

# Burnett Family Letters

Indianapolis Mar 16, 1868 to Harriet S Burnett from Jerome Clark Burnett

Dear Mother

I send with this a draft for \$40, made payable to Austin, as before. Also a pass from Crestline to Indianapolis, so that when you come home you can buy a ticket to Crestline and then come from Crestline here on this. I got the ticket last summer and didn't use it. By the terms on which it was sold it holds good one year, and if you should possibly (though not probably) be questioned you can say that I purchased it last year in June, and did not use it.

We are all well. Addie is robust, but anxious - anxious to see you, and get settled. More anxious on the last than I think she ought to be, but it is perhaps natural.

I suppose the boys have written to you and told you something of their business. Trade has been dull and they have not done as well as they expected to. I have not heard from them lately and don't know how matters are now. Leazer is talking of going further west. Geo. is unsettled and hardly knows what to do. I have told him to get work of some kind through the summer and save every cent, for the purpose of attending school a year, and that when he gets ready to start I will give him a hundred dollars, or more if necessary, to help him along. He ought to go to school, as he shows a disposition and ability to learn, and now is the time.

The boys - George and Will - I suppose feel hard towards me because I wrote to them some time ago about the business - particularly referring to your interests, the condition of the mortgage on the farm, and so forth. My only object was to know to what extent you could rely upon them far as a basis for their business, for means to live on; and whether the business, in their own estimation, was to [be] relied on. They complain that their expenses have been very heavy, and they were under the impression that they had paid a great deal to you and Addie, when in fact, and they now admit, hardly anything was paid. I think that they will now reduce expenses about the store and try to economise in other respects until they get to going right again. They have doubtless done the best they could, and I know that Will has worked as hard and as faithfully as he knew how.

I do not find fault, and have not, but if the business will not pay, and there is danger of their becoming involved I say a change should be made while there is time to save the farm and prevent loss. Of course they know this as well as I do: but I wanted to know how matters stood, and therefore I wrote, and George picked me up rather sharply. My intention was right, and I had nothing in view but your interests and their own, and so I have helped them with money during the past year, and would have helped them more if I had been able; my object ought to have been understood, and treated accordingly.

Will is in excellent finances and I think he will bring matters out right in the end.

You remember I wrote to you last fall, that I yielded the race for Auditor of State to Mr. Lange, and now, you have doubtless heard, Mr. Lange has been beaten. I don't know but it would have been the same with me; there's no telling. I will stay one year longer in the office, and then I can stay under the new Auditor or not, just as I please. But I am beginning to feel that I ought to be working for JCB altogether - doing something for myself. Consequently I think I will not stay here longer than this year.

Write and let me know what you think of doing, when you are coming, and all that.

How are the teeth.

Yours in haste, Jerome

Love to Henrietta and Austin and the little one - and to all the friends.

Indianapolis 21 Dec, 1868 to Lewis Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew:

I expect you think I have "gone back" on my promises, and am not to be relied upon. But the fact is I am rather hard up. We have had to buy a great many western clothes, I have had to pay out considerable money for other things, including a lot of groceries &c, which I bought at wholesale, not to say anything of twelve cords of wood, coal &c. Still, in a few days I think I will be ahead of the hounds again, and I will remember you.

Lizzie and the children went over to T.H. [Terre Haute] today, and I will go over Thursday. They will visit Mother and the rest of in two or three weeks.

I am very busy in the office and expect good extra pay in a few days.

Yours, Jerome

Indianapolis 18 Oct, 1870 to Lewis C. Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew,

The smoke of the election has cleared away, and the Republican Party is badly defeated. All of my political aspirations are rubbed out for the present, and my mind is almost wholly occupied with our prospective tramp on the plains and in the mountains. I don't want to hold out any delusive hope about the thing, but I have fully made up my mind to travel if I can make arrangements for the family while I am gone, and that seems entirely feasible now. Still it is an obstacle that will require much effort and money to overcome, and I am at it already. The term of office expires on the 25th of January, and I may possibly stay a month or so with the new incumbents - and then I will be ready to go. Of course Mother will stay with us this winter, and it may be that I can make arrangements for her to stay with Lizzie while we are gone. There is much to do pertaining to these family matters, but there are several months at our service and I shall work from this out with the one object in view.

I have written a long letter to 'Leazer asking him lots of questions about hunting, climate, scenery, the outfit necessary, how he is living, what he is doing &c. If we could stay there two or three months and bach all together, it would be the cheapest way of getting along, and we could have plenty of sport.

I have already written to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington for information in relation to taking meteorological observations, such as heights of mountains and depths of canons, the temperature of the atmosphere, of springs and lakes &c, and we must post ourselves this winter in geology and botany. I will buy an aneroid barometer, a thermometer, and one or two other instruments to enable us to get information of some benefit, and to write

lively letters for the papers. To this end I wish you would study botany, and learn all you possibly can. I will take geology, and study meteorology. If we make the trip we must go as intelligent men, with a view of making it pay in storing up knowledge and acquiring reputation. I am going to New York next week or the week after, and will see about the instruments there, and make inquiries as to breech-loading rifles. I have fishing tackle enough for both of us now. In fixing up our outfit we must not spend more than is absolutely necessary, but we must have enough, and I think we can get all we will want.

How much money will you be able to pay up between now and the middle of March? I think I can have a thousand dollars, at least I am going to try it pretty hard. If by hook or crook we get stuck out there we can go to work you know, and send money home to build houses with.

It is time enough yet to talk and write about the matter but I thought it would do no harm to let you know the situation, and my views. Write soon.

Yours, Jerome.

*[note in Tavia Burnett Overton's hand "letters from Uncle Jerome"]*

Indianapolis 4 Dec, 1870 to Lewis C. Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew,

I have received a letter from Leazer, in which he answered nearly all the many questions I asked, but he was evidently excited about some purchases of land he and By Sanford are making, and devoted most of his ink to that. He thinks there is a splendid opportunity for making money by entering land near Denver and as it don't take much money to buy a good lot of land I will to-day instruct him to enter 160 acres for me. He is very enthusiastic about Denver and its big promises in the way of rapid growth. They are all glad we are coming, and will be with us some of the time in our rambles. By has bought a shot gun, and is other wise preparing for business. Leazer thinks we can not get out much into the country for hunting and fishing, or for sight seeing, before the first of May, at which time the season opens. So you see, if we go early we shall probably be on expenses some time before we can commence moving about. I want to get off as soon as it will be wise to go, and could leave here in February. However, the incoming Auditor will probably want me to stay a few weeks in the office to show up the mysteries of the business, and if so he will pay me \$50 or \$60 a week, and we can, therefore, afford to wait a little. I cannot decide about the matter though, till sometime next month, and I will do what will pay the best.

We will go to California some time during the year, but I want to wait at Denver, putting in the time as circumstances may suggest, and keeping ready to go on to the Golden State with some excursion. But I don't expect to spend much time there. The plan of the campaign, as near as I can make it out now, and actual experience will probably change it when we get to Denver, is this; spend, say, two months in Colorado hunting, fishing, visiting the mines, climbing peaks &c; and two months in Wyoming, or perhaps farther north in the celebrated Yellowstone region. In fact I would rather see the geysers, and hot springs, and other famous and rarely-visited places in the Yellowstone valley than visit Yosemite. I don't want to go to Minnesota,

nor any of the places northwest, this side of Wyoming. Another matter I have in mind is this; to be ready at any time to join a government exploration party or surveying party or artists, or scientific men who may be there to explore the country and visit celebrated places. We will be welcome whenever we can furnish our own outfit, horses or mules, &c, and that I will have. It is almost useless, though to attempt now to say what programme we will follow. We will take matters as they come, and get all we can out of the trip.

Leazer says, in answer to my question, that we ought to have a dog, a large bone pointer, something like George's old "Yankee." I feel that this is necessary, because the company of a good dog will more than compensate for the trouble of taking him along. Now, do you know of such a dog that can be bought for a reasonable sum, from \$10 to \$20? If not look around, and enquire; we ought to have him as soon as possible, for if we can get one, we ought to have him as soon as possible, to be learning his ways, and teaching him. There are no good dogs here except those that are held at tremendous prices, from \$40 to \$100.

Your gun is just the thing. With the two shot guns, and rifle, and a revolver each, we can get along very well. I think Leazer says jack rabbit shooting is exciting sport. In what respect he doesn't say.

I don't think it will be profitable to stop at Lincoln on our trip. It is out of the way, and the time of year is not pleasant. If we can manage to stop there a couple of weeks coming back I should like it better, especially if the weather is favorable.

We can get along without the knowledge of botany, tho I will take a text book along. I am, and have been, studying Geology like blazes, and believe I can already name rocks from specimens, fossils &c. My barometer works beautifully and will be of great value to us climbing the high peaks.

I have been writing for the papers a good deal lately, so I will be in condition and practice to do my level best out there. I wrote an article called "The Voracity of Fishes" which I sent to George, and which you have probably seen. Also a short article on Gail Hamilton giving her fits for traducing a dead poet, which created considerable talk. I sent a copy of the paper to the female herself. I have written another article for a boy's magazine, called "Two thousand feet high, or, looking out of a balloon," describing my balloon trip from New York in 1865. The editor offered me \$5 each for short sketches that I might write up while travelling. The *Cin. Commercial*, as I have told you, offers me \$5 a column and the *Journal* here \$5 a letter. None of the offers are very good, in my estimation.

I am glad to see that you are improving very much in writing, but you must give careful, painstaking attention to your spelling. Folks all well

Yours, Jerome.

### State of Indiana, office of Auditor of State

Indianapolis 9 Jan, 1871 to Lewis C. Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew,

I have bought a dog, a pointer, which is considered on of the best in town. I gave twenty dollars for him, a big price, but I believe he is worth it. He is so well known here and has been

hunted by so many, that I am in some danger of losing him. I thought once of sending him to you, but I would not do so if he would bother Josie, or be troublesome around the house. I have to keep him in the cellar all the time. I don't think I can get off before the first of April, as the new auditor has come to my terms and I will stay with till about the middle of March. He wanted me to stay all the time, but I can't see it.

Yours in haste, Jerome

Indianapolis 3 Feb, 1871 to Lewis C. Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew,

Yesterday, somewhat to my surprise, I was appointed Assistant Surveyor General of Montana. The Surveyor General is General Milroy, of this state, who has been appointed in place of Gen. Washburn, who died a few days ago. I was applicant for the position myself, but Gen Milroy came in first and I came in second. The place I get is said to be worth \$2,400 a year; and the assistant has command of those exploration parties in the mountains, and in the Yellow Stone region. It may be well to say that I have not accepted yet. If I thought I could not have as good a time as I anticipate having in Colorado, I could not take it. But I believe I can get a good place for you, and perhaps make something out of the place besides - for both of us. If not, I don't want it. I have not received particulars yet; don't know when we will have to go, though I am ready to start almost any day. As soon as I learn more about it, I will let you know. In the mean time, don't say anything about it, except to George and Will. Keep it quiet.

Suppose it should be necessary, in case I take the place, to go to Helena and see what there is in it? Wouldn't you be willing to go as far as Denver and wait there until I can report and let you know? If it is all right, I would send for you immediately; if not desirable, and a place that will not suit us both, I would resign, and follow the programme first laid out. It is said by some that ought to know that the position is very desirable; that there is money in it and besides a splendid opportunity to see the country.

The dog I got run away from me and was gone ten days, when I found him again. He is strong, well-trained, and very pretty. I think he will suit.

I have a great mind to sell my shot-gun and buy a breech loader, but have not fully decided yet.

I have been promised rail road passes for both of us to Denver; and if the men fulfill their promises I will get them, but I shall not hurrah until I get the papers in my pocket. As the promises were made by two men, without hint or suggestion from me, I think they will be made good.

Folks all well          Jerome.

*[note in Tavie's hand; "Written by Uncle George"]*

St Louis 13 June, 1872 to Lewis C Burnett from George Burnett

Brother Lou,

I received a letter from GAB<sup>1</sup> a few days ago- probably you rec'd one like it - regarding the \$100 presents. I replied stating we owed her - Mother - \$30, being the whole amount. Today I receive a reply in which it is disclosed that Mother does not know that I paid my share, \$50, of the loan, and thinks that we collected, and did not give to you or otherwise did not disburse for her one month's rent of the Broadway house. Now as you know that I sent you money by Eleazer to pay my share of the note, and that Josie did not collect that months rent which was due, and so informed you, and carefully gave you all the information necessary to go ahead without getting things complicated. Write to Mother immediately and make it plain to her. It is not right that Mother should have had the impression till this late date that I owed her that money. We do not owe a cent to any person in the world but that \$30 - and would have paid that long ago if I had that Mother needed it.

When you reply let me know what Leazer's property sold for, and how much money was paid down. I shall have to dun him again for \$12 he borrowed (without asking me) out of the money he collected for me in Mattoon.

Will and family are here.

The German Singing Festival is a great success. The procession yesterday was near two hours passing our point. Our business is not very good now.

Our children have just recovered from the measles.

George

PS Hurrah for Grant & Co. - G

New York, 16 Dec, 1872 to Lewis & Emma Burnett from Josephine Eaton Burnett

*[note in Tavie's hand; "Aunt Josie was Papa's brother George's wife; Uncle Geo was killed while boarding a train. I think he was about thirty-six at the time of his death."]*

Dear Bro and Sister;

Your very welcome letter came safely to hand last Friday; I devoured its contents eagerly, I was so anxious to hear from you.

Now about the house, my mind is about made up to come back to Mattoon, not but what Pa is just as good as can be, and in fact everybody is, but I know I can invest my money to bring in a better income than here, and then the children will have the priviledge of all the outdoor amusements they want and need.

Now in the first place tell me [what] the size of lots are, how many feet front and how many deep? About how much do you think lots would cost on some of the cross streets going down to Mother's old home? I will send you my plan, one of my own getting up, so if it is not very well done remember it is my own first attempt; also find out how long it would take to build them and if the fences are put up in the contract and the \_\_\_\_\_ to the house, of course I

know the side walk would be separate.

I want them to stand together the same wall to do for two houses and the flue's built for two and one wall for the two family's &c. You will see by my plan what I mean. The house's to be 28 feet front by 24 deep, a hall to run thro the center of or rather thro to the bedroom, that would make a parlor and bed room on one side and a sitting room and summer kitchen the other. I think they could be built the way I have planned them with a summer kitchen with a very little more expense, you will see by putting them together it will make a side for each kitchen. I want the flues made so as the same flue can be used for the summer K as well as the sitting room and the wall is to be the summer K. I am writing with the baby on my lap and Albert up to the desk. I want you to take this plan or draw it up better if you like, to Woodberry Cunninham and some other carpenter and see what it can be done for, and find out particular about lots and the size. I want the outbuildings just as cheap as will do. You know about what.

I am in an awful hurry so I will have to stop. You will know [by] this about what I want.

Your affectionate sister Josie

Kiss the baby for me and give Emma my best love, where is Mattie, is Allie Lineater crazy to, what did Mrs L. do I did not know any thing about her. Where is Will. Here are some cards Pa had printed he drops them almost everywhere.

Find out just as soon as you can for I shall be very anxious to hear how long it will take to build them and when will be a good time to begin. Ella is perfectly delighted with the idea of coming back, Frank is still with my sister, baby is nice as can be must weigh 16 pounds is as fat as can be.

*[note in Tavie's hand: "This was written by Papa's eldest brother, Jerome, who was Chief of Dept. of Banks in Washington, DC"]*

Indianapolis 19 Apr, 1875 to Lewis C. Burnett from Jerome C. Burnett

Dear Lew,

Your letter from Petaluma came duly to hand and was read with more than usual interest. I should have answered sooner, but business and other matters have made me negligent. I let John and Eleazer have it. We are all well, and also the rest of the tribe here. Eleazer has not gone away, but is working at his trade, and so far is doing well. Will was here a few days ago and reported all well at Mattoon. I have almost given up my California trip for this year, though not altogether. Matters of business which are important to me are hard to finish up. I want to sell two small houses, but just now there is little doing and I could not dispose of them without sacrifice. The point I had selected to stop at in California is Los Angeles, where we have several excellent friends. I thought I would buy two ponies and a pack animal and make excursions from that point, with or without company, and take in any places of note within a distance of three or four hundred miles. But it costs a great deal to take a family of five, and spend six months or a year, where I could make but little, if anything, myself; and consequently I will not until I can go well prepared. I could do that now if I could sell a little house, or close up satisfactorily some other business which is hanging fire, and in which I am interested to the extent of two thousand dollars.

I did not gather from your letter which direction you proposed taking after leaving

Petaluma, or what you thought of doing. I presume you have settled upon something definite by this time. 'Leazer would be tempted to come if you should strike something promising; but I think he had better stay here and work. His health has been good in spite of a savage winter, and he is now strong and healthy. This is the 19th of April, and yet in a short ramble about town yesterday I saw icicles two feet long clinging to fountains, and eaves of houses. We have had a bad cold snap, and as usual the fruit is ruined. It gave me a slight attack of asthma, but did not last long. The papers are full of dispatches telling of the intense cold, and of crops ruined, as far south as Alabama and Georgia. All of which is evidence of a beautiful climate! But California has, and for that matter, the Garden of Eden had, its drawbacks. It would be a difficult matter to find a spot on earth entirely suited to our wants and tastes. If I could have good health here the year round, I would rather live in Indianapolis than in any city I ever saw. Business is excellent, money plenty, & the people wide awake and full of enterprise.

***Obituary of Jerome Clark Burnett;  
died 3 May, 1891 Washington, DC.***

Jerome C. Burnett  
A Journalist Who Filled the Requirements  
of the Definition of Gentleman To The Full

Washington, June 11- At the last meeting of the Indiana Republican Association, Captain Allen, editor of "Public Opinion," read the following brief but beautiful eulogy of the late Jerome C. Burnett, well known in Indiana journalism.

"As gentle as a woman and as manly as a man"- that is the best description I have ever seen of a gentleman. That gentleness which is the natural expression of innate kindness of heart, and that manliness that comes of strong opinions and virile courage were characteristics of Jerome Burnett, whose friendship was my high pleasure to enjoy for almost a quarter of a century without a single interruption by shadow or cloud. I do not know what were his religious beliefs, for religion was never discussed between us, but I do know that in his words and acts he came as near fulfilling the golden rule as any man I have ever known. While he did not hesitate to condemn that which he thought wrong - to condemn, often, in strong terms - he was charitable in his judgements, taking into

account all the circumstances bearing on the case under consideration, and uttering censure, not as if he liked to pick flaws, but as if he felt compelled to be true to himself.

I had made the acquaintance of our departed friend at Indianapolis in 1867. A few months later - early in 1868 - I became editor of the "Terre Haute Express," then the leading daily in that part of the state, and "J.C.B." became its Indianapolis correspondent, commissioned to write "staff" letters, giving opinions and forecasts as well as the news of the day. This position he held for several years and filled it in a manner that left nothing to be desired. His style was graceful, often displaying rare elegance of diction, and his statements of fact were always reliable. No correction, no apology, no retraction was ever demanded by any of the hundreds of public men whose public acts or utterances he criticised. Occasionally he laid on the lash in lacerating style, but he never struck an unmerited blow. It was one of his many good habits to see that the mechanical execution of



his literary work was all that the most exacting editor or printer could expect. In a journalistic experience covering thirty years or more, I have never handled such excellent copy as J.C.B.'s. In fact, it was a rule of his life to do good work in every thing in which he engaged. For 25 years he was a contributor to the press, writing for magazines, weekly and daily newspapers. He wrote political essays, financial articles, sketches of travel, personal recollections and anecdotes, and they were all creditable, all excellent. But the work he best loved was poetry, and he wrote verses that will live in their purity and sweetness when all of his heavier efforts are forgotten. He was a devout lover of nature and his pen was apt in descriptions of natural scenery. It has often seemed to me a strange incongruity that a man so full of sentiment as Jerome Burnett, with a heart beating with sentiment for every cause that ever appealed to sentiment, should have for the actual business of his life the keeping and counting of state

and national securities, that a man whose feelings found fitting, graceful and natural expression in verse, should give his time to columns of figures - the least sentimental of all work. But our friend distinction for great capacity and fidelity in the Auditor's Office in Indianapolis and in the Treasury Department in Washington. Neither our good state of Indiana nor the United States has ever had a more faithful servant, and we who enjoyed his friendship will never have nor lose a truer friend.

Write again soon, because we are probably much more anxious to hear from you, than you can be to hear from us.

One and all join in hoping you will strike a bonanza of health and wealth, and climb down from the "ragged edge" of doubt and hard work, with plenty of both of the blessings we all strive for.

Yours, Jerome

Crow Agency Nov '96 from Lewis Burnett Jr. to Emma Burnett

Dear Mamma,

Now for the first time I will try to write you a summary of events of the last two weeks. Last Tuesday week ago we left Sheridan bound for Dayton, a little place right at the foot of the Mountains comprising of one grocery, three saloons, and a pig pen, a delightful little place and ideal home. Sunday morning we started up the flume which comprises eight miles of wood work in which the water came down at the rate of twenty miles an hour and such a walk we had up and up went untill Dayton seemed a mere speck in the distance and the mountains rose to such a height that they seemed to pierce the heavens; to our right rose two immense stones from the side of a rugged prespice that looked like some prehistoric giants grappling in their last throes of death and the surrounding mountains appeared as huge battlements of bygone times. As I looked at these wonders of creation, I thought, "My God, what though hast not made is not worth while for mortal man to make. God builds and man destroys." ("How true.") At three o'clock after six hours of weary climbing and bumped shins, we reached the Commesry or the tie camp here. Herman and Leslie lost their way as we left them to go another way and we spent an hour and three quarts of patience in hunting them up. Here Herman left us to go back to Camp, while Papa, Leslie and I spent that night with and old timer in a log hut and such a night I will remember untill time will be to me no more. For supper we had sinkers and tough meat, sinkers are a good deal like flap jacks only with more water, and their name suits them to a perfection. After a supper of sinkers I sunk to bed and dreamed of sinkers sailing

through the air and [I] bumped my head on the bed stead trying to dodge the beastly sinkers. Another kind of bread he called pups he wanted to cook some of them for me but as I had tried his sinkers I preferred to let his pups go glimmering. Next morning found us up "bright" and early and after breakfast by our fancy cook we bid him a hearty goodbye and went up to where the hides were and after a half day of hard work we succeeded in getting though and started back for Dayton. Our friend of the night before had told us of a nearer route by climbing the mountains. The trail looked like a spider web in the distance as we began the ascent. It seemed ages before we reached the top and as we stood on the top it truly was the Dome of the Continent. Around us rose massive pines, monarchs of the wilderness, and as the wind blew through their narled branches it seemed to whisper legends of the noble red man. As we wended our way through these beauties we flushed a flock of grouse and as they whirled their way through the pines we succeeded in getting a baker's dozen of them. After three hours more of hard walking we reached Dayton, well satisfied with our afternoon's climb. The next morning we broke camp and bid good bye to the slumbering town of Dayton and the majestic mountains behind. Well, dinner is ready in the dining car and I must say Adeau.

Your fly away bird

Lewie

I am still determined to see what God has made for me to see, and am going around the world or die trying. You may think me foolish now (But some day I will make you proud of me) Will finish next time

Manila, Philippine Is. 5 Dec, 1899 to Octavia M. Burnett from Lewis Chester Burnett

Dear Tavia,

Methinks now that I have time to write you a letter, "Oh," one that they tell about, rich, rare and racy, don't you remember in the long ago when we used those three words in the Literary productions at the schoolhouse, so I have used them again; history repeats itself, and the word goes on. If you could only look down through 2000 miles of brimstone, fire and ashes, you would see me, in the city of Manila, in front of a great ebony desk scrubbing away; the house in which I stay was once owned by a wealthy Spanish family, and the walls are hand painted and all the furniture of rosewood and ebony. Such a mere piece of clay [as] I am in this room of beauty; really I am ashamed of my own existence. And back of this old mansion is a water way, you can step from [the] poarch into quaint little boats and go speeding away, and many a time in the evening I have sat on these steps and watch[ed] the sun go down over the old Spanish cloister, and watching it I would fall asleep and my cigar would roll down the marble steps, and when I would awake it would be night and two million crickets chirping away, and then I would go to bed and have pleasant dreams, really when I come back to the U States A again, I will certainly be able to write something.

Enough, enough of prosy nonsense. I told Pop in my letter of a week ago that I was going to start a restaurant, but luck was against me for I had notany more than got under good head way than they shut it up. Some officers are too mean to live, but I made \$40 out of it at any rate.

These women over here in this country give me the stomach ache, they have nothing

that I can see but their name. Of course some are beautiful but it is of the wax doll type and they have no more animation than a lot of potato bugs, indeed far less. And everything was upside down, buggies and street cars turn out on the left instead of the right side, people go half dressed, and little kids run around the streets with only short skirts. You can shut your eyes and imagine how they look. You can hire a "kajero" (Spanish cart) to take you all over town for 50¢. If you could only see his Royal Highness Lewis C Burnett Jr riding over the city of Manila with a native driver. You would envy your wandering brother and bum. Really you might not think it but one fellow told me that I was the Prince of Bums. It is a good deal to have a Prince for a brother, went 12,000 miles on \$15, not so bad after all.

And Oattie is married, and I imagine by this time that his sweet honey moon is about over, and now come the after math. I wonder how Eddie \_\_\_\_\_ is making it.

And now about that ring I told you I would bring or give you when I left home. I did not have enough money then but my promises are good, just wait and murmur not...

Tell Mama and the rest not to expect a letter from me in a long time now, next week I am going to Japan if I can catch a steamer, and I will not have a chance to write for a long time. Tell Leslie and Jerome "hello," it is hot and dusty \_\_\_\_\_ today.

A Revoir

Lewis C Burnett Manila, Philippine Is

But I must not forget my mustache there are three kinds of mustache, good, bad and indifferent; mine is the indifferent kind. Thin and retiring, but there is great hope, and it is not white [note in Tavie's hand; "Brother Lewie's letters to Mama"]

Hong Kong 28 Dec, 1899 to Emma C Burnett, Nebraska City, Neb from Lewis C Burnett

Dear Mamma,

I am so happy I can hardly write. I just returned from the American Counsoul Office, where I met the Captain of the *Mary L Cushing*, a large sailing ship, and he promised to take me to New York; how does that strike you?

Around the world. Now laugh if you dare. I am going on board this evening so this is the last letter I will write till you hear from me in New York. "Glory of Glories." I don't hardly dare think of it, we go by the way of Cape Colony, Africa and stop at India on the way, also at Madagascar. Won't I strut, when I get home, around the world. "Ha ha" fortune favors the brave. There is no doubt that I don't mean to brag, only all things comes to those who are determined, I cannot write to you for four long months as it will take us that long to get to New York. The ship I go on is a good boat, and I think we will make it okay.

I just returned from the Chinese frontier, where I have been looking over the country. I did not go to Corea as I intended, this seemed much better to start for home. Let me tell you I will laugh at some one if God lets me reach America all right. I spent rather a dry Christmas, never had a cent in my pocket but such things come to all. I must take the bitter with the sweet.

I am feeling fine and I do not much fear getting sick on the road. I am very careful as regards my health.

I received your letter at Manila written Oct 15. Now remember, don't expect to hear from me until I reach U.S.

Hello to all  
Yours as Ever, Lewie

Nebraska Hide and Leather  
dealers in Harness, Saddles, Robes, Blankets, Leather, Hides, Tallow, Wool &c.

22 Oct, 1900 to Miss Octavia Burnett, Lincoln, Nebraska from Lewis C Burnett Jr.

Dear Tavia,

"Oh," you cannot imagine how I have enjoyed myself since you have left, life once more seems like a dream, I felt this was coming on before you left but now that you have gone Thank goodness it is a fact. Please stay away, I beg of you to retire from my presence for ever, forever, and let me enjoy sweet happiness and quiet solitude.

I went home with a girl the other evening. She said, "You have a fine-looking sister, but I never would have guessed it by looking at you," too bad but don't you see why I wish you to remain in Lincoln, the contrast between us is too great, and I am afraid you will loose your personality and sink into insignificance before my all powerful eye.

Eddie and Mollie have been out to our place for the last week; the baby is all right, but he squalls like the very devil some times and in his discordant notes I reckonize your saddening voice.

And now as I close let me beseech you to remain where you are and let my quite unruffled life drift on in this blissful way untill \_\_\_\_\_ it at the other side.

Give my best regard to all the McCullochs, and hoping you will not be seen here for a long time, please don't get a hike on you.

Lewie

Hotel Hyser  
cor. Nicollet Ave & 4th St, Minneapolis

4 Feb 1903 to L C Burnett from Lewie Burnett

Dear Papa, I want you to off your next car of hides to Elkans, as I want to come home about March 1st - and I want something to do while I am there. Also call up Eddie and let me know what he has got. A letter will always catch me through the house. Tell Mamma I received her letter.

Yours, Lewie

Hotel Hyser  
cor. Nicollet Ave & 4th St, Minneapolis

5 Feb 1903 to Mrs L C Burnett from Lewie Burnett

Dear Mamma,

Your letter of Sunday received. I am glad that Papa is better. I do not think that I shall work very much longer but I do not want to stop. However I am feeling so bad that I do not know what else to do, for I fear that I can not do my work justice and I would much rather stop than to be called in. However, I am not going to lay off for a while as I may feel better as spring comes on. I do not know what is the trouble with me as I take good care of myself and go to bed early. I think that I am just slowly going under as I have lost several pounds in the last month. If I can I want to stay with Elkan & Co until the first of June, and I hope I will be able to. Give my regards to all.

Lewie

You may write me to Minneapolis, Hotel Hyser

Lincoln Neb 5 Dec, 1915 to Tavie Burnett Overton from Emma B. Burnett

(My love to Idy, Marie<sup>2</sup> and Longlegs)

Dear Tavia Yes I realized it was the anniversary of that awful tragedy.<sup>3</sup> While I never can forget it, time has so softened the grief that I can think of it calmly. But even if we can, wasn't it a terrible thing; and I will often look at her picture, and such a longing will come over me to see her and to wonder what she would look like by this time. Two such dear ones to be snatched away and in such a tragic way.

But there is no use repining. I have fought sorrow with a good fight - if I had not I surely would not be here. I went over to Boyer's Thanksgiving and had dinner with them. Nobody there but Mr. Boyer, Nettie and myself. Had turkey and other fixings. Awful good dinner, but she is so frail I think she tries to do too much. I am going to - or I have - invited them to my house for Christmas. I don't think I will have turkey though; I think I will have a nice roast. "Turkey too much for me's moneybags." Now you and Olin and Marie and Idy be sure and come for dinner and we will all eat in the kitchen and have a good time.

I surely would like to have had a little visit with Ruth and hear her wit. Surely laughter is conducive to health. Then it develops facial wrinkles which are very becoming in old age, especially if you can by any hook or crook persuade the corners of your mouth to turn up instead of down. Nothing like marking the face with "cheerful wrinkles."

I am so glad that Leslie has had a raise, and is getting along better with Uncle Will<sup>4</sup>. Say, Honey, why don't you put Leslie's letters in the envelope when you write and give me the benefit of them, and I will do as much for you. Your mother wants everything coming her way. It won't cost any more and be a pleasure to me. Wouldn't it be lovely if you could go to Leslie's Christmas, and wouldn't it be fine if I would meet you there and you did not know I was

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2 "Marie" Ackles was Tavie and Olin's adopted or foster-daughter.

3 - The drowning death of Lola Burnett in 1892.

4 - Uncle Will Burnett, a hide and fur dealer in Minneapolis.

coming. "What fun." Every time I get a letter from you or Leslie, it makes Jerome homesick after he reads them. Once he said he was going to up to see Leslie this winter and come by the way of Chicago home. But he said he could not stay over two days at either place. I told him he had better wait until school was out and go up and stay a couple of weeks, that there were so many in Chicago to call on, that he could not get around. So I think he will wait.

I suppose you think you are "some pumpkins" sporting around a diamond lavalier or brooch, whichever way you choose to wear it. I am awful glad you have got it, nothing is too good for my children, "according to my tell," and say! I will be borrowing it when I visit Chicago and do be going out in "sassiety." Well, some people get nice presents and some don't. But sure such a gift is some comfort when you are "growing old."

I think it ridiculous for Annie to charge Ida so much for the sewing she did. I am not going to let her do my dress. I have enough faith left in my ability to do the work myself. If I have a good form, and I am going to get me a pneumatic form, and make it myself. It will cost twelve or fifteen dollars, but what I would pay Annie for making it would go a good way toward paying for it. Then I will have it for waists &c. without the wearisome trying on and off of myself. Yes, Annie is so slow, then I have heard of other complaints about her sewing, so I am going to do it myself. No wonder she did so much better when she stayed in the store. Annie was here and stayed all night on her way home.

Jerome's girl is not in Lincoln this winter, but he is corresponding with her. I really do not think he cares enough for her to ever marry her altho he likes her very much, but he surely has not the symptoms of a fellow very much in love. I do not know what he would like for Christmas, I have studded about it considerably myself. But I have decided to get him a pair of gloves, and I will get Leslie the same.

Jerome sent his bath robe down to the Evans Laundry to be cleaned the other day and they ruined it, put it in and washed it in suds instead of dry cleaning, and he cannot wear it at all, spoiling the looks of it, it shrunk up half way to his knees. They told him they would pay him for it. I was so sorry about it.

I don't understand about Josie and Albert being with Aunt Addie when she went to Oregon. Did they go back with her? I thought Albert had moved back, I so understood him to say.

Give my love to Rose and Frank when you talk to her. I am regretting yet about the picnic we did not get to take. Is Aunt Billie going to stay in Chicago long? Say, Tavia, I had a thought the other day which I hasten to mention, and that is let each one of us send Frank Berry something for Christmas. We surely can spare fifty cents, anyway, for something to make him glad over. I will send him a book, a novel that he can while away a few hours over. Call up Aunt Lillie and ask her if she cannot do it too, I think it would be awful nice, don't you? And you know I am feeling so sorry for Aunt Gertie also, I don't know what to think about her - nothing to wear, and don't work or won't work, or don't know how to work or incompetent, it is hard to tell, the next time you write tell me what you think about it.

How about that stick of chewing gum that you have promised to send me. I will not promise to not chew it all at once or rather to chew it in sections, that is just too much to ask of anybody, see? The next time you talk to Aunt Bell tell her I am waiting for an answer to my letter. I am so sorry she is having so much trouble with her stomach.

Lovingly Mama

L.B. Burnett, Broker  
Room 405 McCague Bldg, Omaha Neb

Omaha Hotel, 1130 Howard St, San Francisco 5/25/1924 to Emma C Burnett, Nebraska City, Neb; % Harry Kennicott from Leslie B. Burnett

My Dear Mother

Yesterday your nice letter from Nebraska City came, and indeed I was glad to get it. Am glad that you have been so royally entertained in the old home town, but then Mother mia why shouldn't you be; aren't you of the old wholesome fine-grained stock that gave the town its claim to respectability. It's a nice thing to remember Mama that while Papa did not attempt to set the world afire, he left behind him an untarnished name, a reputation of good deeds, and a life well-spent; how many of us can say as much?

I am sorry to hear that Aunt Nettie is so poorly, and surely hope things will grow easier for her, however I am glad that you are away. Was worried about you all the time, but feel sure that a visit with the dear girls on the ranch will be beneficial for both yourself and them.

So you weigh a hundred and forty, do you, better watch out Mama, or you will wind up to be a stout old lady after all, then where will Jerome and I find any excuse for being long and lean. Well, I weigh approximately 170 now myself, about 20 lbs more than when I was in Chicago, and only four pounds short of correct weight. If I could get enough to eat I would probably get so fat that I would have to buy a new belt, as it was I had to cut my vest so it would not wrinkle up so much. I am keeping bachelor quarters, this was the only solution for keeping even fairly comfortably filled.

My work with Pinkerton's has been rather uncertain, in the last twenty days I have had nine days work, so you see with the present cost of living and a very healthy appetite I haven't been what you might call flush; however I am learning. Maybe after a while I'll have a little horse sense lined up that I can go ahead and use to advantage.

Last night and part of this AM I stood guard on the old SS *Tecumseh*, a ship of English registry, but carrying a crew of Chinese, Lascars and what-nots, and my duty lay in seeing that none of them set foot on this "land of the free and home of the brave." Tommyrot, what? Wait untill we elect a new set of law makers and have something more than a cold storage receptacle for boodlers at our helm, and then I won't be sarcastic. Give a thief time and he will build his own prison, a murderer rope and he will hang himself, a politician leeway enough and in his greed for gain he will erect his own cross. And so it goes, bad government is soon to be followed with a change sooner or later, let's hope soon.

It's not well to dwell on unpleasant thots tho, and little of my mind is taken up that way any more, existing conditions and the thought that they would grow vastly worse, both domestic and national, almost spelled my finish. Now I have resolved and will cling to the following; some old, some new. To gain gold and inasmuch as it leads to happiness for others as well as myself. To conserve and rebuild health of mind and body and to refuse to worry regardless of what seems to be inevitable. Not to be heedless, but to meet each problem at its appointed time. I'm sure thru crossing rivers that never run and bridges that never were built. Not sentimental either, but first the same, when the clouds begin to loom I like to think of "Pippa Passes," and God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.

All nature is beautiful; never in my life have I enjoyed God and man-made things so

well as now. This morning as I stood on the bow of the big tanker all nature was in its glory, the very air had a tang that only the sea can give. As I watched the first rays of dawn spread over the western hills, I forgot all about my work and the Chinks could all slide down the rat lines for all of me. A light silvery fog hung over the bay, save for the ripple of the out-going tide all the water was still, overhead the gulls were floating and drifting for all the world like they were on the water. Slowly as the dawn brightened and the fog lifted higher, distant shapes and ships appeared; off to the left a school of dolphins played, rising at times clear over each other just like a whole herd of black bear at play. Down the bay a beautiful four-masted yacht lay, white and shimmering, waiting for someone's pleasure. Further down a mile or so swung a big grey battleship, the *Minnesota*, as I watched I could hear the rattle of the anchor chains, drawn up thru the "wild cats," then as the big funnels belched smoke, it slowly swung about, heading for the Golden Gate and perhaps adventures in some foreign seas. Then as the seaman struck two bells, seven o'clock, all the world seemed to wake, whistles shrieked out their call to work, staunch little tugs started on their daily grind, the second watch, rubbing sleepy eyes, tumbled out of the forecastle and the work-a-day had come. I was loath to leave, but it was time to knock off, so I climbed down the sea ladder into the lighter and we chugged the two miles in to the ferry, and so on to here where a big pot of fine old Mexican beans, a cup of rich brown coffee, a pipe of fine "old English," a dreamless sleep and as pleasant awakening; what more could a fellow want?

Well, Mother dear, I have been writing for some time and it is about time to strap on my gun and get back to the job again. I'm only holding on to this work in lieu of something better, however there is no danger and the work is not so hard like it was in Chicago. People in Frisco see something in life besides money, there's a bond of good fellowship extended to all; it will be hard to pull away from the beautiful city and the converging Sierra Madre by the Golden Gate.

Here in Frisco one sees flowers instead of peanut stands, and one whole block close [to] here is devoted to flower stores and stalls. I can buy a dozen beautiful roses or a whole arm full of the most lovely posies for twenty-five cents, and you can bet I have a bunch on my table all of the time. Would rather eat beans with flowers than humming-bird tongues without them.

I am writing to Ruth asking her about Jerome, hope he is coming soon and that we can arrange a meeting.

I will direct this to Nebr. City hoping to catch you again before you leave. Regards to all and worlds of love to the bestest mother.

LESLIE

Will down another plate of beans before I leave.

obituary of William J Burnett died 14 Nov, 1930; Minneapolis

W J Burnett, 88 Dies Heart Victim - Funeral Monday for Founder  
of Northwestern Hide & Fur Co

William J. Burnett, who founded the Northwestern Hide and Fur Company in Minneapolis in 1890, died Friday at his residence, 1405 Como Ave SE, at the age of 88 years.

Funeral services at 2 PM tomorrow will be conducted in Como Congregational Church, 14th Ave SE, near Como, by Rev C J Schaufuss. Burial will be in Lakewood Cemetery. The



body will lie in state today at Washburn's Mortuary, 413 Central Ave.

When Mr. Burnett founded the Northwestern Hide & Fur Company, he located at 417 Main St, SE. Later he purchased property at 409 Main St where he conducted business until 1901 when he moved to its present location at 200 First St, N. He had been in business for himself since he was 21.

When in active business, Mr. Burnett displayed unusual interest in the development of the use of natural resources, and in 1896 he hired two men to explore on foot from the Deer River to Rain River, to determine the resources for agriculture, hunting, fishing and trapping, contributing the information to the newspapers.

Born in Pittsburgh, he resided at different times in Indiana, Illinois, South Dakota before coming to Minneapolis. His wife, whom he married in South Dakota in 1888, died three years ago, and since that time his daughter, Mrs. Alleda B. Arneson and her husband have made their home with him.

Mr. Burnett had been a member of Como Congregational Church for the last 34 years, having served on both the board of trustees and the board of deacons. He was honorary vicepresident of \_\_\_\_\_can Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_. He had been in good health on Oct 25 when he celebrated \_\_\_\_\_day.

obituary of Jerome B. Burnett in "The Coachella Valley Sun" of 8 Jan 1953

### **Funeral Held For Jerome B. Burnett**

Graveside services were held at 1 PM Tuesday at Coachella Valley Cemetery for Jerome B. Burnett, 63, well-known oil man and Coachella Valley rancher, who died Sunday afternoon at an Indio hospital after a long illness. An oil company geologist and executive for more than 25 years, Mr. Burnett purchased the former Paul's Pioneer Gardens, a date garden, in Thermal when he retired in 1945.

He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. William A Lucking, Ojai; one son, Jerry Burnett, a sister, Mrs. Octavia B Overton, and a brother, Leslie Burnett, all of Thermal, and five grandchildren.

Services were conducted by Rev. C. L. Conder of St John's Episcopal Church, Indio. Pallbearers were William A Lucking, Leland Yost, Earl Shumway, Elton Gebhardt, Bob McLendan and Norval Jarvis. Only members of the family attended.

Mr. Burnett was born in Nebraska and received B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Nebraska. From 1919 to 1939 he was successively geologist with the Emerald Oil Company of Mexico, chief geologist of Mexican Eagle Oil Company, and chief geologist and assistant manager of Lago Petroleum, and manager of Huasteca Petroleum Company of Mexico.

In 1939 Standard Oil Company appointed him technical advisor to the New Zealand Oil Company and Standard-Vacuum Oil Company of Australia. In 1942 he became director of the Australasian Petroleum Company in Iraq and Iran.

He was a 32nd degree Mason. Considered an outstanding authority in his field, he was awarded fellowships to the American Geographical Society, Institute of Mining and Metal Engineering, and the Association of Petroleum Geologists.

undated newspaper clipping (1957)

**Services Held For Former Fur Buyer**

Leslie Burnett for whom funeral services were held Thursday at Coachella Valley Cemetery, was a native of Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Born August 11, 1884, he was a fur broker in Omaha for many years. He came to California in 1936 and had resided in the state ever since.

For the past several years he had resided at his ranch on Ave 56. His sister, Octavia Overton of Thermal, his niece, Helen Lucking of Ojai and his nephew, Jerome Burnett of Thermal survive him.