

Letter To Forty-Niner From His Wife Is Found

Carrollton Woman Wrote to Her Husband in Idaho—Old Epistle Now In the Hands of Probate Court of Canyon County, Idaho

S. S. Walsh, who was at one time Superintendent of Schools in Carroll county, and principal of the Dobson school in Carrollton, and who now is on the faculty of the College of Idaho at Caldwell, sends us this clipping from the Caldwell News-Tribune:

"He had probably become a typical forty-niner, and the long years of depravity in the little southern Missoni town of Carrollton had apparently made his gold thirst insatiable. Besides, Carrollton was a world away from the yellow dust infested fields of California."

"But she was the Gold-fearing dutiful wife, he had left in Carrollton for the El Dorado. Aware of the temptations in that land far beyond her horizon, which she exhorted him to seek his 'sole' salvation ad to 'look unto the Lord for his blessing.'" Aware also that her husband might never return, she was struggling to keep her baner flying.

"Such is the picture presented in a letter penned on St. Valent's day in 1851, ten years preceding the Civil War, and sent to 'Nathan G. Cooley, Sacramento City, California, By Way of New York,' by his wife in Carrollton, Mo. The epistle, intricately folded into the shape of a small envelope, was posted for its circuitous destination sans envelope or stamps, three days after it was written. The amount required to send it, 40 cents, was marked on the outside. Possessed by the Canyon county probate court, the letter was retrieved by Judge Ben Riordan from the estate of Bill Cooley, a Manpan who died in a state asylum and who was the son of the Nathan Cooleys.

Although permeated with misspelled words and containing no punctuation, the message pictures the other half of the forty-niner story, traditionally described in a succession of saloon fights and gold-grabbing rivalry in the westernmost part of the country. Its human interest appeal, too, is commanding.

To facilitate reading, periods and paragraphs have been inserted in the following reproduction.

"A. D. 1851.

"Carroll County, Mo.

"February the 14th day at night
"My kind and loving husband I have under took to hav a letter roat to let you no your wife & daughter is well & and your Fathers family also. We received a letter from you & and said u was all well. Ann Elliott got a letter from John & he stated Thomas has bin sick ever since he had bin thair and the 2 boys had a lite brush of sunplmng & he didnot

name what & we was sorrow to here sick newse.

"I receiv that gold you sent to me & I was glad to see it. I rather seen you than all the gold that is in California. If you was as tired of California as I am a hearing of it u certainly could not stay thair much longer. I dont think I dont want you to be discouraged; dont give a way to much. I aim to try to be as much composed as possibel. I think I hav past off the time as well as any body els would to place them in my condishon. You no my situation as well as I can tell you tho I will try to baier with patients until a return. If we never meet here on earth again lets try to meet in a better world than this. U no I hav tried to serv th lord & I want u to try to seek your sole salvation. You no u hav a sole to save. You must look unto the lord for his blessing is my prairs now & forever amen.

Sarah Jane is as smart as the next one. I have commenced wening hir. She is not as hard to wean as I did expect she would be. She can talk sum little. I would be glad u could see hir. I must tell you about the death. Mrs. Morris is gon to try a tryune god in a world without an end, also old Uncle William Drake departed this world January the 20th. He was taken one day & dide the next & cousin Eliza Fox departed this world September.

"Polly Ann Hardwick & Thomas Adkison is maire. Tell Thomas and John to make all the can & keep all the make & bring gold a plenty & I will inshare them a wife if tha want one. The girls is waiting for the California boys and thair gold. I dont no which counsh William James has got home. He got home the 28th of January. I went to see him last sunday. I must close this letter by saying u must rite to me as often as u can & let me no how the times is with u all, let them be good or bad. Tell Henry Wintray John & Sarah Ann is well. I seen them a few days ago. Tell John Annas family is all well except Elizabeth. She is still complaining yet. Sarah Jane thinks a heap of her gran Father. She runs to him & when he comes in & sets down will get on one knee and John Thomas on the other one & tha sing hi ho.

"I hav bin at Uncle Nataniel Carys this week with my cousin Polly Ann Gentry. I hav got hir a riting this letter for me & I do expect to go home with hir in the spring if I can. The friends and relation is all well as far as I no. Give my love to all in-

qureling friends. My love to my kind and loving husband I am yours most obedient so good night. Mrs. Polly Cooleys love to Mr. Nathan G. Cooley.

"We hav not hern from Mr. Bunch yet. When u rite let us no sumplmng about hm. if u no anything about him."

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*Gift of
Carol Mc Intire
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