with cousin Grace Robinson, the only child of Ebenezer and Angeline (Works) Robinson, and one of Mollie's most accurate and important correspondents. Besides telling about the people in Iowa, Grace tells Mollie about their New York cousins, the Wordens, and about her Robinson relatives in Ohio. One of Gracie's cousins "hired him a substitute," a reference to the new military draft law.

The first U.S. military conscription law, in force during the Civil War, provided that a drafted man had to serve unless he could provide a substitute. Many poorer men were hired by richer ones to serve in their stead. Some men even made a business of being hired as substitutes, deserting once they were in the army, and being hired again.<sup>1</sup> As the tone of Gracie's letter suggests, hiring a substitute was deplored. [See Letter #21, par. 5, too.]

During the war, Mollie, like other young women, felt duty-bound to write to soldiers. Her favorite soldier was her cousin, Charles Worden, the son of John and Jerusha (Works) Worden of Throopsville, New York, near Auburn. Charles not only wrote to Mollie [See Letter #17 for a dramatic account of one his wartime experiences] he also wrote to Gracie, and he convinced his sister, Angeline, to open a correspondence with both.

February 10, 1863                      Tuesday  
Nine Eagles, Decatur Co., Iowa

Dear Cousin,

- [1] I now sit down to write to you in answer to your letter which came to hand yesterday afternoon. I wrote some to Perry [Works] Sunday but have not sent it off yet, so I will send this in it.
- [2] You wanted me to tell you all the news. Well, I will endeavor so, as far as I know. Mrs. Ann Horner (who was Ann Peters) is dead. She was buried two weeks ago last Saturday. She had been married a month when she died.
- [3] Sara Ann Loose [Luce?] is married. She married a fellow by the name of Johnson. Her father is also married. He married a fringed [?] girl.
- [4] You will be surprised to hear that Frank Smith is married to Nancy Dale. They have been married about a week.

- [5] Mr. [Alfred] Moffet's family are all getting better now, I believe. They have had a very hard time. Jane has been so badly bloated and had such smothering spells that for a long time she was so she could not lay down, but she has got about well now.
- [6] I received a letter from Cousin Laura Robinson not a great while ago. She said Cousin Calvin [Robinson] had been drafted, went to camp, and stayed a few weeks where he was assigned to the office of second sergeant. But he did not like it very well, so his friends "hired him a substitute." So much for him.
- [7] I was up to Margaret Snook's Saturday. They got a letter from Thomas while I was there. He was in the battle of Vicksburg but was not injured.
- [8] Margaret and I and Sallie Monk went to Geography School that evening. They have pretty good times. Mr. Wm. Barnes is the teacher. They have one every other night.
- [9] Ann and Louis Adkins go to school in town this winter.
- [10] John Crawford is now sick, so Elbert P. Swarenger (Mr. Eammell's stepbrother) is helping Mr. [James] Alfrey to teach.
- [11] I believe I told about getting a letter from Cousin Charles in my letter to Perry, but however, I will say something in yours. He wrote a very good letter and talks like a very kind-hearted fellow. He holds the office of corporal. He receives a box from home every month. If it were not for that, he says he would go somewhere and wish to die. If you write to him, direct your letter to:

Corporal Charles L. Worden  
Co. I, 9th N.Y. Vol, Artillery  
Washington, D.C.

- [12] Please give my respects to Cousin Joseph and Sarah [Bonney], and keep a good share for yourselves.
- [13] You wanted me to tell whether I thought you and Perry looked alike. Well, you look some alike, but not a great deal. I don't think that his eyes hurt his looks much. I think that he is as good looking as his sister is.
- [14] This is all at present. Write soon.

Your cousin,  
Grace Robinson

### Letter #12

The third and twelfth letter in this year (Letters #12 and #21) are written by twenty-year-old Margaret Kennedy, one of Mollie's few Iowa correspondents who was not Mormon. Originally from Pennsylvania, Margaret and her husband, Joe, lived on the Gregory farm next to the Ebenezer Robinsons and Alfred Moffets. Margaret worked for the Moffets. She provides a view of life that Mollie would have understood, being outside the RLDS Church but within a community dominated by it.

Decatur Co., Iowa

Feb. 17, 1863

Dear Friend,

- [1] With pleasure I sit down to write a few lines in answer to your kind and welcome letter which we received some two weeks ago and was happy to hear that you was well and also glad to hear that you was satisfied with your new home.
- [2] We are well at present and hope that these few lines will find you enjoying good health.

- [3] Well, you said for us to pack up and go and live beside you. Well, we would like to live beside Mollie very well, but we cannot go down there. We expect to start north in about two or three weeks if the roads don't get too bad.
- [4] We have had a very pleasant winter here. We have had no snow of any account. There was snow that lay on the ground two days and that was the longest. Well, there is one thing sure—we have plenty of mud.
- [5] Mr. [Ebenezer] Robinson's folks is well. Grace was here this morning. I was to Mr. [George] Morey's yesterday, and they was all well. Mr. [Alfred] Moffet's are all getting pretty well again. Adoniram [W]right is dead. He died on the 13th of January. Mr. Moffet is coming so I will not get this letter wrote today.
- [6] I will now try to write some more. It is snowing this morning. The snow is about four inches deep, and it still keeps snowing.
- [7] You wanted to know how we spent our New Year's and Christmas. Well, we spent them at home setting by the stove.
- [8] You wanted to know how Mr. Celsur [?] was getting along. Well, his dear Darling One has left him, and he has applied for a bill of divorce. He says he is a-going to have another wife. His daughter is keeping house for him now.
- [9] You will excuse me for not answering your letter sooner. I thought I would wait one week. Grace wrote last week, so I thought we need not both write at once.
- [10] I can't think of anything more to write at present, so I will close by bidding a kind adieu. I remain your friend and well-wisher,

Margaret Kennedy



 **Letter #13**

The writer of this letter, Angeline (Boothe) Dennis, Mollie's cousin from Eagleville, Missouri, was the oldest of the children of Lorenzo Dow and Parthenia (Works) Boothe, and Amulek's only sister. Eagleville (or, Eaglesville), where both Angeline and Amulek lived, is directly over the southern border from Pleasant Plains, Iowa. [See map on page ix.]

When Lorenzo Dow Boothe drowned by falling through the ice of the Des Moines River on January 2, 1847, most of his children (Alma, Mosiah, and Hyrum Ebenezer) followed their stepmother and other Brighamites west. Angeline, his sixteen-year-old daughter, chose to stay in the area and keep her younger brother, Amulek, eleven, with her. Even after Angeline married Adam Dennis, Amulek lived near his sister, and when Adam went to war, Amulek helped her with the farm. She helped herself, too, since she got little from her soldier husband. Mrs. Brower was a milliner in Eagleville,<sup>2</sup> and Angeline's letter suggests that she worked for her.

Angeline would be thirty-two a little more than a month after she wrote this letter. She had a child, Annett, fourteen, and five other children aged four to thirteen: Grace, Amelia, Susan, Caroline, and Francis ("Frank"). Her husband, Adam Dennis, was in the Union cavalry stationed near Little Rock, Arkansas.

Eagleville, Harrison Co., Mo. February the 19, 1863

My Dear Cousin,

- [1] After the salutation of good evening, I will intrude upon your good nature by asking you to peruse a few lines from one that has not forgotten you, nor never shall, while life lasts.
- [2] The reason that I haven't written before: I thought I would wait till I could get my picture taken. I have [not] had an opportunity to have it taken since you left—you know what a hard country this is. Times are hard as ever. My husband [Adam] sent me 20 dollars last mail, the first that I have had since you left. I am...[missing fragment]

- [3] [page 2]...like it very well, but for my part I think that you have done just right. I am glad you have come to such a conclusion.
- [4] I think it is time for us all to begin to prepare for the coming of the Savior, Miriam. These are days of trials and tribulations, and if we don't live faithful and put our whole trust in God, we can't expect to escape the snares of the Wicked.
- [5] I wish, my dear cousin, that I lived close enough to you and Cousin Joseph [Bonney]'s family to come over and spend the afternoon with you. O what a happy time we would have! But fate has willed it otherwise, and if I am not allowed the privilege of seeing you, I can hear from you and that...[missing fragment]
- [6] [page 3]...before long, for I have written to him [Adam] and told him that he must write to you himself. He will try and do the best he can, I warrant you, for he thinks a great deal of his Cousin Miriam.
- [7] I tell what it is. I want to see him pretty bad. Cousin Mollie, you don't know anything about what a lonesome time I have. If it wasn't for Brother Ammu [Amulek Boothe], I don't know what I should do. I would have to do the best I could like a great many others that are left in the same fix.
- [8] Cousin Mollie, this is Sabbath evening. I have been down to Mrs. Brower's today, so I have to do my writing after night.
- [9] The most of the family are well except back colds. Francis [Dennis] is quite poorly. Phoebe J. [Dennis] is very unwell. She has had a severe spell.
- [10] Annett [Dennis] sends her love to you and the rest of her relatives. Caroline and Susan [Dennis] say tell Cousin Mariam that they are much obliged to her for their little baskets. They are going to keep them always to remember her by.

- [11] It is getting late and I want to write a few lines to Cousin Sarah [Bonney]. I will bid you a Good Night.
- Forget me not.  
Angie L. Dennis
- My Dear Cousin Sarah,
- [12] Although we are personally strangers, you seem just as near to me as if we had grown up together from infancy, and I know from the description that Brother Ammu [Amulek Boothe] gave of you and from the looks of your picture that you are one of the best of women. I congratulate with Cousin Joseph in making his choice.
- [13] I am very much obliged to you for your picture and those pieces, and in return I will send you my pretty picture if you will promise to keep it locked up where no one can see it.
- [14] Tell Cousin J [Joseph] that I have got his picture and I am going to keep it as long as I live. Tell him it looks just as he did when I last saw him only...[last part of letter missing]

### Letter #14

In Gracie's second letter of this year, she mentions a letter to Mollie from their cousin Charles Worden [See Letter #17, par. 5] that she deliberately opened and read before forwarding it.

The deaths of soldiers recorded by Gracie are included with one who was not a soldier—Adoniram Wright, a twelve-year-old relative of Lydia (Wright) Moffet, Alfred's wife. The other young men are all soldiers from Pleasant Plains.

Again, the sore eyes that causes Arthur Broadbooks to be sent home from the army to stay at Royal Richardson's hotel is probably conjunctivitis, a disease associated with measles or an early respiratory infection. A sticky substance that burns and itches periodically oozes from the eye. Today, a drop of silver nitrate solution into the eyes of a newborn prevents the disease.

The spread of disease—especially childhood diseases—by the gathering together of many young men who had been raised in widely scattered rural communities caused as many casualties in the Civil War



- [3] His brother Arthur is at home. He has been in the Army, has got a discharge. He has the sore eyes, and is staying at Mr. [Royal] Richardson's. Dr. [David] Macy is doctoring him. I think he is quite a good looking Young Man, but not a geat deal better than Rufus.
- [4] I was expecting a letter from Perry [Works] and you last night but I got disappointed. I shall look for one next Saturday certain. Mr. Waldrip and Mr. Richardson were down here on a visit week before last.
- [5] Sallie Monk and Martha Waldrip want to get our school this summer, but I don't know which one will get it.
- [6] We got the news a week today of three more of my cousins being in the Army. Their names are Merritt M. Clark, William Troyer, and George Tinker. Merritt is second Lieutenant. The other two are Corporals. Two of them are Aunt Mary Tinker's sons-in-law. Cousin George was in the battle of Murfeesboro.
- [7] The cases of small-pox are all getting better. Our folks send their love to all. This is all at present. Please write soon.

Your Affectionate Cousin  
Grace Robinson

P.S. Edward Purcell is married to Jane Eaton.

## Letter #15

Gracie's second March 1863 letter is addressed to LaGrange, Missouri, where Mollie often stayed. Gracie mentions Martha and Henry Cowles, the children of Austin and his second wife, Irena. Martha was seventeen, and Henry, now in the Union army, had often called on Mollie. Mollie did not care for him, though. When he came to the Robinson farm, she would hide under the bed and make Gracie answer the door.

The friendship between the Cowles and Robinsons was long-standing. Austin Cowles' hatred of the Mormon "spiritual wife" doctrine exceeded even Ebenezer's. Often derisively called "holy

polygamy,” it began officially in 1843 when Joseph Smith, Jr., announced the doctrine to the Nauvoo High Council. Austin immediately resigned from the Council.<sup>6</sup> His daughter by a first marriage, Elvira Annie Cowles, had become a “spiritual wife” of Smith’s.<sup>7</sup>

Gracie makes sure Mollie knows that the dispute within the Little River Branch of the RLDS has been resolved through the good efforts of William W. Blair. Blair, at this time a travelling emissary for the RLDS, baptized Gracie’s mother and father as well as the Moffets and Booths.<sup>8</sup>

Gracie’s father, Ebenezer Robinson, expressed a life-long abhorrence for anyone who assumed more authority than he thought was just or decent. His friends Austin Cowles and George Hinkle agreed. The dispute over authority in the Little River Branch of the RLDS began as early as October, 1860.<sup>9</sup> Who could baptize members of the “new organization” was especially important since some members may have had high standing in “an apostate organization” (or sect) that was no longer recognized.<sup>10</sup> Alfred Moffet, not High Priest George Morey, had baptized the first members of the Little River Branch, and the authenticity of this baptism was questioned by the Morey faction. The Moffets and others—including the Robinsons, Cowles, Hinkles, and Booths—withdrawed from the Branch.<sup>11</sup> Membership fell from twenty to nine.<sup>12</sup>

W. W. Blair was a very effective missionary who had recently started a branch of the RLDS Church at Manti, Iowa. He was returning to Illinois when he stopped at Pleasant Plains to use his good diplomacy in the baptism dispute. As Gracie notes, George Morey, the high priest of the Little River Branch who opposed the baptism, had left early for the regular April RLDS conference and was gone when Blair resolved the matter.

The Little River Branch membership recovered after the dispute to become one of the strongest in the early RLDS Church, registering over forty members in this year alone, and among the elders was Alfred Moffett.<sup>13</sup> By October, High Priest George Morey would be so bold as to urge elders to minister not only in Iowa, but in “the adjoining country,” including fearsome Missouri where Mormons were especially detested.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, there continued to be tension among Little River Branch members, perhaps reflecting the tensions in the “New Organization” itself. Many thought the Saints should gather together in one place, that is, establish a Zion. In this year, a front-page article in the *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, the official newspaper of the

RLDS, stressed that “The time has not come for the Saints to gather in one place. Zion is not yet prepared...”<sup>15</sup> Gracie’s father, Ebenezer, and his friends agreed. But some months later, on January 9, 1864, at a conference of the Little River Branch, George Morey would exhort his members to “prepare themselves for the establishment of Zion in the last days.” Ebenezer Robinson rose to argue against this, calling for more faith and diligence and George Morey responded to Ebenezer. As a recorder of the meeting noted, only “the severity of the weather and depth of snow kept the congregation small,” and, too, the debate.<sup>16</sup>

Typical of her age, Gracie seems less impressed with the disputes within the Little River Branch—even though they involved her father—than she is with William W. Blair’s assistant, a young man from Manti that Blair brought with him.

Gracie also mentions Captain Brown, a Civil War veteran who was already making political speeches. He would later become an Iowa state senator.

The first mention of the Newmans and Robert Booth, Jr., trying their luck at Pike’s Peak is in this letter. They would go there more than once [See Letters #16, par. 4; #18, par. 6; and #23, par. 6]. Gold was first discovered as early as 1850 near Pike’s Peak, close to Denver, Colorado, but there was no “rush” until late 1858. From 1859 on, an area actually more than seventy-five miles from Pike’s Peak was highly publicized. Though the famous California strike was much richer, “the Peak” attracted many Eastern fortune-hunters because it was closer. There is no evidence the Newmans ever found gold, but they did hold well-paying jobs in Colorado. [See Letter #44, par. 7].

Nothing more than what Gracie writes here is known about the spectacular affair of Old Mr. Mills.

Nine Eagles, Decatur County, Iowa  
Tuesday March 31, 1863

Dear Cousin Miriam,

- [1] Your kind letter of March 21 came duly to hand last Sunday. I was glad to hear from you and that you are well for you had been sick the last time I heard from you. I wrote a letter to Cousin Perry [Works] two weeks ago and sent it to Decatur City by Mr. [Joseph] Kennedy. They moved a week last Friday.

- [2] Martha Cowles was here Sunday. She got a letter from Henry [Cowles] the night before. In it was contained the sad news of the death of Rufus W. Broadbooks. He died at Rolla. His parents know nothing of his death. They got a letter from him not long ago in which he stated that he had made his will and did not expect to live long.
- [3] Elder [William] Blair has been here. He started away a week today. He held three meetings while here. Jane Miller was baptized. Our folks and Mr. [Robert] Booth's and [Alfred] Moffet's joined the new organization [Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints].
- [4] There was a young man with Elder Blair by the name of Willie Redfield, aged 19 years. He is a very good looking young boy. He expects to come back here in May on his return home. He lives in Frémont Co., Iowa.
- [5] We are all tolerable well at present with the exception of Mother [Angeline Robinson].
- [6] Mr. [George] Morey is away now at [RLDS church] conference. He had started before Elder Blair got here. They talked some of going north this spring but I don't know whether they will or not.
- [7] Captain Brown is now at home. He is going to deliver a speech at the Plains [Pleasant Plains] next Saturday.
- [8] Old Mr. Mills has been sent to jail for killing one of the Militia who was there one night last week to see the girls. This man leaves a wife and four children. He lived at Decatur City [Iowa]. It is thought that it will almost kill Mrs. Mills.
- [9] I guess Cousin Deborah [Morey] has not sent an answer to your letter yet. The last time I was over there she had commenced one to you but had not finished it. She has not had a letter from George [Rockwell] since you went away. I want to know whether you have heard from him lately or not and where he is.



- [10] I am glad you have heard from Cousin Ad [Dennis], as we have not heard from him since you were out there. I want you to give me his address when you write. Olive and Louisa [Booth] received a letter from Annett [Dennis] a few weeks ago.
- [11] Moses Turpin has sold his farm to a man by the name of [D. R.] Ockerman. They seem to be very nice people. They have two sons that are young men and several girls that are young women.
- [12] Tell Perry that I want him to come out here this summer to see us very much.
- [13] Jacob Newman and Almeda are talking of starting to Pike's Peak in May. Robert Booth talks some of going along, but I guess he has about given it up now.
- [14] We have three young calves and my little black cat is as cross as ever. This is all that I think of at present. Our folks send their love to all. Please give my love to all the cousins. Please write soon.

From your affectionate cousin,  
Gracie Robinson

To Miss Miriam Works  
LaGrange, Missouri

## Letter #16

The unsigned letter of fifteen-year-old Louisa Booth, one of the daughters of Robert and Phebe (Marcelles) Booth, is addressed from Spring Valley, sometimes called Boothtown in honor of Louisa's father. Apparently Louisa (most often pronounced "Loo-WISE-ah") and her sister Olive prefer the name Spring Valley [See Letter #18].

Most of this letter confirms information in others. Rebecca is Louisa's oldest sister, married to Charles Potter, who also tried his luck at Pike's Peak.

Louisa teases Mollie about Mr. Sulser [Celsur?], a music teacher that the girls apparently found especially attractive. Mollie may have expressed an interest in this unknown man whose wife deserted him [See Letters #12, par. 8 and #18, par. 5]. Louisa, herself, remained single for a long time [See Letter #89, par. 9].

April the 1, A.D. 1863  
Spring Valley, Decatur County, Iowa

My Dear Friend Miriam,

- [1] I embrace the present opportunity of penning you a few lines. I received yours of the 18th, and I was very glad indeed to hear from you. I began to think that you had forgotten me. I was glad to hear that you was well, and I am glad to think that you was satisfied out there.
- [2] Olive [Booth] and I went to meeting up to your uncle [Ebenezer Robinson]'s to meeting and I give Grace [Robinson] the letter you sent to her, and she said that she was glad to hear from you.
- [3] Olive is to Mr. [George] Morey's. She went up there Monday, and she is a-coming home tomorrow. She is a-going to answer your letter tomorrow. Mr. Morey has gone to Conference. He has been gone three weeks. Mr. [William] Blair has been here. He started home three weeks ago last Monday.
- [4] Almeda and Jacob is a-going to start to the Peak the first of May. Almeda sends her respects too. She says that she would like to see you before she started. All the folks has got the Pike's Peak fever. If you have to see Mr. Sulser, you will have to hurry, for all the girls is about to run away with him. He is a-teaching singing school in Mr. McCommer's schoolhouse.
- [5] Rebecca [Potter] is here today. She is a-washing. Jane Miller was baptized. Mr. Blair baptized her.

- [6] It is time to get to getting—time to go to getting supper and I will have to go to get supper.
- [7] I want you to be sure to answer this letter. No more at present, so goodbye. Please answer this as soon as you receive this letter. And I will answer yours. Good morning.

April Fools

### Letter #17

The next letter, which may be the one Gracie Robinson read before forwarding to Mollie, is from their New York cousin, twenty-year-old Charles Worden, a corporal in the Ninth Artillery of the New York Volunteers. He was the eldest child of John and Jerusha (Works) Worden, though his father had nine children by an earlier marriage. Charlie's mother, Jerusha, was four years older than her brother Asa Daniel, Mollie's father. Jerusha did not follow the Mormons west, but she was a friend to them when they travelled back to New York, as even Brigham Young attested to.<sup>17</sup>

Charles Worden spent his military tour of duty in the Washington, D.C., area. He was quickly promoted from private to corporal, and in 1864 he was made a sergeant. The remarkable incident he relates is repeated almost exactly in a history of the New York Volunteers.<sup>18</sup>

Fort Simmons

April 7th, 1863

Dear Cousin Miriam,

- [1] I will now take the pleasure in answering your kind and welcome letter which I have neglected to answer so long. It is rather discouraging, I know, but you must excuse me for not being very prompt. I have been rather unwell for the past week but am now better.
- [2] I haven't any news of any importance to write but will write what there is.
- [3] A private in Company F, while preparing to go on guard, hit his wife—dead on the spot. The ball taking effect under the

left eye, splitting the skull and blowing her brains out. Poor woman, she had been here just two weeks. She leaves two small children to mourn her loss, the children both grasping her as she fell to the floor. They were both completely covered with blood. I think I never witnessed anything so sad an affair in my life. I couldn't help but shed a tear myself.

- [4] We still remain where we did when I wrote you before. There isn't much likelihood of our leaving, and I hoped that there would be. Sunday it snowed hard all day long which made it quite lonesome.
- [5] I think it was too bad that your letter was so long reaching you. It was my fault, not yours. I thought it would go safer to direct it in care of Uncle Ebenezer Robinson. But I will direct the remainder at your address.
- [6] I think that I shall go home week after next, but don't let that make any difference to you in regards to your writing to me, for my furlough is short, only a few days. I think that it is too bad to pay 25 dollars to go home [Throopsville] and then have only 10 days to visit my friends, don't you? I shall have to make short calls.
- [7] We haven't had our pay yet from the Government, but if I go home I can get my pay on my furlough at Washington. I think that you can look for my likeness in my next letter, that is, if I go home.
- [8] You seem to think that my head is all right if I am a Republican. You think right. I go in for breaking with slavery, if that is the cause of this war. And I think that it never will end until it is broke open. I think by what I can learn from the papers that they are in a pretty bad condition. I don't have mercy for them if they are. The poor women and children I have sympathy for, of course. I can't help that, for they are not to blame.

- [9] We are living high now. We have our ham but no eggs. They say the men fight better by feeding them good. I think that is reasonable. There is nothing that causes so much dissatisfaction in the Army as not having enough to eat.
- [10] I have heard from home. They're all as well as usual, with the exception of my sister Jane. She has been quite unwell but is now better. I trust in God that they may all live that I may see them all once more.
- [11] I am Corporal of the guard today—come off tomorrow at 10 o'clock.
- [12] I wish you would have all of my cousins write to me, for I think that if I live to get out of this war I shall come out there and make you all a visit, and by their writing to me I shall know where to find them.
- [13] I wish you would send me your likeness and a lock of your hair, if you please.
- [14] I went to Washington and got my likeness taken and had the misfortune to lose it. I had calculated to send it to you, but as it is, you will have to wait until I get my pay. You shall have it as soon as I get my pay and can go to Washington.
- [15] This is all that I can think of this time, so you must excuse all mistakes and call it good. Write soon as you receive this. Give my love to all of my cousins and tell them to write. Give my respects to Joseph Bonney and all of the family.
- [16] So goodbye for this time but not forever.

Truly your affectionate cousin,  
Charles L. Worden

Direct your letters to:  
C. L. Worden  
Washington, D.C.  
Co. I, 9th N.Y. V Artillery  
in care of Capt. H. Hughes

## Letter #18

As several of the letters reveal, Mollie was ill in the early spring of this year [See #15, par. 1], but she was well by the time Olive Booth wrote this letter, the only one of hers to survive. Olive's relaying of Eunice Morey's insult is one of the first indications that Mollie had neglected writing Eunice [See Letters #19, par. 4 and #26].

Olive, four years older than her sister Louisa, was another of Robert and Phebe (Marcelles) Booth's children. Like Louisa, she teases Mollie about Mr. Celsur with an elaborate puzzle and a crude drawing. In the next year, at nineteen, Olive would marry William Clark, son of the founder of Clark's factory in nearby Davis City, Iowa. She remained in the Iowa area most of her life [See Letter #92, par. 5].

The Robinson Schoolhouse Olive mentions may be the same as the Moffet Schoolhouse, since it was near the Robinson farm.

Alfred Moffet's return to membership rolls of the Little River Branch marks the absolute end of the baptism dispute.

April 25, 1863      Spring Valley, Decatur Co., Iowa

Dear Absent Friend,

- [1] I seat myself to answer your kind and most welcome letter in which came to hand some time ago, and I beg pardon for not writing sooner to you. My reasons for not writing to you were because my health would not permit me to. I have been sick with the diptheria this winter, and I am not so that I have seen a well day since we have heard that you had been very sick since. Now we are there.
- [2] I saw Eunice Morey a few days ago, and she told me that when I wrote to you for me to tell you for her that the cause of your sickness were the carbuncle arising on your back. She said if you got mad at her for that, you had all the world to get pleased in. She also sent her respects to you and wished you to marry soon.
- [3] Now Miriam, I will tell you a little about her. She got Henry Cowles' likeness, and she has hers taken to send to him.

- [4] Mr. [William] Blair preaches today at 11 o'clock at the [Alfred] Moffet's house. He came last evening, so I understood. I have not saw him. We were all ready to start up to hear him preach, but it commenced raining so that it was impossible for us to go. We have heard that Mr. Moffet is to be baptized today.
- [5] Miriam, you said that you had picked me out a man. Well now, if that is the case, I shall be very much obliged to you for such a consideration as that, and I shall speak a good [word] to Mr. Sulser [Celsur?] for you in return. I always love to return compliments. I should like to have you send that man of mine out to see me before you fall in love with him.
- [6] Almeda [Newman] and family and Robert [Booth] starts for Pike's Peak in a few weeks. Our folks [Robert and Phebe Booth] are all well. Martha Waldrip teaches school at your uncle [Ebenezer Robinson]'s schoolhouse. She begins her school the first of May. Your aunt [Robinson]'s folks are all well the last that I heard.
- [7] Rufus Broadbooks is dead. He has passed out of this world and gone to a better one. He left his home and parents and friends to fight for his country, but now he has gone. This war has caused many to weep and to mourn for those lost friends. It has not been long since we heard the sad news of the death of our dear cousin F. Marcelles, and now last night brought the news that one of father's brothers was dead and gone. They both died in the army. F. was wounded and a-died with sickness.
- [8] Amulek [Boothe] and his sister [Angeline Dennis] was up here on a visit about three weeks ago. Debra [Morey]'s family is all well. They are a-living as are they did when you lived with them.
- [9] As it is Sabbath evening and is getting pretty late, I will close as I am expecting company. Shall bid you good-night. Please answer if it is worth an answer. This is from your friend,

Miss Olive Booth

Direct to Miss Olive Booth  
 Spring Valley  
 Decatur Co., Iowa

- [10] Round is the ring that has no end,  
 says my love to you, my friend.  
 Just as the apple drops to the ground,  
 Kiss my true love as she comes around.  
     and   down   have   you  
     up     as     i'll   if  
     reads you   it's   you   me  
     it   will   see   will   have  
 Wourke this out   x x x x x x x   [Here a drawing  
 at your leisure   x k i s s x       of a bearded man]  
                           x x x x x x x       Sul[s]er

### Letter #19

Gracie's fourth letter of this year acknowledges Mollie's letter of April 15 in a rather formal way. (The abbreviation "inst." for "instant," meaning "of the current month," is a convention more suited to business than family letters.) Gracie may have written it tongue-in-cheek or to show off newly-learned letter writing skills. Nevertheless, her accuracy gives some idea of how speedy mail service was from LaGrange, Missouri, to Pleasant Plains, Iowa, during the war.

Fifteen-year-old Martha Jane Keown (pronounced "COW-in"), whom Gracie mentions, is the daughter of John and Mary Ann (Morey) Keown. Her mother was the eldest of George and Sylvia Morey's children. Her father was an accomplished stonemason and worked on cutting and carving the moon and sun stones of the massive Nauvoo Temple, the centerpiece of the Mormon city of Nauvoo, Illinois. Wherever the George Moreys went, their daughters' families, the Keowns and Trumans, went too.

Thomas (called "T.J.") Brant, whom Gracie mentions, was apparently a favorite. He enlisted when he was nineteen in 1861, and then re-enlisted. From Gracie's reaction, it is no wonder that Mollie later thinks there is something between T.J. and Gracie [See #55, par. 7].



Pleasant Plain, Iowa

April 29, 1863

Respected Cousin,

- [1] I again take my pen in hand to address a few lines to you in answer to your favor of the 15th inst. which came duly to hand a few days since. It found us enjoying tolerable health with the exception of "Ma." [Angeline Robinson] Her health has been very poor all winter.
- [2] "Pa" [Ebenezer] has been at home since I wrote you last. He started away a few days ago.
- [3] Cousin George Rockwell is now at David [Morey]'s. He has been here about three weeks. He intends to start away in a few weeks. I was down there a little while yesterday afternoon and Cousin George and Eunice [Morey] and Martha Keown came pretty near home with me. George has been baptized since he came back.
- [4] Eunice wants you to write to her.
- [5] Thomas J. Brant has been at home on furlough. He started away some four weeks since. He has enlisted for three years more. I showed him your likeness and asked him if he knew it. He said "I should rather think I did." He is as full of fun as ever. The young folks had two parties for him while he was at home.
- [6] There was a very serious accident happened here last Tuesday afternoon. As Miss Isabell Fairley was riding a pony, the dogs jumped out and scairt it. It started to run, and she went to jump off and broke her leg just above the ankle. Fortunately she was within a few steps of home. Her mother and sister ran out and carried her into the house, and I went down as quick as I could. The bone was pretty near a half an inch out of her leg when I went down. They had it set, but she is not doing very well now.

- [7] I haven't had a letter from Cousin Charlie [Worden] since February. I wrote to Cousin Joseph [Bonney] some time ago but have received no answer yet. Tell Cousin Perry [Works] to write to me or I will scold him.
- [8] Well Mollie, I guess you will get tired reading this long letter so I will close. Please give my love to Perry and keep a good share for yourself. Ma wishes to be remembered to you and Perry. Please answer soon.

Affectionately, your cousin,  
Gracie Robinson

## Letter #20

The number of Amulek Boothe's letters to survive is second only to those of Grace Robinson's, and this is his first. He is one of Mollie's most faithful writers and arguably her favorite cousin. As a son of Lorenzo Dow Boothe, he is not to be confused with the Booths who lived in Decatur County, Iowa. Amulek was named for a prophet in the *Book of Mormon* who preached with another prophet, Alma, about the resurrection of Christ. One of Amulek's brothers was named "Alma." But Alma was a Brighamite, and Amulek and his sister Angeline had become members of the Reorganized Church.

Mollie's baptism as a member of the Christian Church did not please her cousin Deborah, as Amulek writes in this letter. Because of it Deborah stops writing, something noted by other letter-writers [See Letter #25, par. 4]. Though Deborah was pregnant this year [See Letter #23, par. 2] and may not have had the time or the desire to write Mollie, the issue of religious allegiance was strong, and it is clear that Deborah snubbed Mollie because Mollie's church was not RLDS. Even good-hearted Amulek wanted Mollie to share in his new-found faith.

Amulek refers to a draft about to be run in Eagleville. Nominally, the three million men between eighteen and forty-five in the North were militiamen and could be called to service at any time. Most were unorganized, however, so the draft law required deputies of the Provost Marshall General to enroll men by April 1, 1863. From these lists, names were drawn to meet local quotas. But there was no law requiring the men themselves to enroll. Resistance to enrolling was

sometimes intense, as it was in Olney, Illinois, where 500 resisters threatened to burn down the town if enrollment lists were not surrendered.<sup>19</sup> Delays clogged the draft process in some states—California, West Virginia, and Missouri—where enrollers dragged their heels for various reasons. Since Missouri was one of those states having difficulty, this may be the reason Amulek is uncertain that a draft will actually occur.

Eagleville, however, supported the Union cause. Crowds gathered on the Fourth of July of this year to celebrate the Nation's birth and to await the news of the Battle of Vicksburg. Since the mail was delivered to Eagleville only once a week, the anxious townspeople, some of whom were relatives of soldiers, sent a messenger on horseback more than forty miles south to Gallatin to bring back news of Grant's Great Siege of Vicksburg.<sup>20</sup>

Amulek's joking postscript in this letter angered Mollie [See Letter #25, par. 3].

Eaglesville

April 29, 1863

Most cherished Cousin,

[1] I am a-going to answer your respected letter which came to hand last Friday, and I tell you, I was pleased very much to hear from you and also to get your portrait. I think it is a better looking one than the other that looked a little more funny, for I wanted [it] to look a little like my dearest cousin. I don't think it looks quite so well, but it suits very well, and I am very much obliged to you, and you shan't lose anything by it if I can help it.

[2] Miriam, I have something new to tell you, for it is new to me. I was out to Davis [City, Iowa] last Sabbath and was at meeting at 11 o'clock. Then in the evening at three. Then after meeting I was baptized by Mr. [William] Blair. And I feel a great deal better, for I think it is the duty of everyone to begin to live in obedience to our Savior. I have joined the Church [RLDS] for that purpose, and I mean to live up to it or try to, for I have been walking in my sinful path long enough while desolation is spread abroad in our land an[d] death stands staring everyone in the face. I think it is time to turn and seek their last.

- [3] Miriam, I would have given anything if you had have been there to went with me. I would have been satisfied, but I hope you will try to live that way. Quit the follies and foolishness is the prayer of your dearest Cousin.
- [4] You say you are getting lonesome. I am sorry for you, for I know how it is by experience. I would like to be with you a while, and I think you would get over that, for if there ain't anyone down there, I shall have to come. Though, I will try it from here first by writing you a lengthy letter such as I like to have come to me. For I never get tired of reading yours.
- [5] You say you are going to Quincy. When you get there, let me know so I can direct my letters there, for I mean to write often. I have got a letter from Adam [Dennis] last Friday. He was well.
- [6] We have not had any letter from the boys since I wrote to you last, but I got a letter from Cousin Angie [Worden]. She is not well. [Words missing because of letter fold] It was so long before I answered hers. Then when I came back from down there, I wrote and did not get an answer. Then I wrote again, and she said she got both of them. I didn't know it or else I should not have written the last one.
- [7] I guess Deborah [Morey] don't like it very well because you joined the church down there. She said that she had not answered your letters that you had wrote, nor she did not talk as tho she was a-going to. If she would not answer my letters, I would let her go, for when I write to anyone and they don't answer it, I think they don't want to hear from me.
- [8] They say they are a-going to run a draft next Friday in town. Every man that goes out of the state that belongs to the State Militia with leave is liable to a fine of 30 dollars.
- [9] Miriam, the clock has just tolled the hour of two in the night and I have wrote you a tolerable long letter for the present. I must close.

[10] I forgot to tell you that I have Grace [Robinson]'s likeness, but I don't think it looks near as well as yours. Miriam, write often. So goodnight.

from your Nearest and Dearest,  
Cousin Amulek Boothe

[11] Miriam, I have thought of thee often since last I seen you on the boat and the last kiss that I printed on thy cheek.

## Letter #21

Margaret Kennedy's second letter is from her new home in Des Moines. She implies that, instead of cash exchanges, a tally system, much like the one once used in Nauvoo, might have existed among the Mormons in Pleasant Plains. In any case, her comment reveals the scarcity of actual coins or bills with which to do business.

Not surprisingly, Margaret also has something to say about the new draft law. Horace Greeley wrote that the draft was the foremost topic of conversation in the nation. Some of the press were claiming that it was unConstitutional.<sup>21</sup> Like Margaret, what most people discussed was the \$300 commutation clause, under which a draftee could pay to have another serve in his place. Margaret's comment on the provision is typical.

Nevertheless, the volunteer system of recruitment had broken down. With the volunteer system, brokers got men who were interested in joining together with men who wanted to stay out. The government gave bounties to volunteers, and some men, who fully intended to join, would wait until bounties were high before doing so. Others, who thought they might volunteer, first sought out the brokers of rich clients who were looking to pay the \$300 for a substitute.<sup>22</sup>

Des Moines, Iowa

May 11, '63

Dear Friend,

[1] I take the present opportunity to write in answer to your kind letter which we received on the ninth of this month, and was glad to hear from you, but was sorry to hear you

was sick. We are all well at present and hope this will find you in good health again.

- [2] We have left old Decatur County. I like it a great deal better here than I did there. It is a nicer place than it is there. You say you are not sorry you left that. We are not sorry yet, nor I don't think we will be. One has a chance here to get along. We can sell anything we have for cash, and that is a great advantage.
- [3] Smiths [Frank and Nancy] is well and doing well as can be expected these hard times. They have got another boy. He is five weeks old. He has got no name yet.
- [4] Well, I must tell you about our fruit. There is an orchard here on the place. We get all the apples. We have lots of tame gooseberries and tame strawberries, and we get all of them.
- [5] You wanted to know what I thought of the conscription bill. Well, I don't think much of it. It would do well enough if they could not buy their freedom, but the way it is the poor man's lives will have to go against the rich man's purse.
- [6] Well, I can't think of any more to write at present, but remains yours ever. You must excuse all mistakes for my pen is very bad.

Margaret Kennedy

Write soon if you please.

## Letter #22

George Rockwell, still in Batavia, writes the next letter after receiving news from Iowa. As Mollie knew, the marriage of Edward Purcell meant that Martha Ann (Morey) Truman, who had been a widow since 1860, lost another chance for someone to take care of her and her three children. As it turned out, Martha did marry again, although under unusual circumstances [See Letter #82, par. 5].

The fact that George Rockwell seems interested in the marital state of his friends in Iowa may be the first indication of his own intentions [See Letter #48, par. 4].

Batavia, [Ill.]

June 7, 1863

Dear Cousin,

- [1] I will occupy a few minutes in writing to you. I sent a letter addressed to you sometime since but received no answer as yet. Perhaps you have not received it, but I will send in care of Cousin Joseph [Bonney], and I wish you to be punctual in your answer as I am quite anxious to hear from you and also to know how you are getting along, also present and future prospects, if you please.
- [2] I am quite anxious for your welfare, one that would wish to see you do well. Is your health good as when I saw you last?
- [3] I received a letter from Cousin Grace [Robinson] last week. She says they are all well. Eddie [Purcell] is married. Well done for him. Poor Martha! [Truman] What will she do next? She must not lose many such chances. She says that Martha Cowles, Helen and Eunice Morey are still single. Where is Eunice's correspondent in the army? Is he [Henry Cowles] dead or wounded as many others are?
- [4] I should like to have the privilege of going blackberrying this fall as I did last, but circumstances are such that I cannot. Probably you will not have the opportunity, but be that as it may, I hope, ere long, we may be permitted to see each other again. If not, let us try and live so as to meet in that upper and better world where we may enjoy each other's society in peace.
- [5] I feel like thanking my heavenly Father for his kind protecting care over me. Let one and all seek an interest in that fountain that never fails health, nor a dying bed, for his hand is stretched out over all his works. Seek and ye shall find. These

are his promises to all. We may be separated here in this for a few days, but by living near to him here, we will all meet him around his throne in his kingdom.

[6] I intend to make my cousins in Mo. [Amulek Boothe and the Dennises] a visit this fall, all being well. I shall stay in this place until November. I expect then [to] return to Iowa, perhaps to spend the winter.

[7] Please write soon.

Yours, in friendship.

Give my respects to my cousins and accept the same yourself.

George Rockwell

### Letter #23

Although Grace Robinson, in this letter, does not want to put in writing how Edward Purcell died, Mollie almost certainly learned how, for his murder was spectacular. Members of Dike's Missouri Militia, with Southern allegiances, stopped Purcell on the streets of Pleasant Plains, demanding that he hurrah for Confederate President Jefferson Davis. When he refused, they shot him.<sup>23</sup>

Renegade raiders were difficult to tell from official ones. The most infamous renegade was William Quantrill, an ex-schoolteacher whose gang of pro-Southern thugs, including young Frank and Jesse James, terrorized northern Missouri and eastern Kansas. This year, on August 21, Quantrill's Raiders sacked and burned Lawrence, Kansas, murdering all but the women and very young children in retaliation for a Federal raid on Osceola, Missouri.<sup>24</sup> In October, Lincoln sent a special message to his commander in Missouri "...to compel the excited people there to leave one another alone."<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately for poor Edward Purcell, the "excited people" sometimes spilled over the northern border into Iowa.

John H. Clippinger, another soldier Gracie mentions, had come with the Robinsons to Iowa from Greencastle, Pennsylvania. In peacetime, he was a tinner, a maker of tin items, differentiated from a tinker, who merely mended tin pots and pans.



[Pleasant Plains, Ia.]      Sunday, October 25, 1863

Dear Cousin Mollie,

- [1] I seat myself this pleasant Sabbath morning to write a few lines to you in reply to your favor of the 17th inst. which came duly to hand last evening. We were glad to hear from you again.
- [2] I have no particular news to write. Cousin Deborah [Morey] has a young daughter [Eliza]. It is about three weeks old. They have not named it yet.
- [3] "Ma" [Angeline Robinson] has been very sick for a week, but is a great deal better now. "Pa" [Ebenezer] started away again a week ago last Friday.
- [4] I am doing the work now. Annett [Dennis] stayed with us two weeks. She is over to David [Morey]'s, and I do not know how long she will stay there.
- [5] I have not had a letter from George [Rockwell] since June, and I do not know where he is.
- [6] Robert Booth has returned from the Peak. He talks some of going back in the spring.
- [7] Rebecca Potter has another boy, and Mrs. Froudenger has got a young daughter.
- [8] Mr. Joneses have returned from N.H.
- [9] I think it is very strange that Perry [Works] does not write to me. It is now going on four months since I have had a letter from him. Tell him if he does not write pretty soon, I shall think he is too lazy to write, but I guess I can stand it as long as he can.

- [10] I cannot write any more of the particulars of the death of Edward Purcell, but if you were here, I could tell you some things that I cannot write on.
- [11] I don't see what is the reason you and Perry can't come and see us this fall, as we should be very glad to see you both. I should not be much surprised if you was to see us down as far as LaGrange this winter if nothing happens, as Pa said we could go.
- [12] I almost forgot to tell you that we had received a long letter from John H. Clippinger giving a full history of his experience in war matters. The letter was mailed at New Orleans, Louisiana.
- [13] Annett and Dianna Robertson was baptized last Thursday.
- [14] I have not had a letter from Cousin Joe and Sally [Bonney] since last spring. Please tell them that I should like to have them write to me.
- [15] Ma sends her love to you and Perry and says she would like to have you both write to her. Tell Perry to write. Give my love to him. Please write soon.

Your affectionate cousin,  
Gracie

## **Letter #24**

The next two letters (Letters #24 and #25) were written at the same time in the Dennis home. There is a two-month period between these two letters and the previous one, Letter #23. From Angeline Dennis' first paragraph, it seems that after an initial spurt of letter writing, "the folks in Iowa" slacked off considerably. Angeline, however, accuses Mollie of being too enamored of her "new" cousins, the Bonneys. Especially, Angeline wants Mollie to remember her husband, Union Trooper Adam Dennis of Merrill's Horse Company B in Arkansas.

This year, Adam ("Addy") was stationed at Helena. (Arkansas came under the general command of the Department of Missouri, which

explains the “Mo” Angeline adds to his address.) While Union forces couldn’t stop the Confederate raids that started in Arkansas, neither could Confederate forces make any real gains. So far as is known, Adam never got the furlough Angeline hopes for, and the joyous time (the “shindy”) did not happen. He stayed in Arkansas for the duration of the war, though he was re-assigned to Little Rock later [See Letter #58, par. 4].

Angeline’s financial situation because of Adam’s war service is clear from this letter. The cost of a photograph includes a trip to Leon, Iowa, some twenty-six miles north, because of the accident to James Anderson, the Eagleville ambrotypist. Many photographs at the time were ambrotypes, pictures on glass plates that required separate black backgrounds for proper viewing. A piece of black silk or paper behind the exposed plate differentiated light areas of the image, which were silver on the plate, from dark areas, which were clear and allowed the black to show through.

Angeline reports the birth of Eliza Morey and comments on the death of Effie Josephine Bonney, the second girl Sarah (“Sallie”) Bonney lost. At the time of Effie’s death, Sallie was in the last month of her fourth pregnancy, and she was caring for young (Jessie) Katie Belle, who was a year and nine months old. Mollie was certainly in LaGrange to help her.

The baskets Angeline mentions may have been early Christmas presents to the Dennis children that Mollie made before she left for Illinois. Angeline also mentions her daughter Annett.

Angeline includes a letter to Joe and Sallie Bonney in her lengthy one to Mollie. She even signs her letter to the Bonneys with her brother Amulek’s name. It is no wonder that Amulek, writing next to her, finishes his letter first. His love for Mollie is revealed by his generous offer and an enticement for her to return.

The suitor of Mollie’s named Shakespeare, whom Amulek mentions, is a mystery.

Eagleville, Mo.            Tuesday evening, Dec. 9, 1863

Dear Cousin Miriam,

- [1] It is with a joyous heart I sit down to write a few lines to let you know that I haven’t forgotten you, if some of the rest have. Amulek [Boothe] got your letter this evening. I think you gave some of your relatives a pretty hard rub, but I

don't blame you much. I think some of them might write a little oftener.

- [2] You may depend we were all glad to hear from you. We have often wondered why we got no letter from you. We began to think you was so much taken up with your new relatives that you had forgotten that you had any in Mo. But since your letter came, I have altered my mind. I see you still remember some of us. Thank you. You just tell Angie [Worden] to answer your letter.
- [3] When have you ever sent me a letter without getting an answer? I have promptly answered every one that come from you. I should have written long ago, but I was waiting to get one from you. I think I wrote last.
- [4] Addie [Adam Dennis] speaks of you in almost all of his letters. I told him you was going to write to him. He says he has never got any yet. I wish, Mary, you would write to him. It would please him so well.
- [5] I got a letter from him last Friday. He was well. He talks of coming home on a furlough in a few weeks. I wish you could be here when he comes. I expect there will be some shindy cut [a festive time, as in a shindig].
- [6] Well, Miriam, I really am ashamed of myself for not sending you and Cousin Sarah [Bonney] my pretty picture. When I had a chance, the money was lacking. When I had money, there was no one to take it. There is no chance to get it done nearer than Leon. The ambrotypist in our town had the misfortune to lose his hand some time ago. I will go to Leon [Iowa] just as quick as I can and have it taken for you and Cousin Sarah.
- [7] I have got to send it to my brothers in Salt Lake. I have got Mosiah [Boothe]'s and his wife's pictures. They are pretty good looking. Hyrum [Boothe] is going to send me his and his wife's picture.

- [8] Well Miriam, times are as dull as ever here. It seems very lonesome to me since Annett [Dennis] has been gone. She has been living out to Pleasant Plains for some time. She did talk of staying out there and going to school this winter, but I guess I shall have her come home. She and George Cowin [Keown] came out last Friday and went back this morning.
- [9] Deborah [Morey] has another girl [Eliza]. Mosiah and his wife send their respects to you and want you to write to them and Cousin Joseph [Bonney] [to write], too.
- [10] You say you are going to send me a dollar for those rings. Well, I guess you won't. I know what you think; you think if you don't send money to have my picture taken, you won't get it. I guess I can raise enough to get it taken. Don't you send any here if you don't want a good scolding, for you will be sure to get it if you do.
- [11] Tell Cousin Sarah and Cousin Joseph I deeply sympathize with them in the loss of their little daughter [Effie Josephine]. Tell them not to grieve after her, for she is a great deal better off than the rest of us. Tell them I had been looking for a letter from them this long time. Ask them if they won't be kind enough to write to me once more. Tell them I am coming down to see them some of these days if nothing happens. I look at their pictures every little while and wish I could, the originals.
- [12] Give my respects to Perry [Works]. Tell him I think he might come and bring you up to see us.
- [13] Well, Cous, it is getting late. They have all gone to bed but Ammy, and he is writing to you. So you see you have got two cousins that think of you yet. I am going to write to Adam after I get yours done. Shall I tell him you're going to write?
- [14] Well Mollie, I guess Aunt [Angeline Robinson]'s folks don't get along quite as well as they did when you was there. They have rather lonesome times. Uncle [Ebenezer] is gone

a most of the time. Annett [Dennis] stayed with her a week or two this fall, but they didn't agree very well. Their tempers were too near alike.

- [15] Miriam, I expect you will have to draw on your specs to read this, it is so poorly done. But I am in a great hurry and another thing: My pen is no account.
- [16] Well Mollie, Ammy has been acting the 'possum with me. I thought he said you was going to send the money some other time. He has just handed out the dollar. I have a great mind to send it back. If I had hold of you, I would give you a gentle shaking. Never you mind. I'll remember you—see if I don't. I haven't forgot the trick you tried to play on me when you started away. How does your rings do anyway? Have you got them fixed as good as ever?
- [17] You said you was obliged to Annett for her punctuality in answering your letters. Hasn't she answered them yet? If she hasn't, she ought to be ashamed of herself, and you may scold her as much as you please. I know she is too negligent about writing.
- [18] Frankie [Francis Dennis] says he wished he could write. He would write you a long one. The children all talk about you. They all want to see you. Caroline and Susan [Dennis] says tell Cousin Miriam they have got their little baskets good as ever. They are going to keep them always to remember their Cousin Miriam by. Frankie thinks if you was here, he could beat you climbing the stairs. He often laughs about it.
- [19] Well, I will stop. Ammy has beat me. He has got his done first. Don't laugh at my writing. I can do a little better sometimes when I try hard. Please answer this.

From Your Affectionate Cousin,  
Angie L. Dennis  
Thursday the 11th

Cousin Joseph,

- [20] I have just sit down to write a few lines for Amulek. He intended to write himself, but he didn't have time. He started to mill this morning.
- [21] He said he thanked you for your kind invitation. He would like very much to come down to see you all this winter, but circumstances are so that he can't well leave this winter. He would like to spend Christmas with you and help eat that turkey Miriam spoke of.
- [22] Give my respects to Cousin Sarah. Tell her I often think of her, and keep a good share for yourself.

I shall remain your well-wishing  
Cousin 'til death,  
"Amulek Boothe" to  
Joseph Bonney

- [23] Miriam, when you write to Addie, direct to (Look on the other corner of the sheet.)

Merrill's Horse Co. B  
Helena, Arkansas, Mo.

That is all.

## Letter #25

Eaglesville, Mo. Dec. 9, 1863

Most Dear and Affectionate Cousin,

- [1] I have sit down to pen a few lines to you to let you know that we are well. I received your letter this evening which was dated Nov. 29th and was glad enough to hear from you, although it was a long time coming. I begun to think that you had given up writing to your best friend, although you may not think so.

- [2] Miriam, it makes me feel bad to hear you write as though you had no friends up here, for I feel as a friend toward, and I trust I always shall, you.
- [3] You must not get crusty because I wrote as I did, for it was all in a joke. I heard that there was a young man waiting on you, and they called him Shakespear. I was told by someone at Pleasant Plains, and that the reason how I heard, and if I wrote anything that did not please you, I want you to forget it and consider that it was me wrote it.
- [4] I think that Deborah [Morey] is neglectful, or she would have written to you before this. For my part, I am going to write to you as long as I can tell where to direct my letters, whether you answer them or not. When you get so you won't write, I shall think that I have one friend less.
- [5] I have not had any letters from any of our cousins for a long time. They have quit writing. George Keown came out here last Friday. He left for home this morning. Mr. [George] Morey and his wife [Sylvia] came out to see us, and his Jim horse died here. Helen [Morey] was out here this fall and stayed a week.
- [6] I will go to Iowa this winter, in time—where I was last winter a year ago. I don't know how long I will stay. I would like to be down there a while to see you and Joseph and Sarah [Bonney], but I don't know when I shall get to come.
- [7] I have sold forty acres of land this fall, the forty that I told you you might have if you and Perry [Works] would come and live on it. If you will come up here and live, you may have the rest. I will give it just as free as drink if you will live on it, for I want to leave here anyhow.
- [8] Mary, I will send you the money to pay for that likeness, and if you get it safe, I will send you some more next time. Whenever you want any money, if you will write to me and I have got a cent, you'll get it. So no more this time.



From your Cousin,  
 A. Boothe  
 Mariam, write as often as you can.  
 Give my love to all.

## Letter #26

Finally, after writing to everyone else, Mollie writes to the friend she may have been closest to, Eunice Miriam Morey, and the last letter of 1863 is Eunice's reply. Eunice was the youngest of the Morey daughters and Mollie's age. The freedom with which the young women communicated explains the unabashed surliness that begins Eunice's letter, including her apparent pun on the name Pleasant Plains.

Pleasant Pains [sic]    December 27 [probably 1863]

Dard [Hard? Darn?] Friend,

- [1] I sit down this Sabbath morning to pen a few lines to see if you will do as well as I have a-done. The reason I did not write to you sooner was because you wrote to all the rest of the folks before you wrote to me. I thought that you was doing well enough hearing from the rest of your friends. You wrote in Helen [Morey]'s letter that your feelings was very hurt. I am sorry to hear it, but I think that I have got feelings as well as you. You wrote to Deborah [Morey] and did not scribble [?] a line to me. I thought that it come pretty close to home. I will not say anything more about it.
- [2] Well, Miriam, please excuse me for commencing my letter the way I did. I know that I had not ought to have a-done so.
- [3] I was down to Mr. [Adam] Dennis' last week. I went down with David [Morey] when he took Annett [Dennis] home. We made a short stay with them. We stayed all night.

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- [4] I am a-going to school this winter in the old schoolhouse [Moffet Schoolhouse]. The name of the teacher's name is Wise, but he lacks of being wise. I don't like him as well as I did Doc Clark.
- [5] Doc is in the army. He is pretty sick. The folks say that Samanth Sinder [?] has gone down to see him. I don't know it to be so. All the folks is well.
- [6] Well, I will close by asking you to write me, if you think I am worthy of an answer, and I will write to you. So good-bye, Miriam, until the next time.
- [7] I will send you my likeness in this letter. Please to send me yours. This is the second time I have asked you.
- [8] Please excuse bad writing and spelling and oblige a friend.

From your cousin until death,  
Eunice Miriam Morey

#### NOTES

1. Jack Franklin Leach, *Conscription in the United States: Historical Background* (Yokohama, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle, 1952) p. 155.
2. *History of Harrison County, Missouri*, (St. Louis: George W. Wanamaker, 1888) p. 369.
3. Paul E. Steiner, *Disease in the Civil War* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1968), p. 12.
4. Long, *Civil War*, p. 436.
5. Long, *Civil War*, p. 303.
6. *Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844, p. 2; and Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Feb., 1891.

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7. Hiram L. Andrus and Richard E. Bennett, *Mormon Mss to 1846: A Guide to Holdings of Harold B. Lee Library* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), p. 36.

8. Early Reorganization Minutes (unpublished records) (Independence, Missouri: 1863), p. 36.

9. William W. Blair, *Memoirs*, Frederick B. Blair, ed., (Lamoni, Ia.: Herald Publishing House, 1908), p. 43-44.

10. Church policy was that those who had been baptized by high officials of apostate sects had to be re-baptized. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, September 1862.

11. Early Reorganization Minutes (unpublished records) (Independence, Missouri: 1860), p. 64.

12. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, 1 January 1860; and November 1860.

13. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, 15 July 1863.

14. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, 15 November 1863.

15. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, June 1863.

16. *True Latter Day Saints Herald*, 15 February 1864.

17. Brigham Young, Letter of 5 June 1862 as quoted in *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City, Ut.: Deseret Book Company, 1974), p. 23.

18. *History of the 152nd N.Y. Volunteers*, Henry Robach, ed., (Utica, N.Y.: L.C. Childs & Son, 1882), p. 21.

19. Leach, *Conscription*, p. 257-260.

20. *History of Northwest Missouri* (St. Louis: Whitson Printing Co.), p. 520.

21. Leach, *Conscription*, pp. 282 & 287.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

23. *History of Decatur County*, Vol. 2., p. 171.

24. Long, *Civil War*, p. 399.

25. *Ibid.* p. 416.



**Helen Merah (Morey) Rockwell (1839-1888).** Both Helen and her sister Eunice Morey were faithful letter writers to Mollie. Helen's courtship and marriage to Mollie's widowed cousin, George Rockwell, in 1864 is the subject of many letters. The marriage meant George's daughter, Adrianna, would live with her father instead of with George's sister, Deborah (Rockwell) Morey, whose housekeeping he was critical of. After marrying George, Helen advised Mollie not to marry. [Photograph courtesy of Nancy Gerlock]

Dear Friend Marian  
 it is with the permission of Eunice  
 has give me permission to write a few lines  
 in her letter to my I expect she has told  
 all the news I got a letter from Henrietta she  
 said they was all well she say I told  
 Marian & Dun has joining the army  
 I was sorry to hear that they had got to war  
 they was to young to under go so many hard  
 ships as they will have to go throo these few  
 lines leave me well and I hope these few  
 lines will find you in good health the same

Part of Letter #36, started by Eunice Morey, and added to by her sister, Helen in 1864.