

Fort Grame Texas

American 1 Sept 1851

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

No doubt it will alarm you my writing in place of Mrs Parks your daughter who died on the 15 June at a Mr Lamb's in Leon County on their way up the country, 30 miles from the place where I was taken sick and three of my family. They thought me dying. Mr Woods stopped with us in the house of a Mr Marshall. Christina, my fourth daughter died on the 8 June aged 14 years, of congestive fever, the fifth day after leaving the company. Those that was well went on with the waggons, indeed none of mine was free of sickness, two died afterwards, James aged 20 months died 13 June in the waggon as we went through a prairie 40 miles long and no house near. He was buried beside a little creek among a few trees: --Martha aged 12 and Janet 6 was so sick they could not

follow him to his grave. Martha got to Fort Grame and died on the 16, 24 hours after she got there, about 6 miles from our place beside a good docter but past his aid. She knew nothing for 3 days—They were left in a house in a strange country among strangers. They had the greatest of kindness shown them, every thing was brought for their comfort, respectable grave clothes free of all expense. They were weeks from the time they left. --We stayed ten weeks in Mr. Marshall's and ten days on our way: -- Mrs Park wrote you from New Orleans: -- We had 3 days voyage to Galveston. The Cabin Bay fell from the upper story of the boat and sunk to rise no more. Mrs Park was washing the childrens faces when he passed and lamented she had nothing to through (throw) in his way to save him. Chairs was thrown over but the current from the paddell wheel carried him away: -- Then three days at Galveston All in an Inn at Half a dollar a head, 31 in a company. Mrs Parks

and us had a large washing of dirty cloths, my two eldest girls took sick with the heat, her and me held on. Joking I said the old wives are better pile than the young girls—We knew nothing of sickness: --

Our direction was by Houston. A boat went two days earlier up the Trinity the company 31 in number all agreed to that. We should have 150 miles by land travel. Captain MacKenzie and a Mr Ballentyne, managers for the company, came to meet us at Galveston and having business at Houston MacKenzie and Major Holme went to Houston and bought their horses and hired wagons up the country they would get cheaper than we could at Navario where we should land and Ballentyne was with us and stayed till they came. The river had fallen so much we were landed at Mores Bluff 15 miles down.

A young may from England died going up River from drinking too much liquor at New Orleans one of our company. We camped beside Mr More. They were 10 days before they came. We were all so tired stoping. The wagons did not come for 4 days more. We were two weeks drinking muddy water from the River in a low place beside the wood. We had good washing water at a pond. With a pot and tubs we washed every change (of clothes) as it came off. We had only one change out of the chests. They were so blocked up among the luggage or on wagons to have move might be troublesome: -- The first week the men went a shooting and fishing. Mr Park shot a Chawcoon (raccoon?). The farmers came to ask them to hoe cotton and at half a dollar a day their meat and bed (room and board). Mr Park, John Paterson and Mr. Barron went to work at two houses four days. The English men only stayed 1 day. The work was too hard for them. They breakfast at 6. Work to 11 then rest in the shade to 3. Stop at 6. Mr Park never wrought easier work. Since he could work, was sorry he did not know of the place sooner. Mr Halleys was sorry at them

leaving so soon. I always say that we got all our sickness stopping there.

I and two of my daughters was two days sick before we left. Mr. Parks got sick the night before. Mrs Park said she had as good health as ever only for that finger she would say; it was hurt by a fish bone when helping to clean fish. The finger hurt the little one on the left hand it kept her from many a nights rest. That and a broken heart was the cause of her death.

We had some medicine the morning we started. I was much better and remarked to Mrs Parks how good in such a hurry and it would be a blessing if God was pleased to spare us all to our journey's end.

There were 5 waggons 4 with the luggage and 1 for the women and children. The men travelled. Mr Parks sat on a wagon he could not walk. There were 4 & 5 yoke of oxen in some of them and such oaths at these oxen I never heard: --We all got on till the third day. Mr. More a stone builder from London

stoped at Mr Lusk's, got work, he had not money to go farther, he drank all he could get, his wife and her sister a little girl died in two weeks only one little boy left with him. -- I was taken to Mr Marshall's that night the family all came next morning to see me. Some of them lay down with me sick. The wagon stoped all day expecting some more fit to go next day. Mrs Park and family stayed with us, next day (

friday) they went away leaving me and three of my family & Mr Woods who after got sick. Mrs Park was in better spirits saying she was much better and she was well but the finger. And would make my girls all the help she could with little Janis who after died. Hoping she would soon see me again. My mouth and teeth was black and they all cried in the wagon. They never expected to see me more: -- Then all got on till Monday a day to Mr Lamb's when Mr Park and family was left, he could not go further he was so weak. And died on Thursday 12th. Mrs.

Lamb told me he could speak until about ¼ hour before he died. Mrs Park fell back, fell back and said she was like Ruth in a Strange Land among a Strange people. They carried her to bed. She called the children to her and made them repeat some hymns. They buried him on Friday. She spoke a little and of writing to you but she could not compose her mind. She told them of our kindness to them and of ten Sovereigns they got from us at Galveston and of their engagement and said she would go with us and do anything she could: --

Saturday Mrs Lamb went to wash some clothes for herself and Mrs Park that were required upon William and left her sitting singing a hymn to little William to make him sleep. One came calling that Mrs Park had fallen. They carried her to bed. She never moved till Monday morning. They were ordered to bathe her head with cold water. They kept bathing all night, in the morning she spoke and

looked better. Mrs Lamb went to her at breakfast. Said what do you want to eat: She looked and said she wanted water. She brought water and lifter her head to drink. Mrs Park had told Mrs Lamb to call her Faney after Wm died and she now looked surprised to hear one say Faney in a strange place. At evening she appeared worse and never spoke more. She died on Tuesday night. The children said little at their fathers death but they all fell on there mother and cried wonderfully: -- Mrs Lamb has seven children of her own and no servant for no girls serve but blacks and many choose to have none. A Mrs McAdams and Mrs Ridgeway waited much on them in their sickness, took away the children. Mrs Ridgeway got Wm in her arm and David behind and rode away 5 miles after their mother's funeral. Mrs McCallum, sister to Mrs Lamb, got Arch and Lillias, they are near neighbors. I expected to take them all. When we got up

thinking it my duty to do so coming from one place. I heard of Williams nurse saying, "if I took Wm from her I might as well take her life". She would not part with him: --- Mr Barran from England who came on the voyage with us and was with us all the time 6 weeks after the deaths came down the country to see us and all the sick folks that was left by the way. He asked Arch and Lilly if he might take them with him it would save a little expense by the time we were able to go up, I thought it my duty to take them but so long as we were near others I could look after them and take charge of the chests, they were so dirty with the dust my daughters would not let them go away. I expected to bring David with me. I saw them all at Mr Lamb's. She said she was afraid of me taking them but go to law I could not take him. She got him when no one was to look to him and sat with him in sickness. I expected to take David with us but he

would not go. They would rather keep him as part with him. They have only one little girl such as David. She cried when we had come for the two boys and said we would take her two little brothers. I told them I would write you, if you were willing to let them stay I should not take them from them. I was to say they should be well used every one I have inquired at say so:-- Lilly cried all day after Mr Barran came for them Arch kicked and scolded. Mr McCallum was sorry to see them go away. They were so attached to them. He wished them back. Their luggage is with ours. I intend to keep them also and will look after David and William. I expect he knew me, he came in my arms but held out his little hand to "Ma" and "Pa" as they are teached to call them not to trouble them to say Mr and Mrs Ridgway. He made Mr & Mrs Parks coffins and charged nothing for his trouble:-- I wish you and

the friends to say what you think best to be done with the children and write us as soon as convenient, and direct "Mr Wood near Fort Grame Texas America". We expect to stop here till the season cool before we go to our land. We are near the Docter and market. We have fresh meat twice a week at 2 ½ cents the #. We have a comfortable cabin good water few have the like this summer here. We have not seen any rain to count for since we came, the grass is quite burned up and not a vegetable to be seen. The sun has a burning heat it is cool in the morning and evening you will burn your head and feet to go uncovered in the sun. There is not a day but some one is sick or has a chill and will be so until climated. We have the privilege of milking a few cows which is very useful to us. The country is rich and good, it is a great change. The manners and living are entirely different. We must not look on any thing but difficult in the first year. Had it

been the will of God to spared us all, but he doeth all things for good. They are all gone from the evil to come. Let us say with Job, "He giveth and he taketh away and blessed be the name of the Lord". Hoping you are enjoying the blessing of good health.

I am, J C

(Signed) Mr & Mrs Wood