

*we just paid a lot of money to have this \$0!
thing fixed - Don't ask me why it's so dirty!*

Letters to Daniel H. Bartholomew on Guatemala City North Mission

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I took a new route home from Maryland, Monday evening, May 21, on route 80 through Gettysburg PA and around Philadelphia--a pastoral drive (at, ahem, 65 miles per hour) through rolling, verdant farm country. Even though I was absolutely exhausted from all that intense research, I felt such a joyful presence all the way home--almost as though all those Staley relatives were accompanying me. I had dreaded leaving the court house, anticipating that it would be dark outside and fearing traveling a new route. But it was light most of the four hours home (daylight savings is great!), and thanks to Barry's careful directions I did not get lost. The beauty of that route almost took my breath away at times. I don't know if I'll ever travel Rt. 95 again. I am now processing pages and pages of marriages and family groups I extracted from deeds and marriage records (the marriage [licenses only] records not ever copied by the Church, according to Barry--though they did get the wills).

I still have not proven the vital Staley and Simmons links (your grandfather Hall's lineage), but probably found them and certainly have been feeding a lot of information into my computer day and night. I now have 1300 individual entries in my 2.2 PAF program and over 500 marriages.

Since then I've also done about ten hours' research at the Morristown Family History Library on Essex Co. MA probates (17th Century) on films ordered from Salt Lake. Yesterday I got quite excited when I found the will of your ancestor Maximillian Jewett. Quite an interesting character! I just got a postcard saying the film I ordered on records of Shepherdstown VA has arrived--I'll get those Staleys yet!

When I went to D.C., I left the house in a mess because I had been doing yard work for two weeks before. Needless to say I came home to disaster. But I really hit it and was congratulating myself for planning a fine meal and getting the house clean and organized in only two whirlwind days. Then I got a call from the air conditioning people (one more thing that has conked out) and they said their "fixer" could come that afternoon. I thought how nice it would be to have the house cool while Don Pepper was here, so told him to come ahead.

Well, the plumbing and heating man was from South America and when I took him down to the furnace area, I made some complaint about how everything in this "new" house was falling apart. Well, in his broken English he made some comment about how when you pray right, the Spirit will descend on your house and protect it.

That took me back a little. I kept wondering what I had done to him that he was so sure we deserved all these repairs in spite of our prayers. Turns out he is a "born again" Christian who was absolutely not interested in hearing more of Christ's message from the Book of Mormon, but who felt compelled and sincerely inspired

to call me to Christ and to repentance. I thanked him for his message and said I would do my best to repent as I surely did need to repent of my sins--a response which seemed to surprise him.

I know it wasn't me, it was the Lord. In the next two hours, he did most of the talking (I hardly said any thing--not because I didn't want to, but because he never took a breath!). However, the few things I did say were definitely guided by the Spirit, because he softened his attitude greatly and became even anxious to read the Book of Mormon. I think he was a little chagrined at judging me so harshly, too, because he made a few apologetic comments about how the Lord called Biblical people to repentance through donkeys, and he guessed he was just a donkey, too, some of the time (I would have applied the biblical term, a--). Hee Haw! Something did tell me, though, to hang in there. I do think this man, though seemingly self-righteous and arrogant, was sincere in his desire to serve the Lord. Dad and I are giving Books of Mormons to our other repair people and doctors, too, so maybe some good can come out of all this nonsense. But dinner was late!

Rev. Pepper said to tell you his love and prayers are with you, and he also called to tell us he had been in intense prayer for Cal Jr. on the day of his surgery. His assistant minister is moving (he was not that effective in working with their youth, anyway), so Don is organizing his congregation "Mormon" style, so the lay people take responsibility for what this assistant minister did. Now his people are having Family Home Evenings, doing Home Teaching and experiencing lay leadership. Now if they'll just pay their tithes....

This has, in some ways, been a traumatic week. We fasted and prayed for Cal's surgery and tried to follow his progress by phone--it was hard to see him in so much pain (he required 3 pints of blood and they would not give him pain medication until his blood pressure went up). But there was no sign of cancer in his lymph nodes after the surgery--a big relief. There is still some cancer they could not get in the surrounding tissue, so he will have radiation treatments--which are awful. But the prognosis is very good.

As always, Aunt Karen is in positive, encouraging spirits--says their kids are very good friends with Tracy Jr. and Betsy's children. She said Laura should know she has a "home" away from home any time she wants and that Laura can call her any time to talk about anything when she comes out to the "Y." Laura was glad to hear that--she truly loves her Aunt Karen.

We also got the sad news of your cousin Amy Tanner's non-Temple wedding. With her parents' permission, we offered for her to come here to have her baby, so she would feel she had an option, but I think she chose the responsible thing--to get married. We are grateful, in this day and age, that she did not

get an abortion and just pray they will be happy. Pray for them.

Laura has, I think, a second sense about some of these things. She kept telling me she was worried about Amy and wrote Amy a long letter which Amy probably received just about the time she found out she was "expecting." Anyway, we just pray that they can be happy and find their way back to the Church and temple worthiness.

Amy is still going ahead with a big reception--most of which she and her fiancé are paying for themselves. Seeing the heartache of her parents makes me so grateful for you children. Thank you for serving the Lord and for living the commandments. There is no greater gift you can give your parents--because all we want is for you to be happy and we know that is the only road which can spare this kind of heartache.

I pray you are all right. When I don't hear from you I get worried. But I try not to get neurotic about it. Parents at this stage just have to have the faith to say good prayers and know you are in the BEST hands. That gives me the peace to stay off the phone to your mission president. (If I don't hear from you next week, he just might get a call anyway!)

I turned to the answering machine last week (it seems I've been on the phone all week arranging various repairs to home, cars, and bodies), and a message was there from Themma of Forward Mobility asking about the office boy they loved so much. She was wondering why she hadn't heard from you and wanted to know if you were all right. Her son is in the Marines and was just transferred to a dangerous location, so she would like our prayers, too. Nice of her to keep in touch. She's going to write you a letter and bawl you out for not writing to either of us (you just write me and I'll call her with any news).

I kept listening to the tape and on it was that family home evening lesson I gave on the three degrees of glory (and the one not so glorious) which accidentally got recorded. Really funny to listen to your and Laura's impromptu comments. Made me miss you and your sense of humor so much. I also listened again to your birthday call. You sounded wonderful! You'd better know I have a testimony. I would never let my kids leave me for missions and BYU if I didn't know this was the Lord's work. Courtney left for the MTC last week. Nancy is really feeling it and has called a couple of times because she knows I can empathize. But we wouldn't have it any other way, so we're not complaining.

Can you believe Laura is leaving our home in just 20 days? She reminds me every day of how many days are left to be nice to her and tries to extort favors by suggesting how many grandchildren she might produce some day, two of which just might be named after us! She graduates June 20th and will have one day before flying to BYU. Laura chose nine patterns she wants me to sew up so she'll

have something to wear at summer school. I don't think I'll be looking for things to do these next few weeks.

Last week we went to Ridge High for the awards assembly. Laura was among those honored for being on the honor roll all year. She also went to Bucks Co. PA last week because her play won a regional award (the one where she's a condemning minister in the Salem witch trials and her friend, Bonnie, is the condemned). Bonnie got the award for "best actress" for the entire region.

Laura also graduated from the 4-yr. Seminary program last week I came home from Church sick (I had been fighting flu or something the week before which kept me home from the canoe trip and Memorial Day picnic), so could not attend the ceremonies, but Dad went and we are certainly pleased with her "enduring to the end" on those early mornings. She did the reading, too, so wasn't just putting in time. Nancy Ferderber was just called as a counselor in the Relief Society, so won't be teaching Seminary next year. Onalee Wood called me up, testing the waters to see how I would feel about teaching seminary next year with only one student, James. No thanks. Nancy told me he never arrived until the last ten minutes of seminary and absolutely never did the reading. He can go to Morristown and meet with the other students--he needs that peer group, anyway. As for me, after five years of transporting teens to Seminary at unearthly hours, I EXPECT TO GET SOME SLEEP !!

Some of the parents around here make such a big deal out of high school graduation, buying their children cars or sending them to Europe. I hope you kids don't feel cheated when we don't even send out announcements. But I agree with my parents that graduation from high school is like learning to walk: important, but expected. We do get excited about graduation from college or a trade school, however, which hopefully prepares us somewhat for support of self and family. You probably won't get a car at that graduation, either--but maybe you'll be prepared to earn your own.

Laura went to Youth Conference at Morristown Stk. this weekend and brought six of the youth here for a sleep-over between Conference sessions. You can imagine we got a lot of sleep. She thought this was a great conference--put on by a BYU group.

The North Branch kids do appreciate Laura. They are acting like Laura's going to BYU is the end of the world or something. She has been a good friend to a lot of the younger kids. One of them even got up in testimony meeting yesterday and said how much Laura will be missed. Laura bore her testimony yesterday, too, which was a sublime parental moment for us.

Guess who dropped by to see Laura last week. Rich Wolenski or whatever--that guy who gave her the rush last year and then dumped her when she wouldn't get cozy. He was back from college, tall and looking very handsome (I admit), and wanting to see Laura.

I must say I was very gracious, considering what I was thinking. Am I ever glad she's flying to BYU in 20 days--far, far away from that #@!***@!

This next week will be a busy one. Meg Edwards is back from her mission and her parents have invited us to supper Sunday at their home, after her homecoming talk. Thursday we're going to a shower for Kaye Moen at Nancy Ferderber's--she's getting married next week (temple--she just graduated from BYU--is she ever gorgeous!). Rob Moen's farewell is coming up and Laura Lee (Edwards) and I are doing all the refreshments for his Open House (since we visit teach Marolyn and she has her hands full with a wedding reception that weekend, too). Friday night we're going to a 40th birthday party at Linda Abashamaa's (they are moving to CT soon). Tomorrow is my day at the Family History Center again (I also went in Friday and this morning to help members in the ward who can't come during the usual hours). I finished teaching my genealogy course, so Sundays are a little more relaxed now. I've also been on the carpool helping take Carmella DiSanza to the doctor for therapy following her back surgery. She seems to be making good progress. So, we're not running out of things to do.

I must say Dad and I had about the happiest anniversary we ever have had. Not because we did anything special--but because we just loved each other so much. It feels wonderful. I like to complain about all the "repairs," but the whole world can fall apart and if I am filled with love and gratitude for your father (which comes easily these days), none of that matters much.

Well, I can't think of anything very profound to say. I know you waited all this time just to hear about our broken water heater, faucets, garden hose, air conditioning, heating, car systems, flat tires, and bodies (yes, flat, too--ho!). So I'll try to spare you the gruesome details. I think Dad covered most of his territory. I also have gone to the skin specialist (no more skin cancer and last operation healed nicely), the gynecologist (all well and fat--I like this woman doctor because she never weighs me), and the eye doctor (same one operating on Dad--prescribed new glasses for me which on first estimate will only cost \$85 for the frames and \$180 for the lenses!). All these inconveniences with maintenance are a royal pain, but I guess we can be grateful that we have so many blessings which need repair.

Today is "Senior Sluff" day and Laura is at Great Adventure. But if she were here, I know she'd want me to say "HI" too. We love you with all our hearts and pray for you always. Hang in there and don't let us think you're too homesick by writing too many letters (would I ever get sarcastic with you?).

All our love,

*Mom (and daughter) - There are too long for
Hallie. — just to let you know the "news".*