

Subj: Oh, What a Beautiful Evening!Bethurum letter
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From: drb@itsnet.com
X-From: drb@itsnet.com (Dan Bartholomew)
To: osdhallb@spinach.mscc.huji.ac.il
CC: irhall@aol.com, hthalljr@aol.com, nathan44@aol.com,
Hallsibs@aol.com, qureshi@go.com.jo, lbandbw@aol.com,
neilfam@ix.netcom.com, GoghHyde@aol.com, Gregdba@rtsnet.com,
Emilyemskye@cougarnet.byu.edu, Erinetneil@cougar.netutah.net,
hthall@acs2.byu.edu

Dear all of you,

Some sweet things happened this week that I want to tell you about.

First, yesterday I dropped by Mom and Dad's, hoping to see Uncle Delbert (but he had gone to visit Uncle Wendell), and Mom said she had just found something in her files she totally forgot she had. A distant relative she met in her genealogy searches sent her a copy of a letter written by our (that is, those of us in my generation)4th great-grandparents, David P. and Margaret (Kincaid) Bethurum. Mom received this letter after she published her Langford history, so this will be news for most of you. I suggested we type it right then into Mom's PAF program (under David Bethurum's notes) before it got lost--so Mom and I transcribed the letter together--which was good--I saw some thing she didn't and the reverse. David, you may want to download the letter from Mom's files into the Langford files you are putting together--or I made Mom a hard copy, too.

I wish I'd known about this letter when I wrote up my story for the Church News, because this is one more touching Christmas-time happening--written just after learning that Margaret's mother had died. I'm typing it here for you, preserving their spelling, punctuation, etc., and sometimes inserting a letter or word between brackets, for better clarity and a question mark where we had trouble discerning the handwriting (which might have been

done

by a scribe--it is not unpleasant--has lots of swirls and looks like it was done by a creative person.

The letter was written December 22, 1840 to Dr. Joseph Kincaid, brother of our ancestor Margaret, who lived at Shelby, Rutherford County, Tennessee. The letter was mailed from Mt. Vernon Kentucky. Notice how she called her brother by his title. Mom says the wives of that generation in that locality always called their husband's "Mr." There is a lot of genealogical material in this letter, though Mom says she had already gleaned most of it from area records. The sister named Thompson she asks about was insane. Mom found that out when she visited there--which is another story in itself. So why not tell it!

I was not on this vacation, for some reason, and Mom couldn't remember when it was--but this is how she told me about it. She said it was one of those vacations where those of you who were along groaned every time she wanted to stop for genealogical purposes. So the big groan began as she entered famous family territory, and even Dad was getting tired of it, so he told her he would only make one stop, so she had better decide what was most important. It was a hard decision, but she finally decided on Platt County (Missouri). When they got out of the car at the court house, the first thing they saw was a statue of Gov. Boggs, and Mom thought, "Oh, no--what if my people were Mormon haters (she later checked out the location and dates, and apparently her Missouri blood was innocent--of at least that). Also, they were surrounded by black crickets, which gave her the creeps. But once they got into the courthouse (and it was about closing time), the people inside were absolutely wonderful--did not hurry them at all. The County probate judge showed them all around and asked Mom about getting Salt

Lake

to come out and microfilm their records (which she did arrange). Anyway, there Mom found the estate packet (which Salt Lake does not always film). It was a packet for James Kincaid and Sarah Wilson (James was Margaret Bethurum's father, who had just become a widower when Margaret and David's

letter was written). James must not have accepted their invitation to come

and live with them, because, according to this packet, yhe died in Platt County on 12 July 1841--not long after his wife died. The packet said William M. Kincaid (Margaret's brother) was granted permission to probate the day after James died. Heirs listed were John Kincaid of Lincoln Co., KY; Margaret Bethurum, wife of David Bethurum, of Rockcastle County, KY; Sarah Hay, wife of Aaron Hay of Rockcastle, KY; Joseph Kincaid of Bedford County [sic--this is the Dr.], and Harvey Kincaid of Andrew Co., MO; James A. Kincaid, William M. Kincaid, and Mary Thompson of Platt Co., Missouri. Mom says she hit the jackpot there and was grateful she chose that one place

to stop. She also found in the records information that this sister of Margaret's named Mary Thompson was insane. Her brother sold some land to provide for her.

By the way, Zina and Dean, here is another family name to consider in naming

that upcoming baby. Margaret's mother was Sarah Wilson. Wilson Wheeler.

Not bad. They'll call him "Whistling Wilson Wheeler," and get their tongues

all tied up in knots trying to say it.

Here's (finally) the letter:

Dear Brother sister and family all, through permission [?] of almighty God, we are all yet in the land of the living and at this time in moderate good health for which we are truly thankful &etc.

Hoping at the same that these lines may come to your hand and find

you with all yours Enjoying health and happiness &etc. We received your long looked for, but welcome letter of the 29th of Nov. last which gives us great Pleasure to find that you had not yet forgotten us &etc.

But were sorry truly sorry to hear of your bad state of health at this time--

You inform us that you were in the Missouri last season, and of the high opinion that you entertain of that Country.--

--also of the death of a dear and beloved Mother the situation of a disconsolate and affectionate father, -- It is easier much easier to imagine our feeling on these points than for us to describe by way of letter but suffice it [to] say that though our dear and beloved mother is no more, yet the thots of her exit in the triumphs of faith in the redeemer should be some consolation to us that are still left behind them

As to our ever moving to the missouri or else where there is no expectation at this time for my family as the most of them settled round here and the rest in the Indiana so that I should be loth to go and leave them. Nevertheless should our dear old father feel willing to come and live with us here it would be a great pleasure to us to enjoy the company of a long absent and affectionate parent.

I will just say to you Doctor that probably you had better come and see to your land here as it will be lost, for the taxes are not paid for it, and if you was here you would sell some or all of it -- therefore I would advise you to come and see to it shortly.

Please to write to Father our situation as to moveing to his Country giving him our love and well wishes and longing anxiety to see him &etc. You will also please to write back to us (if you dont come to see us[]), and let us hear what has become of Sister Thompson as we have not heard from her for some time.

The last time that we heard from Brother John Kincaid him self and wife were both down with the fever he could only sit up on a chair and she could only set by being propped up in the bed. Sister Hay and her family are all here and gives there Compliments to you &etc

my Children all desires to be remembered to you and yours

You would confer a great favor on us by sending these lines to father in the Missouri and with them our Parential or filial love and affe[c]tion to father and Brothers sisters and familys and to all enquiring friends we must conclude your ever loving Brother till death Farewell D. and M. Bethurum

To J. Kincaid"

(David P. and Margaret Kincaid Bethurum's daughter was Sarah Bethurum, who married Fielding Langford. There's a name, Zina and Dean: Fielding Wheeler. Hmmm.) Mom says that name Fielding and also the name Harvey are all over the place in her family, but she can't find any surnames as sources: So, Harvey Fielding Wilson Wheeler. This just gets better all the time! How about Sarah Margaret for a name. I always did go for traditional names, myself.)

The other experience was tonight, and I'll make this quick because it's late. Dan and I went to Salt Lake to the reception of Mary Lee Scott (now Call) at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Her father is Elder Richard Scott, and we got to shake his hand and talk with him a little. Mary Lee was in our ward before it got divided off, and she was taking my Family History Course when her mother died, so that was a tender time, and we talked several times about her feelings then and her increasing desire to do the work on her mother's lines.

Mary Lee is an attractive, tall, thin woman of about thirty-five, who got her Ph.D., teaches linguistics (I think) and worked with students who

wanted
to teach Spanish as a second language. She had worked hard to get a track
teaching at BYU and was just ready to reach an important career goal,
when
she got this proposal and accepted.

He is a handsome man, architect, has a gorgeous home in Arizona, I'm told,
and his wife (who by all accounts was very musical and absolutely
fantastic)
was killed by a drunk driver, leaving four children motherless. Now one is
married, one is on a mission, and there are still two at home, the youngest
seven. So she has instant children, with this marriage. And how did she
meet this great guy? By being active in her Orem ward. When it was
split,
one of the members introduced her to her architect relative.

I had never been to a reception in the Joseph Smith Memorial Bldg. Wow! I
think it was the Ambassador room--10th floor--anyway, there was
absolutely
no need for decorations of any kind. What a magnificent setting! They
stood before a huge picture window that framed the illuminated spires of
the
Salt Lake Temple. What a backdrop! Mary Lee looked beautiful and very
happy. She asked us to bring pages for her memory book that included
family
photos and perhaps told memories or gave marriage advice. She had quite
a
book there. The line was very long, but we met the most interesting
people--we really had some fun conversations and met a lot of old
friends, too.

Well, this is the interesting part. As we entered the building, I saw a
little old Japanese man, and he looked somehow familiar. I somehow got
the
impression that he was a very righteous man and maybe even a general
authority (I can never keep all the new authorities straight or in my mind).
We went on to the reception and talked too long, so it was quite late when
we came down from the 10th floor. Dan told me he would go get the car

and

be there in five minutes, so to wait by the north entrance. As I approached

the door, I saw this little old Japanese man before the doors and said to myself, "Oh, good, I want to talk to this man." So I went right up and introduced myself. Well, he was very hard of hearing, and I had to about shout his head off, and he still didn't get it. But he did proceed to express his concern that his son was supposed to have been there to pick him

up an hour before and had not shown up yet. I said, "Well, that's OK, we'll take you home." He said, "Oh, no, I live a long ways away--I live in Orem." I said, "Well, we live in Orem," and he looked oh, so happy.]

So I suggested we leave a sign on the door in case his son showed up, so he wouldn't worry, and we got that together, and in the process I finally understood that his name was _____ Watabe (I think).

What a sweet man he was. He really sounded and acted like a holy man--he

kept thanking us for answering his prayers. 'Said he had been praying for an hour and was getting very worried.

I put him in the front seat with Dan, and they had a great conversation. He seemed better able to hear bass sounds than mine. It turns out he was in temple presidencies in several temples--including Japan. He was in the war

as a Japanese officer and speaks Japanese, Russian, and Chinese (he has also

served in China). He told us his conversion story. His wife died a year ago, and he says he goes to her grave every single morning and keeps asking

her if he can die and join her, and she keeps telling him his mission here isn't over (he is now a patriarch, but disappointed that the current local temple presidencies think he's too old now to do temple work).

What a spirit that man has! When we brought him to his door (which is behind our Stake House and only a couple of blocks from where we live), he kissed my hand, thanked me for saving him, and asked how I knew he had

been
praying someone would come and save him in his predicament.

Now you will think this is just silly, and it is. But it made me feel so good to feel that God would use me to help one of his servants. I can't tell you how good it made me feel. And Dan was saying all the way up that we should have doubled with somebody, so we weren't driving up alone. Well, he had a ball bouncing his Russian and little Japanese off of Brother Watabe and listening to all his stories.

It was just one of those happy kinds of surprises that makes you feel good and warm all over. And I know you are all thinking, "Well, big deal." But I guess I learned tonight what Joseph Millet was feeling like when he got an impression to take some food to a family named Hall in the early days of the Church, and the father of the family told him they were about ready to starve and had been begging God to bring them help. He wouldn't let them pay him back, because it made him feel so good to think that God knew somebody named Joseph Millet and put him in the right place at the right time.

Well, let me go find my book and see how many of you I can send this to.

Love, Sherlene (now I expect you to call me Sister Bartholomew from now on--as they did in this letter--oh no, I can just hear what's coming--yeah, Sis--we know--you're the one who went insane!)

P.S. Tracy, would you forward this to David for me? I need to get his number in my book. Could you send it to me? Also, Bro. Watabe said he knew Dillon (if he understood us right), and I don't have his #, though he wouldn't be interested in most of this letter--but feel free to forward this to any other family I might have missed, you guys.