

turned over to his father for safekeeping and have ever since been  
in his possession. In the evening I took the train for Kansas City.

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Blackfoot, Idaho  
February 17, 1909

Nathan A. Tanner  
Ogden, Utah

Dear Nathan A:-

Complying with your request to write an account of my visit to David  
Whitmer, I looked for my diary of that date, but, to my surprise I cannot  
find it, so I will write from memory of the incident which occurred in  
May, 1886 -- nearly twenty-two years ago.

I went from Independence, Missouri to Richmond, with a view of seeing  
David Whitmer, and upon alighting from the cars at Richmond, the town of  
his residence, I inquired where he lived. A son of his who kept a hotel  
in the town, heard me, and possibly guessing who I was, said to a man sit-  
ting on the front seat of the coach, and loud enough that I heard him,  
"There is a man who wants to see my father, and I'll see that he does not  
see him," or words to that effect.

Being directed to where I could find the house where David Whitmer  
dwelt, I immediately went there and knocked, and the son that I had seen  
on the coach, or hotel bus, answered the knock and opening the door, stood  
in it, but did not invite me in. I inquired if that were David Whitmer's  
residence, and being answered in the affirmative, said I was passing through  
the place, and had called with a view of seeing him. His son said that his  
father was sick and could not be seen. I felt that the excuse was made  
simply to prevent me from seeing David, and that his father might be seen  
if he chose to allow it, and I prayed fervently but silently that the man  
might relent, and knowing that newspapermen often bothered him, and did not

always report him fairly, I said, "I am not a reporter; I am simply passing this way and desired to see the man who had been so highly favored of the Lord as his father had been, and added that his father need not talk, but if I could see him and shake his hand, I should feel satisfied, and favored. The man then invited me in and said he would go and see if his father felt well enough to be seen. He retired and in a few minutes re-appeared and said, "Sit still, father will be out in a few minutes."

In a few minutes David appeared, a very feeble and stooped, but pleasant looking gentleman, and I arose and took his extended hand, saying as I did so that I was very greatly pleased to have seen him; and that as he was feeble in health he need not talk, but I would be satisfied with the pleasure of his personal acquaintance.

He bade me sit down however, and began to talk and continued, I should judge, for a half or three quarters of an hour. He related the story of his first hearing of Joseph, of the angels, of some other persons putting in his grain in order that he might go to the Prophet. He said he had concluded to go as soon as he could put in that field of grain and he thought, of course, that it was planted for him in order that he might go the sooner. He related the history of his travel, too, and meeting the Prophet, whom, he said, had seen him coming in vision, and had walked out to meet him on the way, and knew him when they met. He said the Prophet told him where he stayed enroute, how he had seen him reading a sign -- I think it was a hotel sign -- and how he told him so many things which he could know only by inspiration that he (David) could not doubt the divinity of his mission. David then went on and told me in a general way, the whole history of his relations with the Prophet. About the way the translation was accomplished; about seeing the plates, etc.

He said that Joseph was separated from the scribe by a blanket, as I remember; that he had the Urim and Thummim, and a chocolate colored stone, which he used alternately, as suited his convenience, and he said he believed Joseph could as well accomplish the translation by looking into a hat, or any other stone, as by the use of the Urim and Thummim or the chocolate colored stone. David expressed absolute faith in the Prophet's power to get any information he desired, and by any means he should adopt for the purpose. I mean he appeared to have absolute faith in the Prophet's power with God, to get any information he wished for. And he did not think that either the Urim and Thummim or the stone he had were essential, or absolutely essential, to the obtaining of the information.

He said that Joseph would -- as I remember -- place the manuscript beneath the stone or Urim and Thummim, and the characters would appear in English, which he would spell out, and they would remain there until the word was fully written and corrected, when it would disappear and another word appear, etc.

With reference to having seen the plates, he said they were brought and laid upon a table by an angel, who turned the leaves over for their inspection, and that a voice from heaven spoke and said that the record was a true one and that it was correctly translated. He also told of seeing the breast plate and the sword of Laban, and, as I remember, the Urim and Thummim, which were a little way off, and in a receptacle which held them. A peculiar feature of the man was that from a feeble old man when he commenced his testimony, he began to be magnified in my eyes until he was as fine a specimen of humanity as I ever saw. It was unnecessary in my case, but I felt as I saw him with the effects of the Spirit upon him, that that was his special mission, and that when performing it, God took

him in hand and made his testimony effective. I felt that no person could see him and hear his testimony as I did, and doubt it any more than David could doubt the divinity of Joseph's mission when they met under the circumstances of their meeting. And David said he could not doubt it.

After talking as he did, so fully and freely, he said, "I have been asked if we saw those things with our natural eyes. Of course they were our natural eyes. There is no doubt that our eyes were prepared for the sight, but they were our natural eyes nevertheless."

I asked him if the table were a tangible one, and he said it appeared to be, but they did not touch it. After his testimony about the plates, his son asked if he should bring out the manuscript, and he assented, whereupon <sup>it was</sup> they were brought out, and examined and explained. Our conversation did not touch upon his relation to the Church.

Love to all,

(Signed) N. Tanner, Jr.