

July 2, 1985

Hi!

When school ended, we took off for a weekend and went up through Conn. and Mass. to Sharon, Vermont and the birthplace of the prophet, Joseph Smith. What a beautiful drive! We had marvelous weather, and the serenity of the countryside seemed to rub off on even our teenagers. I think it's the most pleasant trip we have ever taken--not that taking off wasn't a crisis--a day late. But we had just been visited for a few days by the Noel (Sydney) Reynolds family (with the oldest six children along), and it really put us behind in getting ready, as they didn't leave until just before we needed to. Nice visit, though. Interesting, fine people. On their way to Scotland where he is writing a book.

I got the family to reluctantly stop at the old cemetery in Meriden, CT., and it is filled with relatives. I may, also, have found the grave of our ancestor, John Hall--but I have to check it out.

Also showed the family the grave of Caleb Hall (we're descended from his 14th child) and the broken headstone of his brother, Moses, which is propped against the Centre Street cemetery wall in Wallingford, CT. I just have to get organized and do more genealogy and get the temple work in for these families. I can't really describe the feelings I had in those places.

As we drove out of Wallingford we saw a "Garage Sale" sign, and I asked Dan to turn around and go back so I could get a souvenir from Wallingford. For the first time in dozens of such requests, he did turn around. Well, I nosed around and didn't see anything interesting. Finally, I asked the people running the sale if they didn't have an old map of Wallingford or some old document or memento that I could buy, and told them my ancestors helped found the town. "Oh, I'm so glad you reminded me," she said. "I do have an old map of Wallingford which I forgot to bring down." She went up and brought down this 1881 map of Wallingford, published in Boston, which shows the wide streets with old fashioned carriages going down them and the boats on the lakes and Merriam street and Hall Avenue, named after our ancestors, and the Congregational Church they helped found. In a corner of the map is a drawing of the original Church (it burned down and a new building is on that lot now), and the man who sold me the map pointed out an inn next to the Baptist Church where all the "old settlers" used to congregate and where, "for sure, your ancestors spent many an evening." This map was all framed in glass, and they sold it to me for \$3.00. It was a little rippled and the backing was torn, so I just paid \$26 to get it glued to a new backing and get it sealed and strengthened--I am so thrilled with that treasure.

There is such a special spirit about the sight where Joseph Smith was born and the ward of the Church there. Mom and Dad Bartholomew are marvelous guides--we could feel the inspiration of their call to that particular place. They offered us their guest room, but I decided to join the others in the tent (stupidest thing I ever did). The campground there is lovely, but there isn't a level place on it. We tried sleeping with our feet down, then our heads down, then crosswise and rolling down. I finally almost got to sleep and then some characters came right next to us with blaring rock music and crazy talk. Of course it took Daniel all of thirteen seconds to be out of the tent and roasting marshmallows and hotdogs with them (as the smoke gathered in our tent. At least, we gathered from his conversation with them that they were not hippies, but were teens being chaperoned by a returned missionary from Hong Kong. After Daniel finally came back to bed, we about dropped off when it started raining. I never would have made it as a pioneer. Even though we brought foam to roll out under our sleeping bags, I felt every rock and bump the next day in Church, and my tailbone hurt so much, I could hardly sit. But the Griffins made Mom B. a wonderful birthday dinner which we got to share in, it was a luxury to have an iron and ironing board and to have such personalized tours of sacred things. Tent and all, I came back feeling so refreshed and grateful.

Daniel went fishing in the trout pond there and caught a big one which I later ate, since he went to merit-badge camp for a week and left in the freezer.

I tried fishing with him for an hour or so, but all I got were a few nibbles.

It really killed me to travel so quickly through all those places I knew our ancestors had been. I must go back on my own private trip soon, ALONE, so I can stop and stay as long as I want. You should have heard the kids when I stopped at those cemeteries--for sure I could have buried them any minute, as they were D-Y-I-N-G of boredom. Dad, why don't you and Mom come back and take me on some trips up there. This is exciting stuff!! Rutland Vt. is big history, too. Oh, well. Sometime soon.

Daniel had a ball at Scout camp. Did the mile swim again and earned 4½ merit badges. It's incredible what dedicated Scout leaders we have. Dan went up in the middle of the week and supervised an all-night war ^{inside} between cabins. Came home looking like he'd really been on the battlefield. Daniel lucked out this year. Only broke one toe, punctured one foot, and limited his poison ivy to his neck.

Now Laura's up at her first Girl's camp. I'm leaving at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow for Camp Liahona--I'm on KP for the day. Once again, the arrangements, organization, and planning that went into this program for the girls is just phenomenal. Laura called tonight from camp and gave me a big list of things to bring--especially MONEY! She said she was having a ball and said she wanted to make sure Teddy was all right and that she loved us. Ah-h-h!

We're planning to go visit Virginia and Barry on July 12th and go to the temple (D & L just got their recommends to do baptisms for the dead there) and Dan ^{may} ~~plans~~ to go see Joan ^{Post} just before she moves to Missouri from Va. If they were not packing to go, we would all go visit--but THAT she does not need at this point--besides, I want an excuse to go visit them near Nauvoo soon.

Mom, do you remember when I was Relief Society Pres. in my BYU ward, but still accepted a call to teach Beehives in our home ward (actually I was just continuing what I'd been doing there for years)? Well, just to show how life catches up with you, one of those Beehives I taught that year was Rosie Anderson Hamblin who was just sustained this Sunday as Laura's new Beehive teacher. Can you believe? And Rosie's husband has been a great help to our family with his counseling, and he is starting a "Family Relations" class this Sunday which we are taking and which will also include a four inactives on my visit-teaching route, plus the fiance of one. Richard L. Andersen and Carma were here for a visit and he did a wonderful fireside, explaining some of those letters that have recently come to light. Rosie had also invited us to their home for a private session on polygamy in Nauvoo--but we had just come back from taking Laura to the zoo and the smell and mold in that African Jungle house had made me feel nauseous. I told Carma I was going to go take an Alka Selzer and she recommended that, instead, I get two medium leaves of Comfrey, 3 sprigs of mint, simmer them 5 minutes in a few cups of water, stir in some honey and try that. It really worked well. She said even if you throw up, you keep drinking that stuff and you'll cure in a hurry. I had sworn off Comfrey since reading a NEW YORK TIMES article about its dangers--but that brew sure did work for nausea.

I'm really excited about this Book of Mormon insert I'm trying to lay-out. Sharlene Wells came and spoke at a youth fireside here, and she is letting me use a photo and quote--but my big thrill was when Fred Ward, who used to know Mom and Dad when he was in Gloversville and they were in the S.S. Superintendency and who is now stake PCD there--agreed to contact Governor Cuomo. His press office said we can go ahead and quote the Gov's statement that he has read the Book of Mormon, finds it very interesting, and plans to attend the Hill Cumorah Pageant. I want to get some local yokels, too. Yester day we all fasted at the mission pres's request, as all missionaries in the area held a Book of Mormon marathon (read until you're through, only stopping to sleep--from page 1). They are really pushing the B of M, in connection with the new discussions--and I hope to support it with our PC efforts. We had some incredibly good publicity this month--some real go-getters at the ward level.

Well, that's it for now-- we hope you are all well and happy. So glad Dad is feeling better and Virginia and Barry found a house. We're praying for the new babies (Charlotte and Nancy) and for each of your success and health. Love,

Sherlene and family.

Sherlene ☺