

Letter from Martha McBride to
Rizpah Knight (her husband's mother)

Nauvoo, July 8, 1845

Dear Mother:

I this day sit down for the first time to write a few lines to you to let you know I received your letter the last of June, which I read with pleasure for I have not heard from you since Mr. Spencer was here only by way of a line from him when he was on his way to Illinois, stating that he thought you would come west in the spring and that he would stop in Plainsfield, Illinois and wished to hear from me there, but I did not get the line until the middle of winter and I did not know that he was going to settle there, for I supposed by what you wrote to me that he would go to Michigan, so I did not write for fear he would be gone and thinking perhaps you might be here in the spring for I thought if you come to the west you would come and see us but when spring came I neither saw nor heard from any of you. Therefore I knew not where to write until I received your letter and be assured I was glad to get another letter from you, for I did not know as you would write to me any more on account of my negligence in writing to you, but I hope you will forgive me. You will remember that I am a poor writer and all together out of the habit of writing and then with the cares of my family which pressed heavily upon me after Vinson's death for Martha and Rodolphus were both sick and for four of five weeks after Vinson's death I scarcely had my clothes off. Rodolphus died the third day of September. I then found myself almost worn out with the troubles and fatigue. These things together with the continued persecutions of our enemies and many other things too

numerous to mention has prevented my writing before and now dear that you said you would like to hear some particulars about Vinson's sickness and death but how shall I begin to describe to you the scenes of sorrow and afflictions that I have passed through with him. It causes my bosom to heave and tears steal down my cheeks. Vinson enjoyed his usual health until we went to Missouri and the scenes which he passed through there I think together with the change of the climate somewhat impaired his health for his life was sought for most of the time he was there, which drove him to the necessity of hiding himself when he could find a place, sometimes it was in the hazel brush and sometimes in old barns. This sort of thing continued until we left Missouri. We came from there to Illinois where we now are, this being a sickly place and the fatigue and hardships and experiences through which he had just passed was too much for him. He was soon taken sick vomiting. It was in the morning and he vomited until evening and could get no relief although the doctor had stood over him about four or five hours constantly. He was much exhausted and I thought he would not live until morning. I then sent for President Joseph Smith. I now begin on this piece of paper. It is some I intended to put on this sheet but it is too small. I could tell you many things that we cannot write but my sheet is almost full and I must come to a close.

Mother, I wish you would write to me as often as you can afford to and if you can read this we will write more. The crops of all sorts in these parts are doing well and bid fare for a plentiful harvest, much wheat is already harvest and things with us

very prosperous at present. The children sent their love to Grandmother. My folk are five miles from me on the other side of the river. They are all well as usual and if they were here, they would send their respects to you. I will now bid you adieu, for the present. I am your affectionate daughter until death.

Rizpah Knight

Martha Knight

First Baptism for Dead - Nauvoo Temple Font

Fillmore, Nov 1st 1886

Dear Sister Martha

I Received your kind and welcome letter some ago, but circumstances has been such that hindered me till now, the subject you wrote upon is one of the greatest importance. The first work that I done for our dead relatives was done in Nauvoo. I think in the fall of 1842 but you know for you was there. Bro Joseph Smith made a (bee) and had the font in the Temple filled with water from the wells. He said he, wished to be Baptized in the font before I went back to Ohio. We met Joseph, Spoke and the font was dedicated and he, Joseph Said "Blessed is the first man baptized in this font." Brigham Young baptized me. I was baptized six times. Joseph took off his mantle it around me, took me in his carriage and, drove to your house. He talked all the way going to your house and . . .

(this part of the letter is missing)

Write as soon as you get this God Bless you

Good Bye your Brother

Reuben McBride