

LETTER FROM ELIZABETH DOBNEY SHORT BROWN

To Her Children & Grandchildren

March 17, 1892

Moved with my Parents in 1850 to the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. I was in Port Elizabeth, Cape of Good Hope, when I first heard the Gospel of the Latter-Day Saints. I was baptized on November 18, 1855, by Elder Leonard I. Smith. Left Africa on April 1, 1863, with my mother, brothers, William, Charles, Samuel, and sister Mary Ann, to come to Utah. We were eight weeks on the ocean from the time we left Port Elizabeth until we landed in New York.

Continued our journey by railway and steamboats to Florence, Nebraska, the outfitting place to prepare for the plains. After staying a few weeks preparing, fitting up teams, provisions, etc., in connection with a few families from the same place as ourselves, traveled in company of a freight train that had come from Utah and was about to return across the plains. It took us six months in all to finish our journey. Arrived in Salt Lake City, September 4, 1863. My father did not come until the year 1864.

The first Christmas spent in Utah was in Farmington, Davis County, Utah with friends which crossed the plains with me. It was at this place that I first saw Philander Brown, your father and grandfather. I was married to him on February 6, 1864, by President Wilford Woodruff in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City. I also received my endowments at the same time. Zina Elizabeth was born June 17, 1865, in Farmington, and Emily Orilla was born in Farmington on December 8, 1866.

I was appointed treasurer when the first Relief Society was organized in Farmington, in 1867. In October Conference 1868, your father's name was read, and he was called to go on what was called the "Muddy Mission". In November of that year, he took part of his family. I was not able to go, so I remained another year. On December 21, 1868, Philander Franklin, my first son, your oldest brother, was born. Your father returned to Farmington, May 18, 1869, to take the rest of us south.

We sold our home and was preparing to go when our only son born to us during those trying times when our family was separated hundreds of miles apart, was taken from

us by the hand of death on August 30, 1869. So, we had to leave our little darling behind. We left Farmington to fill our Mission on September 3, 1869, and arrived in St. Joseph, Piute County late in September 1869. (This is now what is known as Boulder Lake and Dam). It was a new place, so houses had to be built. When our house was finished, I sewed my carpet together and helped to put it on the floor. The next morning, March 13, 1879, your brother Charles Hyrum was born.

President Brigham Young and his Company made a visit just eight days after Charles was born. They camped with their traveling carriages around our house, the settlement being new. President Young and his wife, Emelia, slept in our house. I was still in bed and had not yet got over the death of our little Franklin or the birth of our new baby son. I requested that while so many of our Leaders were with us, that my baby be named and blessed by them. This was done, President Brigham Young being mouth.

How I enjoyed their visit. I often think of the great blessings pronounced upon my new baby and the good instructions they gave me when they would come to my bedside and talk to me. I also received blessings pronounced upon me.

In January 1871, it was found out that the country we were in belonged to Nevada and we were counseled by our leaders to vacate the place, which we did. Although we had built houses and our farming land looked promising for the coming year's crops, we left all standing and our brethren had to travel over bad roads to haul our breadstuff or we would not have anything to live on, it being winter.

We were also expecting the Nevada officials to come and take our teams and wagons for back taxes, which we had paid in Utah. After staying a few weeks in St. George, we removed to Kanab, Kane County, which was then being settled. This was in March 1871. We all lived in a fort, the people not yet building outside on account of Indians.

Levi Stewart was Bishop and in May some lumber houses were built outside the fort. We had one; it was here that Mary Emeline was born, June 26, 1871. Your father built a good log house and fenced two lots. Our land was all cultivated. Wheat almost ready to cut and other crops looking promising, but, on June 4, 1872, a cloud burst hit on the side of the mountain, and in a few hours our home was surrounded by a flood which went through the part of the town we lived in. Our vegetation was covered with 2 feet of sand and rocks. Other families sharing the same fate.

Our mission being filled when the Muddy was vacated, and your father having worked so hard in trying to build these new settlements with nobody's help but his own family

being only young children. After the flood he concluded to move north again.

We started from Kanab on June 24, 1872. Your father accepted a position on the Narrow Gauge Railroad running up American Fork Canyon. We bought a home in American Fork and moved there August 1872.

Harvey Alfred was born September 24, 1872, when the railroad was being built to Provo. Father had charge of laying the track. When it reached the Provo River, we removed on the construction train, camped overnight with our children and household goods on the riverbank, received no hurt from camping out. This was November 1873. We rented a house in Provo 1st Ward. (Southeast corner of 3rd West and 3rd South). On January 24, 1874, William John was born. In April 1874 we bought the place we still own in Provo (Southwest corner of 5th South and 5th West) which is in the 2nd Ward. (This is now a part of the 6th Ward).

May 19, 1875, Ellen Adell was born, February 6, 1877, B. Jared was born. December 26, 1878, Phoebe Diantha was born. On November 27, 1879, our darling B. Jared was taken from us by the hand of death. February 23, 1880, George Albert was born, which made five of my dear children born in the same settlement. I very much appreciated this blessing having moved our home so often but not for our own pleasure.

It is now 18 years, which is the longest time I have been permitted to remain in one place since I was born. May 19, 1883, I was set apart a Sunday School teacher of Provo 2nd Ward by Abraham Halladay. June 18, 1883, I was set apart as teacher in the Relief Society of the 2nd Ward by Evan Wride. March 6, 1884, I was set apart as Assistant Secretary of the 2nd Ward Relief Society, by Bishop J. W. Loveless. February 3, 1887, I was set apart as secretary of Provo 2nd Ward Relief Society by Jorgen Hansen, which position I still hold.

November 24, 1887, your father was arrested by Marshall McClellan for living with his plural wife. He also served a subpoena on me to appear before Commissioner Hill. We were then placed under bonds to appear at the next term of court.

My darling children, perhaps some of you who may read this will remember that we have not had the privilege of living as father, mother and children in the same house since the surprise that was made on my 46th birthday.

I do not know that we shall be permitted to enjoy that blessing again in this life. But our Father in Heaven is at the helm and He doeth all things well. On September 17, 1888,

subpoenaed by Marshall Redfield to appear before the Grand jury. September 26, 1888, I did so and answered their uncalled-for questions. September 30, 1888, your father appeared before Judge Judd and pleaded guilty, and sentence was suspended on condition of observing the law. How long these things will exist I do not know.

This being the 50th year since the organization of the Relief Society and having the opportunity of placing a few lines in the box that has been prepared for this purpose to be sealed up to come forth 50 years from this present time.

I have written a small account of my sojourn since I have been here to one and all of my children who may be living when it is opened. Perhaps some of you will remember some of the incidents that I have mentioned, but it will do no hurt to be reminded of them after so many years have passed.

This is also the 50th year of my birth. I have lived to see seven times seven Jubilee.

Dear children, we shall have passed through many changes by the time you read this, but that we may have all stood firm and faithful and be prepared when Christ shall come to meet as a family and reign with Him a thousand years upon this earth, with all the righteous saints, is the earnest prayer I have for you.

Mother & Grandmother
Elizabeth Dobney Short Brown
Provo City, UT. (Territory at this time)

P.S. The Relief Society have prepared a box and all who wished to enclose a short sketch to any of their family have the privilege of doing so, to be opened 50 years from the present time. I have embraced the opportunity of doing so. Elizabeth Dobney Short Brown. My picture is among the officers of the Relief Society also enclosed with this sketch of my life. My girls Emily and Mary are with the officers of the Young Ladies.