

A Letter of 1832

[The following letter was written by Martha Fussell the wife of Solomon Fussell very soon after they arrived at the home of John Lewis in 1832. Lewis was a pioneer already established on a frontier farm near Pendleton, Indiana. The letter was mailed to the father and mother of Solomon Fussell back in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was designed for them and other relatives and friends from whom Martha and her husband had recently parted. Solomon and Martha Fussell were the great-grandparents of Charles Swain Thomas. Henry Lewis in whose cabin home they were entertained was the grandfather of Miss Evangeline E. Lewis, of the Pendleton and Fall Creek Township Public Library, and the little Joe spoken of in the letter was her father, then but two years old. The father and mother of Solomon Fussell to whom the letter was written were the great-grandparents of Miss Lewis. The *Magazine* is indebted to Miss Lewis for the letter, who sent it with the information presented in this foreword to Pres. W. L. Bryan of Indiana University. The letter was printed in the *Pendleton Times* on March 22, 1923.—*Editor*.]

Fall Creek, [Indiana], 11-3, 1832.

Dear Relatives and Friends:

Knowing you feel an interest in our well doing, I hasten to write to inform you of safe arrival at our place of destination in good health and spirits, meeting with nothing to disturb our journey since writing at Fair View.

We have had as pleasant weather as we could have wished and the roads are as good as could reasonably be expected. We got to Jonathan Justice's late Firstday [Sunday] and received a hearty welcome by them. They appear to be a very worthy family, who came to this country when it was quite a wilderness under far more discouragements than any of us could possibly have thought we could have endured. But through industry and faithful reliance on that Hand which never misleads those who ask for aid, they have become independent though not austere and hard hearted, nor do they think that all who do not get along as well as they have deserved no mercy or assistance, and they seem willing to extend of charity to all that need it. We left them on Secondday and got here at John Lewis's on Fourthday and found them all well and very comfortably settled on their own land in a cabin where we all are with them. They are in good spirits, and I see no reasons why they should be otherwise, as the prospect before them in our opinion is promising and sincerely as [do] I wish we could meet with as good bargain as they have.

It is in truth a beautiful situation, directly on the State road and the land more like a mole hill than you ever saw. You cannot form an idea of the quality of the soil without seeing for yourselves. We do not feel any ways discouraged except in land having risen in price so much since Solomon was out last fall. Then would have been the time for him to have had the best chance of buying.

John Lewis has been offered \$200 for 40 acres of his and would not accept this offer knowing that it will represent a thrible interest.

11th Month, 4th

Solomon has been looking at several places that are for sale but has not concluded to take any one yet until he looks more around the country. So far we are much pleased with this place. It is quite thickly settled and with some very respectable people. There have been ten of the neighbors in to see us today, two very fine old Friends, William Williams and Daniel Nicholson. D. Nicholson's daughter was here when we got here. She is a very nice looking girl. There are several families of Friends near Huntsville, though no meeting established yet. Joseph Cadwalleder had a meeting there this day two weeks ago to the general satisfaction of all parties.

I will now give you some account of our expenses, which amounted in all to eighty-five dollars and fifteen cents; ten dollars toll on the turnpike near four hundred miles, and most part of as beautiful road as you ever saw. The doctor's bill and extra expenses on Priscilla's [afterwards Priscilla M. Thomas, who was very sick during the journey] account twelve dollars; and two bushels of oats and corn for horsefeed which averaged about thirty-one cents a bushel. Corn sells here from twenty to twenty-five cents, wheat sixty to seventy-five cents, potatoes sixteen cents a bushel, butter eight cents, cabbage two dollars per hundred, eggs six cents, beef, hind quarter, two and one-half cents a pound, fore quarter, two cents; tallow, six cents; pork one and one-half cents.

Owing to the stagnation of business on account of the veto [Jackson's veto of the Bank Bill July 10, 1832] and cholera at Cincinnati, there has been no sale of hogs this season. Wages a day for a man thirty-seven and one-half cents, and fifty in summer and dried apples seventy-five cents a bushel. We got a few things for housekeeping at a little town between here and Milton at the following prices: coffee-pot fifty cents; one half dozen large plates forty-three cents; small plates thirty-one cents; cream jug twenty-five cents; two pint bowls (Liverpool ware) thirty-seven cents; Japan pepper box six cents; one half dozen knives (very handsome) seventy-five cents. Hallow ware sells here at four cents per pound; wool thirty-seven and one-half cents already carded, leather, good Spanish hide, sells at twenty-eight cents; buckwheat at thirty-seven and one-half cents and good shirting muslin at Milton thirty-seven and one-half cents; I do not know the price here as I have had no chance of knowing. Bureaus are twelve dollars with glass mountings, splint bottom chairs thirty-seven and one-half cents apiece, brick twenty-five cents per hundred, very good tea one dollar per pound; coffee six pounds for one dollar, salt fifty pounds for one dollar, earthen ware is

the dearest article that there is, on account of not having a pottery near here that is carried on as it should be. There is excellent clay here for the purpose and wood for the cutting. The oracle of the West, Jonathan Justice says,—Anyone that understands the business would in a few years monopolize the whole trade, and realize an independent fortune. I do regret that sister Mary was unwilling to let her boys have the chance.

Please tell Thomas Jacobs that the papers have not come to Milton, and I wish him to write to J. Painter and tell him to direct to Pendleton post office. I do think Uncle Tommy would be delighted with this place, it is such a wonderful place for trade and business of all sorts. You may think that we are out of the world but we seem to have just got into it. I believe we see from fifty to sixty people passing and repassing daily, on horseback, in wagons and sleds, within sixteen yards of the door. It is now not eleven o'clock and Sarah has counted forty-six already.

The place Solomon seems most pleased with is situated one and one half miles from here. It has a spring sufficient to water the whole place from end to end, and lies directly on what we call the Knightstown road leading from the State road to the National road. There is great want of a good blacksmith here as there is none here that carries on the trade very briskly. I do not see anything to prevent people from doing well if they have their health and are industrious but it will require both and some privations, though nothing to what many have to encounter in older settled places. It is surprising to see the number that are coming to this settlement and the increase in the price of land. If any of our friends have a disposition to possess land here they had better do so soon. It will indeed be an increasing fund for themselves and their children. Please tell Brother Charles [Moore] that we wish he would forward the Courier to Pendleton as it would seem like something from home. We often, very often, think of you and it seems almost a mistaken idea that we are 600 miles apart when the heart is so often with you through the day.

To convince Aunt Nancy that Rebecca is not deprived of all the comforts of life I will tell her I have just got up from dinner consisting of good roast pork, potatoes, turnips, stewed apples, stewed pumpkin, wheat bread, buckwheat cakes, and butter and a good cup of tea. She is as comfortably fixed as anybody could be in the same length of time. She has a sweet little, fat black headed baby, as good as she could ask and little Joe is quite well and so are all of our children at present.

Solomon and John have just returned from the election. They were allowed the privilege of voting greatly to their satisfaction. Solomon has had several very good offers. If we had money we would get improved land but that has got almost beyond our reach. Should Joshua conclude to come out this winter I would be much obliged to him if he could call at a tavern in Mt. Sterling seven and one-half miles west of Zanesville on the National Road (The man's name is Weingardener) and ask for a small bag containing various articles left there by us. Describe the wagon and no doubt they will remember it for it was much admired by them. I have written to Brother Richard today and Solomon is so engaged in land hunting that he has not had time to write to anyone and

we wish you to send this around to all that are near, and write what you would consider would be interesting to the rest at a distance, and do please write soon. We are wishing much to hear from you all. Please give our love to all of our friends. Tell Peter we got plenty of his old fare, chicken and short cake and often wished he was along to help partake of it.

I am afraid you will be hard set to read this for I have made so many mistakes that I am ashamed of it but we have but one apartment and all the children are talking around and asking questions. There is no talk of cholera in these parts and the country is remarkably healthy this season.

The roads are so good and likely to be better that we begin to anticipate the pleasure of seeing Father out here sometime if his health continues which I hope it may. It is getting [along] in the morning so with more love for Father and Mother and all the rest than can be expressed I close. John and Rebecca send their love to all as if mentioned. R. says I may say she is not sick now. John says she has mended very much since we came. I must conclude or I shall not have paper enough to fold this up. We will write again when we have got settled which I hope will be soon, so no more at present.

Your affectionate children and friends
Solomon and Martha Fussell.