Garland Hurt to Col. A.S. Johnson  
October 24, 1857  
Utah F 176/1858  
Camp on SweetWater  
Oct. 24th, 1857  

Sir,

Having recently fled from the Indian Settlement on Spanish Fork in the Territory of Utah somewhat precipitately and reached this place on yesterday. After wandering for 27 days through mountains and deserts in company with the Utah Indians; I venture to trouble you with a brief statement of the circumstances which induced me to abandon the Agency and entrust my life to the care and protection of the Savages.

For sometime previous to my departure it had been the settled opinion of the people of Utah that the troops could not get farther than Green River this season; consequently I reasonably concluded that the Territorial officers would not continue to cross the mountains before Spring, and under the embarrassed condition in which the retention of the mails, and the very unsettled state of governmental relations with Utah had placed me, I deemed it important to seek an interview with them before winter set in. And as I had been previously advised that no person would be allowed to leave the Territory or cross the mountains without the humiliating ceremony of
applying to Brigham Young for a passport—the ultimative of organizing an Indian escort suggested itself to any mind: the first conception of which grew out of the deep concern these untutored creatures had, for sometime manifested for my safety, and I was no more inclined to avail myself of this suggestion from the fact that several of the Chiefs of the Uinta Country were then on a visit at the farm soliciting me to accompany them to Utah Valley for the purpose of inspecting the adaptation of its climate and soil for the cultivation of grain, as they had become much pleased with the cause of policy we were pursuing with the Indians in Utah County.

On the morning of the 27th ult. while I was yet discussing the prosperity of this resolution in my mind, some half dozen of the natives rushed into my office room exclaiming, friend! friend! the Mormons will kill you, and pointed to the window on the eastern side of the house. On looking out, to my surprise I saw some 75 or 100 armed dragoons stationed in the road about a mile from the house, and as I did not manifest quite as much concern as the Indians thought the occasion justified they gathered hold of me and gave me to understand that they would not let me stay any longer. I commenced arranging my official papers so as to be able to remove them instantly if necessary, for I did not understand what it all
meant. In a few seconds another Indian came in to inform me that the Spanish Fork Canyon was full of Mormons armed with guns and pistols, and said they were going to kill me and he had scarcely time to tell his story when another came in great haste and said that a Mormon Squaw at Springville had told him to run and tell me that the Mormons were going to kill me. He also reported a large body of armed men on the road between Springville and the Indian farm. It was also reported by another Indian that the Mormons at Paysan (the town in the South) were all in arms, (although it was Sabbath.)

The Indians would not quit my room, but began to gather up my bedding and running apart, when any Interpreter came into the room in an apparent state of excitement and exclaimed, "Doctor you gone in!

I asked what it all meant. He said it was understood all over the country that I was about leaving with the Indians, and handed me a note from Mr. Butler, Bishop of the Spanish Fork Settlement, stating that he had learned from various sources that I intended going out with the Indians in violation of the Marshal Law now in force. He felt it his duty to inform me that I could not leave, that they were resolved to enforce the law at all hazards.

I regret having mislaid this letter but the above is its pur-
port which revealed to me the meaning of so much military array.
To think that an officer of the government should be thus
menaced while in the peaceful discharge of his official duties
could not fail to excite in the bosom of any one possessed
of a spark of patriotism, feelings of the most indignant scorn.
To be detained by force and used as a tool in a most treasonable
opposition to the laws of the country, as occasion might require
or to fall a victim to that brutal revenge which seeks gratifica­
cation only in the sacrifice of life, was too humiliating to
contemplate for a moment. I determined to extricate myself
from the dilemma or die in the attempt, and turned to ask some­
one to bring my horse, but when I reached the door I found
that the Chiefs son, (a sprightly boy) had already performed
that service, and while he was saddling him I gathered any
papers and wearing clothes, threw them into some meal sacks
and pitched them out of doors to the Indians, who all appeared
eager to assist me in my escape.
In the presence of an armed populace I set out in company with
these Indian youths whose names are Beto, Sain, and Showen­
shockets. Mr. Joseph P. Watters of Salt Lake City also accom­
panied me.
Instead of going east as our enemies expected, we took a
western course, but when it was discovered that we intended
reaching the mountains by a circuitous route, some half
dozen persons on horse-back came out from the town of Payson to tap our course just ahead of us. We wheeled short to the right, cut just in our front by a small stream so deep and mazy that stock were not in the habit of crossing it. I urged my horse and he attempted to clear it at a single bound, but failing to reach the opposite bank with his hind feet, fell back into water and mud over the top of his hips. I lit upon the bank over his head and by pulling at the reins assisted him extricating himself which he did after several desperate struggles. My comrades sallied down stream a little and had better success. Our pursuers were by this time within three or four hundred yards of us. I remounted in haste and soon found to my great satisfaction that the stamina of the noble animals had not been much exhausted, and though I lost my spurr in the struggle, that I could easily dispense with its service. At the distance of about two miles we reached the base of a low mountain ranging north and South, but undoubting the propriety of pursuing a western course as our friends behind were not aware of this change of the programma: but just at this time a dispatch was brought by two boys from an old chief telling us to be sure and return to the farm that night. We reached the Summit as the sun was about setting and made a feint.
Instead of continuing west, we only descended far enough below the Summit to hide ourselves and turned north, and continuing this course for two or three miles when we thought our pursuers were about gaining the Summit we turned again upon an eastern side of slopes and dropped into a little hollow where we waited for the daylight to disappear. This completely foiled our enemies, for the ground was so hard and stony that they could not discover our tracks and as the half grown moon began to shed its silver rays upon the mountain slope, we remounted and bounded over the prairie towards the point from whence we had set out. We reached the farm at about 8 p.m. and found about one hundred of our red friends anxiously waiting our return and who manifested great joy at our arrival. My first inquiry was where the Mormons were when twenty voices shouted "Cotchcarry Mormon" (not here Mormon).
I had left some 45 head of horses and mules and was about inquiring for them when I discovered that they were upon the backs of the most of them. They then stated how they had sallied out during the day and driven the enemy out of the canyon with threats of what course they should pursue in the event that I and my comrades were murdered. Taking some bread and meat that we found in the cellar we made our escape up the Spanish Fork in the direction of the Uinta Country, and before 10 o'clock the next day had placed ourselves quite beyond the reach of
our enemies and had passed in this mean time no less than three hundred Indians, the most of whom had left the farm the day before and were halting on the way to learn more fully the fate of the American as they called me, and before sunset all my papers, clothes, etc. were returned to my possession. From that time hence I have been entirely dependant upon those poor untutored children of nature for life and sustenance. I have shared a liberal position of their meager hospitalities and crude sympathies in my bereavements, and though they were evidently conscious that they were unable to treat me as I had been accustomed, they have manifested a devotion to my person and a regard for my safety far in advance of their present knowledge of Christian civilization.

When we left the Indian Settlement the season was mild and salubrious, but as early as the 9th inst. we encountered a severe snow storm, which pelted without mercy the naked skins of my straining escort. Also on the 12th and 13th in crossing the Green River mountains, we waded through snow knee deep, subjecting any party to the utmost degree of privation and suffering, yet throughout their attachment was unremitting, and they would often when around their campfires assure me that if any attempts were made to take my life, they would die in my defense. The weather is now becoming intensely cold and even as early as the 16th, winter had set in with unusual severity,
which in the meantime we were short of provisions and were compelled to submit to the most extreme suffering from hunger during the last two days of our journey, yet through all these privations I had the satisfaction to be frequently assured that my companions would feel themselves amply rewarded if they could only be the means of restoring me to the bosom of my friends and retrieving me from that danger to which they had so often warned me that my life was exposed. I feel it a duty which I owe to the Utahs, to make as fair and candid exposition of these facts for I doubt if ever an agent of the government in the Indian Service witnessed similar attachment for his person or more loyalty to those laws and regulations which have been instituted for this government than has been manifested on this occasion.

The absence of any one in charge of the Superintendency I trust will be a sufficient apology for thus obtruding these facts from your notice.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Garland Hurt

Ind. Agt.

Col. A.S. Johnson, U.S.A.