

Letters: L. H. “Fay” Holbrook and Alsina “Sina” Brimhall, 1897-1901
(transcribed and compiled by Mary Jane Fritzen, 2006, 2010)

Introduction

These letters, which my grandparents saved, record their courtship while he was on his L.D.S. Church Mission to New Zealand, and she was teaching school in Springville, Utah.

From the personal history of Alsina Brimhall Holbrook:

“Somewhere in the halls of the B. Y. A. in my 17th year, I met this companion [Lafayette Hinckley “Fay” Holbrook], the father of our eleven children. . . . The experiences of four years at BYA were romantic It was a time of great developing power of head, heart, hand. Great additional testimony of the gospel, strengthening of my knowledge of Gospel already learned in home and in our wards In 1897 I took out my Degree of Bachelor of Pedagogy well assured I would only teach school until my future husband should return from his mission to New Zealand where he went the following July.

“Misses Delia and Eva Maeser gave him a farewell party at the Maeser home. While they were all busy with games he and I slipped away and he gave me a tiny pearl-handled gold pen, with which I gave him, a few months later, the promise of remaining true as his bride-to-be. My three and a half years teaching followed. His letters were a constant inspiration and kept my star of hope shining brightly

“In May 1900, by consent of Supt. L. E. Eggertson, principal of the Springville schools, I obtained a leave of absence and went to Europe to meet my missionary. He in company with his mission president Ezra Stevenson were making a circle of the globe returning by Europe and the Atlantic, home. My husband’s sister Clara Holbrook, now Jarvis, was laboring as a missionary in London, England. We four toured the main countries of Europe, spending three months together This experience abroad was sweetened constantly by the companionship of my lover

“I was in the pink of health on my return home. I began teaching school that fall 1900 in Spanish Fork. I lived with Grandma Brimhall who lived just below the school house. Whether the strain of going directly into school after strenuous travelling could have been the cause, I gave up my school in early spring. I went to my sister’s home to rest and prepare for my wedding day.

“On 15th of May, 1901, my sister and father accompanied us to Salt Lake, taking a Pullman. At the Temple door we were introduced as a young couple come to start a kingdom. Lafayette Hinckley Holbrook and Alsina Elizabeth Brimhall were married in Salt Lake Temple. Not until that event was consummated did I ever feel that I had found my life’s project.”

Five years of correspondence between the two sweethearts from 1897-1901 are preserved and transcribed. The following chart gives a chronology of the letters along with their first sentences, selected phrases, and closing.