Great Salt Lake City

February 2d, 1855

Wm. Hammond Jr. Esq.

San Francisco, California

Sir,

Your favor of 18th Decr. was received on the 27th January; since when, I have made some little exertion to ascertain how far your enterprise would be likely to be met by the Merchants and traders in this City; I acknowledge with rather poor success. Insurance on freight, and the route being untried makes them rather unwilling to engage in any enterprise of the sort at present.

There is, however, another reason, which is, that it might involve a little risk, as well as expense. Many of the Merchants of this place are mainly interested in making a speedy fortune instead of developing the resources of the Country.

I am honestly of the opinion that land carriage may be lessened by the navigation of the Colorado. It seems <necessary> however, to make an exploration trip to know at what point goods could be landed before we could make any reliable calculations.

The annual amount of freighting from the Missouri River is ~~increasing~~ <immense>, and is obtained at an average of about 12½ Cents per lb. But they come that route only at certain seasons, whereas if this Southeren enterprise could be once opened it would be acceptable at any season of the year.

We have no definite knowledge of the distance to the mouth of the Rio Virgen, but think we are safe in saying that it cannot exceed four hundred and fifty miles from this City; three hundred miles of that distance is through our settlements. You will perceive by this that if you can land at that point it is a saving of five hundred and fifty miles of land carriage; as a thousand miles is the nearest navigation that we now have access to from any point.

We expect to explore in that direction this season & if our company should meet a steamer at, or near, the mouth of the Rio Virgen they could give reciprocial information more definite than anything that can be said at present.

I have but little doubt that that River can be navigated to the junction of Green and Grand Rivers and perhaps up both of those streams, until you come to the Canon <or> Rapids; but our settlements have not as yet extended much in that direction, and from the present appearance you would be at the nearest point to any of our settlements at the mouth of Rio virgen, which I do not think can exceed, as before shown, more than one hundred and fifty miles.

It is strictly a Mercantile question and should be entered into with spirit and energy by that class of our community. Rely upon me, Sir, I shall exert what influence I can to promote an opening in that direction, and if it shall be found practicable, as I. have but little doubt it will, it must necessarily result in ample renumeration to those who are found enterprising enough to secure. its advantages.

I shall be most happy to meet you, if possible, at Ceder City, as I intend visiting that place probably in May next, at which time, fuller details being known, more definite arrangements might, if practable, be made.

Wishing you every success

I am Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servant

Brigham Young