

[Viola's last letter to Niels is dated October 29 and the next one in the shoebox from her is dated January 12th. The sequencing isn't very accurately marked, but the letters have been numbered and there appears to be about seven missing.]

Gefle, Dec. 13th 1909

My Dear Wife;

It is just a week since I last wrote to you so I will endeavor to favor you with another. I haven't received one from you since I last wrote so I am expecting one from you any time. I received a letter from Stena and Chris just a few minutes ago and besides the news it also contained fifty-five dollars which were received with great pleasure as I was obliged to borrow about \$5 of my companion. I am pretty well hooked up now for a few months as far as money is concerned and I will try to retain a good spirit so I can enjoy my labors and probably be a useful instrument in the hands of the Lord, in promulgating a portion of his great work in this part of the world.

We received a welcome letter yesterday from our Pres. stating the he would send us another elder this week to help us roll on the work. They have received four new elders in the Sundsvall Conference so they will send two to Luleå. I am glad that some elders are going to commence work again in Luleå but I can't say that I would desire to be there myself, for since I have been in this branch for a while, I feel more contented and satisfied than I ever did in the far north. It will take considerable labor to get Luleå woke up to Mormonism so I hope they will send two well qualified elders there. The Pres. says that the elder we are to receive is good in singing so I hope we can get a choir woke up and make things a little lively and more enticing so we can draw a larger crowd at our meetings, although we have our hall about full as it is, nearly every Sunday. If we had a good choir and a larger hall I think we would draw a pretty good crowd for it seems like they enjoy our songs from Zion as they have such a tasty melody. We have five girls who belong to the church and we also have a couple who regularly attend our meetings who are not members but intend to be so if we get them all interested. I think we can work out a nice little choir. We are quite short for material on the men's side but I will try to hold them down on the bass and probably our new comer can sing tenor. I wish you were here and we would certainly use you in singing soprano. Probably baby could help us out a little also for I remember in the letter that your father sent me, that he said she was a fine contralto singer. When I take my second mission I want to have my little wife with me for it would be much ore pleasant if you were here.

I received a letter from Mart the other day which stated he had received one from Ethel and that she wrote you looked just as young and cute as ever if you were a married woman and had a baby. It also stated that Melba was just as cute a little girl as her papa. Is he a cute girl? That isn't saying much for baby, but I surmise Ethel meant different to what she wrote. I have yours and Melba's photo taken on a stamp photo now and wear it in my watch, so every time I look at the time I can see my whole family. Isn't that nice Viola?

Last week I sent you a little Xmas present. A broach with my photo in it. It isn't much of a present dearest but I hope you will accept it with pleasure. Everything in the line of

jewelry is very expensive here so you know I couldn't afford to buy anything so very nice. Say dearest, you better send me my ring because it is the custom for married men to wear rings and if you don't have one, they think we are single and of course you know I don't want any one to get that idea about me. I could buy one here but they are quite expensive and then I just as well have my own anyway. Send it by mail in a little box and be sure to send it by registered mail so if it should go lost we could trace it.

Say dearest, did Aunt Lettie ever get the second letter I sent her? I haven't heard yet whether she did or not. There are lots that I should write to but I haven't time. The days go so fast that I can't do half that I should do and still we don't sleep our time away for we get up at 7 a.m. and don't get to bed before 10, 11 and 12 p.m.

Well I suppose Xmas will be past when this reaches you so I must wish you a happy New Year with lots of pleasure. Chris said in his letter that you and the kid were up there for Thanksgiving day. I suppose you will also be there for Xmas so Melba can represent me and make the family just as large as when I was home. Will close now with lots of love and kisses to you both. Your Loving Niels. Write soon. xxxxxxxx

Regards from Beckstrom.

Gefle, Dec. 21st 1909

My Dear Darling Viola;

Just arrived from a two hour walk out in the country with some papers which we call "The Swedish Star." This paper comes twice a month so then we have to deliver them to the different places. Talk about cold weather, we certainly have it here. It makes us draw our overcoats tightly around us and turn up the collar. The cap which shows on the photo which I sent you last winter comes in very handy as it covers the little ears so they won't freeze. We have lots of snow now, about three feet on the level so you see there is fine sleighing here.

Well dearest I received another of your welcomed letters a couple of days since. It was two weeks since I received your last one so I was indeed glad to hear from you again. I wish I could talk to you face to face dearest for I am afraid my letters cannot represent my feelings which I have for you. I can tell by your letters that you wish I was home with you and I know you are anxiously awaiting that time to come. I hope you will keep up courage sweetheart and not feel like everything is going against you, for it is not. You say that both you and baby have good health and I want to tell you that that is worth everything even if it isn't more than what everybody ought to have and could have if they would only live in conformity with God's commandments.

I feel sorry that you have to work so hard with your sewing which you say you are tired of but I will promise you dearest that you won't have to sew for anyone else after I come home so try to bear your load as pleasantly as you can, and peek into the future with fond hopes. I suppose you have already experienced that married life is not all sunshine but I hope you will not allow yourself to become discouraged or despondent. If I was home everything would be much better, would it not dearest? I am sorry to learn that

Allredge's place is sold for I am like you in that matter. I believe I would like to make that our home. I wrote to Chris and told him to keep his eye on the place, but now that it is once sold probably it would be hard to get it. I often wonder where we are going to live in the future but I can't settle my mind on any definite place. I sometimes think that if I am going to stay with farming that the best thing we can do is to go to some new place where we can work our way up with less difficulty and more rapidly than we can in P.G. I don't hardly know where I would like to go, but I suppose the future will take care of itself.

I had better not allow my mind to be on that matter too much or I will lose interest in my present work which strains all my thinking nerves now in order for me to hold up my end of the work that is to be done in this branch. I feel very weak in my position but with the help of the Lord probably I can accomplish something that will be for the advancement of the latter day work in this region of the world.

Our new elder John Benson from Spring City, Sanpete Co., arrived here last night. He looks nearly like Allie Radmall and he reminds me lots of Allie only he doesn't say crimeny all mighty. Well we have lots of work to do in this branch so we can use him to advantage in peddling books and preaching sermons. He is unacquainted with the language so I don't suppose he will pound the pulpit so very hard the first year. I have been here a year and I don't pound her very hard and I don't think I ever will be so worked up that I lose control of my fists.

Say it certainly would be nice if I could receive a photo of baby showing her bare arms and legs but according to your letter I won't have that pleasure. You may send one of her with her clothes on just as soon as you can get to it.

As Xmas will be past when this letter reaches you I will say that I hope you have enjoyed a nice Xmas with lots of luxuries and a good appetite to eat them. I don't suppose you will be so busy with your sewing now when Xmas is over so if you can, try to write me once a week for you know I am always glad to hear from you. I don't receive nearly so many letters now as I used to, but I suppose it is because I don't write as many as I used to. Goodbye honey. Your Loving Nels.

Kiss Melba a few for me and accept these yourself, xxxooxxxoox.

Pleasant Grove, Utah, Dec. 27, 1909

(Dear Niels, mother wishes you to discourage the boys buying down town because they are so much in debt now. Don't let them know that we ask you to do it. I am of the same opinion as mother, they are paying so much interest now on borrowed money and they have a good shed here for their implements.)

Dear Bro –

I have received two letters from you since I wrote to you, so it is about time I endeavor to answer them. I have been thinking of writing every day for the last week but as yet that is as far as I have got. Your letter was read with great pleasure, we were certainly pleased to

hear that your health is good and that you are enjoying your missionary work. There is nothing like being busy, you know, the time passes much more rapidly. Last Tuesday Jens went to Provo to build a barn for John (there was no stable on the place he bought) and he came back Thurs. night, he did not get it done but he could not stay any longer, that trip.

The Sunday Schools of the three wards joined together and had a cantata. They had it last Thursday night, it was good, the choruses were splendid. The Sunday Schools of the three wards gave a dance Xmas for the children. Santa Claus was there and gave each child a sack of candy and nuts. They enjoyed it I can tell you. John and Carrie came over from Provo and spent Xmas with us. They went home today. Jens went with them, he is going to finish John's barn. The weather is milder than it was a couple of weeks ago so they are anxious to get it finished before another storm. He thinks he can be back in three days. Perhaps they will be over to spend New Years.

Last Tuesday night Chris, Lavina and I went to Lehi to attend Alice Knudson's wedding. She married a young man from Rock Island Ill., he has been working at Garfield, he has an uncle living there and Alice had been staying with her sister Laura, she lives at Garfield too, that is where they got acquainted. He is as pretty as a peach. They have gone to Illinois to spend their honeymoon with Mr. Frank's mother. I think there was about two hundred and fifty at the reception. Mr. Knudson has his new house just about finished, the downstairs is done, that is where the reception was held so there was plenty of room and plenty of everything else. The supper was swell I can tell you. Gilbert Knudson returned home from his mission on the 19 inst. He says he has enjoyed his mission very much although he has had chills and fires and been ailing since last June. He looks fine considering and has a gab just like his mother, just running over with fun. So much for the wedding, it is enough too isn't it.

Last Sunday the 3rd ward Sunday school had a Xmas program, it was quite nice. We had two Stake officers with us. And the Sunday before Lottie Owens was here so we have plenty of visitors. Lewis Fugal goes to school at Salt Lake City, he is taking a civil engineering course or some such name, he intends to make something out of himself. He has gone to Mayfield to spend Christmas, says he hasn't been there for fifteen years.

I wrote you some time ago that cousin Hannah Voorhees was operated on at the Holy Cross Hospital, she has gone back to Mayfield, she got through the operation fine but of course she is very weak yet and will be for about a year. Mrs. Lim was over today and brought a card for you from Lerina. She said she had received a card from Mart, she seemed to appreciate it so much. It would be nice if you could send her a card sometime say for Valentine or the 1st of March, that is her birthday you know. She just dotes on anything like that and seems to take quite an interest in you too.

Santa Claus visited us this year, he brought Ernest a sleigh or sled I mean. Chris made it, it is a good one, a ball, a pocket knife, a watch and a horn, and a top. So you see he was not forgotten. We all got some little remembrances, too numerous to mention them all.

Esther and Ike spent Xmas with Viola and Annie this time. Ike went back to Salt Lake last night. Esther will stay until New Years. We did not have a family reunion on Xmas

like we generally do but we will try to get together later. We were all to Lavina's to dinner yesterday, we had a nice time. Pete Carlson and his wife were there too.

Last night Bro. Booth, judge Booth's brother, lectured in the tabernacle about Palestine, he has been on a mission in Turkey for ten years, he knows something I can tell you. He had a map and pointed out different things that happened in the history of the bible about Moses, Abraham, Joseph and everybody else, his talk was very interesting. He explained different passages in the bible that were not easy to comprehend. One was where Elijah was in hiding from Ahab by a stream of water and the ravens brought him food. He said that ravens in that case did not mean birds but men that belonged to the Arab tribe, they were a very dark people and one of the tribes was named ravens hence the streams gave Elijah water and the ravens brought him food. That seems much more reasonable than ravens or birds that feed on dead carcasses should bring a man food. There are two tribes of Indians living at Montana called the snakes and the crows and he said if any history was written about them it would not mean reptiles and birds and he said it was the same in olden days. If we could understand the conditions of the people when the history of the bible was written it would not be so hard to comprehend.

In Turkey the people eat out of one dish, they have always maintained that custom, that is how it was that Jesus said "he that dips in the dish the same time as I do he shall betray me." The reason that that could easily happen is because they all ate out of the same dish. Bro. Booth also explained other passages that were hard to understand, I wish you could have heard it. Viola went with us to the meeting and also your little daughter. Say kid, she is as cute as anything can be cute. I did not think a couple of months ago that she could get any cuter but she does anyhow.

If you were here now the organs of your stomach would have to take a contract to digest quite an amount of cake and honey. No doubt you will not starve during holidays. As mother was saying the other day that it made no difference how little people had to eat the rest of the year, they always had something to eat on Christmas and were willing to treat. So I hope your stomach has made a good contract.

Say Niels, I am glad to note in your last letter that you are not only a minister but also a poet. Keep on and you will be OK. You also stated that you did not know whether you would be home for next Xmas or not, but we do hope you are. You also stated that you would like to know more about the farm and things.

The boys had to pit five loads of their beets last fall. They hauled them to Rulan Lim's place and covered them up. Nels Fenton sent word the other day that the factory would take them now. Ren Benson hauled one load of them last Friday and has gone with another load today. They are hauling them to Lehi factory, they get 50 cents per ton more and the horses are not busy and the roads are pretty good so they decided to haul them to Lehi. I expect they will get them all hauled this week. They talk like they will plant fully as many beets this next year. All the fall plowing is not done, the weather has been cold since Thanksgiving, the ground is frozen so hard that they cannot plow now. But most of it is done. The boys sent six herd of stock in the dry herd, all six returned well and sound. Last week they sold a cow, Rheumatics' calf to the butcher and received \$38.90 for her. They have two steers that they are fattening now. I suppose they will soon be ready for

sale. Hay is \$12.00 per ton in the stack and grain is high too. Wheat is \$1.05 per bu. so you see it costs something to feed so many cattle and horses.

Jens is through at Fenton's. Chris is about the same as usual, he is getting to be quite a chore boy now. He says he does not mind being chore boy but he does not love to milk, he has had it to do the last week while Jens has been off. Rheumatics has got a calf, it is too young to take all the milk so Chris has had her to milk too, he makes such a fuss that we laugh at him. He says we do not need to laugh because it makes his fingers cramp, but he will grin and bear it. I did not notice that my letter was getting so long so I had better quit until next year. Hope you have had a merry Xmas and we all wish you a Happy New Year. Write soon to your Sis Stena.

We hope that you have received your money, there was \$5.00 in green backs with the check, hope you received all OK.

Dear Bro. Niels.

I take pleasure in filling out this space (blank side of Stena's last page). I am still on the sod and trying to still be in the ring. I am trying to do a little in the shop but it takes a quite bit of my time doing chores. We have always something to do. We are going to go to Salt Lake a day to make arrangements for next year's goods. We are thinking some of getting Beers store, they want \$2000 for it. If we could get it for about 12 or 15 hundred we might take it. We can still get a 39' front by the blacksmith shop for \$700 ... but Beers place is already built and plenty of room. There is 40 ac. of dry land in Alpine we are trying to get, we have offered \$1000. They don't want to sell yet. With best wishes, Chris.

Pleasant Grove, Ut., Jan. 6th 1910

Dear Brother –

It isn't long since I last wrote you and we have not heard from you since I wrote, but nevertheless I feel like going ahead and scratch off a few lines. The last time I put off writing until I had received two letters from you.

This new years finds us all a kicking, it is somewhat cold so we have to exercise to keep warm or else sit by the stove. Today I suppose is a holiday in Sweden. It is the day they celebrate the Three Holy Kings birthday and mother is cooking rice. Don't you wish you could have some – hum!? No doubt but you will get all the rice and pulse you can eat these days. Mother said she would like to send you a pot of honey but she is afraid you would not do anything but sit by the jar and get stuck up.

John and Carrie came over and spent New Years. Jens got their barn finished and came home before New Years. We had a pretty nice time but we did not go to the dance. There was a good theatre here entitled The Belle of Japan. They all took their parts fine, it was a traveling troop. We have not any home dramatic company now. I always enjoyed them, the plays I mean, when we did have a home play.

The most talked of event this week is that Hogan is not road supervisor and Miley Smith is city marshal and road supervisor too. He is to get a salary of \$75.00 per month. Some thinks it isn't fair to give one man two offices. O Yes! Jens is the superintendent of the water works so somebody else feels blue. His salary is \$275.00 per year. He thinks he can take care of the water and be plumber and electrician also.

Our pres. of the YLMIA, Luella Thorne is going to resign as the law of the church is that they have to work in the ward that they live. You know they live down town by the post office. They have made an addition to the office and now they run a café and office too. I don't believe that she cares much, I rather think she is glad because she thinks more of the café than she does the MIA. I do not know who will be the president but another will be chosen right away. I don't like to see her leave as she had such good influence with the girls. Things doesn't always run smoothly.

Last Sunday night we had a dandy conjoint meeting. Bro. Badger from Salt Lake was here and lectured, it was just fine and Bro. Paxman sang a solo, he is a splendid singer. Monday night a man from Philadelphia was here and lectured under the direction of the schools. He travels most all over the United States. He could pound the pulpit.

Lew Nielson and Davy Adamson have had a fall out so Lew lives in town now and works around when he gets the chance. He has been cleaning out the drain in the field for about the last week. The work is contracted so he works when he feels like it. All the beets are to the Lehi factory now so that is off our minds. Lew hauled the last load day before New Years. The boys have sold one of the steers, he came to \$33.00. They have one more to sell as soon as he gets fat. Beef is 8 cents per pound now. It is very cold now and has been for a month so they have to have lots to eat. John has offered \$200.00 for Kate but the boys do not know whether to sell her or not. She is such a dandy buggy horse, she goes like a streak. They feel like they can spare her for the work that they have. She will bring a larger price than any of the others. They have not decided to sell her yet.

Last week Ernest fell through the barn down to the side of one of the horses. The horse got frightened and plunged back and struck him on the head with her front foot, the cut was not deep and is almost well now. But he got scared, I can tell you. I am so glad that he did not have to stay out of school. There was but one week of holidays this year, we have always had two weeks before. Pearl Galli [John and Lavina's niece] is married and lives in Park City, she is quite young to get married. Chris is the same old boy, he was working at the Manila school house yesterday. Don't know of any news. P.G. is about the same as usual, so will close wishing you a happy and prosperous new year. Write soon to your sister, Stena.

The folks send their best wishes to you and your companion.

P.S. Roy West has returned home from his mission. They sent for him to come home on account of his mother's health. She was out of her head worrying about him. Roy says he feels sorry that he had to leave his mission as he was just getting interested, he has been gone since May. S.C.

Dear Niels – Chris just now came from the post office and had receive a letter from you

containing two cards for mother and I thank you very much for same. In your letter you stated that you would like a calendar, we will send you one with this letter in separate parcel. It isn't very pretty, in fact it is not pretty at all but will serve the purpose. We have some that are pretty but they are stiff cardboard and are apt to break. [Note this calendar in the photo of Niels washing dishes.]

Just heard the sad news that Mason Johnson's little daughter Lerina was dead. She died last night of croup. I feel so sorry for them. Just received a card from Carrie, they are all feeling fine. Viola was up Sunday and gave us a picture of Melba, she is sweet as ever. Ernest and I are going down town and he is standing here watching me write and asking when I am ready to go. So goodbye. Be good to yourself, as E. says. S.C.

Chris will write in the near future.

Gefle, Jan. 7th, 1910

My Dear Wife;

I now take the time and pleasure to write you a few lines. It is over a week since I last wrote you so it is time that I was remembering you with another. I am quite busy now and if I am not careful more than a week will elapse between the letters which I write to my darling wife. I realize that you are always anxious to receive letters from your husband and I consider it my duty to write to my dear wife as often as possible. I don't always write the best of news to you nor give you the best words of encouragement but I hope you like to get my letters at any rate and become consoled somewhat by their contents. It would be a greater pleasure than can be expressed in words if I was only with you now instead of sitting here trying to write something that will be of interested to you. I have written you so many letters now and it seems like I write about the same thing every time, so I don't know whether they give you much encouragement or not. It is too bad that we have to be separated so long but I hope the time will pass quickly so we can get together again and keep house as you stated in your last letter. Your desires are that we will be living together next Xmas and that we will have a place of our own. Well my Dear Viola, those are also my wishes but whether they will be fulfilled or not I am not in a condition to judge, but I think I ought to be released about next Xmas, for I have a loving wife and babe at home who need my presence and then it will be over two years since I arrived in Sweden. I am blessed with good health and I realize that this is a very good school for me but still when I look at it from another view I think that I should be home with my wife and babe and try to comfort them. My heart strings are strained when I think of the condition you are in and that I cannot be home and support you but I hope dearest that you will pull through another year OK and won't stand in need for anything. It is too bad you can't get a new dress this Xmas being as your sister Annie and my sisters are getting dresses. I don't like to hear that you are standing in need for anything and I would much sooner suffer myself than for you and Melba to suffer. You haven't told me that you were suffering, but I know you are tight run and have to pull through with as little as possible. I hope your future will be brighter, and if a husband's love and work can make it brighter it certainly shall be.

I am glad to note that you went to that theatre and I hope you also went to the

Scandinavian dance which you wrote of, for a little recreation will do you good and make you feel more like a live person. I suppose it is about a year now since you had your last dance so it would no doubt be something new and pleasant for you to indulge in. I wouldn't mind having a dance myself but I suppose I will have to wait until I get back home again.

We are having quite a nice Xmas but it is nothing like the times I spent with you during Xmas. I must say that I have felt more to home this Xmas than I did last for I can talk the language a little better and am more used to the ways of these Swedes in this man's land. The Swedes are a very jealous sort of people and they can't hardly stand to see anyone else to get ahead in anything. I am so disgusted with them at times that I almost feel inclined to tell them what I think of them, but it seems as though an elder has to put up with lots and try to keep peace and harmony in the family. There are ill feelings existing between the saints now and I believe some of them are quite sore at Bro. Beckstrom and myself in the stand we take, but we can't help it nor we don't intend to be dictated by a lot of jealous creatures who don't know what they do want. I was glad when I was sent to this place but now I am not very particular whether I stay here or not. But I suppose all these trials will only develop me and prepare me to meet the conditions of this life.

If the saints were united much good could be accomplished and the work would have better progress. We intend to leave the city next week and go off into some other town for a few days to tract and probably hold a meeting. I like preaching better now than I did at first but I still paralyze the language somewhat and don't know whether I can interest anyone in any wonderful discourses or not. I am right here trying and hope that God will lead me and prepare me as an instrument to accomplish some of his glorious work.

Now my dear wife be of cheer and pray to the Lord that He will protect you from sickness and danger, and that in due time He will bring back to you your loving husband. Nels.

Kiss my daughter a few for me and accept best love from your husband. xxxoxxx

Pl. Grove, Ut, Jan. 12, 1910, letter in Swedish from Isaac Carlson, Hannah's brother.

Pleasant Grove, Utah, Jan. 12, 1910

My Dear Nels.

I don't remember how long it has been since I wrote to you but I guess it is time to write again. I sent you Melba's picture and your ring and you must be sure and tell me if you get them alright. Since I wrote to you last Melba has been quite sick. She has an awful cold but she is lots better now, but she has got lots thinner. She isn't near as fat as she was when her picture was taken. I was awake two nights nearly all night with her and then walk the floor all day, but she is better now and I do hope she will get well and then not get sick any more. We have all had sore throats and I didn't feel good all during Holidays but am alright now. I hope that you are well and enjoying yourself. You must take good care of yourself and not get sick. Oh Nels I do wish you were here. I would give anything to see you now. I do hope they won't keep you any longer than two years for I can't live any longer than that without you.

Annie is going to Salt Lake this week or next and I guess I will go up to your mother's and stay till she comes back. I have got me a new dress Nels and it is pretty but I don't know when I will get it made. We haven't got any sewing to do now for anyone else but I have so much to do for myself and Melba that I don't know when I will get it done. I haven't been able to do anything since she was sick. I gave Esther one of Melba's pictures and she says that everyone that sees it says she certainly is a fine looking Baby. Don't you feel quite proud? I do wish you could see her when she laughs and when she is dancing. You can't imagine how sweet she is Nels. I do think it is too bad that you can't see her when she is so little and cute.

I started this letter last night but Melba woke up crying so I didn't get to finish it. I was up all night long with her, she was feverish and crying, but she is better this morning and is asleep now. I didn't sleep at all last night so I don't feel twice as good as I could. The only way I could get her to stop crying was to walk the floor with her and she is so heavy I nearly broke my back. But I don't care for that for she is lots better now and has been asleep quite awhile. Elias had the croup this morning about six o'clock and Annie got scared and run up and got Dr. Vance so while he was here I asked him about Melba and he said she had fever and was delirious, that's what made her cry that way. He is going to give me some medicine for her today so she will be alright in a little while.

I don't know of any news so will say goodbye for this time. Write often to your loving Wife and Baby. Melba sends kisses to papa. xxxxxxxxxxxxoox