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## Letter from E. Strong to Her Grandparents and Aunt, November 14, 1836

E. Strong

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St. Charles, St Charles, Mo., Nov. 14, 1836.

Dear Grand Parents and Aunt Harriet

Your grand children & niece and nephew, you think, are far away. We are indeed in Missouri, 1400 miles from Mendon, [N.Y.] but by no means in the "far west" – that point is yet unknown. It is somewhere, we suppose, the other side of the "mountains". This community sport with the idea of this being far west, and set it down as another evidence of the contracted and narrow views of the Quakers. "Why", say they, "we are not half way to the Rocky Mountains; and we think not half so much of going to them as you do of coming among us." All of which is indeed true and is a thing of every day occurrence, for men from this section go to the mountains and even beyond for trade and hunting. And what may surprise you, there is actually a smooth carriage road scarcely inferior to the road from Mendon to Rochester, in almost a strait [sic] line from this to Santa fe [sic] in the Mexican Mountains, a distance of more than one thousand miles, and which town you know is west of the mountains. The gentleman with whom we are residing himself laid out the road. Maj. Sibley says for a distance of 11 hundred miles, from the west boundary of this state to Sante fe [sic] is prairie, one vast ocean without a shrub or tree excepting at wide intervals a few hundred yards of woods. None of these clusters of trees are one mile in width and the whole distance, all the treeless land through which a part lay does not equal 30 miles, and these were so open that never a tree was removed for a road.

Our journey to Missouri, as you must have learned through several letters from our dear Julia to her friends, was pleasant and highly prosperous. It was also expeditious, 3 weeks in actual counting. When you recollect one week was expended in crossing the state of Ohio in our own carriage. We were a week by way of the Falls from Rochester to Hudson, a week from H. to Cincinnati; and a week from C. to St. Louis, a little less than 900 miles by water. We have found it economical and for our own convenience in this respect to locate in St. Charles, a small town, 1200 souls, 20 miles from St. Louis on the Missouri River. Mr. Sibley, with whom we board, resides one mile from the town. The situation is elevated and delightfully pleasant, and is said to be decidedly healthy. Mrs. Sibley has a school of young ladies, known as Lindenwood Seminary. Our dear J. [Julia] is assisting in giving lessons to the young ladies. I think she will tell you she is delighted with the employment, and the girls seem excessively fond of her. Even Mr. Strong when he returns, is greeted with cordiality and evident marks of pleasure by the young ladies.

You will be interested to be informed that living in Mo. is more pleasant to both of us than we had anticipated. We find the people, except the Catholic population, decidedly American. They are active, shrewd, hospitable, and on many subjects intelligent. They are our own people, our "kindred according to the flesh." We feel quite at home – at least I do, as much in any place, more than I ever did at Cmaiteon. [?] I know something is attributable to my change in circumstances. It must be home where my dear wife is found. And though the people are western in their habits and characters, we find intercourse with them pleasant. We can love and esteem them, and if I mistake not, begin to be esteemed by them.

In some respects Mo. has the appearance of a new country, particularly in its spare population, in the deficiency of good dwelling houses, and in the absence of literary and religious privileges; but in agricultural improvements, in smooth and delightful roads, in markets supplied with all varieties of

foreign and domestic commerce, and in the genteel dress and demeanor of the people, we are as old as western N.Y., and are scarce inferior to any part of the United States . In fact St. Charles and St. Louis, and some other towns have been settled more than one hundred and fifty years , Not as I supposed on coming to Mo. It is a sacrifice only to a limited extent. We have the conveniences of the older states. . We often wish our friends could look in upon us and see how tidy and comfortable our little room appears. If you will believe it, even in Mo. our rooms are not only plastered, and papered, but carpeted, and furnished as we could desire

I have commenced my labors, and find it necessary to be “all over”, early and late in promoting the interest of the Tract Soc. I shall probably find it necessary to be from home quite two thirds of my time. This to be sure is not the most agreeable – but then it is so delightful to return and greet in this land of strangers a smiling face, & find things in so nice a fix as Julia always has them. I assure you it is a pleasure which few like an agent can appreciate, and Julia, the dear creature above all others, was made for the place she occupies. At another time I will give you some account of the moral wants of this community.

Love to all our Mendon friends, particularly to Mother. With sincere affection, I am yours de E. Strong, jr.

( The last 7 lines are written on the top margin of a letter written Nov. 15, 1836, to – Miss Harriet Barnard, Mendon, – by “Your most attached niece and granddaughter.”)

[Several bracketed notes appear containing clarifications of the document. These are copied from the typescript copy. With the exception of this footnote, only those containing “sic” or “?” were added by me.]