

WORDS FROM THE PAST

Courtesy of Laurie Miller, Thank You Laurie

A little background on these letters...

These are all from my Great-Grandfather, George William Harlow, to my Great-Grandmother, Jessie Pearl Johnson during the time that they were "courting." She lived in Higbee, Missouri and he traveled working for Union Pacific. As you will see, it was touch and go for a while, but in the end they married on July 1, 1914 at Jessie's aunt's home in Higbee.

They are transcribed with the original spelling.

Letter Number One

Centralia Mo

Oct 1 1912

My Own Darling Pet,

I received your Dear Sweet letter yesterday - believe me I am so tired I can't hardly write but I dont believe I could get to tired to write to you Jessie: - I am working at Swift's Poultry House now and the show runs every night now so I am at work until 7:00 in the morning until 1/2 past 8 or 9 O'clock at night. Well my looks wont take me through this world so I guess I'll just have to work-

Say have you been to the Medicine show yet? I went every night. Yes and one of the curtain girls got a diamond ring for being the most popular the last night they would give a million votes with every nickel's worth of candy you bought and I bought a dollar's worth at once and got twenty million votes. =Gee= you ought to have had the candy I had HA! HA! The girls name that got the ring was Grace Eaton - the reason I was pulling for her was that another girl was about to get the most votes that I didn't like - and you know those girls up there at the office has been awful good to me - about finding me when you called up - and I was going to do one of them a favor - If I couldn't be good to the rest of them but believe me there is one Central girl I am going to be awful good to if I ever get the chance - do you reckon you know her - HA! HA!

Well-pet and you don't think it would be doing me right to tie me to a promise like that? Now how about your self would I be doing you right? Am I doing you right by asking you or not? Well pet I shure will be glad when the time comes when you will make that promise. For honest Jessie I would be the happiest boy in the world. Oh: yes pet ma-ma gave me a whole lot of encouragement the other day- She was telling about her troubles in her young days when pa and her was courting. She said Papa went to Iowa-and didn't even write to her. Now you see this happened after he had been going with her quite a while - and she said after he came back he took girls sleigh riding and took on just so and she said she thought some times she would forget him. And she said it made no difference how hard she tried she couldn't. And then she told me - if you loved me and if I loved you - we would have our ups and downs but we would marrie some day-if it was five years - she believes that God has certain matches to make. Well - I truly hope he has matched us out - don't you? Say pet are you going to Springfield? I dont know whether I will go or not - for your mother would be right with you all the time and if I was to get with you out there - and her along I would just about get my brain peeled - HA! HA! Say Jessie I was just thinking the other day - and now what are the chances - You see pet I am just dying to see you honest I am. And why couldn't I come up some night on the 7 O'clock train on the Carty and get off at the water tank and you see by that no one could see me - so they could run and tell your Ma - about it. Either that or come down on the Sta - freight about 7 or 8 O'clock - what do you say pet. Well - here is five pages pet and look how close and small writing so by that you are owing me about ten pages. Well say sweetheart it is now Eleven O'clock and I am going to have to get some hay to night so here goes for a bye-bye. I would like to see you right now and just squeeze you till you bellered real loud - and then kiss you good night - listen pet come soon - for I am getting awful lonesome to see you - if I can't see you right away - a return letter will help out a little.

Be good - and remember I still love you - just as much as ever - Bye-Bye Pet

From your lonesome true loving = Billy = XXXXXXXXXXXX

PS Come soon
XXXXXXXXX
Here is my last words pet please answer soon
I kissed Mama for you, Pet.

Pet I just now addressed your letter and put it like this:
Miss Jessie Johnson Centralia Mo
Guess I must be dippy Ha! Ha!



Letter Number 2
Centralia Mo
Oct 5 - 1912

My Dearest Jessie:- I received your letter this morning - and was more than glad to hear form you - although it was rather short-

Well the world is just the same as it ever was to me - how about your self?

Pet as I have been speaking to you about coming to see you some evening late - I dont guess I will come until well after next - the reason is that I will be on my way to Wichita Kansas to visit some of my kin folks -and I can just stop off then - it seems as though you arent very anxious to see me any way asyou never told me I could come in your letter and I had to beg you pretty hard over the telephone. Well Jessie as your Mother doesnt know we are writing to each other - and as I cant come to see you any more with any pleasure - also I have to beg - and beg - of you - to let me come when I do come it would be better for both of us to quit each other - and quit keeping each other heart broken all the time - at least it keeps me feeling awful bad anyway - I dont know just how about you - . I do wish I could only call you mine; Well pet I want to see you just once more anyway and then, when you want to see me you will have to do the asking for a while - for I think I have more than done my duty in begging you to let me come to see you actually I have asked you so much - that I almost seem silly by asking you anymore - people would say I was crazy if they only knew how I did take on over you - but I cant help it for I love you. Well I dont guess I will go to Springfield for there wont be any thing there for me. Well as I havent any news to tell you I will bring this to a close - Jessie please ans soon for I shure like to hear from you.

As ever your true broken hearted lonesome, Bill

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I am just thinking of the good old times we use to have when we talked to each other over the telephone and when I use to come to see you when you was working at nights. With tears in my eyes I will close - bye - bye - "Your Bill"

Ans Soon

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Letter Number 3
Centralia Mo
7/10 1913

Dear Jessie

Here is that promised letter that I promised you yesterday. Well Jessie it has been so long since I wrote you what you would call a love letter that I hardly know what to write you will shurely excuse me if it is bum, for I shurely am going to do my best perhaps I could do better if I knew the Sircumstances better,

if I only knew I was the only one you loved. I beleive I could almost write a News paper. I do hope your friend Lany has gotten over the heart trouble by now - well I know how to sympathize with him for I had heart trouble and my self - but it wasn't dangerous, it can be cured allright if you will only let a girl be the doctor. Have you had it I wonder if Lany has given you a scolding yet I hope he hasent for you know I dont like for my dear little girl to be scolded it is all right if I do it though isnt it. I expect you think that is what I think, if you do you are mistaken Jes - for I would rather take a beating than to say a cross word to you. You dont think I scolded you yesteday do =u= if I did I just couldnt help it. Lany may want you and like you and all that but nothing like I do - I had you first anyway - Ha! Ha! - Oh: well wee wont fuss over you for I think that would be silly. You are the judge - at least for my part anyway, if you should happen to think you could enjoy your self better with him than me, it would have to be allright I wouldnt have heart trouble but merly would try and forget, I am going to have to give my mother up. I am shure I could a sweet heart if I could her dont you think so. Well Jessie you must decide on one of us for you know your self you are not in Utah, and it woulnt be as hard now as it would be latter on in the future, for I have learned to care for you as much as I use to - it would be hard for me for a while - I guess though all of us could forget - couldent we - you must write tomoorow and tell me some thing please do -. But what ever you do dont have a date with me - at one place and one with another at another, for it wouldent work nine times out of ten and honestly Jessie it wouldent with you I dont beleive any way I am not going to do you that way any how. Oh: say Jes you knw I told you about writing to that girl in South D. Well any way I got a card from her - I will mail it to you in this letter, that isant being nice in me sending you some other girls cards, but I wouldnt think of doing it if I cared for her I suppose you know that do you not?

Well Jessie here is eight pages I suppose you already new it but any way if you do thank well I will be much oblige - I would have called you pet instead of Jes - or Jessie but you ain't yet. Hope I know by tomorrow now dont disapoint me with all the best regards from Mother and the rest

I remain yours to be
Sincerely and lovingly
WM Harlow



Letter Number 4

This is a letter from Bill to he and Jesse's friend Emma.

Centralia Mo

12/14/1913

Dearest friend Emma:-

I Received yours day before and shure was glad love well I am still in Old Centralia yet, and am working twelve hrs now acount of the 3rd trick Opr has been sick since Friday and now the first trick man in working his place we call it doubling so see we have to lend in overtime and by that you see I go to work at 7ik Pm and work until 7k am and day time is my time to sleep now, "G" I never slept this morning but this Evening I shure put n some hay. You know Emma I was just thinking this morning of what good times we use to have up there and I guess I never will forget those days I dont see how a person could I wish I could forget but I can't, what is Jess doing tell heer Hello and that I havent forgotten her yet but tell her I think her cousin I ought to hurt her a little any way you know she called me up on the telephone the other afternoon but we didnt get to talk long as some one else wanted the line and beleive me Emma her voice sounded (kindy) sweet see I hadent heard it for a long time I wonder if she cares for me now I dont guess she does, you know Emma if any one ever loved a girl I certinly did her and I just did any thing she asked me to do almost but it seemed like I ought to do it if it would please her do I guess she just got tired of me on that account but I thik the old lady had something to do with it as time came on for I could tell some day when I was with her that her mother hadet been treating her just right by the way she was acting and it made me just feel like loving her to death to try and make her happy but I guess its all over now, Poor Bill and Jess beleive me for a long time I use to think she would be the one for me and some

times now great big tears comes in my eyes when I get to thinking of her I dont see why I cant forget her, I do wish I could just for her sake, for she has asked me to, the girl I am going with now, is just like this Emma. I dont know what kind of a girl she is for I havent been with her enough but before that final wedding day I am going to find out and if she isnt a good girl I'm off of her. That was one thing about Jess I know she was the best girl that ever lived and that is one reason I thought so much of her, you know if we was married how I mean Jess and I Ha That we could see a jolly good old time and about on of a year take a trip somewhere that would be grand, Say Emma dont tell Jessie but I beleive some day it will happen yet honest I do, for as soon as I left that other girl two or three days it seemed like a joke moe than anything else. I dont see what in the dickens is the matter with me I might be going dippy seems like it sometimes. I think I will be clear off of all of them but then there comes a sudden change Ha! Ha! and think a man isnt just right then shure enough for that is what woman is for a man so there you are again, Ha! Ha! Ha! Beleive I will come up there with a slipery elm or some other elm and work out on ole Missus Pilkington and tell her Jess or her hide - - - I beleive she would concent but I expect the woman has had enough trouble I was only jooking she is a nice woman after all that (G) it is getting rather late going to have to quit soon. Well Emma I truly hope your old man's rib is getting better give him my best regards - and ask Jess for me if she wants me to write, to write first as I wrote last and it better be some letter too, you can show her this letter if you want to. Well here goes for a good bye hoping to hear from you real soon. I am as ever your friend Bill. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Billy
Bye - Bye Ans soon



Letter Number 5
Burlington Jct Mo
6/22 - 14

My own Darling Pet: -

Am going to look for another letter from you in am - I would have waited until I heard from you before I wrote this one but hun I had some good news and cant keep it any longer. Hun I was calling Moberly this morning and Mr. Lowe said is Harlow there and I said this is him now so he said Say I have got you fixed up for the first OK - and I said shure enough. and I said how is every thing in Moberly and he said just fine, but he said it wasent in Higbee - throughout - then he laughed -, beleive me I shure was tickled when he said it was ok on the first - so hun Dear I will shure be there and linsten hun I will stop in Moberly and get the Lisence and then come on over to Higbee -, and you was speaking of me asking Russell and Mabel if they cared for us coming there, why hun you know they don't - Ge hun I wish you were here to night I have just got two more trains and both prugers, one is 225 mins late and the other is 110 mins late so Willie will get some overtime to night, well every little helps, doesnt it. Say Dear you wear a 6 1/2 size ring dont you - Well I wont forget it bless it's little heart - I just worries abut that ring all the time, Ha! Ha! I dont know which you want me or the ring. Ha! Ha! And you say if you count the days first it wont happen well we will just show that saying something. =G= but I am so hot am almost burning down-, Well sweetheart only a few more days - and we will be together and I can call you all my own - am thinking of you all the time Dearr when I am awake, just think another week yet well it will be soon, but not to soon for me. Well Dear I am going to quit but you answer right away with all my love-, and a soul that am all yours

Wm Harlow
P.S. Hun I have got a book here for you to read soon as you come
Bye Bye - Bill
Hurry the 1st of July,
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Letter Number 6
Burlington Jct Mo
6/28 - 1914

My own Dearest:-

I recd your most dearest letter yesterday Well hun I guess this be the last letter you will get from me while your name is Miss johnson just think of it. Does it seem sudden to you - not by a long ways with me. For this last week has been the longest week I have ever lived through, and Jessie you dont know how I miss you - I aught not to though yet - but I think of you so often, that is the reason - I guess. I beleive I told you about me going to get off all right didn't I? Well any way I have got my pass and it reads pass Wm Harlow Burlington Jct to Centralia and Return Centralia to Burl Jct Wm Harlow and wife so every thing has gone so far, I also got a lettyter from Mabel and Russell today saying that they was all going to be at the train to meet us and then go down to their house and tear up Jack and no one knows about us going to get married down there but my folks and that will be nice to, I told them to be shure and not tell any one - the opr. that used to be here was talking to the agt here this morning and he asked his counter the agt here how he liked the new man of coarse that was mw - and I heard this conversatin and he said just fine - that he would make a good agt dome day. So - I said Thank you and he had to laugh. Dont guess he knew I was listening Ha Ha: Say hun you aught to have saw me the other day, you know there is a preacher boardng where I do and I am supposed to be married so he said to me at the table the other day "When is Mrs Harlow coming down and I had to think a while so I said in a few days, that I was going up there the first of the month and then was coming back the 3rd and I was just about to laugh all time to beleive me. I am all byt my self here today. The agt went to another town to a ball game today So I just came down and worked for him, he said when I come back he was going to lay off for two or three days and let me run the station so that will be nice to, wont it = Well hun dear I cant think of anything to write am just crazy to see you. I only wish it was tomorrow. I will tell you a whole lots when I see you - if I aint to bad excited Ha Ha! Hun if they wont let me have the lisenice in Moberly with out me being identified I will thell them to fone the depot office could I ? Well dear - I will quit on this one and will see you the first, wont go to centralia first I will go to Moberly and then come on over there so good bye until I see you.

Love and kisses,, yours only

- Bill _

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I wont forget the strap, (I'll fetch it ok)

The Obituary of Jessie's Aunt
MRS. MARY PILKINGTON DEAD

Mrs. Mary A. Pilkington one of our oldest and most highly respected residents, who had been near death for several weeks from the infirmities of age and who had been confined to her bed for three months, passed peacefully away at the home of her niece, Mrs. John Goin, at 3:00 Wednesday morning, April 9, 1924, aged 80 years. Deceased, whose maiden name was Cokeshott, was born in Manchester, England, on December 5, 1844, and came to America with her parents when 19 years old, the family locating at Kewanee, Ill., and in which city she was married in 1863 to Isaac Shephard, who preceded her to the grave many years ago. They moved from Kewanee to Bevier, Mo., being among the first settlers there when coal was discovered and the mines opened, and moved from there to Higbee some twenty-five years or more ago, when she was married to Joseph Pilkington, who died a few years later. She is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Anna Clift of Lafayette, Colo., and three sisters-Mrs. Harriet Davis, Taylorville, Ill.; Mrs. Margaret Jones, Independence, Mo., and Mrs. Alice Whaley, Chariton, Iowa. She also leaves a large number of nephews and nieces, among the latter being Mrs. Wm. Harlow whom she reared from infancy, and whom she loved as tenderly as if she had been her own child. Mrs. Pilkington at an early age united with the L.D.S. church and had since lived a consecrated christian life and was

generally looked upon as one of the community's very best women-one always ready to do more than her part in cases of sickness, misfortune or distress, and one who always had a pleasant smile and kindly word for all. Funeral Services will be held today a 2 p.m. from the L.D.S. church and interment made in the Higbee cemetery. Our sympathy goes out to the bereaved ones, and especially to Mrs. Harlow, who has lost one who was all to her that her own mother could have been.

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