

## Eliza R. Snow

### Letter From Missouri\*

Caldwell Co. Feb. 22, 1839

Esqr. Streator

You have so long been *reliev'd* from my preaching, as you sometimes call'd it; I think you may well afford to *endure* a little interruption. You need not anticipate another intrusion very soon, for as yet we have no continuing city or sure abiding place, and one week more will probably find us on our journey from this State. We wish to give you some *few* items of the movements here before we leave, for we find from the reports, which go, and come, thro' the Newspaper medium that you get nothing correct; and as you are a Politician & fond of politics perhaps you will take some pleasure in contrasting those of Missouri with your own. Father is so busy, preparing for our next move, that he has not a moment to spend in writing; *this*, is my apology for addressing you. Probably, before you receive this, you will have seen a letter which father wrote judge Atwater two or three weeks since in which he gave some few of the particulars, respecting what has transpir'd since our arrival; but it would require a volume to give a full account. Things have mov'd with such rapidity, and of such a nature as might well allay doubts, if doubts are yet remaining in the mind of any, that these are indeed the *last* days, and that the inhabitants of the earth are *some* of them at least, beginning to be in haste to fill up their measure, before the Lord shall come forth from his hiding place. The nations of the world can never fill the cup of their iniquity without shedding innocent blood, and the blood of the "Latter Day Saints" *will*, that of many of them be required of the present generation. The Lord has commenc'd a

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work that is destin'd to try the *sincerity* and the *strength*, yes, and the *legality* too, of every Creed and Profession, both political & religious, upon the face of the whole earth. The religionists of the day who have been crying "do as you would be done by," will have ample opportunity to see if they will put their own excellent precept in practice; and those who sit in the halls of justice, as the dispensers of rights between man and man, will be put to the *test*, whether they judge *righteously*, for righteousness' sake. It is *comparatively* an easy matter to act uprightly, when public opinion and the weight of influence favor the *act*; but it requires some *courage* when a man is obliged to bid defiance to popular feeling, in order to do right—when a man must place his life in jeopardy in order to decide with impartiality between man & his fellow man. *This*, has been fully proven in the State of Missouri. There are those, who, actuated by the spirit of republicanism and without any partiality to the religious views of our society; have risked their reputation, and endanger'd their lives by pleading the cause of the innocent, while Judges & Lawyers have dispersed with the high dignity of their profession, and while Preachers and Deacons have laid aside the Sacred insignia of their office, to wield the sword against a people whose only *crime* was in believing in "the times of the restitution" (not destruction) "of all things," and proving their faith by their works. In persecuting us, & driving us from city to city, & from State to State, no doubt, like Saul of Tarsus, they think they are doing God service. And so they are, for as a Pharoah was necessary to the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan, so are the persecutors of the Saints of the *last* days, necessary, in bringing about the great purposes of God. They mean it for *evil* but the Lord means it for *good*. "*Offences must needs come*" We have a copy of Gen. Clark's concluding Speech, which was delivered to our brethren at Far-West a few days after the surrender, which will give some idea of the spirit of the times. Our brethren have not taken up arms except in self-defence. Expecting you have seen father's letter refer'd to above, I shall not say anything about what transpir'd previous to the last of Oct. when an army of 95 hundred encamp'd about Far-West threatened an immediate massacre. Soon as our people ascertain'd that they were authoriz'd Militia they surrender'd, the leaders of the church delivered themselves up, and went to the camp of the Militia, with the promise, that they should return to their fami-

lies in the morning. Gen. Lucas, was first in command;—the prisoners 7 in number instead of returning home the next day were tried by a Court Martial & 13 generals out of 17, condemned them to be shot a company was chosen to execute the sentence—the hour was appointed & the place chosen which was the center of the City, in sight of their families. Those who were chosen refus'd to perform, & a second company chosen, when Gen. Donithan told them, they were acting illegally and if they proceeded he would expose them. They then concluded to take them to Jackson County thinking the mob spirit *there*, would furnish executioners without ceremony, but they were mistaken. Our people found warm friends in that Co. who even invited Joseph Smith & S. Rigdon to bring their families & settle there. They were then taken back to Richmond & put in chains where they were kept four weeks when prejudice was so strong it was thought wisdom to remove them to Liberty where they were considered more safe. They were tried about the last of Jan. The excitement was *great*, about 250 mob, collected & seeing that nothing could be brought against the prisoners, threatened to shoot both Judge & Jury if the verdict was given, and the prisoners were hurried back to prison. One of our neighbors was there on the day of trial, who said he should judge that no less than 1000 people gathered in, and when he was returning home, met 300 arm'd men, who swore that if the prisoners were releas'd, they would kill every "Mormon" in the State. But to return to the *surrender* at F. West. After the 7 were taken, the City was kept with a strong guard, the men call'd together to lay down their arms and were compell'd at the point of the sword to Deed away all their property both real & personal estate to a committee chosen for this purpose, all of which was done so cheerfully that the Militia were quite angry. Three or four days after *this*, General Clark came with several hundred, who ratified the treaty made by Gen. Lucas, I will send a copy of his address that you may have it in his own words, the "list of names" refer'd to in the speech are those of between 60 and 70, who were driven to prison soon after, like sheep to a market, most of whom were releas'd after a confinement of a month, the rest are in prison *now*, unless they have been *privately* set at liberty, for the Mob law is the law of this State and but *few* dare act, except in accordance with it. A copy of the General's Speech:



"Gentlemen,

You whose names are not attach'd to this List of names, you will now have the privilege of going to your fields to obtain corn for your families, wood &c. Those that are now taken, will go from this, to prison to be tried & receive the due demerit of their crimes. But you are now at liberty all but such as charges may be brought against. It now devolves upon you to fulfil the treaty that you have entered into, the leading items of which I will now lay before you. The *first* of these, you have already complied with, which is, that you deliver up your leading men, to be tried according to law. The *second* is, that you deliver up your arms: *this*, has been attended to: The *third* is, that you sign over your property to defray the expences of the war; *this* you have done. Another thing yet remains for you to comply with, that is, that you leave the State forth-with, and whatever your feelings concerning this, or whatever your *innocence*, is nothing to me. General Lucas, who is equal in authority with me, has made this, treaty with you—I am determined to see it executed. The order of the Governor to *me*, was, that you should be exterminated and not allow'd to continue in the State—and had your leaders not been given up—the treaty complied with; before *this*, you, and your families would have been destroy'd—your houses in ashes. There is a discretionary power vested in my hands, I shall try to exercise for a season. I do not say that you shall go *now*, but you must not think of staying here another season and putting in another crop, for the moment you *do*, the citizens will be upon you. I am determined to see the Governor's message fulfil'd. Do not *think*, that I shall act as I have done any more: but if I have to come again, because the treaty which you have made, shall be broken, you need not expect any mercy but extermination, for I am determin'd that the Governor's orders shall be executed. As for your *leaders*, do not once *think*—do not imagine for a moment—do not let it enter into your minds, that they will be delivered, or that you will see their faces again; for their fate is fix'd—their dye is cast—their doom is seal'd. I am sorry, Gentlemen, to see so great a number of apparently intelligent men, found in the situation that you are, and Oh! that I could invoke the spirit of the unknown God to rest upon and deliver you from that awful chain of superstition; and liberate you from those fetters of fanaticism with which you are bound. I would advise you to settle abroad, and never again organize with Bishops, Presidents &c, lest you excite the jealousies of the people and subject yourselves to the same calamities that have now come upon you.—You have always been the aggressors—You have brought upon yourselves these difficulties by being disaffected and not being subject to rule: and my advice is, that you become as other

citizens, lest by a reoccurrence of these events you bring upon yourselves irretrievable ruin." — — — — —

The General's assertion that our people had been the "aggressors" is too false to pass without some comment; for we have been driven from Jackson, Clay, De-Witt and Daviess; yet, as a people have always been in "*subjection to the powers that be*"; not that there has been no *wrong* done by those that are call'd "Mormons" for we profess the "*ancient order*," of course our greatest perils are those we have to encounter among *false brethren*; for we have those among us who have not only tasted the "good word of God" but also the "powers of the world to come," who, concerning the faith have become *reprobates*. These constitute the most powerful *earthly* ally, which Satan has to boast. But be assured, *these* are *not* the followers of Joseph Smith, for so long as they conform'd to *his* teaching, they were righteous men. I now anticipate your question, Do you yet believe Joseph Smith is a prophet? I have not seen or heard anything which caus'd me to doubt it even for a moment: If *possible*, I have *better* testimony that J. Smith is a prophet, than that Jeremiah was one, altho' he has not been kept in prison quite so long. S. Rigdon is liberated, I do not know whether he was let down the wall in a basket, but his keepers thrust him out privately for fear of the people, and then circulated the report that he was bail'd out in two thousand dollar bonds, but this, is only to appease the wrath of the multitude. He has gone clear, and the others are only kept for our safety, for it is suppos'd, the Mob will either revenge on us, or on those who hold them in confinement, if they are liberated before most of us get out of the State. The Gov. of Illinois says our people may come there—they have been going all winter, and move very fast—A man just arrived from Ill. who said he counted 220 wagons between this and the Mississippi. It has been judg'd there were eight thousand of our people in this County but the season has been a *stormless* one—the most favorable for moving that we could wish, and the word *impossible*, has become *obsolete* with us, therefore I think we shall get out, in pretty prompt compliance with the orders of government. Those who will deny the faith have the privilege of staying. *Some*, will accept the terms.

Lorenzo left us in the forepart of Oct. we received a letter from him which he commenc'd in Ill.; it was mail'd in Kentucky where I suppose he is now,—had but partially recover'd



from an attack of the fever & ague when he started. I will transcribe as much of his letter as my paper will admit, which is as follows,

"Dear Father,

It being six weeks today since I left home I feel an anxiety to address you upon the subject of my welfare & prosperity. Since I left Far West, my health has, thro' the great mercy of God, continually been improving, and now am enjoying excellent health. The morning on which I left Far West appear'd big with evil forebodings. Dismal [?] were the prospects before me—terrible reports from DeWitt were in circulation and a severe relapse, rendered me, to all human appearances, unfit to perform one half mile journey. I put my trust in the arm of Jehovah & set forth. I gradually received strength until my disease was entirely removed. The next day we met a company of arm'd men who viewed us very narrowly as we pass'd, which caus'd us to suspect they were a Mob we manag'd to get by them unmolested. Some of them however call'd very lustily after us, to know where we were from. At Richmond landing, we found two brethren, who were desirous of getting on board a steam Boat for St. Louis. In consequence of the lowness of the water, the prospects being small of any Boat arriving soon, we concluded to unite together & build a skiff & row ourselves down the Missouri waters. We built our skiff and embark'd—the next day we rowed nearly 50 miles. It was very unpleasant travelling in consequence of the leakiness of our boat and the coldness of the weather. The next day we travelled about the same distance and at evening sold our skiff. The next morning we all started on foot for Boonville; the same night stay'd with a man who was one of the Mob at DeWitt. Just before we arrived at Boonville we parted with our brethren—the same evening we reach'd the village of Palestine, where we proclaimed our name, and business: A congregation was immediately obtained, & I delivered them a discourse upon the principles of salvation. Among my auditors, was one of the Governor's guards who had about one week before, accompanied the Gov. with three thousand volunteers, to Boonville, with the intention of going against the Mormons. He gave me a very polite invitation to preach at Boonville.—We traveled a South Western direction, calling on all men every where to repent. The country we found generally thinly settled, consequently, we preach'd from house to house, When we got into settlements, where we could hold meetings, we did so. On the Osage River I found our people from Mantua, Mr. Dresser Mr. Bliss, and the Mr. Jones.—We found *here*, a most cordial reception: we stay'd two or

three days and held one meeting. From this, we directed our course to Washington Co. holding meetings whenever occasion offered, & warn'd the people in their houses, in their synagogues, in their lanes, and in their streets the Lord who sent us, giving us power, & bringing all spirits under our subjection. In this manner, I have strong faith that we have succeeded, thro' the grace of God, in planting the seeds of life in the hearts of many which will eventually, shoot forth into Everlasting Life. I parted with brother B. at Belview, Washington Co.—I held fifteen public meetings in the State of Missouri, and if ever man received assistance from God, I also receiv'd of his assistance in performing a mission thro' that State. When I now look back upon the scenes thro' which I pass'd, in traveling in that State; I am astonish'd and caus'd to marvel. It certainly appears more like a dream, than a reality. Upon the swift waters of Missouri, I have traveled in the dark night, amid terrible [snags and daring savages?], in an open pine camp, death staring me in the face. I have slept in the open wood, upon the bare ground all night, waiting the rising sun. I have slept in the house of him, who was seeking the lives of my people. I have declar'd the gospel among those, who would, they could cover a multitude of sins, to kill a Mormon. I have been to those places, where, if I should go, it was declar'd in demoniacal rage, I should be tied to the whipping post. Man has sought for his fellow man for strength, to take me to drag me from my congregation. I have taken breakfast at that man's house whose eyes were red with hellish rage for my destruction. I have been, as a spy, taken & search'd by a Magistrate-Judge and six or eight assistants, call'd from my bed in the silent night—my license demanded—my valise search'd from top to bottom—from end to end. After *all*, the Lord has brought me off uninjur'd—without the loss of an hair of my head.—I am now in Illinois, in about 13 miles of the Ohio River, about 60 from its mouth. I travelled 585 miles in Missouri, & held 15 meetings. In Ill. I have travelled 75 miles and held eleven meetings. In this settlement I have baptiz'd five adult persons. The Lord has been pleased to give me here a father and mother, one brother & two sisters. I baptiz'd a Mr. Cotton of the Baptist order, & upwards of sixty years of age. In order to perform the ordinance of baptism we were oblig'd to open the ice, yet, notwithstanding the extreme coldness of the water, the women came forth from the water, clapping their hands, and shouting praises to God."

I have not room to transcribe all of his letter. I wrote him, & directed to Washington Co. Kentucky, have receiv'd no reply as yet. Letter-conveyance is very uncertain here for which rea-



son I intend mailing *this*, in Illinois. Please, let cousin Pease & wife see this, I purpose writing to Uncle Granger's family after we get located, for now I could not tell them where to write us—

Confiding in the Lord's protecting care, We go, as Abra'm did, "*not knowing where.*" I have not written *half*, that I want to say to you, but my paper is full, and it would be superfluous to tell you I have written in too much haste to keep my pen in order—we have so much to do, to prepare for the journey.

Respectfully,

Elisa R. Snow

To Esqr. Streator, Mrs. Streator, Charity and all the rest.

I find upon folding my letter a little more room—The Missourians had commenc'd mobbing in Daviess Co. previous to our arrival; but were very friendly at *that* time & were very anxious to sell to us: Our people purchas'd their farms—they remov'd their families away, and rais'd a mob—painted their faces like Indians, & came directly back to drive us from the lands, we had purchas'd of them, calculating to chase us away & *repossess* the country. *This*, we *suppose*; because when we *did* leave, by order of the Militia, we were hardly out of our houses before the former, owners occupied them. When the Militia came, the mob volunteerd & join'd them. You will understand from *this*, the character of the Militia. I will transcribe a [pass?], which every man was requir'd to carry for his own protection, and that of his property. "I permit Oliver Snow & sons to remove from Daviess to Caldwell County, there to remain during the winter or to pass out of the State."

Nov. 9th 1838

(Signed R. Wilson, Brig. Gen.)

It astonishes our enemies that our people *suffer* no more while passing thro' these scenes of *suffering*. They say, the Mormons have always rejoic'd in tribulation, but they will do something now that they will not rejoice in. I fear them not, but know not what *new*, tortures they *may* invent. They have not burnt any of us at the stake *yet*,—they have imprison'd, whip'd, ston'd and shot some but *death* does not terrify us enough to suit them, for they say that the Mormons are so d—d sure of going to heaven, they had as lief die as not. The Lord maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Let *his* name be magnified.

E. R. S.