

Appendix 1  
THOMAS JAY HARRISON, FARMER, SCHOLAR, TEACHER, LEGISLATOR, FARMER  
1846-1943

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NOTES, EXCEPTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN BY THOMAS JAY. TO HIS WIFE  
WHILE HE WAS ATTENDING STATE LEGISLATURE SESSIONS:

(Salutation, complementary close & signature shown on first line of each synopsis. Direct quotes italicized)

- 26 Jan 1874 Dear Little Wife; Yours; Thomas J. Harrison
- o Disappointed that he (T J) had not received a letter from her. Disappointment ...*all the more poignant because we have today agreed in our patriotism to abjure our love for wife and children and home, and remain without adjournment until we are through. Our wives will no doubt rejoice to know that their dictators are not likely to put in an unpleasant appearance. It is singular that men can be so foolish and weak in principles as to fear to vote for a sufficiency of time to visit home! ... because their constituents would be displeased if they were to go home even for a day.*
  - o Notes that a fellow legislature, a Dr. Munson, said he was completely disgusted with activities going on and would not return again even though they gave them four times as much money for their service. T J adds *I think him about right.*
  - o Notes he greatly appreciated the two letters (from Gertrude) he had just received. He then adds *Don't allow Grace's want of "tittle" to prevent your writing again soon.*
  - o Notes that *Right across a little open space from my room is a family of man, wife and 3 little ones -- after my own heart. They have a small organ and the wife, though a plain farmer's girl like you, plays well and sings finely. I can hardly resist the temptation to go and help her. Sunday evening she played an hour or two and I could but feel like grumbling that you and I could not thus together seek enjoyment.*
  - o The letter ends with *Please allow me to say in your ear that, though I like your letters so very much, I would much rather have the substitute you propose to give. Don't forget that you have my whole love and that I want nothing less from my little wife.*

- 20 Feb 1874 Dear Little Trudy; Yours only; T. J. Harrison ( Letter transcribed almost in it's entirety)
- o (opening paragraph) *It gave me no great pleasure to read parts of your last letter. I don't think you were hardly fair in some of your criticisms. I felt miserable when I wrote you those short letters and lack of love and good wishes did not cause their brevity. The fact that I did not express my love as freely as usual arose from the fear that the old folks read with small sympathy. Love, pure and disinterested, is a noble attribute of humanity, yet its avowal is often productive of sarcastic smiles from any other than the subject and object of it -- the giver and receiver. If you were here, a warm kiss and caress should soon convince you that my love is not materially lessened to say the least. ... It seems to me you write impatiently. Do you feel so?*

*I think, Trudy, I can give up going to theaters or any place else where simple pleasure is the object, if my wife desires it. I would not like her to go against my will. I will therefore pledge you herein that I will not attend said resorts of pleasure unless some noted lecturer, whom I wish to hear, constitutes the attraction. Brazen faces, bare legs and bare a\_\_s shall not control my attendance. Nor shall music, either, if you will wield your*

Appendix 1  
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1846-1943

---

*power at home. I have so far gone simply out of curiosity -- a desire to see what was done at these places. I have seen the inside of each and am now satisfied.*

- o How do you spell that which you wished me to dissolve in my mouth? Be careful of that little word to, too, two. You may interchange them. You say "I received" etc.*
- o My throat is now well, thanks to Providence, and my body is, I think, sound as usual; but my brain gets very tired of these business proceedings, if proceedings is the proper term when so little is done. We are doing much better, however, as we get better broken into the harness. It is impossible to say when adjournment will come. I think the flowers will bloom and fields look green ere we cast the last long lingering look at our adopted winter's home. ... A great many unimportant bills are introduced and many such pass the House, but they are mostly squelched in the Senate. That body is so contemptibly mean that it will pass nothing in which none of it's members have a personal interest. Their advantage therefore is not superior wisdom but transcendent meanness.*
- o I will send you a little money today as I have drawn only one week's wages since I was at home the first time and am about out. I shall draw next week, though, and I shall then supply your needs. Write and tell me how much to send.*
- o Accept the assurance of my sincere love for both my little dears, and write soon....*

13 Mar 1874 My Dear Little Wife; Yours; T. J. Harrison

- o Chit chat -- how he misses her. Does she need money? Can send it if she doesn't ask for too much. Notes that I sent for the Star for you according to your request. I hope you will receive (notice how this word is spelled) it soon and be well pleased with it. What did you mean in your last in regard to Mr. Williams's Keeping grocery? You and the children both allude to it in a way that leaves me in doubt whether you are in fun or earnest. Please explain.*
- o What are you women doing toward suppressing the whisky trade in your community? There is nothing of importance enough to talk of except the "Whisky War" here. ... Last night Gough lectured on temperance at the open house which was filled to overflowing. It was a masterly effort ... Perhaps when you come up next winter you will have the chance to hear the Lion roar.*
- o I want you to tell me, Trudy, what to bring home to the children. I can't make a satisfactory choice either in kind or quality --I need hardly tell you that.*
- o I am glad to hear of your success in the new music book. I hope you will continue to give attention to music...*

9 Apr 1874 Dear Wife; Yours; T. J. Harrison. {Letter started on Thurs.; finished Friday}

- o Discusses, comments on, uncertainty about when legislature will finish their business.*
- o Notes that the election has strengthened the Democrats and that one had stated he was ... in favor of reorganizing the remaining benevolent institutions before we leave if it takes all summer.*

Appendix 1  
THOMAS JAY HARRISON, FARMER, SCHOLAR, TEACHER, LEGISLATOR, FARMER  
1846-1943

---

- o Bad weather -- snowing, ground covered with several inches of snow and snow still falling. *I fear you will have a very disagreeable work to do in your feeding (my feeding, I should say)*
  - o Says he plans to come home Saturday (11 April) ... *to be with my Darling ... Will She greet my coming with a holy kiss?*
  - o Notes that he was disappointed he did not receive a letter (from Trudy) yesterday
- 3 Dec 1874 Dear Wife; Yours; T. J. Harrison
- o Chit chat. Legislature to adjourn for holidays. Boarding house where he stays charges full fare for absences of one week or less and half-fare for absences over a week. Legislator received no pay during recess. T. J. had a roommate -- representative from Clinton County. "Nice" room, on third floor. Rent/fare: either \$5.50 or \$0.50 per week -- document faded.
  - o *I went to church last night to while away the time and I was surprised to find one of the goodest old fashioned prayer meeting I have lately gone to -- good singing and hearty praying.*
  - o Recently attended an organ recital at First Congregational Church. Sent Trudy a copy of the "programmie".
- 3 Mar 1874 Dear Trude; Yours; T. J. Harrison
- o Chit Chat. T. J. had bad headache for several days. Went for a long walk, as recommended by "Dr. Ray." Only made headache worse!
  - o Ended with *Now good bye and be a good girl; Kiss Grace for me and receive mine.*
- 3 Jan 1875 Dear Wife; Yours; T. J. Harrison {Beginning of T J's 2nd year as legislator}
- o *We made a call Friday on the governor. Cake and wine loaded down a side table and few of the members had the grit to say "no" when the latter was offered them.. To relieve your apprehensions at this juncture I will just say that I was not tempted above what I bore.*
  - o *We heard a lecture at the Penitentiary by Ferguson, the Chaplain, on "Mordicai the Jew." There was some fun but little sense -- I'll say wisdom -- for it was the most sensual sermon I ever heard. It was full of obscenity and was very ill adapted to the place.*
  - o *(This afternoon) we called on Mrs. John G. Deshler who set a rich table for perhaps two or three hundred -- at least as many as called. This was the silliest affair I have ever been a partner to. I suppose it was all in strict etiquette but a trained parrot might have entertained company with as much good taste and politeness as did this volary of, and acknowledged leader in, fashion.*
  - o *I propose to start my juvenile bill forward and I hope it will be dealt with gently.*
  - o *One year ago was my first Sunday in Columbus, and what great changes my experience has wrought in that time! Instead of the sober, earnest men I expected to see in the halls of legislation, I find few but political tricksters regarding naught but their own interests. But I have no time to pursue the thought as I would...*
  - o *(End of letter) I must commend you for your penmanship for you are rapidly improving. ...Good bye and may this be the happiest and most useful year of the feast when you make the review a year hence.*

TRANSCRIPT of a LETTER TO THE EDITOR by T. J. HARRISON  
(Written about 1920; Published in a Bethany, Missouri, Newspaper)

Dear Editor:

In my last comments I promised to give your readers a sample of E. Z. Marks and a record of the respect which history accords them. Sixty-five years ago, when I was just beginning to understand what I read, I found it difficult to get reading matter that boys like. We had quite a library of big leather bound volumes, mostly of religious and scientific works, but you know a boy's love for blood and thunder and action. These elements were supplied abundantly in the Bible and Plutarch's "Lives." So I read them as boys would hardly do now.

There were four stories in the Old Testament that were especially interesting to me: The story of Esau and Jacob, the story of Esther and Mordicai, the story of Joseph, and the story of Ruth. The first three are stories of financial, political, and social greed, but the fourth is a story of love and unselfish devotion so beautiful that it has made Ruth the sweetest name loving mother can bestow on her darling babe. If there is anything in English literature finer than Ruth's auto dedication, I have yet to find or appreciate it.

But it is the story of Esau to which I would like to call your readers' attention as it seems to have been recorded for just such cases as ours. I would be glad to have your readers defer to the story for they will find it exceedingly interesting; but for those who may not find reference convenient I will say briefly that Esau and Jacob were twins. Esau was the elder brother and, according to the law of prime-geniture which prevailed at that time, was entitled to succeed his father as patriarch or father-ruler of the family, and was heir as well to the family's great wealth. Esau was preeminently an outdoor boy, helping the cowboys of the range to round up the steers and bust the bronchos. He was also a great hunter and kept the table supplied with the choicest of venison. Jacob, however, was the "Little Lord Fauntleroy," or perhaps the "Merle twin," of four thousand years ago. When Mrs. Ben Hadad called on Mrs. Israel, Jacob leaned sweetly against mother's knees and listened to neighborhood scandals and knew all about how many hens the neighbors had setting and especially the price of eggs. During all this time mother's fingers were gently twining those glossy curls and she loved Jacob as the apple of her eye. Isn't it wonderful then that she should determine that Jacob should supplant Esau in the inheritance and in his father's love.

Came at last a time when Isaac was very old and blind -- so blind that he would not know a great highway from a cross-cut saw. He called Esau to bring him a choice mess of venison and promised then to give him his final blessing. But the mother heard, and when Esau brought his offering, Jacob and his mother had already kidded the blessing from the father and there was nothing left for Esau.

Appendix 2  
THOMAS JAY HARRISON, FARMER, SCHOLAR, TEACHER, LEGISLATOR, FARMER  
1846-1943

---

Now, Mr. Editor, I would like to call your readers' attention to the fact that though this was the grossest and most unbelievable case of bunco-steering in ancient or modern history, yet Isaac after being convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that he had done Esau irreparable wrong, refused utterly to unwind one particle of his red tape or change his blue print a single hair. In other words government was just as blind and stupid four thousand years ago as it is today.

Again came a time when Esau went hunting. The wind was wrong and the game was shy. Discouraged, hungry, footsore and weary, Esau turned homeward. By some species of wireless the crafty and conscienceless mother and son learned of Esau's plight and prepared the final act of his undoing. The loving mother prepared a great bowl of steaming broth and sent Jacob with it to meet his brother. To feed him? Not on your life! Esau, full of gratitude, reached for the bowl but Jacob withdrew it and told Esau he could have it only in exchange for his birthright. Of course we know the Mayor of Cork would simply have tightened his belt a notch and gone on a hunger strike, and his wife would have stood by to prevent the cruel English from feeding by force. But I tremble to think what would have befallen little Jake's face if the proposition had been made to a red blooded American. Esau, however, accepted the condition.

I would like to call the readers attention to the fact that Esau and Jacob, though twins, were born in widely separated states. Esau in Utopia and Jacob in Missouri. Esau is one of those that "believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Jacob believes nothing till it is proved, hopes for nothing that he has not the energy to make on his own, endures nothing that he can fight successfully. You tell Esau to "sign here" and he signs, even if it is a quit claim to his soul's salvation. Jacob would know the meaning of anything he signed if he had to spend a month finding out. Esau only feels the urge to buy when the price has reached the top; Jacob only when the price has reached the bottom. Esau never looks a gift horse in the mouth; Jacob will scrutinize every tooth in his head. Esau was greatly pleased when Bethany made him a present of a fourteen-mile hill and went gladly on the hunt of the mules which he must stable and harness, water and feed the balance of his life to do the work of two mules; Jacob would have declined the gift in those emphatic little words of the Bible, "Go to." Curious, Mr. Editor, but I have always thought the authors of King James' version left out a word here inadvertently and if the reader thinks he has in mind a word adapted to the context for the purpose of this article he has my permission to use it. Jacob sold the contract to grade the fairgrounds at eighteen cents a cubic yard. Esau sold the contract to grade the Jefferson Highway at seventy cents. Which would you employ to do business for you?

Not many months ago I had business in a store in a town not far from Bethany. I was detained several hours and while waiting so many people called for oil that my attention was attracted to the method of service. The room extended from street to alley. The clerk received the receptacle from the customer, walked wearily

Appendix 2  
THOMAS JAY HARRISON, FARMER, SCHOLAR, TEACHER, LEGISLATOR, FARMER  
1846-1943

---

one hundred feet, maybe, to the rear, down a stairway, got a quart, half gallon or so and wearily returned. Each service occupied probably six to ten minutes.

A few days later I was at another store in the same town. I was there only a few minutes but in that time a customer called for oil. The clerk received the can, took possibly three steps, gave a lever a yank or two and handed the buyer his oil. The whole affair occupied possibly one minute. Which firm would you bet on?

The fact is, Mr. Editor, that every intelligent manufacturer scraps an inefficient machine whenever a better can be bought. Must do so or quit business. Much less would he buy an inefficient machine if he knew it. But Bethany Township is deliberately buying a costly road that is eighty-four percent junk, as compared with the road it might have had for the same money.

I saw men hauling coal past my home the other day. They lived so far south I did not even know them. They possibly had one ton to the team. What hope would there be for Bethany if its citizens had to haul their fuel and other supplies from New Hampton or Ridgeway? How long would it be until Bethany would become a mere cross-road with a blacksmith shop, a church and perhaps a "farmers' store?"

Forty years ago, when I first saw Lorraine and Bethany, there was not much difference between them except that Bethany had the court house and its usual barnacles. If the railroad had gone through Lorraine and left Bethany out, their present status would have been exactly reversed. Don't make any mistake about it. A community is made or ruined by its transportation facilities or lack of them.

I do not know the exact grade of Big Creek Bottom. The Missouri River bottom has a fall of about one foot per mile or one-fiftieth of one per cent. It is this fact that makes possible those magnificent freight trains you can see anywhere from Kansas City to Omaha. Our creek has doubtless twice that fall. But an intelligent engineer could certainly have made Bethany a one per cent road if he had wished. Such a grade would have enabled a tractor to take at one load enough coal to last a dozen families a year.

It seems impossible to me that an intelligent community would submit to the squandering of their hard earnings for twenty on a mere pretense of a good road. But if it does submit, then the mountain that labored and brought forth a mouse has nothing on Bethany.

Isaac discovered the law of survival of the fittest four thousand years before Darwin's time. He saw that Esau, because of inherent weakness and inability to grasp opportunity, never could become the head of a great nation, and Esau still breeds true to type. If the owners of the saloons and dance halls, pool halls and patent medicines, depend on Jacob's patronage they might as well go to Armenia and let the unspeakable Turk put an end to their sufferings; but Esau, poor, little, weak, incompetent Esau, will see that their wives and kiddies are clothed in the cleanest and daintiest lingerie and never go hungry. And Jacob? Jacob will caress every nickel like a fond red-lipped sweetheart and by and by will be building great steamship lines, great

Appendix 2  
THOMAS JAY HARRISON, FARMER, SCHOLAR, TEACHER, LEGISLATOR, FARMER  
1846-1943

---

transcontinental railroads, and great halls of learning. True to type? Ah Yes. Esau downward to those asylums behind whose walls we hide from human sight those intellectual monstrosities of humanity, and Jacob upward to our hall of fame in whose center we have placed that great masterpiece of the Divine Hand the man who lived and wrought to the end that liberty and equality should not perish from the earth -- The Emancipator -- the man without a model and without shadow.

Now, Mr. Editor, I am going to write your paper another article, but I suppose there is no hurry. It may only be putting a jewel in a swine's snout anyhow. But first I want to tell your readers of a wonderful club I am organizing. It is to be known as the "Esau club." It's motto and creed will be:

"A hill is no detriment to a road. All grades are, and of right ought to be, free and equal."

The federal and state engineers, the county court, and the Bethany Highway commissioner will be invited to become members ex-officio, having already proved their eligibility. Any person can become a member by bringing conclusive proof of direct descent from Esau. The sessions of the club will be held quarterly in the county clerk's office, the first Monday in each month. Each session will be opened and closed with this beautiful hymn:

The grand old Duke of York  
He had ten thousand men.  
He marched them up the hill,  
And marched them down again!