

Letter from John Pack to his wives in Winter Quarters 1 & 8 June 1847

(Two dated entries in same letter)

“Julia Pack Mormon Camp in care of Mr Sarpea Council Bluffs

“June 1 - 40 miles from Fort Larime towards home

“Kind and affectionate companions Julia Ruth and Nancy and all of my family. I now take my pen as cheerful as I ever did in my life to rite a few lines to you. I have rote one letter to you since I left the horn and sent it with a bondle of letters from this camp by a frenchman. it will go to St Joseph and then to Sarpee and he will send it to winter quarters. It will be some time before you will get it. I have had very good health since I left home and a good apetite and plenty to eat.

We have had all the fresh meet we wanted. I rote you a little of my hunting story in the other letter but lest you do not get it and you no I like to brag a little I tell you some of it in this. Thear was considerable anxiety in the camp who should kill the first buffalo. We had none ever kiled any except Bros Woolsy and Tippetts that come from the army. I said very little for feer I mite not kill one at all. One after noon about 3 ock we came in site of about 300 buffalo in one hurd. 11 of us which previously had bin chosen for hunters, prepared for a chase on horseback (I was chosen as a hunter before I ever kild any game but Brigham thout I could do anything). We started off on a slow walk the buffalo being 3 miles off. Their was much braging by the way. I told them I did not expect to kill any. I was going along behind to skin with my big jack knife however many we got up. Within 1/4 mile I cut acrost and came in ahead of all the hunters and long sid of the buffalo. I fired away and kill one head on the spot. My sturrip broke and while I was mending it the hunters rode by on the full chase. I left the one I had killed and followd after. I soon came up with 3 large buffalo that Bro Kimball and Higby was after . Porter had shot at one of them once but did not touch them then rode on and left them. I spirrd up my horse and came along side and fired away and shot the largest one the sholder he still run very fast. I left Bros K and H in the rear. I then droad my pistle and shot him in the heart. Then he fell dead on the spot. This one is aloud to be much the largest of any that was kiled. Their was 4 old ones and 5 calves kiled in all. I killed 2 alone and helped Bros Kimball and J. Redding kill one. They all had to give up but well you must no that I felt first rate.

This is barron dessolate country. Their is but little or no wood. we have cooked our vituels with buffalo chips for weeks. The water is good. The are [air] pure. The climate healthy. All well in our camp. Our teams are reduced for the want of grass. We cannot travel only about 75 miles a week. We hope that fort larrame is about half way. I do not expect to get back till late in the fall. This is quite a lonsom journey to me. in fact I am never happy when absent from my family and kindred. the enjoyments of life are but vanity and if it were not for the sake of my kindred and the kingdom of god I never would leave home again but I would spend my remaining days in the sweet society of my family. But I no if I am faithful in this life I shall be saved in the Celestial kingdom of our god. I went out today over the hill with the 12 and a few others and we clothed ourselves in our priestly aparel and coled upon the lord for our fammiles. This we expect to do often. My prayre is continuly for you all that you may be blest with health and your lives preserved that I may see you all when I return in the fall. I have no instruction to

rite concerning the cattle or other things. I believe you will do with them the best you can. Try and preserve your healths and be prudent in all things. Cultivate love and union. Do not forget to pray for yourselves and me and keep the Spirit of the Lord. Johnes little dog is here. I think of him every time I see him. Tell him he may stand in my cubby when I get back. George Lucy and Ward be good children and mind your mother and do not be saucy to the giver [?] And the Lord will bless you and I soon will come back.

“June 8 - 60 miles from fort Larime toward the mountain. Dear Julia and all I am well thank the Lord but have a little pain in my brest but I feel strong in the Lord and firmly believe that I shall return home safe. You told me before I left home if I was sick I wold not one [own] it but I tell you the truth. If you do not believe it just look at at my writing. Are not my nerves still? I am satisfied that your trew hart niver douted my word wether at [John apparently omitted a word] or abroad, my prayers without ceasing that you all may be blest with health and kept safe that I may meet you well in the fall when I shall return, We are now crossing the Black hills and some of them are covered with snow, we find good grass in the valies for our tems, I cannot describe the feelings of affection I have for you all and their is no one that knows how to prise the sweet society of an affectionate family untill they are deprived of it. I am not sorry that I came on this jorny but I miss my bosom friends, it will probably be late in the fall before I get back. We do not no yet ware we shall settle but think it near Salt Lake, we have peace in the camp and all things goes rite brother Kimball is very good and sociable tells me I may have any thing I want but thank the Lord I have got as much as most any of them. Some of the camp are out of bread stuff now scarce any of them will have any to come back on unless they get it from the next camp. I think I shall have enough to last me home. Every man eats his one [own] . Those who have no bread liv on meet. Do not fail to pray for me for I can do nothing without the assistance of the Lord. May the Lord bless you that you may liv till I return and move you to a land of peace and the Saints of God be free as the wind that blows from hill to hill and may He pore out his Holy Spirit upon you and comfort your hearts that your soles may be calm as the somers morning after the storm and tempest is passed by. I have but little time to rite. The trader will take this to the masura [Missouri] river which is 400 miles. It will take the steem boat and go down to Sarpee. No more at present but remain your ever trew and affectionate companion through time and all eternity.

“To Julia Pack I have no time to read this there maybe mistakes. John Pack

“Dear Ruth and Nancy be faithful and comforted and forget me not but pray for me which I firmly believe you do. I have not forgot the time when I was sick You don all you cold for me. You never hav none [known?] my love and affection for you. May the Lord bless you and spare your lives that I may enjoy your society long on earth and threw all eternity. John Pack”

Undated letter (possibly May or June 1847) from Julia Ives Pack to John Pack

Addressed: "John Pack

"John my beloved husband I with pleasure take my pen this morning to write you a few lines we were happy to hear from you that you had reached the camp in safety and that your cough had left you in a degree we are all well and feel first rate considering we have not your society which we would be happy to have was it in our power at present beloved companion the Lord being my helper I will do the best I can with those things left in my care and ask your prayers that I may have wisdom in every time of need everything has gone on right so far and I believe they will and that you will come home and find us enjoying the blessings of the Lord and that you will have joy and gladness in the Lord your God we will meet and rejoice upon the earth in the goodness of the Lord our God and spend many years yet in doing the work the Lord has for us to do I have no more to write at present but pray the Lord to help you with his Holy Spirit to comfort you on your mission and that you may have health and strength to carry you through every hardship you may have to pass through and bring you home again in peace and safety is my prayer in the name of Jesus my redeemer no more but I remain your affectionate friend and companion through time and all eternity

"Julia Pack

"Nancy and Ruth sent their love to you and say you shall have their prayers and faith. Say they feel first rate and wish you every good blessing

"Mother sends her love to you and all the rest of our family"

Julia was pregnant at the time and would bear a son, Don Carlos, at Winter Quarters on 22 August 1847. This was two months before John returned from the pioneer trek.

Letter from John Pack to his wives at Winter Quarters 4 May 1847.

Adressed: To Julia Pack
Camp of Israel
Winter Quarters

“West of Grand iland [*Grand Island*] May 4

“Dear Julia Ruth and Nancy I hale this moment with the greatest pleasure and take my pen with More anxiety than I ever did before in my life I am well thank the Lord but I never mised [*missed*] the Society of my family more than I do at this time I feel lonsom there is no society so dear and so sweet as my kindred tho in the mids of my friends and brethren I am not happy I have no bosom friend But it is good to be deprived of the Sweet so as to no how to prise it if I were adopted to the Best man their ever was he wold not be like my kindred to me I do not say this becose I have feelings against any one all is rite in the camp all is peace and union If I had you all here I truly shod be happy but I trust I shall see you again in the fall this is my prayre nite and day I have a great anxiety for your welfare, We are organized in a military force and I am Major or Lutenant Colonel over Br Brigham's Division and have nothing else to to do and this is quite easy I do not have to stand gard I only Command the Division if their shold be an attack from the Indians and this we do not expect

“12 of us went out on a buffalo hunt day before yesterday and killed 11 of them I killed the first one that was killed in the camp and the largest one I killed 2 out of the 11 all alone and helped kill 2 more they had to all giv up that I wass the best in the crowd

“I hav no time to rite any more
the frenchmen is wating
fare wel may the lord bless you

John Pack

“Jack is well”

Note that the spelling had been reproduced as he wrote it. The letter contains no periods and few capital letters to delineate sentences. In two instances italicised words have been included by the copier in brackets [---] to assist the reader.

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