Joseph F. and his sister. Beyond the usual common maladies, they both confronted the increasing effects of aging. Joseph F. wrote with a touch of humor, “We are all usually well—but growing older at an accelerated pace, like the cart-wheel rolling down the hill, which gains speed as it nears the bottom!”

Near the end of 1916, Joseph F.’s usual vigor took a permanent turn for the worse. Extracts from his journal show some of the health problems he faced near the end of his life:

I had a very painful, restless night; I could not rest.

I passed a most sleepless and uncomfortable night, with great difficulty to get full breath.

My heart was throbbing with rapid violence, and my head swam, and my eyes dimmed until I could scarcely see.

From the thirty-five surviving letters from this decade, it appears that Joseph F. and Martha Ann visited each other from time to time, particularly during general conferences of the Church and family celebrations. Joseph F.’s already-rigorous schedule as a Church leader took on even more demands, a workload he maintained until health issues forced him to slow down in 1916.

Throughout this decade, Martha Ann continued to care for her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. As much as possible, she worked at home and continued making temple clothes. She expected to die long before her brother would, but as it turned out, she lived five years beyond his death.

Martha Ann always treasured her brother’s letters. On 3 March 1913 she penned these words:

I certainly do appreciate your kindness to me poor old crippled up woman that I am I dont know what ever I would do if it was not for my dear good noble grand dear beloved generous harted even more than I could ever expect & I feel in my heart to say God bless you for ever. for you have helped me to bare my burdens helped to lighten the load that has rested on me if it had not have been for you I surly would hav sunk under the load I feel truly greatfull to you mor than I can express.

The known letters between them of this final decade make few references to local and world events. The family is by far the predominant focus—a fitting finale to nearly six decades of correspondence between Joseph F. Smith and his “Dear Sister.”

1. The postmark on the envelope indicates that it was processed at 7:30 p.m. at the Salt Lake City Post Office on the day it was written. Typewritten in blue ink on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the Trustee-in-Trust.

Martha Ann Harris,
214 So. 3rd. West St.,
Provo City, Utah.

My Dear Sister Martha:
My Dear Sister

Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 19 September 1910 (p. 1)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Office of
Trustee-in-Trust
Salt Lake City

Sept. 19, 1910.

Martha Ann Harris,
314 2nd West St.,
Provo City, Utah.

My Dear Sister Martha:

It has been some time since I heard from you or you from me. On the 4th. of July I started on a tour, in company with Bishop Hibbley and family, in the hope that it would be beneficial to my health. We followed this delusive hope to New York, across the sea to Dover, England, and Antwerp, Belgium, thence to Holland, thence to Scandinavia through Germany and back to Germany again, thence to Switzerland and France and back again to England, the native land of our dear mother, thence returning to New York and this city, arriving here on September 3rd, two weeks ago last Saturday, during which time I have been confined to my bed with asthenic-rheumatism. Many times during the past two weeks or more I have been wondering how it was with you and all your children and with our sister Jerusha who I so seldom see, so I thought I would just write you a line so say "Howdy" and express the wish that you may all be in the enjoyment of good health and still in the pursuit of happiness.

I was very much grieved on noticing in the paper

Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 19 September 1910 (p. 2)

the sad accident that happened to one of the employees a few days ago in the Startup Candy Factory. I have not heard whether the accident terminated fatally or not but the unfortunate one, together with his family, have my sincere sympathy. Brother John has called regularly to see me since my return home and once laid his hands upon my head and blessed me for which I felt very thankful and from which I derived much comfort. My friends have been very kind to me by warding off, as far as possible, unpleasant duties and lightening my responsibilities as far as they possibly could. I am beginning to make some substantial improvement now and hope before a great while to be on my feet once more.

With love to all the children, I am,

Affectionately your brother,

Joseph F.
My Dear Sister Martha:—

It has been some time since I heard from you or you from me. On the 4th. of July I started on a tour, in company with Bishop Nibley and family, in the hope that it would be beneficial to my health. We followed this delusive hope to New York, across the sea to Dover, England, and Antwerp, Belgium, thence to Holland, thence to Scandinavia through Germany and back to Germany again, thence to Switzerland and France and back again to England, the native land of our dear mother, thence returning to New York and this city, arriving here on September 3rd, two weeks ago last Saturday, during which time I have been confined to my bed with sciatic-rheumatism. Many times during the past two weeks or more I have been wondering how it was with you and all your children and with our sister Jerusha who I so seldom see; so I thought I would just write you a line so say “Howdy” and express the wish that you may all be in the enjoyment of good health and still in the pursuit of happiness.

I was very much grieved on noticing in the paper (p. 2) the sad accident that happened to one of the employees a few days ago in the Startup Candy Factory. I have not heard whether the accident terminated fatally or not but the unfortunate one, together with his family, have my sincerest sympathy. Brother John has called regularly to see me since my return home and once laid his hands upon my head an blessed me for which I felt very thankful and from which I derived much comfort. My friends have been very kind to me by warding off, as far as possible, unpleasant duties and lightening my responsibilities as far as they possibly could. I am beginning to make some substantial improvement now and hope before a great while to be on my feet once more.

With love to all the children, I am,

Affectionately your brother,

Joseph F. Smith

3. Charles Wilson Nibley was the presiding bishop of the Church at the time. See biographical register, “Nibley, Charles Wilson.”

4. Joseph F.’s wife Mary Taylor Schwartz accompanied him on this trip. Joseph F. spoke to missionaries and Church members in each of the countries he visited and also did some sightseeing. See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and R. Q. Shupe, Joseph F. Smith: Portrait of a Prophet (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 177–79.

5. Joseph F. and Martha Ann’s mother, Mary Fielding Smith, was born in Bedfordshire, England, on 21 July 1801.

6. Salt Lake City.

7. Sciatica, also known as sciatic rheumatism, occurs when the sciatic nerve at the base of the spine is compressed, making it painfully difficult to sit, stand, or walk. Anthon H. Lund visited Joseph F. on the day he returned from his European tour: “In the afternoon we went in to see the Professor. He has suffered with Sciatica the whole distance from here and back again on his European trip. He says when he lies down he is all right but when he is up he is suffering much pain.” Anthon H. Lund, journal, 3 September 1910. See John P. Hatch, ed., Danish Apostle, The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1912 (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2006), 437.


9. The semicolon is written in pencil.

10. A Salt Lake newspaper reported, “Provo, Sept. 17.—William F. Dunn, engineer at the Startup candy factory discovered something wrong with the belting last evening, and while endeavoring to adjust the trouble, was terribly injured by the machinery. He was dragged on to the shaft, which performed several revolutions before it could be stopped. The unfortunate engineer sustained a dislocation of the right knee, his collar bone was broken, and a screwdriver which he carried in his hip pocket was driven through his side, protruding from his back. However, it is believed he is not injured internally, and hopes are therefore entertained for his early recovery.” “Serious Accident,” Deseret News, 17 September 1910, 9.


12. Signed in pencil and underscored with typewriting.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 7 NOVEMBER 1910

Salt Lake City, Utah—

Nov. 7th 1910

Martha Ann Harris

214 South 34th West Street,

Provo City, Utah Co. Utah

My Dear Sister Martha:—

I hope you are well, and that you are having a good visit with Jerusha. I was sorry you went off so unceremoniously the last time you were here, or just after the close of conference; I expected you to remain here another day or two at least, and was surprised to learn you had gone without even saying goodbye.

I have no news to write. I am gaining a little, but very slowly, in strength. My trouble has by no means entirely left me. I am still lame. I send you my cheque for $10.00,— which may come in handy for a few trifling things you may need.

Tomorrow will be a day of good fortune or of calamity and disaster for Utah, and especially for this city. If the Republican Party shall win—there will be prosperity and peace. Every democratic vote cast will be in favor of the so-called American Party—and against my friends. Affectionately your Brother. [p. 2]

Let no man deceive or wheedle you or any body you can influence to the contrary—to vote for Tom Kearns’ party; and the Salt Lake Tribune. Every democratic vote cast in Utah will be in the interest—more or less of the bitterest foes of Utah and of the mormon people, in the combination known as “The American Party”. Any republican who will desert his party at this election—in Utah—for any cause—I don’t care what it is, is either a traitor to his party or is sadly deceived or in error. If my party had faults I desired to amend or eradicate from it, I would not fly to my enemies to do it but would stay with my party and benefit it if I could.

13. The postmark on the envelope indicates that it was processed at Salt Lake City Post Office on 8 November 1910 at 9:30 a.m.


15. The 80th Semiannual General Conference was held on 6–7 and 9 October 1910.


18. OED defines wheedle as “to use influence or flattery to persuade someone to do something.”

19. Thomas Kearns, a prominent Catholic businessman and politician.

20. The Salt Lake Tribune had been an anti–Latter-day Saint newspaper from the time it was first published in 1870 but had become less strident when Kearns purchased it in 1901. Nevertheless, it was still often the voice of opposition against the Church.

21. Anthon H. Lund reported the election results: “I was anxious about the result as it has been a very hard fought campaign with much bitterness and personal abuse. It was pleasing to learn that the Americans were beaten. ‘The country seems to have gone Democratic.’ Anthon H. Lund, journal, 8 November 1920; quoted in Hatch, Danish Apostle, 423.
My Dear Sister Martha:

I hope you are well and that you are having a good visit with George.

I was sorry you went off to an emergency the last time you were here, or just after the close of Congress, I expected you to remain here another day or two, but I am surprised to learn you had gone without even staying good-bye.

I have no news to write. I am gaining a little, but very slowly in strength. My trouble has by no means entirely left me; I am still lame. I send you my cheque for $100, which may come in handy for a few shifting things you may need.

Tomorrow will be a day of good fortune or of calamity and disaster for Utah and especially for this city. If the Republican Party shall win there will be prosperity and peace. Every democratic vote cast will be in favor of the scattered American party and against my friends! Affectionately your brother.

Dec. 24—1910

Martha Ann Harris
214 South 3rd West St. Provo City.

My Dear Sister Martha:—I certainly wish you a cheerful joyous Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year and an endless succession of them.

Julina is still suffering with rheumatism but keeps on her feet, and never stops from morning till night. Alice K., is also troubled with rheumatism. I am some better. The rest

22. From Joseph F.'s letterpress copybooks; original not extant.
My Dear Sister

Joseph F. Smith

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 3 APRIL 1911

Salt Lake City, Utah, Apr. 3r

Martha Ann Harris

Provo, Utah Co.

My Dear Sister Martha:—

I send you herewith my cheque for $20.00 which accept with my compliments and love.

Your letter of Feb. 26th came to me Feb. 28th. I have been so busy that I have neglected my correspondence. In fact I have no time for myself—nor for my family or friends.

I can only attend to my public duties imperfectly for the want of more time and strength and ability. My kindred will therefore not have much pleasure nor profit in me. I am grieved over Joseph's condition. We pray for him every day at home, and every week in the Temple—and yesterday in our Fast meeting. God only can give relief. Conference is on us. We are all moderately well. With love, your brother Joseph F.

May 16th, 1911

P.S. I got a card from cousin Josephine Fielding Heath, from Smithfield, Cache Co. Last evening informing us that her daughter Seraph 25 died the day before, i.e. on Sunday the 14th inst. So you will see she died on your birthday anniversary. Julina 26 had to go off somewhere to day with “Aunt Em”, 27 so she is away from home.

Josephines daughter will be buried to day, at Smithfield.

Our folks are all pretty well just now for which we are all very thankful.

Give our love to the girls and all friends, and reserve your share to yourself.

Affectionately your brother Joseph F.

25. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 6 May 1909; herein, note 165.
26. Martha Ann was born on 14 May 1841.
27. Based on Mark 7:37, the line comes from Elisha A. Hoffman's hymn “He Doeth All Things Well,” published in 1879.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 14 MAY 1911

Beehive House

Salt Lake City, Utah

May 14—1911

My Dear Sister—

Martha Ann.

We have not forgotten that you have reached your Seventieth mile stone on your life’s journey today. 28 While we know you have been compelled to pass through many narrow places, and your path has been—all too—rough and thorny, yet we cannot fail to see the hand of Providence has not deserted you always. Your life has been spared—your faith unimpaired, your hopes have not failed you, you have learned to kiss the hand that held the rod of your afflictions, and dealt out mercies in the hour of need, and to say from your heart “He doeth all things well.”

You have had experience to prove that God is more kind and loving to ward His children than is Man. God does not err—nor fail but Man is full of weakness. I send you $20.00 for a little birth-day gift. Affectionately your brother Joseph F.

May 16th, 1911

PS. I got a card from cousin Josephine Fielding Heath, 29 from Smithfield, Cache Co. Last evening informing us that her daughter Seraph 30 died the day before, i.e. on Sunday the 14th inst. So you will see she died on your birthday anniversary. Julina had to go off somewhere to day with “Aunt Em”, 31 so she is away from home.

Josephines daughter will be buried to day, at Smithfield.

Our folks are all pretty well just now for which we are all very thankful.

Give our love to the girls and all friends, and reserve your share to yourself.

Affectionately your—brother Joseph F.

28. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 6 May 1909; herein, note 165.
30. Located ninety miles north of Salt Lake City and seven miles north of Logan, Smithfield was originally known as Summit Creek when it was founded in 1857.
31. Julina Lambson had been the second counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency since 3 October 1910. See biographical register, “Heath, Seraph Celestia.”
32. Julina Lambson.
N. B. We have just got word that Abraham Cannon’s son, now in Holland—or France died to day—of appendicitis. This is sad news. I have been so busy I neglected to send this as I should.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 29 MAY 1911

May 29th 1911

My Dear Sister Martha Ann,—

I got the sad word last evening thro’ Julina, that Joseph Albert had passed over the dark river to the great majority beyond. While it is always sad and sorrowful to pass thro’ the gloomy shadows of the dark valley of death, there are some things much worse than death itself. A living death is more to be dreaded than the final sleep, and rest from the fatal ills of mortality. Joseph is all right now. He is beyond the power of death. Let me know what you need, and when the funeral will be—Ever—your Brother, Joseph F.

P.S. Julina and all the folks send you their love and sympathy in your hour of trial and sorrow. You must bravely sustain your trial—for Joseph is at rest, and is much better off than he has been for months, or possibly could have been if he had lived.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 6 NOVEMBER 1911

Nov. 6th 1911

Martha Ann Harris—

214 South 3rd West St. Provo,

My Dear Sister Martha:—

44. Lester Jenkins Cannon, son of Sarah Ann Jenkins and Abraham H. Cannon, was serving a mission in the Netherlands when he suffered from appendicitis complicated with peritonitis. He died on 16 May 1911 in Lille, France. See biographical register, “Cannon, Lester Jenkins.”

45. From Joseph F.’s letterpress copybooks; original not extant.

46. Julina Lambson.

47. Martha Ann’s son, Joseph Albert Harris, died on 28 May 1911 at age forty-nine, leaving behind his wife, Johanna Patten, and six children. A Provo newspaper reported that he died of “nervous exhaustion after several months’ illness.” See “Former Provo Man Dead,” Daily Herald (Provo), 30 May 1911, 1. See also Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 3 April 1911, herein.

48. Written upside down in the top margin.

49. From Joseph F.’s letterpress copybooks; original not extant.
I write to inform you that our brother, John, is in exceedingly bad health.44 Last Thursday he returned from a visit to Ray Davis,45 up north with a severe cold, which immediately developed into pneumonia—or lung-fever. He has been confined to his bed, under the care of a trained nurse since last Friday morning, without any symptoms so far as can be discerned, of improvement or relief. The general impression being, that he has steadily grown weaker.

The Doctor46 gives no hope for his recovery, but we are all hoping and praying for his recovery.47 His age is against us, and his heart seems very weak.

We will keep you posted by letter or phone as to his condition. I have a cold myself—but we are generally well. With love your brother

Joseph F.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 22 DECEMBER 1911

Salt Lake City, U.T. Dec. 22 1911

Martha Ann Harris
Provo, Utah—

My Dear Sister Martha—

I send you herein, my cheque for Ten—(10) dollars as a small remembrance of Christmas.48 I hope this will enable you to prepare a nice little Christmas dinner for yourself and the two little grand children49 who are keeping their Grand Mother Company in her widowhood.

We had a glorious meeting this morning50 in the T. Annex51 in honor of Uncle Joseph’s52 birth-day anniversary, tomorrow.53 I have written our poor, proud Cousin Ina54 and sent her enough for her Christmas dinner—Hoping you are well I am your bro. Joseph F.——.

MARTHA ANN TO JOSEPH F., 26 DECEMBER 1911

RECEIVED
DEC 29’11
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE54
Provo City December the
26 1911
Mr Joseph F Smith,

55. Joseph F. sent several people checks to cover Christmas dinners at this time. See, for example, Joseph F. to Ina D. Coolbrith, 20 December 1911; Joseph F. to Bishop Franklin B. Tegney (7th Ward, Salt Lake City), 21 December 1911; and Joseph F. to Jerusha Smith Pierce, 22 December 1911.


57. The journals of most of those who likely participated, including Joseph F., Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, and Joseph Fielding Smith, are held in the Church History Library and are closed to researchers, so additional information about this gathering is unknown. The meeting is not mentioned in the Journal History of the Church.

58. The Salt Lake Temple Annex was designed by Joseph Don Carlos Young in 1866, constructed in 1888, and demolished in 1962 and replaced by a temporary annex that was replaced in 1966 with the annex currently in use. The annex accommodated three hundred people in the main assembly hall, which featured a podium for speakers. See James E. Talmage, The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries Ancient and Modern (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), 255–59.


60. Another celebration was held on Saturday, 23 December 1911. James E. Talmage noted, “This evening wife and I were among the invited guests at the Smith anniversary gathering of the Centennial Memorial party in the celebration of the dedication of the Joseph Smith monument. The party was given by Pres. Smith, at the Lion House.” James E. Talmage, journal, 23 December 1911, BYU. The printed program, included in Talmage’s journal, indicates the gathering was held in the “Assembly Rooms at 5 p.m. Sharp.” An extended report of the event appeared in a Salt Lake newspaper, “Vermont Party/ Gathers on Birthday of Prophet,” Deseret News, 25 December 1911, 1.

61. Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith) spent most of her life in the San Francisco Bay Area and kept her Latter-day Saint heritage hidden. Following the death of her older sister Agnes Charlotte Smith, Ina cared for her niece and nephew, taking work at the Oakland Free Library, where she later mentored prominent figures such as Isadora Duncan and Jack London. Following the devastating 1906 fire and earthquake, Ina found herself in financial difficulty.

62. Stamped with blue ink in the top left margin of page 1.
my dear beloved brother your favor containing the check for ten dollars came saffly to hand yester day after noon and a hankerchief & a poto of your self from Aunt Edna,48 & cards from Rachel & Edith48 & I thank you all very much I opreicate all more than words can express I was truly thankful to you for the money it will help me thru this cold weather after all you let me have while I was there the last time I did not expect any thing more I feel bad to think [p. 2] you have to do so much for me. Hyrum48 sent me 50 dollars bless his dear good soul, but it took it all to pay for the pavement & for the taxes Franklin48 wrote & told me he would try & send me enough to pay my taxes but I guess he has not been able to rais it yet I try & be as carefull as I can but there is a dream all the time for something I know I have to impose on you all the time. I am still very lame I have to limp round & do the best I can. my left hip pains me of nights so I can not [p. 3] 5 rest much.49 5 I know now I know you have troubles enough of your own with <out> me bothering you with mine. I red of Aunt Marys50 mother50 pasing away in the paper it is few people that has no pain like she was that is not our lot ours is to suffer pain. She has must have been a wonderfull women I know she will miss her so bieeing right there with her so long dear little Royell52 will miss her to bless his sweet dear little heart pleas give my love to Aunt [p. 4] Mary & tell her I would liked to have went to the funeral but I was not able to come even if I could have come. I never bird of her death until she was buried. the girls are none of them very well Arte Sarah nor Jessie52 Sarahs baby52 has been very poorly with gathering in her head caused I guess fom cutting her teeth the children are home from school with me this week & I am glad to have this help I am so lame please give my love to your folks the children [p. 5]53 joins me in love & thanks to you they think there is no one on irth like thir uncle John. now my dear brother I sincerly thank you again, with all my heart, we had enought to go your greatfull & affectionate sister Martha A Harris [p. 6]

I got a letter fom little Franklin the other day <they are in mexico> they were all well & the children were going to school & doing nicly53

PS I am so glad you can help our poor misguided cousin Ina54 would that she could see the right way be fore it is to late please excuse all mistakes it is so hard for me to write at best

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 22 JUNE 1912

Salt Lake City, Utah, June 22d 191256

Martha Ann S. Harris

Provo—Utah Co.

My Dear Sister Martha:—I have just written to Sister Jerusha.57 She is a very sick woman.57 I called on and blessed and prayed for her several weeks ago, while in Brigham City.57 Since then I have written to her and received letters from Eli,58 about her. She is not able to write, herself. I rec’d a letter from Eli this morning, he thinks his mother is a little better than she was, but is very weak. She has jaundice,59 or the in action of the liver—and is exceedingly yellow, or dark. She is having a long seige of it, and I hope she will pull through. My folks are all usually well. Aunt Sarah60 is visiting with her sisters at Fielding—in Box Elder Co.60 I send you $50 which we will not come amiss— I hope you and the children are well. Give my love to them all—in which all here joine. With love your brother, Joseph F.——

63 Edna Lambson.
64 Joseph F. and Julina Lambson’s daughters Rachel Smith and Edith Eleanor Smith.
65 Hyrum Smith Harris.
66 Franklin Hill Harris.
67 “[26 DEC 1913]” is written above “3” in an unknown hand.
68 Martha Ann suffered multiple accidents during her life, which may have added to her discomfort as she grew older. In addition to falling in 1892 (see Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 20 June 1892, herein), she fell and broke her right arm in 1898, an injury that, according to her granddaughter, caused her severe suffering “for many months, not only physically but emotionally.” See Carole Call King, “History of Martha Ann Smith Harris, 1844–1923” (unpublished manuscript in editors’ possession), 5. She had also previously fallen and shattered a bone in her knee (see Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 7 March 1894, herein), and she may have suffered from a hernia as well (see Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 1 February 1906, herein, note 109).
69 Mary Taylor Schwartz Smith, Joseph F.’s wife.
71 Royal Grant Smith, son of Mary Schwartz and Joseph F., was five years old at this time.
72 Martha Artimissa Harris, Sarah Lovina Harris, and Jessie Lena Freckleton.
73 Verna Passey, born on 18 July 1910 to Sarah Lovina Harris Passey. See biographical register, “Passey, Verna.”
74 “[26 DEC 1913]” is written above “5” in an unknown hand.
75 Franklin Hill Harris was apparently working as a railroad contractor in New Mexico.
76 Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith). See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 22 December 1911, herein.
77 Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-three, and Martha Ann was seventy-one.
78 Joseph F. noted in his diary, “Wrote to Jerusha, Martha Ann, & Sarah E.” Joseph F., journal, 22 June 1912.
79 Jerusha Smith died five days later, on 27 June 1912. Joseph F. reported, “65 years today since the Martyrdom. At the Temple ... Jerusha died today.” Joseph F., journal, 27 June 1912.
80 Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah, is about sixty miles north of Salt Lake City.
81 Eli Thomas Pierce, son of Jerusha Smith and William Pierce. See biographical register, “Pierce, Eli Thomas.”
82 Jaundice, a yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, is very often the result of liver disease such as hepatitis or liver cancer.
83 Sarah Ellen Richards.
84 Fielding is located about eighty-four miles north of Salt Lake City.
My Dear Sister

Salt Lake City, Utah, Aug. 20th 1912

Martha Ann Harris
214 South 3rd West St. Provo—

My Dear Sister Martha.

I hope these few lines will find you well and will remind you that you still have a brother in the “land of the living.” I am pleased to say I am in usual health, and from day to day bent on the discharge of my duty to the best of my ability and understanding.

I am delighted also to say that my family are enjoying their usual degrees of health and aptitude to make the most they can out of it. You know my family are workers. They spend no idle hours in gossip, and waste no precious moments in useless repining. The Lord has been and is most merciful to me and mine.

We have with us Vonna Griffin, granddaughter of our deceased Sister Sarah. She is earnest Griffin’s daughter. She has a faint resemblance to her lamented Grand-Mother both in features and personal characteristics. A nice, quiet, easy-going girl. She is under the Doctor’s care for some kind of trouble with her eye-lids, and—of course—in the absence of her Uncle John, and the non-existence of his home, she is staying with us.

Aunt Julina is overwhelmed with home—and Relief-Society duties and responsibilities. She knows no rest except in the “wee-Smah” hours of the night. But she is holding her own remarkably well. Aunt Alice K. expects to start for Arizona tomorrow night on Y.L.M.I.A. duties. She is the Treasurer of the General Board and also a member of it—and does her own house work, mending and making, cooking, washing and ironing, etc. etc. Aunt Edna is a Temple worker, and spends most of her time there. Our little Emma keeps the home. Aunt Sarah not only has the watch-care of her home, but that of Darling Nonies’ motherless

85. Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency.
86. Found in the Bible; see, for example, Job 28:13, Psalm 27:13, Isaiah 38:11, and Ezekiel 32:32. The phrase is also found in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants; see Mosiah 14:8 and Doctrine and Covenants 84:3.
88. Repining means “to yearn for something; to be discontented, to complain or to fret.”
89. Sarah Smith Griffin died on 6 November 1876. Her granddaughter Vaunie Griffin was sixteen at the time this letter was written. See biographical register, “Griffin, Vaunie.”
90. Ernest Adelbert Griffin, the son of Sarah Smith Griffin and grandson of Hyrum (Joseph F. and Martha Ann’s father) and Jerusha Smith.
91. John Smith.
93. Wee-smah refers to the “wee, small” (early) hours of the morning.
94. Alice Ann Kimball.
95. The Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association was originally organized by Brigham Young as a retrenchment society for his daughters. It eventually became a Churchwide organization for young women. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 3 May 1872, herein, note 224.
96. Emma Smith, daughter of Joseph F. and Edna, was unmarried at this time. See biographical register, “Smith, Emma.”
97. Nonie is a nickname for Leonora Smith, Joseph F. and Sarah Ellen Richards’s daughter, who passed away on 23 December 1907. She was survived by her four children.
children as well as Minervas sweet little flock and Willards magnificent little Man. Aunt Mary and boys are running a 40 acre farm, at Taylorsville. The home keeps itself just now. They have built a large Hay barn and stables; put up a hundred tons of hay—or less, and raised grain for their yearly keep. As for myself I continue at my daily grind in the Office. I need say no more. I send you $10 with the love and best wish to yourself and all from your affectionate brother, Joseph F.—

**JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 22 NOVEMBER 1912**

Salt Lake City, Utah, Nov. 22, 1912

Martha Ann S. Harris—

214 South 3rd West St., Provo—

My Dear Sister Martha—

A few days ago I received a letter from Cousin Ina, acknowledging receipt of a copy of the last Conference report which I sent her. She desired to be remembered to you. She is in chronic ill-health, but has better eye sight than for some time past. My last letter from you was written Aug. 26th and came to me Aug. 28th last.

Julia and I have hard colds—she is improving. I am in the progressive stage, each day it seems a little worse, some people in my condition would be “Sick-a-bed and worse up”, but I have to “keep a digging”. “no rest for the wicked!”

I would like to know if the boys have paid your taxes, and provided you with winter fuel? Please let me know. Next Thursday will be Thanks-giving day. I send you $10.

I have just been to Ina from whom I received a letter on the 11th inst., in which she spoke of you as being somewhat unwise in helping to bear the burdens of others, having reference, of course, to the care you are taking of Lucy’s little children. I have just been writing to her and have explained to her the situation. I have no idea that she would ever think of assuming such responsibilities as you willingly take upon yourself for the well-being of others. I am glad to say that the family are all usually well. I hope William is better and that all the rest are in possession of good health. I sincerely wish you all the compliments of the season and take pleasure in enclosing herewith a small token of good feeling, which I hope will come in handy for your Christmas dinner. Give my love to the children, and try and take care of yourself.

Affectionately your brother,

Joseph F. Smith

P.S. I sent you a copy of the Christmas News—which I hope you will look at. It is a big thing Also $10.

**JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 23 DECEMBER 1912**

Salt Lake City, Utah, December 23rd, 1912

My dear sister, Martha Ann Harris: 214 So. Third West St., Provo.

I have just written to Ina, from whom I received a letter on the 11th inst., in which she spoke of you as being somewhat unwise in helping to bear the burdens of others, having reference, of course, to the care you are taking of Lucy’s little children. I have just been writing to her and have explained to her the situation. I have no idea that she would ever think of assuming such responsibilities as you willingly take upon yourself for the well-being of others. I am glad to say that the family are all usually well. I hope William is better and that all the rest are in possession of good health. I sincerely wish you all the compliments of the season and take pleasure in enclosing herewith a small token of good feeling, which I hope will come in handy for your Christmas dinner. Give my love to the children, and try and take care of yourself.

Affectionately your brother,

Joseph F. Smith

P.S. I sent you a copy of the Christmas News—which I hope you will look at. It is a big thing Also $10.
My Dear Sister,

I feel in my heart to say God bless you for ever. for you have helped me to bare my burdens. I have sunk under the load I feel truly greatfull to you mor than I can express. I feel greatfull to your for the assistence of my dear ones I have willed them thrue work. John pm has been down with lagripp for nearly a week is some better can get round [p. 3] as they are. I hope Aunt Julina will have a nice pleasant trip & return home in safety when you write to her pleas thank her for me the money she sent the work is done I will send it to the girls I would like very much to come to conference & hope my poor feeble body can make the raffe with love & gratitude & thanking you again for your kindness I am your affectionate sister

Martha Ann Smith Harris

PS I forgot to tell you about the house burning down. They said it was a defective chimny but it was not that. the people that lived in the house hung their close round the stove to dry & got up in the morning & made a fire & went in the other room & shut the dore the close caught fire & soon the house was in flames it was quite a loss to me for the rent was a help to me Frank sais he will build another house there as soon as he can he is coming home for conferance if he posabley can get off [p. 4]

pleas give my love to cousin Ina as I know she will not under stand how I can take care of these children I can do it because I loved thir mother mather i am not perfect but I am trying my best. & I know she will not understand how I can take care of these children. I told her if any thing ever hapened too her I would take just as good care of them & I did of her that is Zinas little girl that I raised on a bottle. that is I said if I am alive I have tryed to do the best I could. but I little thought that in one week they would be in my care. & with the help of the Lord for he sure has given me strength & for the assistance of my dear ones I have willed them thrue

126. The other children of William Jasper Harris Jr. and Jessie Lena Freckleton were Ada Fern, Viola Myrtle, Alice Bernice, and Legrande Smith Harris.

127. William Jasper Harris Jr.


129. Probably a misspelling of “Artic,” a nickname for Martha Ann’s daughter Martha Artimissa Harris. The baby she refers to is probably Elbert Harris Startup, who was eight months old at this time. See biographical register, “Startup, Elbert Harris.”

130. Sarah Lovina Harris had three children at this time: Lee Roy (four years old), Verna (two), and Alene (nine months). See biographical register, “Passey, Lee Roy,” “Passey, Verna,” and “Passey, Alene.”

131. John Flicking Harris, Martha Ann’s son.

132. La grippe was a French term for influenza.

133. “[P. 3, 3 MAR 1913]” is written in the top margin in an unknown hand.

134. Juliana Lambson.

135. The 83rd Annual General Conference was held on 4–6 April 1913.

136. See biographical register, “Harris, Reuel Irene.”

137. See Martha Ann to Joseph F., 3 March 1913, herein.

138. See biographical register, “Harris, Reuel Irene.”

139. See biographical register, “Harris, Reuel Irene.”

140. “POSTSCRIPT, 3 MAR 1913” is written in the top right margin in an unknown hand.

141. Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith).

142. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 23 December 1912, herein.

143. Possibly refers to Martha Ann’s granddaughter Sarah Rachel Farnier, daughter of Martha Ann’s daughter Martha Arthurine Smith who was a newborn baby at that time. See biographical register, “Farnier, Sarah Rachel.”
My Dear Sister Martha:—

I wish you the compliments of the Season, and the same to all the children and their little ones. I need not remind you that this the 108 Anniversary of the birth of Uncle Joseph Smith—the Prophet.

I have just written the Ina “Coolbrith”—and reminded her of it, but you will remember it without reminding. Aunt Edna has been sick with ptomaine poisoning, for ten days.

The rest of the folks are well—as usual.

I have had a cold for two weeks, which has troubled me some—but I am getting better. Julina and family are all usually well and all send love and Christmas greetings. The children are all looking forward for Christmas.

I send you here with $10, which will help get you a good Christmas dinner.

Affectionately your brother

Joseph F. Smith

Mary Harris

Salt Lake City, Utah, June 24, 1914

Martha Ann Harris

214 South 3d West St. Provo.

My Dear Sister Martha:—

I sincerely hope you are enjoying your little visit down—from 4,300 feet in the tops of the mountains, where you have so long existed, to the level of the great Pacific Ocean. The Ocean which I first saw in July 1854—which is within a few days of 60 years ago, and across more than 2,000—miles of which I have sailed and steamed, back and forth 10 or 12 times—witnessing both its calms and its stormes, while you for the first time, now just gaze on its sunny shores, constantly washed by its restless waves. I want you to have a “good time”—while you are there—and hope you will stay as long as you desire. The folks are all looking forward for Christmas.

All send love. Affectionately your brother

Joseph F. Smith

Salt Lake City, Utah, June 18, 1913

Martha Ann S. Harris

214 South 3d West St. Provo.

My Dear Sister Martha:

I thought you would like to know that Julina is 64 years old to day. She is in California with Mamie and Donnie and their children, and little Josephine, Joseph F., Junior’s daughter. We are all as well as usual at home. My Daughter Emma has been quite poorly for about a week, but is feeling some better now. Our Cousin Maggie Smith Parry died last night. She has been an invalid almost all her life, and her death is like a release from mortal ills. I wrote Cousin Ina—a short time ago, in answer to a letter from her, and sent her $10.

There is very little difference in your—and her ages, both 72. She on the 14th of March and you on the 14th of May. I send you $10 as a birth day reminder. Hoping you are well—I am your affectionate brother

Joseph F. Smith

Salt Lake City, Utah, Dec. 23, 1913

Martha Ann was seventy-two.

Joseph F. built a home in Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, California, as a retreat for his family, friends, and other Church leaders. The home became known as “Deseret.”

In 1916, Joseph F. and Edna Lambson’s daughter, Margaret West Smith, daughter of George Albert Smith and Susan Elizabeth West, was second cousin to Joseph F. Smith.

The average elevation for Salt Lake City is 4,327 feet above sea level.

Joseph F. was seventy-four, and Martha Ann was seventy-two.

Josephine Smith, daughter of Emily Louise Shurtleff and Joseph Fielding Smith, was ten years old at this time. See biographical register, “Smith, Josephine.”

Emma Smith, Joseph F. and Edna Lambson’s daughter.

Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-five, and Martha Ann was seventy-three.

Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-four, and Martha Ann was seventy-two.

Food poisoning. It was once believed that food poisoning was caused by chemicals called ptomaines, found in spoiled food. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “ptomaine.”

Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-five, and Martha Ann was seventy-three.

Smith home in Santa Monica.

Joseph Smith Jr.

Edna Lambson.

Food poisoning. It was once believed that food poisoning was caused by chemicals called ptomaines, found in spoiled food. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “ptomaine.”

Julina Lambson.

Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-five, and Martha Ann was seventy-three.

Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency. Joseph F. was seventy-four, and Martha Ann was seventy-two.
Martha Ann to Joseph F., 7 July 1914

RECEIVED
JUL—9'14
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Ans’d in person
July 23rd 1914

Provo City July 7th
1914

Mr Joseph F Smith my dear beloved brother I will try & write you a few lines this after
noon, hoping they may find your dear ones all well I should have written you before now but I
have been very much under thaw weather sense I came here. I am hear at my daughter Arties**

yet have not been home sense I came but I am gaining sloly now & hope to be able to go
home perhaps tomorrow she has been very [p. 2] kind to me & done all she could to make me
comfortable while I have been here I have suffered quite a bit with my knee & other ailments
that I have to contend with.*** but I am very thankful that I am as well as I am, at the present
& hope & pray I may <still> be improving I got a pare of crutches & have yoused them some but
I want to thank you all once more for the nice time I had in Calaforna[4] & for the money you
gave me the day you fetched me home, & for bringing me home. I would have been in a fix if I
had come in the cars & no one to help me in my weak condition thos chills up set me they were
caused by the shock of fooling & I think I caught some [p. 4] while traveling on the train & I
am very glad you did not get hurt when you got your fall brother & sister Hodson[5] who is on
your place wished that I would ask you to have him prayd for in the temple for for his afflicted
leg so I have done so hoping that you in your multiplicty of labors will have this attended to

provo city July the 9th
1914

I can use it for something usefull to them when my poor lame, right arm gets 

I got it over the worst of it now but my leg swells very bad yet. I have to yse the crutches to get

I am here at Arties she dont want me to go home untill I am able to get round & do my work Edna

I can use it to work again. it is very lame in the sholder I must have strained it when I fell[6] we have

told you greatfull to you for what you have done for me. I will keep you posted in regards

to Sarah. If you should see Andrew[7] please giv my love to him & tell him I should like very

vamp to have seen him before I come home. your affectionate sister M. A. Harris Arte joins

me in sending love to you all.

P.S. I also thank you for the dear letter[8] you wrote me while I was <away> I cannot begin <to>
tell you how much I enjoyed it every minute of the time

Martha Ann to Joseph F., 9 July 1914

RECEIVED
JUL 9'14
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Ans’d in person
July 23rd 1914

Provo City July the 9th
1914

Mr Joseph F Smith my dear <[illegible strike-through]> brother your letter of the 6th to
hand was glad to hear you were all well but one I have not been able to make out who you
sayd was not well I am not feeling as well as I would like but am thankful I am not wors. the
dolar came all right & thank you for sending it to me I did not want them to send it to me. but
I can use it for something useful to them when my poor lame, right arm gets [p. 2] so I can
use it to work again. it is very lame in the sholder I must have strained it when I fell[9] we have

in sending love to all. my dear beloved brother I will try & write you a few lines this after

In sending love to all. my dear beloved brother I will try & write you a few lines this after

This content has been marked as incorrect due to the presence of illegible text. However, it appears to be a letter from Martha Ann to Joseph F., discussing their family's well-being and Martha Ann's current health. She mentions receiving crutches and money from Joseph, and expresses gratitude for his support. She also mentions her daughter Artie's care for her and her wish to return home. The letter contains a mix of readable and partially illegible text, which is challenging to transcribe accurately. It suggests a personal and affectionate communication between the siblings about their daily lives and health. The letter is likely part of a larger collection of letters from Martha Ann to Joseph F., which would provide more context for understanding the family's narrative. The illegible parts of the text indicate that some characters or words are difficult to discern, but the overall sentiment and content are clear enough to convey the essence of their exchange.
May** to working for Sarah** till she gets a girl to work for her there is one coming Sunday if nothing happens to prevent it, & then I can have my girl home with me. I will send a parcel to Aunt Julina** to day & I hope she [p. 4] get it all right we had a nice rain here last night it will do lots of good to the crops. I just made out that Mary** is (is the one) who is sick I hope that it is nothing serious that ails her. Sarah is still very poorly & Aties children have colds Arte & the children all join me in sending love to you all your affectionate sister Martha A Harris

RECEIVED
JULY15
J.F. S**
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE**

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 10 SEPTEMBER 1914

Salt Lake City, Utah, Sept. 10—1914**

My Dear Sister Martha: 

Julina** sends you the enclosed Cheque for $100 for work done.**

I received a letter from Cousin Adele,** from Reno,** Nevada, soon after she arrived there. That is her home for the present. They do not seem to have a permanent home, some times they live in Tonopah,** Nevada, sometimes at Berkeley,** California. She sends her love to you and regret she did not have a longer visit. While she writes very conservatively, she appears to have enjoyed—to some extent her visit here. [p. 2] No doubt everything was not entirely to her taste and liking, but she says she has many things to think about in her quiet moments at home.

My Dear Sister Martha: 

Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 2 April 1905 and 10 April 1907, herein.

**179. Edna Mae Simmons. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 2 April 1905 and 10 April 1907, herein.

**180. Likely refers to Sarah Lovina Harris, daughter of Martha Ann.

**181. Julina Lambson.

**182. Mary Taylor Schwartz.

**183. The initials are handwritten and not part of the stamp.

**184. Stamped sideways with blue ink in the bottom margin of page 4.

**185. Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency.

**186. Julina Lambson.

**187. Martha Ann made temple clothing, to worked for Sarah, for individuals and for the Church’s National Relief Society. 

**188. Burial Clothes Department. Julina was her connection for work in Salt Lake City, where Julina served as supervisor of the Wedding and Burial Cloths Department, overseeing the production and sale of temple and burial clothing to members of the Church.

**189. Martha Ann and Joseph F’s distant cousin Adele T. Jones. She was the great-granddaughter of Stephen Mack Jr., first cousin of Joseph Smith. See biographical register, “Terrill, Mary Adele.” See Martha Ann to Joseph F, 17 July 1915, herein.

**190. Reno, Washoe County, Nevada, is located in the high desert valley at the foot of the Sierra Nevada and officially came into existence when a railroad station was built there in 1868 while the transcontinental railway was being constructed.

**191. Tonopah, Nye County, Nevada, is located midway between Reno and Las Vegas and was settled about 1910 after the discovery of gold and silver.

**192. Berkeley, Alameda County, California, is the home of the University of California, established in 1868.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 5 FEBRUARY 1915

Feb—**1915**

Martha A. Harris

214 South 34 West St—

Provo—Utah Co.

My Dear Sister Martha. 

I have just written to Bro. Henry Stringham,** Manager of the Knight Woollen Mills Company,** to furnish you, Edna May and Arthur,** each a Mackinaw coat,** at my expense. 

All you will need to do, will be to call at the Factory, with the children and this letter, and select just what you want—and I want you to choose the very best. David A.** will be in Provo to-morrow—and if time will permit, he will call on you.

**193. Edna Mae Simmons and John Arthur Simmons. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 2 April 1905, herein, note 84.

**194. The Church built a large home, known as “Deseret,” on Brentwood Terrace in Santa Monica, California, in 1913 to provide Joseph F. and other Church leaders a place to relax. Arriving by train, Joseph F. took advantage of his time away from Church Headquarters to golf, swim, and take long automobile drives. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 24 June 1914, herein.


**196. Written upside down in the top margin of page 1.

**197. Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the Trustee-in-Trust. Joseph F. was seventy-six, and written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the Trustee-in-Trust. Joseph F. was seventy-six, and the handwriting indicates by train. Joseph F. took advantage of his time away from Church Headquarters to golf, swim, and take long automobile drives. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 24 June 1914, herein.

**198. See biographical register, “Stringham, Henry.”

**199. Previously known as the Provo Woollen Mills Company, the mill changed names when Jesse Knight and associates purchased it in 1930.

**200. Edna Mae Simmons and John Arthur Simmons. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 2 April 1905, herein, note 84.

**201. A thick double-breasted plaid wool coat known in Canada as a “Mac.”

**202. David Isaac Smith, son of Joseph F. and Julina. David was a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric at the time.
Aunt Sarah has been very sick but I am thankful that she is getting some better—otherwise we are all well and improving. Zina is in the Hospital, and Franklin has just got out. Your brother, Joseph F. Smith

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 17 FEBRUARY 1915

Salt Lake City, Utah, February 17th, 1915

Mrs. Martha Ann Harris, 214 So. Third West St., Provo.

My dear Sister:—

Your favor of the 10th inst. was duly received, and I have just received the bill for the coats, which seems evidence to me that you have duly received them. I hope you and the children will find them useful for all cold weather, and that the children’s are made large enough to last them more than the present season. The mackinaw was not intended to be a fashionable article of dress, but one of durability and warmth and withal not overly expensive.

I feel grateful on being able to say that Aunt Sarah is slowly, but I think surely, improving in strength, and we sincerely hope that she will soon be herself again. Zina is stopping with her mother and seems to be recovering her strength right along, I suppose you know that her husband started on a mission to the Southern States on the day that we brought her from the hospital. I am also pleased to say that Franklin seems to be getting along as well as could be expected. His was a very serious and severe operation. The rest of the family are enjoying usual health, and hoping this will find you enjoying similar blessings, I am, Affectionately your brother, Joseph F. Smith

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 15 JULY 1915

Salt Lake City, Utah, July 15—1915

Martha Ann Harris
214 South 3rd West St—Provo City, Utah County

My Dear Sister Martha,

It has been a long time since I either wrote to or heard from you. I hope this will find you and all the children enjoying good health and other things you need.

I am writing a line or two to cousin “Ina D. Coolbrith” this morning, and am sending her ten dollars as a reminder of kinship: and I enclose herewith my Cheque No. 12—for $25 as a small reminder to you, which I hope you will accept with my love and constant prayers for your well being and happiness.

Julina sends love, and says if you would like to make a few more aprons she will pay you for them. She will send material.

With love to all, affectionately your brother

Joseph F. Smith

MARTHA ANN TO JOSEPH F., 17 JULY 1915

Rec’d July 17—1915

Provo City July the 17th
1915

My dearly beloved brother Joseph F your very welcome & kind letter of the 15th came sadly to hand containing the check, you sent me for which I sincerly thank you but that does not half express my gratitude for all your kindness to me. I was very sorry to hear that you had been suffering with your back again all I could do was to pray for you. & that I never neglect to do I thank you for the kind rememberce of me in your prayrs, for I sorly need all the help I can get I am very lame can hardly get round some of the time but I try not give up I try to keep doing all I can I do hope & pray that I will

Sarah Ellen Richards. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 5 February 1915, herein.

Zina Smith. See Joseph F. and Edna Lambson’s daughter. She died eight months later on 25 October 1915.

Franklin Richards Smith, son of Joseph F. and Sarah Ellen Richards.

Franklin Richards Smith. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 5 February 1915, herein.


Franklin Richards Smith. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 5 February 1915, herein.

Signed by hand.
My Dear Sister,

I got a letter from Frank\textsuperscript{22} on the other day that they were all well or better than they had been his wife\textsuperscript{23} is very poorly she has been under the weather for a long time. her father\textsuperscript{24} died before last & they buried him there Dealia\textsuperscript{25} is home in Springville\textsuperscript{26} & Hyrum\textsuperscript{27} will soon be coming home & I am very glad he is I think they are all anxious to come home, as soon as they can arrange it that way. my family are all useally well as far as I know at the [p. 4] at the present time. I have had several bad spells with my heart it bothers me once in awhile. we had quite a shaking up here yesterday an earthquake.\textsuperscript{28} Just a gentle reminder of what the Lord can do. I got out of the house with out being told. It stoped the clock opened the cupboard doors & made the dishes rattle quite lively also the windos. we were very thankfull it was no worse, than it was. I will close with love to you all your loving sister

M A Harris

[...] P S I got a letter from Cousin Adel Jones\textsuperscript{29} she was well improving in health all the time she wished me to give you her love & sympathy in the loss of dear Aunt Sarah\textsuperscript{30} she said the first that she had hird of her death she read it in the paper\textsuperscript{31} she said she sent my letter to Cousin Ina\textsuperscript{32} & that she had beged her the privilege of keeping it she said she loved me & allways had & I am sure I have as [p. 6] I have allways loved her I sure would like to see her once more in this life but I guess that is out of the question now. I am so glad you can do something for her. I do hope & prey that she will see her mistake befor it is all to geather too late. I pray for her that her eyes may be opend that she may not be cast off in the day of her recking she youst to be so sweet any one could not help loing her.

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 23 DECEMBER 1915

Salt Lake City, Utah. Dec. 23\textsuperscript{4} 1915\textsuperscript{28}

Martha Ann S. Harris

214 South 3\textsuperscript{d} West—St. Provo.

I suppose you have many things to be thankful for. It would be difficult for you to “count your many blessings”\textsuperscript{33}—I suppose, and yet no one, so far as I know, has ever had so many blessings, that a little more, in addition to the stock already in hand, would be objectionable. I cannot send you a Turkey for your Thanks-giving dinner, for I have none, besides if I could, some one would have to be cruel enough to kill the poor thing before it would be fit for use. So I am glad I have no Turkeys!! but if you have one, you can get something for the “Stuffing” with the enclosed $10.25

Affectionately your brother,
Joseph F. Smith

217. Edna Mae Simmons
218. The Startup Candy Factory was established by William B. Startup in Provo in 1875. Following William’s death, the business was run by his wife and three sons. One of those sons was Harry Walter Startup, the “Uncle Walter Startup” mentioned in the letter. He was married to Martha Artimissa Harris, Martha Ann’s daughter and Joseph F.’s niece.
219. John Arthur Simmons
220. Franklin Hill Harris
221. “[P.3, 17 JUL 1915]” is written in the top margin of page 3 in an unknown hand.
222. Josephine Parkes Robinson
223. Joseph Robinson, died on 26 June 1915. See biographical register, “Robinson, Josephine Parkes” and “Robinson, Joseph.”
224. Delia Sarah Rebekah Twede
225. Springville, Utah County, Utah, is located five miles south of Provo.
226. Hyrum Smith Harris
227. Provo experienced a minor earthquake on 29 May 1915; see “Earthquake Shock Felt,” Deseret Evening News, 29 May 1915, 8. A month and a half later, Provo was hit with a 5.0 magnitude earthquake at 3:00 p.m. that was felt throughout Bear River, Utah, and Salt Lake Valleys, Tooele, Park City, and Parley’s and Provo Canyons—an area measuring about five thousand square miles. In Provo, as Martha Ann mentioned, people ran out of doors. According to newspaper reports, Provo residents waited nearly an hour before returning to their activities after buildings swayed, clocks stopped, chimneys fell, dishes rattled, and walls cracked. The quake caused a rockslide that blocked the road in Provo Canyon. Some witnesses saw an upheaval of water, like a small tidal wave, at Utah Lake. See “Quake Sways Five Thousand Square Miles.”
228. Joseph F. often noted the purchase of stamps, envelopes, and stationery in his journals. See, for example, Joseph F., Journal, 2 May, 30 July, 5 August, and 10 August 1912.
229. Juliana Lambson
230. Written upside down in the top margin of page 4.
231. “[P.3, 17 JUL 1915]” is written in the top right margin in an unknown hand.
232. Martha Ann and Joseph F.’s distant cousin, Adele T. Jones, see letter from Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 10 September 1914, here.
234. Sarah Ellen Richards’s death was widely reported in regional newspapers, including in Reno, Nevada, where Adele T. Jones lived at the time. See “Wife of President of Mormon Church Passes,” Nevada State Journal, 23 March 1915, 1.
235. Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith).
236. From Joseph F.’s letterpress copybooks; original not extant.
237. Written by Johnson Oatman Jr., “Count Your Blessings” became a popular hymn when it was first published in 1897.
238. Written on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the First Presidency.
My Dear Sister Martha.

I wish you the compliments of the Season and send you herewith $10.00 to back up my wish. “If wishes were fishes” we would all have a “plank Shad bake” on Christmas, as wishes are not always fishes, we may have to submit to a Turkey or a chicken dinner on that day.

One hundred and ten (110.) years ago, Your uncle Joseph Smith was born, at Sharon, Winsor Co. Vermont, and at the age of 38 years and 6 months, he was murdered in cold blood at Carthage—Hancock Co. Illinois—In the short time of 14—years he laid the foundations, by the help of God—and against the opposition of the world, of the most perfect Church and Plan of Salvation the world has ever known, and you are his Niece! God bless my sister Martha—Affectionately your brother, Jos. F. Smith

P.S. Love and best wishes and the compliments of the Season to all the children and to all our friends. God have pitty on our enemies—Yours &c. Jos. F. Smith

239. Shad is a type of herring but is also a term often used for other fish. “Planked shad” refers to a method of preparing and baking fillets in which several fillets are nailed to an oak plank and smoked alongside an open fire. Sometimes many planks would be laid in a row next to several fires at a social gathering. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “planked,” “shad.”

240. Written upside down in the top margin of page 1.
My Dear Sister

Salt Lake City, Utah, Feb—17—1916

Martha Ann S. Harris.
214 South 36 West St. Provo.

My Dear Sister Martha—

Please find herewith my Cheque No. 24—for $15.00 for your personal needs. I would gladly have made this double what it is—but I have been helping Jesse, Lucy, and Martha to secure homes for themselves—and it has made "grass mighty short" with me. I am also writing Cousin Ina to night and am sending her $15.00 to help her out a little. She writes me very doefully—about her physical and her financial condition.

I have had a siege of La Grippé but am much better. Julina has been quite under the weather with cold and cough, but is improving. With love to you and all. I am sincerely your brother

Joseph F. Smith

P.S. David’s Emily is still waiting—we think she will now hold out until the 25th Chase’s. Lileth is expected to be confined about the 25th. Lucy M. and Jesse’s May are “casting their shadows before” —and E. Melissa— and I donot know how many more. God bless the babies here and now and yet to come—and henceforth and forever! I omitted to mention Joseph’s—Ethel, George’s Lillian— and they are all I can think of now.

As e-ver your bro. Joseph F.—

---

Martha Ann S. Harris
214 South 36 West St. Provo.

My Dear Sister Martha—

Please find herewith my Cheque No. 544, for $22.50—in payment for consignment of Aprons just received. We hope this will find you well—and prosperous.

We got a glimpse or two of Frank while he was here—but learned nothing about the object of his visit.

We are all just a little troubled with colds, but nothing serious and I hope we will soon be convalescent.

Give our love to the girls and children, Affectionately your brother. Joseph F.—[p. 2]

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Salt Lake City, Utah, Mar. 20—1916

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Martha Ann to Joseph F., 27 March 1916

RECEIVED
MAR 29'16
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Provo City March 27 1916

Mr. Joseph F. Smith

My dear brother your short note of March the 20th came safely to hand with the check in it, for the aprons. I was glad to hear from you once more, that you had returned home from your journey in safety & I thank you for the check pleases tell Aunt Julina I thank her also. I have been very busy since receiving it, making some temple clothes for a lady from Idaho I hope you will all be better of your colds by this time. & I thank you for the little bugit of news you sent me. I will give you a bugit from our side of the house. I to have had quite a shour of home emigration Zina E had a fine, 11 pound & half boy & Ruby Williams daughter has her 4th son born. Sterling has a daughter born [illegible strike-through] in Feeb. Alva has

257. Stamped with blue ink in the top left margin.
258. Joseph F. left Utah on 20 February to lay the cornerstones for the recently announced Hawaiian Temple in Lī‘i‘u, O‘ahu. However, heavy rains prevented this event, and Church leaders returned home on 20 March 1916. See “President Smith and Bishop Nibley to Go to Hawaii,” Deseret News, 19 February 1916, 2; and “Hawaiian Temple Is Being Built,” Deseret Evening News, 16 March 1916, 2.
259. Julina Smith.
260. Likely refers to Zina Christine Harris, who gave birth to William Henry Dennis on 4 February 1916. See biographical register, “Dennis, William Henry.”
261. Unknown individuals.
262. Sterling Patten Harris’s daughter Florence Ann Harris was born to Ann Lloyd on 29 February 1916. See biographical register, “Harris, Sterling Patton” and “Harris, Florence Ann.”
263. Alva Robert Harris’s daughter Virginia Louise was born to Anna Louise Herman on 10 March 1916. See biographical register, “Harris, Alva Robert” and “Harris, Virginia Louise.”
264. Wilford Leroy Harris, Martha Ann’s grandson, married Margery Ellen Sumner. Their daughter Ruth Harris was born on 20 March 1916. See biographical register, “Harris, Ruth.”
265. “[3]” and “[27 MAR 1916]” are written in the top margin of page 3 in an unknown hand.
266. The 86th Annual General Conference was held on 6–7, 9 April 1916.
My Dear Sister:—

Martha Ann Smith Harris:
214 South 34 West St. Provo.

We have not heard from you for a long time, nor you from us, perhaps. I hope you are all in good health, with something to eat, drink and wear. We are all usually well—but growing older at an accelerated pace, like the cart-wheel rolling down the hill, which gains speed as it nears the bottom!

Julina says she has some more for you to do, if you want it, but she will wait until she sees you. She sends her love to you and the children. She expects her brother Alfred B. Lambson and family to come from the north on a visit during Conference. There will always be room for you. I enclose herewith my cheque in your favor for $15 which will help you to come to Conference.

Give my love to the Children in which Julina, Edna and Mary join. Your brother Joseph F.—
JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 14 NOVEMBER 1916

Beehive House\(^{276}\)
Salt Lake City—
Nov. 14^\text{th}^ 1916

Martha A. S. Harris,—
214 South 3 West St. Provo,

Dear Aunt Martha,—

Your Card of gratulation in rememberance of myself and Nov. 13^\text{th}^ and that of Artie’s,\(^{277}\) reached me this morning. Thank you both, and all my kind friends and kinfolks for their kind wishes and rememberances!

There were 125 members of my family present at the Bishop’s Building,\(^{278}\) from 4—to 6 o’clock yesterday, including 65. Grand children out of a possible 79.

Some of the little ones were troubled with slight colds, and the weather was very cold, so it was thought best for them not to come out. Therefore 13 of the grand children remained at home—And One—Joseph S. Nelson—\(^{279}\) is in England on a mission.

We are all pretty well. And hope you and children are also well—Julina\(^{300}\) sends you a Cheque for $18.\(^{300}\)

All send love to you and family, Your bro. Joseph F.

P.S. I also enclose for you a cheque for $10.\(^{300}\) to help you to get coal—or pay on tax a/c, as you wish.

Jos. F.—\(^{300}\)

JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 29 NOVEMBER 1916

Salt Lake City, Utah—Nov. 29^\text{th}^ 1916\(^{300}\)

My Dear Sister Martha,—

Please accept the enclosed $10.\(^{300}\) bill as a trifling remembrance for your Thanks-giving dinner. I should have sent it yesterday but was so much employed I could not get the time to do it. I hope it will reach you in time for a mid-day meal.

I hope you are better in health. We all seem to be gaining a little weight.

Some of the little ones are teething and fretful, with the usual colds which come to babies when cutting teeth. Julina is up at Inas,\(^{300}\) and the girls\(^{300}\) are out—and I want to get the first post-collection, so you will excuse haste. Ever your naughty brother

Joseph F.—

MARTHA ANN TO JOSEPH F., 13 DECEMBER 1916

RECEIVED
JAN.—2/17
PRESIDENT’S OFFICE\(^{300}\)
Provo City Dec the 13^\text{th}^ 1916\(^{300}\)

Mr Joseph F Smith my dearly beloved brother your dear letter came safly to hand with the check in it, for & when I seen it it so over come <me> I had to have a good cry with gratitude to my Father in Heaven <for> giving me such a dear brother. I do not know how to express my harts gratitude to you for your goodnes to me. I guess you think I am very on greatfull not to [p. 2] in answer before now I have been very busy this is the first time I have been able to get at it & my dear brother I do thank you more than I can tell you but you a git tierd of this I am afraid. but it is a long lain that has no turn & I do hope it may turn some day in my way before it is to late I was so sorry to hear from Aunt Julinas\(^{300}\) letter, that you had been troubled with that pain in your chest [p. 3] \(^{300}\) I do hope that it will soon be better. I have had a pain in my side for the last to days I guess it must be indigestion perhaps I have taken could & it has settled there I hope Inas baby\(^{300}\) will not take the meezles babys of that age re not so apt to take it. I went to my daughter Zinas\(^{300}\) for Crsmass dinner John\(^{300}\) sent for me to come to his house but I had promised Zina so I had to put them [p. 4] for some other time Hyrum & Franklin are in new Mxico working the assesment on their mine thare.\(^{300}\)

283. Julina Lambson was likely visiting her daughter Julina Clarissa Smith.
284. An affectionate nickname for Joseph F’s wives.
285. Stamped with blue ink in the top left margin.
286. Joseph F supplied Martha Ann with stamps and enveloepas from time to time, beginning in the 1880s. In this case the envelope has a US two-cent George Washington preprinted stamp with the postal mark “PROVO UTAH DEC 30 3-30 1916.” Additionally, Joseph F preaddressed the envelope in his own hand, “Mr. Joseph F Smith 67 East South Temple St. Salt Lake City Utah,” and added the word Personal to the front cover.
288. “[P. 13 DEC 1916]” is written in the top right margin in an unknown hand.
289. Likely refers to Luacine Peery, daughter of Julina Clarissa Smith. Julina had two children at this time; the youngest, Luacine, was four years old. See biographical register, “Peery, Luacine.”
290. Zina Christina Harris.
291. Likely John Fielding Harris.
292. Hyrum Smith Harris and Franklin Hill Harris. See Martha Ann to Joseph F., 26 December 1911, herein.
you could help Ina and our other cousin when you write please tell me whom Athaia is who's daughter she is. well I will close for the present for I have some more letters to write & my desire is that you may have a happy new year & a prosperous one & a whole lot of them

from your loving sisters M A. Harris

with love to all I am as ever Aunt Martha

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293. Likely Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith).
294. Possibly refers to Joseph F. and Martha Ann's cousin Thalia Grant Smith. See Joseph F. to Martha Ann, 19 December 1916, herein. See also biographical register, "Smith, Thalia Grant."
295. Written sideways in the right margin of page 4.
296. Written upside down in the top margin of page 2.
JOSEPH F. TO MARTHA ANN, 19 DECEMBER 1916

December 19, 1916.

Martha A. S. Harris,
214 South 3rd West St.,
Provo, Utah

My Dear Sister:—

Thinking that you might enjoy a turkey for your Christmas and a little cranberry sauce, I thought I would forward to you the enclosed check for $25.00, which I hope you will accept in the spirit in which it is offered, and will enjoy the use of it. I am serving Cousin Ina in the same way, but I do not expect from her the same sisterly appreciation that I usually receive from you. I am happy to say that we are all usually well, with the exception of some of the little ones who are suffering from teething and other little ailments incident to infancy. Our Ina is in San Diego with her three little children, two of whom have the measles from the last account. One or two of Melissa’s also have the measles. You will be delighted to hear that Willard has another little son added to his family. Wishing you and the children the compliments of the season, I am, Affectionately your brother,

Joseph F. Smith

P.S. I am also sending—a small remembrance to Cousin Thalia—who is in Kansas.

297. Typewritten in black ink on official letterhead of the Church from the Office of the Trustee-in-Trust. Martha Ann was seventy-five, and Joseph F. was seventy-eight.
298. Ina Coolbrith (née Josephine Donna Smith).
299. Julina Clarissa Smith.
300. San Diego, San Diego County, California. Ina may have attended the San Diego 1916 Exposition, also known as the Panama-California International Exposition. Dedicated on 18 March 1916, the “New International Exposition” was held in Balboa Park in honor of the opening of the Panama Canal. See Richard W. Amero, Balboa Park and the 1915 Exposition (Charleston: History Press, 2013).
301. Julina Clarissa Smith, Ina, and her husband, Joseph Stras Peery, had three children at the time: Joseph Smith Perry (born on 6 February 1911), Luacine Perry (born on 2 December 1912), and Julina Perry (born on 19 February 1916).
302. Edna Melissa Smith.
303. Willard Richards Smith’s son Briant Grant Smith was born to Florence Grant on 15 December 1916. See biographical register, “Smith, Briant Grant.”
304. Signed by hand.
305. Thalia Grant Smith.
306. Written in the bottom left margin of the page.