

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS & PHOTOGRAPHS  
RELATING TO

*Joseph Lee Robinson*

MORMON PIONEER

# Contents

## Letters of Joseph Lee Robinson

Joseph Lee Robinson copied several of his letters into his journal. Here are several more—including one from his father, Nathan Robinson—that were not copied into the journal. These letters are presented true to Joseph Lee’s original spelling, punctuation and habit of generally not using paragraphs.

The letters were originally published in descendant, Nola Valentine’s landmark work, “Genealogical Research For Joseph Lee Robinson Ancestors”. Nola added the notes and interpretations of a number of mystery words that accompany the letters. Descendant, Christie Roberts, retyped the original publication into the computer, clarifying a number of details and bringing the document to a whole new generation of Robinson researchers.

### Joseph Lee Robinson to his family and friends back in New York State, 1848

*“Winterquarters Janry 2<sup>nd</sup> 1848”*

*“beloved Parents Brothers & sisters & friends in all the world greting with pleasure I improve this opertunity in adressing a few lines to you. through the blessing of the Lord we are all well, & buisily engaged in preparing to prosicute our journey in the coming spring over the mountains we feel truly like Pilgrims & strangers on the Earth exiled from our native land but we trust in the Mighty God of Israel in him we trust & hope for salvation he has in reserve a goodly land where many of our people have gone to the valey in the tops of the mountains where the House of the Lord is to be built to which all nations will flow to be taught in the ways of the Lord,*

*as says the Prophets Isaiah & Malici. we left Nauvoo one year last June & came to this place which is called Council Bluffs on the Mo. River in the Indian country about 3 hundred miles from Nauvoo & 5 or 6 hundred from St. Lewis. about sixty miles above the line of the state of Mo. which is the nearest white settlements of Gentiles this is very fertile rich country. we broke the raw prapara [prairie] on the bottom & put in & raised the largest crops the last year that I ever saw grow on the ground I have raised 70 or 80 bushels of corn to the acre without ploughing or howing it at all after planting. the valley to which our people have gone & we are going is in the tall & lofty mountains about one thousand & 30 miles from this place a very good road to it it is a very rich fertile country well watered in it is a salt lake four barrels of water when boiled down will make one barel of the finest of salt, it will produse all kinds of grain & gardens an the air and watter is as pure as can be therefore it*

*is perfectly healthy & in it are warm and hot springs there is a spring of tar & oil which is as good as the boughten tar, there is allso lakes of salertus as good as the boughten & allso bourse [browse] in abundense, there is on the rought between here & there almost innumerable multitudes of buffaloes the bufalow country commences about one hundred & fifty or too hundred miles west of this. there was a company of pioneers about too hundred with the Twelve [Apostles] started from here in the spring early for the mountains to seek a location for the saints to go to, they staid there about one month broke & put in a large quantity of seeds of almost every kind which grew remarkably fine they also built a good many houses, these are in the best water priveleiges in America finally I expect it the best place in the world, so I think it will do for the laterday saints, at any rate it seems to be the only place for them, these pioneers left there the first of sept. & arived here the first of Nov*

*well & in good spirits & with them some of the solgiers who enlisted for californiia for Uncle Sam as he made a demand for five hundred of our boys while we were exiled from our Mother country, Moving without house or home in the wilderness among the wild men of the west but notwith standing our situation the five hundred volunteered & went immediately, they started one year last July & have had a very hard time of it a part of them have returned but the most of them are yet in calaformia because they were not able to come over the mountains, we have heard by the by that if we had not turned out the five hundred men, they intended to cut us of & not let us go any further in the wilderness, but they sliped up in their calculations, so we continue our course west where we intend to locate ourselves in the name of the Lord & build unto his name fine temples & for our selved fine fine houses & make splendid farms & plant vineyards & eat fruit of them & if we need to dig up the gold and*

*silver & the precious things of the mountains all in the name of the Lord. & now my exortation & invitation to you all is, in the first place repent of all your sins & sectarian traditions which are incorrect & be baptized for the remishion of your sins, & then come and go with us & I will doo you good & you shall be blessed & shall rejoice in the fullness of the everlasting Gospell of Jesus Christ I say it not in my own name but in the name of the lord my God, believe me for I know in whom I trust for he is the God of revelation now whether you believe in my God or not you can act your pleasure about it. but I want you to come & settle with us in that goodly land & then you can judge for your selves about the matter, for any people that wish to settle with us can if they will be in subjection the the laws by which we will be governed. the weather is fine the roads dry & dusty have had but one or too flurries of snow, Sunday evening Janry 22 a pleasant fire & wife and children They go to*

*scool learn well we lost our youngest girl this side of the river she died on e year last sept. we have many good log houses very comfortable about one thousand built in this city & as many on the east side of the river, I intend to go on over the mountains this year will start in may next. I have sent a man to be making preparation for us I have 1 horse 3 yoke of cattle 6 cows I lost en head of cattle last winter, I have allso 3 waggons, so I find in the wilderness prosperity & adversity, peace & plenty, friends & foes why is it that wer must be so scattered in the world is a question that I will answer when you come to see me, where is Ebenezer if you knw tell me in your letter I want to hear from him report says he is crazy I do knot wonder at it but hope it is not so I am dreadfull sorry that he should depart from the right track but I am aware of the cause of it. wish he would come back, says one I wish I had wisdom enough to know whether Mormonism is right or not, such I would refer to the scriptures*

*he that lacketh wisdom let him ask of God who giveth liberally & upbraideth not & allso ask & ye shall receive now without revelation we know nothing about God nor salvation I have witten to John & Asenath, left them in ILL. Is my Father & Mother yet alive I would be glad to see them once more in the world would be glad to say much more but cannot with ink and pen now I want you should wright as soon as you get this so that we may hear from you before we go from this place but if it should not it would follow me over the mountains be sure to wright, the Lord bless you all & save you from sin & death Maria & the children sends their love to you all. my love & best respects from your son Brother & friend”*

**Nathan Robinson Sr. to his son,  
Joseph Lee Robinson, 1850**

*“July 12th AD 1850 I forgot to say Newbury”*

*“Deair Children after so long a time I take pen in hand to let you no that the blesed King in Heaven hath been pleased to let us live until I am 86 years old although I have been very sick and have Just recovered and hold may own since and I desire that these lines may find you and your wife and them Deair Children alive and well o that it had been so ordered in provendnce that you had been placed near me now Joseph I heaird about two yeairs ago that you was dead from Elenois [Illinois] bit Ebenezer rote me a leter in may last that he had a leter from mr Snow that said that his Brother Joseph was alive and was a Bishap [Bishop] at Calaforna [California] Now my dead son have you forgot your old father*

*that hath labord hard all his Days Did you forgit them things that I let you have when I moved from york state to oioh [Ohio] I must one [own up?] that I forgot a long time after you mved out to the west Now it was over 50 dollars Now that would help a pore old man that is past labor Now my deair son do remember me now as it respets you brothers and sistor that livs in this contrey are well and are doing well as fair as I know and nathan and Samuel are very good to us Now Ebenezer has ben very good and has maid the most what he was to pay me for 5 eairs time that I let him have upon condision that if he should take good conseses and if i should liv to bee an old man he should pay me one dollar a month for that time and he has paid the most of it Now you are so rich you must come and see us now this has been Laid a side until now January 25 1851*

*now my children you see that I am an old man I have seen Eighty seven New Years Days I have*

*got all my wood until yeaster Day a babttest Brother sent me a load and I am now very sick with a hevvy cold on the Lungs and my Deair children I can say that god my heavenly father is good and has given me a Long time to do do good in now I feel to say as did my blesed Saviour Except a man is converted and becomes as a litel child he can in no case enter in I remember seventy one yeairs ago the blesed Lord was pleased to show me that i was a siner and I cryed to Jesus for mercy and for a bout a weak I could hardly work or sleap until I found peas in beleving in Jesus as my only savour and the first time that my voys (voice) was ever heaird in publik in a religes meeting was I belive that Jesus Christ has redeemed my soul and I belied what I said and he feels to bee the same to me now as there is salvation in no other now I am sick of a havy cold abut ten days and I feal as the time is about to com to an End with now as it respects my children that livs in this contrey*

*are well Sarys Husband [David Robinson, the son of Jonathan and Sarah's 2nd husband] is ded he died the last of november she has two children and has a comfortable living Nathan and Samuel and familys are well Nathan and Samuel and wivs and Samuels two oldest girls have been babtised and united with the Camiellits [Campbelites] I have not heaird from Ebenzer since June I sepose you have heard that they have a dater [daughter] now my son do starte and rember me in your prayers so leve you all in the hands of the Juge of the hol Earth So no more poscript My Dear son Joseph if you cannot com out here no how at all do send me a letor right a way and send some of your gold in it as you no I let you have all my farming tols you no how as I am an old man goodbye to Joseph Robinson”*

The above letter was never mailed to Joseph Lee, but was among the papers of Nathan Robinson when he died.

**Joseph Lee Robinson  
to his father, Nathan Robinson, 1854**

*“To my dear Father, after so long a time I take my pen again to adress a few lines to my aged Father. I had suposed that he was sleeping with the fathers, but I find by a letter i received a few days since that my old father is yet alive for which I thank the Lord I have knot heard one word from him nor any of the Boys for a long time untill now, when in Nauvoo I wrote some letters to father and the Boys but got no answer from them then I concluded that if they did not think enough of me to wright that I would stop wrighting to them untill I heard from them again, I am sorry to hear that your circumstances are as bad as they are, but father you must yet trust in the Lord and acknowlege his hand in all things if you was here I would build you a room that you*

*could have by your self and let you have a horse and buggy to drive when you wished and a cow and pig and a garden and more if you wanted, but you are knot here but a great way of. and I supposed would knot wish to come if you could. if you was in the same faith with myself you would be glad to come here but you are knot. but for all that I think as much of you and would do as much for you if I had the opertunity. but I dont see how I can help you at present. I dont know when if ever I can come and we have nothing but specie currency here if I should undertake to send you anything I should knot have confidence that you would get it. but I am knot rich as you suppose knot that I know of but I am living in a good country where if worldly gain was all that I was after I could get rich but in thruth I am seeking the kingdom of heaven and its richeousness which if I am lucky enough to obtain. I shall after that be rich yea possess all things. if I dont get them in this life I*

*shall in that which is to come, then my father if I dont see you an do any thing for you in this life I shall be able to there. and than you will be sur to want some help as well as many of my brethren and fathers and friends. however this may seem like foolishness but verily will be true. If it was knot for Gospel or Dispensation of gathering I should knot be here but it is all wright I am where i should be connected with a good people and engaged in a good cause. father I was knot aware that I was owing you anything but for my raising and I supposed I was paying that debt by raising my boys you wished me to give an account of myself since I left you. or rather my children we have nine children living theyr names are, Oliver Lee. Ebenezer J. Anna Maria, Jane Jeneva, Mary Jane, Joseph Elija, Nathan Benjamin, Solomon and Josephene Elinora, as smart and interesting children as we commonly see. my oldest son will be 21 in too weeks from this time he is not married yet, I give him a good*

*mare and a fine pair of steers one cow and one year old higher [heifer] and too sheep and when they drove us from Nauvoo I had to leave my house and lot and land that I had paid for. I only got about one hundred dollars for property that cost me about one thousand dollars. but I was glad to leave there because we was obliged to, since I left there I have had some long and [?] egious [rigorous?] journeys to make to get here I have lost since I got to the mo. river 20 head of oxens and cows, and have a large family to maintain but I have a fine little stock growing I have some as good horses as there is in the country I have seven or eight head of horses and forty or fifty head of cattle and thirty of sheep and a fine farm. I am building this season, we build here with adobies that is sun Dried bricks, which do first rate for building, we do knot have very much snow here in the winter time for common, but a great deal in the montains, we raise fine crops of wheat in these vallies and it is*

*a fine stock country it is very dry in the summer season we have to irrigate our land to make good crops there is a good many things that I could talk about but I have room was time now, Maria sends her respects to you and mother and all of the rest of our folks, we are all well at present we would be glad to see you father and mother and all of the children again. tell Samuel if he pleases to wright to me and let me know how he gets along and what he is about tell him to sell out and pick up his duds and come here with his family and bring Asenath and her children with him if they will come & tell me when Nathan died and how much family he has left and where Sarah is and how whe is getting along and if you see Ebenezer again tell him to be sure to wright to me and let me know where he is for I want to wright to him but I do not know where to direct my letter.”*

*“July 20th as I missed sending this letter the last male. I again resume my pen to adress a*

*few more lines to you my aged Father. since I commenced this letter I have had another son Born to me. and I have received another letter from you but I do knot know how to send you any help at present it may be that I will have an oportunity of sending by some one that I know, something to help you a little before you leave this world. but Father you must knot worry nor fret yourself for you shall have food and rainment while you live in this world and you know Paul said to the saints in his day having food and rainment therewith be content make yourself as comfert able as you can while you live if I could I would be glad to help you but as I said I don knot know how I can at present, with in a few days past the fling [flying] grasshoppers have made us a visit in great numbers and given a touch have nearly destroyed my wheat and have done much damage to some I live about 17 miles north of great Salt Lake City which is quite a large City and building very fast the Indians have been*

*very troublesome the last season and we are now building in Cities all through the Territory which is settled by the latter day saints upwards of three hundred miles in length there are a good many incorporated Cities in the Territory I am now building in the City of Farmington I have my wall allmost built as we are building walls about our Cities, as time and room fails I must close for the present.*

*I remain your affectionate son*

*Joseph L. Robinson”*

[Added later]

*“To my Father Nathan Robinson and Lydia my good mother May God bless you my dear Parents I would be glad to see you I want you to write and tell me where Ann and Lydia maria is [these are daughters of his stepmother Lydia.] if you please get that little girl to wright [Mary Shipper?]*

*My love to all enquireing friends and to all the mores (the Moores, Lydia’s relatives) and more the Lord bless you all Amen”*

**Joseph Lee Robinson, to his nephew,  
Milton Robinson, 1884 (partial letter)**

*“And now, with regard to our fathers, I can remember my father said his Fathers name was Joseph, and it seems he said his grand Father Robinsons name was Samuel, but I could say sertain as to that, but I feel very sorry that I do not know or that I do not remember more about them. but it is certain that if i had time that I thought I could spare, and money to spend, I most certainly would search the records of the Eastern States untill I found more about them well I should have written to you long before this but I have been so very buisy all this season, as my son Jedediah was expecting to have tended the farm or helped me, he bought another farm*

*and then hired a young man to help us, he got in debt some for his new farm, and then he engaged for all summer doing Carpenter work, as there's a large amount of building going on here in our Cities and in this Country, and as he was some in debt for his new farm, and then the boy that he had hired left me, and then I found myself alone mostly this summer and I have got along the best I could have had an abundance to do, and a good many letters to wright, that I have neglected you, but you must pardon me this time once more, and i may do better in the future, I am some what afflicted with a Coughf now otherwise my health is remarkable good, and have ben all the Summer past, my family generaly are in very good health, there have ben I dont know how many Births of Grand and great Grand Children, and probably some deaths, and there have several marriages with our Grand Children, but not many plural marriages, for that is against theyre law, they say we must Cohabet with but one woman in*

*the Marriage relation, but they say cant you Mormons be like us, do as we do, they could very easily skip over other relations but we must not marry, but that we can never do, we must be virtuous, and true to our God and our Covenants, now with regard to these matters we could tell you a great deal if we had time and you would like to hear it, I will try to get my ugly picture taken so that I can send it next time I write, I have ben taken of it a good many times but have not got on yet that I would like to send to you, we were at a picture gallery not long since and had my picture, with my third wife, that is living and all her children that is living, in a family groop, we have them in large frames they look very good, but my separate ones are all gone, I was intending to have had one taken at that time but just then as ours was taken there was a fire in the town and they could do no more then, but I will try to get some to send to you, you must try to be patient as you*

*can but dont forget your prayers, and now with regard to births, deaths and marriages, with our Children and Childrens Children, do you wish, the names, and dates, of them all, if so I will gather them and send them right along to you, I ought to have them, to kep a record of them by all means I should. I think I had better bring this little letter to a close and send it to you sometime this year, hoping that find you, and all yours in good health and in a good humor and doing well, it is or has ben thanks giving day for th enation my wife got us up a royal dinner we have had a good time and some of our friends to partake with us. and I wish your self could have ben one of our guests. I should like to see you very much, but would more like to have you to receive the Gospel and become a Member of the Church, of Jesus Christ, of Latter day Saints, but then, you would be calld a poor deluded mormon, and you should be belied, and percicuted, and your name should be cast out as evil, and how would you*

*like that, my dear Boy. well, the Lord, Bless you, with a pure heart, clean hands, and good luck is my humble prayr and Blessing  
Yours truly with kind love, and Charity,  
Joseph L. Robinson, To My Beloved Nephew,  
Milton Robinson”*