

August 6, 1876

Dear Brother & Family,

I seat myself this morning to inform you that all are well and hearty and I hope these few lines may reach you and find you all well. You must excuse me for not writing sooner. I expect you thought I was dead, but it is a grand mistake. Sir, I am healthier than I ever was in my life and Ciota has her health good and all of the children, I mean all 8 of them. Time is very hard here about money, but we have corn and wheat plenty, but no money. Corn worth 20 cents per bushel, wheat worth 60 cents per bushel, bacon 14 cents pound, calico 4 to 5 cents per yard.

I left Polk County last fall and moved to Johnson County, Kansas right on the line between Kansas and Missouri, right at the corner of Cass County, Missouri, just 18 miles due south from Kansas City. A good watered country and as healthy a country as you ever saw. I know is is a heap healthier than Kentucky. I live on the Black Bob Reserve, so called it belongs to some indians that never give up the land 'til here of late, and people think it will come in the course of twelve months. This land is rich and you can buy a claim here from 300 to 500 dollars 160 acres. Now that has got poor land and stock would do well to turn it all into stock and corn out here and buy. Nearly all of the connection lives here that lived in Holt. I live on what is called the Big Blew River. It is a nice little stream and I can catch fish when I please, and that is pretty often. I rented a farm from an old man from Virginia. He lives with us. Nobody of his family but himself is in this country, and he wants me to still remain on his farm. I gave him a third of what I make and his land lays right in the blue bottom and just as rich as can be. Old corn is only worth 20 cents per bushel and we have got fine crops here and you may say that corn will be cheaper. We have had a heap of rain here this summer. I lost all of my crop last year on account of the grasshoppers. Before it got ripe, it froze and all short and I lost it all and they eat all of my wheat, but I have got fine corn this year.

The 2 day of September 1875 my mother died. She was well and hearty as common. Eat her supper and went to bed and about 10 o'clock she called me and it seemed as though she could not get her breath good, and in about 30 minutes she was a corpse. Just seemed as though she went off to sleep. She was buried in the cemetery in Oregon, Holt County, Missouri.

I still live in the Christian church and am trying to live the Christian life and I want us all to live so, for we shall soon all pass away and if we are prepared to die, we will all meet again where we can enjoy each other's society in peace.

So farewell for a while, but we will meet again. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends, if any. Write soon and fail not. So I must close.

John L. Elder and family  
to J.W. Rainwater and family.  
Mother and Father also.

Direct your letters to Belton, Cass County, Missouri

In between the last and 2nd to last lines, the following is written in pencil in a different hand: Exod 22 1-18 Deut 1 8-10. After the last line of the letter, the following is written in pencil in a different hand: 1 Sam 15 23 Gen 3, 20