

[1878]

Wounded Station, Illinois.

Apr. 2. 1878.

Mr J. T. Cobb.

I received your letter in regard to those plates, and will say in answer they are a humbug, gotten up by Robert Wiley, Bridge Whitton (a blacksmith) and myself. B-Whitton is dead, Wiley may be living, he was a Missourian, none of the nine persons who signed the certificate knew the secret excepting Wiley and myself. There were two Mormon Elders present when the plates were found, their names were Ward & Sharp. A man by the name of Savage (of Quincy) under an assumed name borrowed the plates of Wiley to show to his friends there, and took them to G. Smith, after they were returned, Wiley gave them to Prof. McDowell of St. Louis Mo. for his Museum, but since McDowell's death, we heard they were taken to Chicago Medical College, and placed in the Museum, by visiting to Prof.

John Hodgson of St. Louis Mo. you may find out
where they are, and also if Wiley is still living
he was a graduate of that College - Wiley
Dr Harris was not a Mormon, he was a chemist and
he took the rust off the plates when found - Dr is dead
Wiley was not a mormon, The plates were cut ^{out of copper}
by a blacksmith (Bridge Wagon) Wiley and myself
made the hieroglyphics, a man by the name
of Newman saw the plates before they were put in
the mound, but whether he is living or not? I do not
know. I do not know any man by the name of
Roberts. I will say in conclusion that the plates
were made simply for a joke. I believe I have
answered all your questions, and given you
the particulars concerning them.

Yours Resptly

W. Furgate.

P.S. As Father is too old and nervous to write, he
requested me to answer, and the above is written
as he directed.

Walter Furgate.

Your letter came to Mr Sterling and as we had
moved from there several years ago, we did not
get it until a few days ago, consequently the
delay in answering.

I will give the reason or cause of the joke
We were reading "Pratt's prophecy" that truth
yet was to spring up out of the earth, and as
they were digging at Kinderhook we concluded
to make the plates, and dug down about 8 feet
and came to a flat rock and put them under it
they were fastened together with rust, made of
nitric acid, lead, and rusty iron. The hieroglyphics
were impressions made in beeswax, and filled
with nitric acid, and placed on the plates.

We understood Mr Smith said they would
make a book of 1200 pages but he would not
agree to translate them until they were sent
to the Antiquarian Society at Philadelphia
France, and England, they were sent and
the answer was that there were no such

Hieroglyphics known, and if there ever had
been, they had long since passed away,
then Smith began his translation

W. Fugate