

Jedediah Smith to Ralph Smith

This letter is from Jedidiah Strong Smith (1799-1831) to his brother Ralph Smith (1794-1867) who was living in Wayne County, Ohio at the time of the letter in 1831. This letter is written from St. Louis, Missouri months before Jedidiah Smith was killed by Comanche Indians in May of 1831 on the Cimaron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail near the Cimarron River. In the letter, Jedidiah writes about his travels and people he encounters and interacts with including children and doctors.

Creator: Smith, Jedediah Strong, 1799-1831

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Jedediah Smith to Ralph Smith

St. Louis, Jan^y 26th 1831

Dear Brother

Austin arrived here yesterday; Ira came to^{St.} Louis on the twenty third of Dec^r. last; he had brought hand type and was to have, Printed, for Mr. Fairbank, but this city and the vicinity had been previously supplied; I was very glad of the meeting, and soon had arrangements made for him to place himself under my control, that he might receive an Education; some difficulty occurred with regard to conveying the Property to Mr. F., as the river was frozen and the Mail Stage was at this season irregular; he never only hired constitutionally; I finally took the responsibility upon myself to engage to purchase Mr. F.'s property, as soon as the River opens, and Ira wrote what we had concluded upon, to Mr. F. I then went to Jacksons Mill, Illinois, where there is a College & left him at that institution; I can not say that I am altogether pleased with that Seminary, but there is a probability of its becoming very respectable and I am very willing to give it a fair trial, as it is not very far off, and I can the more easily correspond, and know his situation —

I had expected to hear by Austin something more particular with regard to what the prospect was with regard to the opportunity of the School for B. & P. and N. J. for the ensuing

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ensuing Summer, he said something about the Co-
 =college near Mount Vernon but I could make no cer-
 =tain arrangements; however I have now written to the Pres-
 =ident of that College & am getting an answer from him, as
 well as from another Seminary to which I have written,
 I shall be able to come to some conclusion. — Sister said
 you spoke of an easy conveyance for them to this place; my
 Brother! this is the best place to which youngsters should be
 sent; it is possible if no better chance offers that I may want
 them sent here, as I can place them in the same Seminary
 with Lou; but as I before stated I am not altogether pleased
 with that place. — I am afraid my Dear Brother that
 you and my friend the Doctor do not council together
 upon the subject of Education, consider my Brother, his re-
 =spective age he has had the profit of Education as well
 as experience, & he is the Father of my Beloved Sister,
 your Wife, oh! he will be the best and most kindly coun-
 =sellor according to the common course of things he must soon
 be in the prime of life, and between him and my Father
 we must make no difference, but let us endeavor to ease & comfort
 them, to pour in Oil & balm into the wounds, made by the
 relentless hand of Time, the pleasing thought caused me
 to shed Tears of joy. — How long will it be ere you
 and I will be under the necessity of renouncing (if we are
 as blessed the privilege of living) that we were once
 young? and let us now set a pattern to our younger
 Brothers & Children. — It gave me great pleasure to hear that
 the Children, under the charge of Doctor Simons, were making

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^{fine. Prose}
making. I am not surprised at this, for have could it be
otherwise with children placed under so good a Teacher?
Arthur had come by Water but the ice stopped him at the
mouth of Ohio, and he brought none of the letters.

At present I shall only write to your Self & Boston.
Shirans, I have reasons for writing to no more. it is certainly
very far from my wish to have too much publicity given
to our business. — I expect you to give my love to our
Friends generally. — Next my Brother came, the subject
for which we live, we are ungrateful to that God in
whom we live, and move, and have our being,
have often caught me on our bended knees to give up
our grateful acknowledgments for the gift of his Dear
Son; is it possible that God so loved the World that
he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believed
on him should not perish, but have everlasting life?

Then let us come forward with faith, nothing dan-
gerous and he will most unquestionably hear us — let us
be often found in the means and take my word for it
we shall receive a blessing: some, who have made a pro-
fession of Christianity & have by their own negligence
caused the Spirit to depart think their day of grace
is over; but where did they find such doctrine?
I find our Saviour ever watching & weeping over us, use-
ing the most pleading language and endeavoring by every
means (without compelling, for that would at our destroy and
free agency) to bring us to him that we may have life,
we are doing our duty, do we regularly and without fail attend to ^{our} ^{duties}

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Progress & keep in view that in due season we shall receive the crown, if we faint not, oh!
 let us be engaged & to that end let us take a view of what the poet says of the unhappy close of life
 "Howe shocking must thy summons be, oh death
 To him who is at ease in his possessions!
 Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
 Is quite unprepared for the world to leave!
 In that dread moment, how the guilty soul
 Finds round the walls of her blissful turret;
 Runs to each corner and shrieks for help;
 But shrieks in vain! How wretchedly she looks
 On all she's leaving now no longer hers!"

What a dreadful picture is this which
 we find in the English reader; but
 another poet sings the following lines
 "Lord, I believe a rest remains
 For all thy people here;
 A rest, where pure enjoyment reigns,
 and thou art loved alone
 Will my Brother, will it be

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 Mr. Ralph Smith
 Wayne County
 Wisconsin
 Ohio

for us if we have faith in those last lines and make use of
 it - in such a way that it may produce good works.

write soon my Brother, & give me any news which
 you may consider worth conveying. and believe me, as
 Ever your affectionate Brother
 Jedediah L. Smith

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