

A HOAX.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD KINDERHOOK MYSTERY.

The following letter came into the possession of Hon. Geo. H. Wilson of Quincy recently, and was by him given to the editor of this Journal. The incident referred to created a great commotion at the time of the discovery of the plates. These plates were supposed to contain the basis of the Mormon gospels promulgated by Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader, who was killed at Nauvoo, June 27, 1844. The original plates were of gold, and where they now are is unknown. The letter was shown to an old resident who remembered the incident well, and who said: "The plates referred to were in the possession of Dr. McDowell of McDowell's college in St. Louis. After the death of Dr. McDowell, it is supposed the plates were placed in the Mercantile library, or some other museum in St. Louis. I knew personally most of the men named in the letter. W. C. Flagg lived at Moro, Ill., when Mr. Harris sent the letter. There are a few Pike county citizens still living who knew Fayette Grubb, Bridge Whitton, A. R. Wiley, Wilburn Fugate and Esq. Murray, who lived at and near Kinderhook, and a great many remember Dr. P. M. Parker when he resided in New Canton and Barry. The object of the men preparing the plates is supposed to be their desire to bolster up the visionary plans of Joseph Smith, and to lead the unsuspecting public to follow him."

THE LETTER

Barry, Pike Co., Ill., April 25, 1855.

Mr. Flagg.

Dear Sir: Yours of the 4th of April came to hand on the 23d. This thing is stale with me, although I have my feelings and respect for the truth.

Some years since, I was present with a number at or near Kinderhook, and helped to dig at the time the plates were found that I think you allude to. Robert Wiley, then a merchant of that place, said that he had had a number of strange dreams (as I have learned) that there was something in the mounds near Kinderhook. If I recollect right, he began to dig on Saturday, and on Sunday the discovery was made. I was present with quite a crowd. The plates were found in the pit by Mr. Fayette Grubb. I washed and cleaned the plates and subsequently made an honest affidavit to the same.

But since that time, Bridge Whitton said to me that he cut and prepared the plates and he (B. Whitton) and R. Wiley engraved them themselves, and that there was nitric acid put upon them the night before that they were found to rust the iron ring and band. And that they were carried to the mound, rubbed in the dirt and carefully dropped into the pit where they were found.

Wilbourn Fugit appeared to be the chief, with R. Wiley with B. Whitton. Fugit lives at Kinderhook and B. Whitton at Alton, Illinois, to both of which you can refer.

Subsequently to my receiving your letter, I have seen Dr. P. M. Parker, M. D., that graduated at St. Louis, Mo., last winter. Dr. Parker says that R. Wiley graduated at the same place since the finding of the plates at the same school, and that Dr. Professor McDowell on surgery has the plates now in his office, and he (Dr. Parker) saw them there last winter.

If it would be any satisfaction you will write to Dr. P. M. Parker, to Wilbourn Fugit and Bridge Whitton. Esq. W. Murray said that he had wrote you on the subject. What Esq. Murray says you may rely upon.

I believe that I have stated all as far as I know that would be any satisfaction to you, so with much esteem I remain,
Fraternally yours,

W. P. HARRIS.

Mr. W. C. Flagg.

P. S. Mr. Fugite, Mr. Whitton and I are all of us be-

longing to one order that ought to bear witness to the truth. If anything should transpire that you would wish to hear from me again (an old man rising of sixty) please write, and I will cheerfully give you all the information that I can. It is a late hour and I have worked hard all day in my garden and my health is very poor. So I hope you will excuse

Yours respectfully,

W. P. H.