



ART GALLERY

Volume LX    July 1966    Number 4

# MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW

Published Quarterly by

## THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

RICHARD S. BROWNLEE  
EDITOR

JAMES E. MOSS  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

DOROTHY CALDWELL  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW is owned by the State Historical Society of Missouri and is published quarterly at 119 South Elson Street, Kirksville, Missouri 63501. Send communications and change of address to The State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65201. Second class postage is paid at Kirksville, Missouri.

The REVIEW is sent free to all members of The State Historical Society of Missouri. Membership dues in the Society are \$1.00 a year or \$25 for an individual life membership. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors to the magazine.



# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PETER VERHAEGEN: PIONEER MISSOURI EDUCATOR AND CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR. By <i>William Barnaby Faherty</i> .....	407
THE RE-ELECTION OF THE IRRECONCILABLE JAMES A. REED. By <i>Franklin D. Mitchell</i> .....	416
CIVIL WAR JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF COL. JOHN VAN DEUSEN DU BOIS. Edited by <i>Jared C. Lobdell</i> .....	436
JOHN SCOTT, THOMAS HART BENTON, DAVID BARTON AND THE 1824 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A CASE STUDY IN PRESSURE POLITICS. By <i>Alan S. Weiner</i> .....	460
THE WILSON LETTERS, 1835-1849. Edited by <i>Durward T. Stokes</i> .....	495
HISTORICAL NOTES AND COMMENTS	
Missouri Press Association and State Historical Society Hold Founders Luncheon and Open House.....	518
News in Brief.....	520
Local Historical Societies.....	523
Commemorative Events.....	540
Honors and Tributes.....	542
Gifts.....	543
Missouri History in Newspapers.....	547
Missouri Historical Data in Magazines.....	552
In Memoriam.....	554
Book Reviews.....	556
Book Notes.....	570
TRAILS IN THE WILDERNESS.....	600
ANN HAWKINS GENTRY.....	Back Cover

---

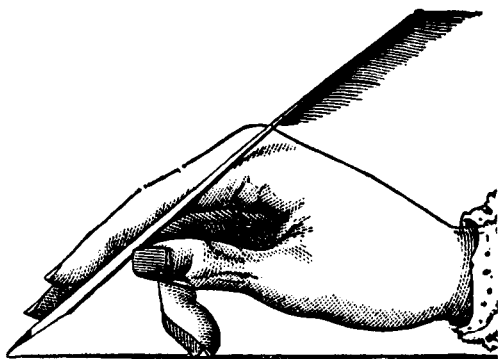
THE COVER: "Emigrants Crossing the Plains," from an engraving by F.O.C. Darley (1869) in the State Historical Society's iconographic collection. See pages 495-517 for letters from North Carolina emigrants about their new home in Clay County on the Western border of Missouri, 1835-1849.

\*   \*   \*

# THE WILSON LETTERS

1835-1849

\*   \*   \*



*Six Letters from Anderson, Caleb, and Josiah Wilson, Written  
from Their New Home in Clay County, Missouri, to Their  
Relatives at Their Old Home in Orange County, North Carolina*

EDITED BY  
DURWARD T. STOKES

Thomas Wilson was a descendant of Scotch-Irish settlers of Orange County, North Carolina, and lived in what is now the Little River Township, in the northern part of the county, but which was the St. Mary's District at the time his forebears first obtained land grants and built their homes. Wilson was a conservative, hard-working farmer, a pious Presbyterian, and a good citizen. When he died in 1829, he left a large family to share the ancestral acres. Three of his sons succumbed to the urge to go to the frontier and try their fortunes in a new situation.

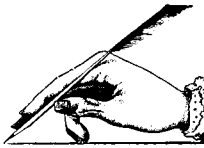
The Wilson family were close neighbors and friends of a Turrentine family, descendants of two immigrant brothers, and there was considerable intermarriage between them. Two daughters of Thomas Wilson married Turrentines, and kept Bible records as well as family papers, which were passed on to their descendants, and from which the genealogy of the two families has been constructed. It was these daughters who kept the letters written by their brothers to them, and to their mother, and whose descendants preserved them to this day. They are now deposited in the Southern Historical Collection, in the Library of the University of North Carolina, at

---

\*Durward T. Stokes is assistant professor of history at Elon College, North Carolina. He did his undergraduate work at Elon, received his M.A. at the University of North Carolina and is presently working on his Ph.D. A genealogical researcher, he has published articles in the *North Carolina Historical Review*.

Chapel Hill, where they are labeled *Wilson Letters* and catalogued under both the state of Missouri and North Carolina.

The letters the Wilson brothers wrote home contain the observations, planning, and conclusions of people of average intelligence and embrace almost every phase of thought in which men on the frontier could possibly be interested. In spite of educational handicaps, the ability of these men to express themselves on paper is remarkable. The six letters published here were discovered among family papers in the possession of Mrs. Lillian McMannen Fitzgerald, of White Springs, Florida, a great granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Absolom Turrentine, to whom two of the letters were addressed. In 1959, they were given to the editor. Periods have been added where absolutely necessary, but other punctuation and spelling have not been altered in an attempt to maintain the originality of the letters.



State of Missouri Clay County July 6th, 1835<sup>1</sup>

Dear Brother and Sister: I now take my my pen to Chat with you after an absence of 10 months as you have been informed of the Jorney and have heard my opinion very freely about the Contry & as Correct a discription as I am abel to give I dont think it worth my while to repeat the Same Story again to you But must try to inform you on Some other Subjects and delite your mind in a Different way Altho it is a hard task to write a letter to answer Every inquiry & much harder to write the truth & it be believed when it gets there, Well all are to the present in good health and also Caleb & his family<sup>2</sup> and the neighbors in general are well. also we Received the letter from Abs. Turrentine & Fanney<sup>3</sup> on Monday last informing us of the Death of Jinney<sup>4</sup> and the attact of Fever on John.<sup>5</sup> we are not Satisfyed with the account they give of his Sickness as they dont

<sup>1</sup>This letter is addressed to Samuel Turrentine, North Carolina, Orange County, Hillsborough, Little River, and postmarked Liberty, Missouri, July 11. Samuel Turrentine was the husband of Ann (Nancy) Wilson, a sister of the writer of the letter.

<sup>2</sup>Caleb Wilson was a brother of the writer of the letter who moved to Missouri with his family. He left North Carolina with Anderson Wilson but settled in Washington Township in Clay County whereas Anderson claimed land in Fishing River Township.

<sup>3</sup>Absolom Turrentine, brother of Samuel, lived on the farm adjoining his brother in Orange County, and married Fanny Wilson, a sister of both the Wilson brothers and the wife of Samuel Turrentine.

<sup>4</sup>Jinney was a Wilson family slave.

<sup>5</sup>John Wood Wilson was a brother of Anderson and Caleb who remained in Orange County and lived with the widowed mother of these brothers.

say he is better or like to Recover, I hope you will not think I have neglected you as I have not wrote to you til now for I did not think it necessary to write you all letters at the Same time and if it had been necessary I had not time, for if I Ever was busy in life it has been Since I left you and I will tell you all about what I have done. I cleared fenced and put 5 acres in Corn Besides 25 Dollars I worked out in Stock & I think I have 13 Acres in Corn and it is the Best I have Seen and every one praises it for the best to be found and the Neighbors Says it will make from 10 to 14 Barrells to the acre But I dont aim at Bragging on my Corn nor Running down N. Carolina. I have Sold the little waggon for 40 Dollars and give 3-75 for a heifer with Calf. I thought it was high But She now gives milk enough for us twice a day. I find that the bottom land in this Contry is worth about three times as much as the ridge land & therefore I intend to Save my Redemption when the time is out,<sup>6</sup> I have sold harry for 500 Dollars<sup>7</sup> & the reason was that he became my enemy & was determined on my ruin & me on ———<sup>8</sup> going down the River I advised and threatened the Rascal took his own way and is in the Cotton Contry where he ought to be if he ought to be any where. I understood the other day he had got a first rate master But I would Just as leave it was not So. As it was I have put the money to interest. It will bring me 50 Dollars a year And I have owned the first & the last Negro I ever will while I live. I lack about three Days plowing of being done laying by Corn and I am not quite done planting as I want to plant my flax ground. I planted my Corn 30 Aprile and it is now taselling and Shooting. I am also Breeding 3 mares to the Jack if I Should have good luck I hope they will bring me 75 Dollars Cash when foaldded. I want also to Sell the other wagon and by me Some Calves Sheep etc and I will also sow you the prophit in this kind of a trade and also the prophit of the mewel trade in this Contry and that of Jenneys & Jacks. First, if I lay out \$25 for 10 Calves this fall and feed away 15 barels of Corn at one Dollar per barel and one Barel of Salt at 6 Dollars this winter and 4 Dollars worth of hay, my Calves will cost me 50 Dollars & I sell them for 8 Dollars a piece I shall make 30 Dollars Clear money or 60 per Cent on my money and this is a very moderate Calculation. But again Suppose I go among the mormons and buy the 10 Calves for 15

<sup>6</sup>Preemption in 1835 was based on the Land Law of April 24, 1820, which priced land at \$1.25 per acre in 80 acre lots.

<sup>7</sup>The price of slaves evidently remained somewhat steady in Missouri for an estate inventory in 1829, in Clay County, listed the sale of, "Isaac, a slave, 25 years old, \$450." From *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri*, compiled and published by The National Historical Company (St. Louis, 1889), 115.

<sup>8</sup>This letter was sealed with wax and the wafer adhered to the paper on top of a word which is represented by the blank.

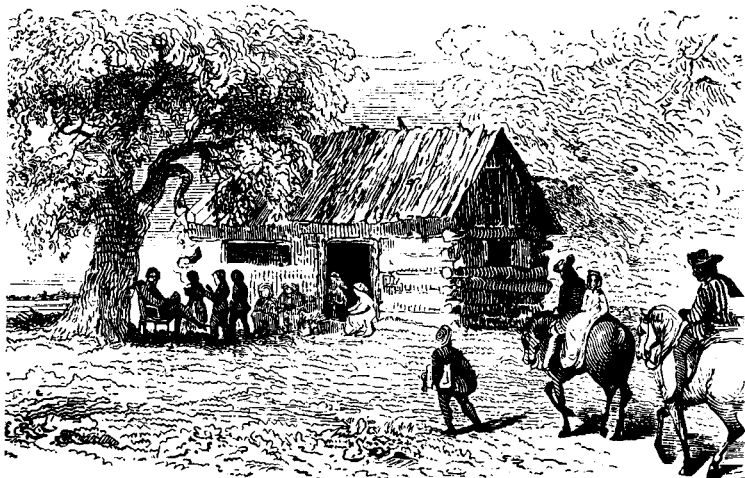
Dollars<sup>9</sup> then I make 70 per cent. Second, Suppose I buy 5 mews for 100 Dollars and feed 10 Brels of Corn and \$4 of hay and one of Salt they cost me 115 Dollars and I Sell them for 35 Dollars a piece, I mak 60 Dollars Clear money. But let us now Calculate a large Capital in this trade. Suppose I buy 300 Calves for \$750 & 50 Mewls for 1000 Dols. and give the rangers 240 Dollars and 25 Dollars for Salt and 5\$ for bells, the whole Cost is 2020 Dollars and I Sell at the Afforesaid rate they Bring me 2130 Clear gain in 12 month. Again if I go to Santefe and Buy 10 Jacks for 1000 and Sell them for 500 a piece I make 4000 Clear gain & if I buy 10 Jenneys for 100 Dollars and Sell them for 300 I make 200 Dollars Clear gain. So you may see from this statement the advantage we have in trade & Range. But this ant the prophitablest trade we have, for if I buy 100 galons of Orleans whiskey for 25 Dollars and Sell it to the indians for 65 Dollars per galon I make 6575 Doll Clear gain and Bring the blood of as many red men on my head. This is the report of the Sworen officers of the government appointed to Examine into this affair. I am also Sending Marth<sup>10</sup> to Schol. She has went 3 months & learns very fast. She Can spell in five Sylables. prety smart. She will go 3 months more if She is well and I pay 4 Dollars per Sholar for Six months. Wee are also about building a meating house this fall 24 F by 24 F & 11 F from Sill to plate, good floor, painted & plastered.<sup>11</sup> Above 200 Dollars is now subscribed and all

<sup>9</sup>The Mormons were reported selling their stock under the market prices in order to raise more money with which to buy land.

<sup>10</sup>Martha Wilson was the daughter of the writer and the only child of which there is any known record.

<sup>11</sup>The writer and his family were members of Little River Presbyterian Church when they lived in Orange County, North Carolina. *Clay County, Missouri Centennial Souvenir*, edited by Ethel Massie Withers, privately printed by the Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Liberty, Missouri, 1922) page 123, states: "Bethel Church, in Washington Township, ceased to be a branch of the Liberty Presbyterian Church September 24, 1842, and became a separate organization with forty-four members." This may have been the church begun in 1835, or it may have been another which is not in existence today.

A PIONEER  
MISSOURI  
SCHOOL



appear anxious to lay the foundation and build thereon. But agan while we are in the way of Chat let us See what the farmer can mak if he has to rent. We Say he tends 12 Acres in Corn and makes 120 & has to give 24 rent he has 36 Barrell left and 5 in wheat will make 75 and 25 rent leaves him 50 Bushels and two in hemp will make him 12 cwt. at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  will bring 66 Dollars So 4 for rent will leave 62 So the whole prophit of one hand is 183 on rented land. Now give him 40 Acres of land and let us See what he Can do. 223-50 is made and this all on the range without feed without even a plow Sharped or any Expense in the world after the tools are first Bought which will Cost 10 Dolls. But our winters are long you Say & that takes the prophit. Yes it does Some, But we son get it Back. It is a Short lane, for a hog one year old will grown, will bring 2-50 or 3 Dollars and our mare we make the Crop with will Bring a Colt and the Cow a Calf and these will Soon pay What they eat an we have the trade of Pennsylvania & New York, Santefe, Tennesse, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansaw and others to tedious to mention at present. But you Can annumerate the advantages of a new Contry, a Rich Soil and a good trad as well as I can & perhaps better. Again Absolom thinks he is to old to Break up & Come here<sup>12</sup> & I think So to, But what are my School mates Doing. Are they to yong and two much attached to the mother Contry to leave it and that ant all for I Can Just tell you their promises if they Still Stay and that is Just this, that they Shall pay their taxes for I have been looking in the minutes of the last Legislata and find they have made the Rail road Clear thro the halls of the Legislator and appropriated a few Cents more to finish the State house<sup>13</sup> and passed a law for Convention and Spent about 25000 Dollars for a Convention and that is more than it will ever prophit the yong if they do as our fathers did which was to Seek a new Contry, a Rich Soil and a free government. But Dont think that I wan them all to Come to the Missouri for there ant room and no doubt Some of the western or Southern States are Better than this. But if you want to know how Old I think a man Should be to be to old to leave Carolina I will tell and that is when he is to Old to Get Children or his wife to old to bear, then he is to old to move & had better Stay, But not til then.

<sup>12</sup>Absolom Turrentine was 51 years of age in 1835. Anderson Wilson was 29 years of age in 1835.

<sup>13</sup>In 1833 the North Carolina Legislature had chartered the Experimental Railroad to haul granite from the quarry to the site of the new capitol. The Statehouse in Raleigh having been burned in 1831, a new (and the present) capitol building was begun in 1833 and finished in 1840 at a cost of \$531,674.46. This was a gigantic undertaking at the time and more people were dazed by it than a simple frontier farmer like Anderson Wilson. These years also marked the beginning of the state participation in railroad promotion. It is remarkable how well this farmer in Missouri kept up with affairs back home in North Carolina.

So if Absolom thinks that is his Case he is Righ to Stay. But you hant heard all about us yet for I ant Abl to tell it. But I can inform you that the Small pox has been in Liberty<sup>14</sup> this Spring & is now Raging in St. Lewis and the Cholera<sup>15</sup> also. They die 10 of a day. It is Said the lower part of the state is like the lower part of Carolina, lowe flat and Sickly and there is also another evil attend it & that is the Slaws which kill people, horses & Cows. The Cows will have it so her milk will kill whatever eats it & not kill her, or the meat would do the same Before you would know She was Sick. The Illenoy & Indiana are the Same way So their Stock ant worth a Cent to them only for their hides, when one eats the milk they lose their Senses, fall a Sleep, Sicken & die in a few hours. So if medicine ant at hand it is Certain death. This is 300 miles from where we live. Many Experiments have been tried to fine out where the disease Originated but all have failed as yet. I would also inform you that we have had Several frosts in June and July and it was 20 Degrees Colder 22 June than it was the 15th But it is now getting warmer. Harvest will begin this week & wheat is injured very much with the Scat as the Season has been Very wet. There was also a mission Sent by Congress went thro town a few weeks a go to preach to the Oregon Indians and to explore the Contry and report to Congress. They will have to live on deer, Bufaloe & Turkey without Salt & without Bread. It Consisted of a preacher, his wife, One Doctor & an interpreter. The interpreter was an indian of that tribe & they are thos among who Lewis & Clark Explore the Columbia River & Missouri Teritory.<sup>16</sup> Agan I wish to tell my friens that I hate to pay 25¢ for a sheet of blank paper and therefore hope they will try to fill them with Something after this if possible as I have always Sent them full letters I hope to get Such in Return.<sup>17</sup> I would also inform you that the Missouri River was higher 22 June than it has ever Been Since the Settlement of the State. It will no doubt Cause a great deal of Sickness on the river bottom as it over flowed its Banks and filled all the ponds & hollows which will Stagnate and infect the air this fall. The reason it was so high was that the Spring was Cole & dry til 10 May and on the 15th the thermometer Stood at 90 and the snow and ice Came all down from the Black mountains like a flood and not upon the account of Rain. If this Repot is true that it was

<sup>14</sup>Liberty was the county seat of Clay County, designed for this purpose when the county was founded in 1822.

<sup>15</sup>Cholera epidemics were thought to be a result of the flooding of the Missouri River. The only epidemic mentioned in the *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri*, was one which occurred in 1851. Doubtless the sickness in 1835 was mostly a local outbreak.

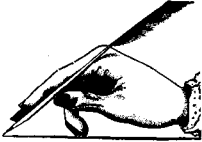
<sup>16</sup>The expeditions of Colonel John Charles Fremont had attracted attention to the Oregon country and there were many travelers enroute to this territory in this period.

<sup>17</sup>The United States postal rate in 1835 was 25¢ for a single sheet of paper, payable C.O.D.

even as full as it has been heretofore I know it was terrible for I crossed it in one place where it was 7 miles wide and Seen the houses where many people had been Brought out to dry land in Skifts & Baots while all they possessed was left behind in the Swelling flood. But this did not deter them. They went Back to try it again.

As you are tired Reading	Fare well my loving Brothers
And me of writing too	And you my Sisters too
Lest you should get offended	Read this to poor old mother
I know this line will do	And then a long adieu

A. WILSON & EMELIA<sup>18</sup>



Missouri Clay County May 8th 1836<sup>19</sup>

Dear brother and sister: I now take the oportunity to in form you that we are all well at present & hope these lines may find you & family enjoying the same blesings of God. The neighburs & friendes is generley well. We heare had the wettest spring i ever saw. Their was frost nearly all last month but it is warm & pleasent now. Wheat is sorry. The winter was cold & not mutch snow witch ciled wheat out in a great measure. I have entered 40 acres of land in January for \$50 and now I have 63 acres that cost me 300 dollars. The last I entered is mostley bottom & of the best sort. Congress has reduced the price of land now to 1 dollar & I want to Sell my waggon & enter 40 acres moare this fall. The piece I want is nearley half a mile from me witch will soot wheat better than aney of mine but it is unserten whether I will get it or not. Their is one or too moare that wantes it I believe and were waiting till the time when we can have it for \$1 witch is in June I think, but you musent think that all the land joining me is entered, for one end and one side of me is joined by vacant land. Their has moare land been entered last winter than ever has been since it was in market. our neighbours is selling out heire and moving out on the fronteere, a distance of 20 or 30 miles, as fast as they are moving into this neighbour hood. They say that north of us is first rate entreys to be made but I have

<sup>18</sup>Amelia Faucett, daughter of Ralph and Martha Faucett, married Anderson Wilson in her home county of Orange, in North Carolina, February 14, 1829.

<sup>19</sup>This letter is addressed to Absolom Turrentine, Orange County, Little River. Absolom Turrentine married Fanny Wilson, a sister of the writer.

not been out that way verrey far yet but I intend to go this fall for to see for my Self. We have a kind of Sport heire that we call bee hunting whitch is verrey profitible when we have good luck. By going 80 or 100 miles north of us, 4 hands in 5 or 6 dayes can get as mutch honey as a 4 hoarse team can hall home on a level road in the jernuey. As milck is scarce heire in the winter season honey is verrey axceptible.<sup>20</sup> There is a talk of placing a large force of troopes en our bountaires. If it is done we will have a good market at hoam. Part of the force will be in 15 or 20 miles of us. You wanted to know if it was a fair question if i was in that countrey where i was when i started and had as mutch knowledg of the countrey as i have now if I would come heire. Yes, you may be sure i would and i will give you some reasons for it. First, if i had stayed theire i could not have got land theire but what was poor and woare out & not much of that sort and Couldent make much for sale. What i have is worth \$500 at the least calculation. Another reason is i can make moure corn heare with little work than i culd theire with all the work i could do but you may say that we came heire to live in laziness but that is not our intention. It is to live easey for it is as easey to tend land that will bring 10 barrels to the acre as that whitch will bring 3 & it is as easey to so an acre of ground in wheat that will bring 15 or 20 bushels as that will bring 5 & it is just as easey when we want fresh meats to go out and kill a deer as it is to fatten a hog to get it & when we want fowel it is as easey to kill a turkey as to feed a chicken till it is big enough to kill. It is as easey to sell our grain at home as it is for you to hall yours 50 to 100 miles to market but you may say your railroades will carry of your projuce to market.<sup>21</sup> So it will but it will not be any great advantage to you. They will hall all the merchants goodes and you must pay for halling yours or keep a team to all yourn and that will not be making money fast therefore it is a Speculation. It is a strange thing to us that you must have a rail road to hall your produce to market now when your land is wearen out and hundreds of your countrymen must moove to the west. If you have any use for a road it is to hall manure insted of produce. I am sorry to think that your legislature has run you to such an

<sup>20</sup>An article in *Welmores Gazetteer of Missouri*, reprinted in the *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri*, stated: "The bee hunters (a people rather less industrious than the insects which they destroy) have made a sad havoc with the timber of Missouri. They go ahead of the settler, and find honey in the tops of the tallest trees in the forests. These are necessarily felled to obtain the honey; and thus some of the best timber on the public lands is destroyed." See also: D. L. McKinley, "White Man's Fly On the Frontier," *Missouri Historical Review*, LVIII (July, 1964), 442-451.

<sup>21</sup>In *The Hillsborough Recorder*, the chief newspaper in Orange County, North Carolina, at the time, the market most usually referred to and from which prices were quoted was Fayetteville, North Carolina. In North Carolina at the time, railroad building was the topic of the day and the issue was whether or not they should be built with state financial aid. Clay County did not get a railroad until 1867 when the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad was built from Kansas City to Cameron and passed through Liberty, Missouri.

expeunce as to make you pay a million of Dollars for building a house to set in, to spend the rest of your money in & now if i was theire i would be as contrarey as they are extravagant for i would get up and leave them.<sup>22</sup> Our public expenses is not as mutch as yours. We work our taxes out on the road and if we work any moore we get pay for it & even juries get no pay. You musent think that i am a Cusing your countrey but doant mistake your self for i am not. I am very backward with my work this spring. I havent not got half my corn planted yet & have 5 or 6 acres of new ground to breake yet i have got nearley as mutch ground Cleared as i can tend & under tolerable good repaire. I want Mother<sup>23</sup> to se this letter & perhaps she may say that Caleb has been hunting too mutch is what has put him so behine but if she does she is rong for i have spent but one day since plowing time & that was killing squirrels to keepe them from hulling up my Corn but i am amonge the formeost with my work. I have great need of hunting for when i go to plow in the morning the turkeys gather round the field so that i hardley can contain myself at work but i must stand it til i get time then i will have some of them for dinner & want you to come out and dine with us. Gilbert wanted to know if i had Nathen yet. You may tell him that i have & he need not be uneasey abought me parting with him while he is willing to live with me & a good buoy.<sup>24</sup> Nothing mour at present but remain your loving brother & sister til death. CALEB WILSON & MARTHEY<sup>25</sup> MOTHER & JOHN & THE TURENTINES

<sup>22</sup>The writer was referring to the building of the new state Capitol in North Carolina to replace the one burned in Raleigh in 1831. The State House, which is still in use, was built in the years 1833-1840 at a total cost of \$530,000.

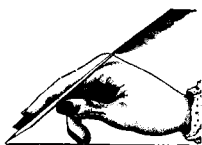
<sup>23</sup>The writer's mother was Mrs. Thomas Wilson, nee Jean (Jane) Wood. She lived at the old home farm in North Carolina with her son, John Wood Wilson, until her death in 1851. Her husband died in 1829.

<sup>24</sup>Gilbert and Nathan were slaves. The writer's sister, Ann (Nancy), who married Samuel Turrentine, recorded the names of the family slaves born on the plantation in her husband's family Bible. The names Gilbert and Nathan are used in that record to name slaves born too late to have been the ones mentioned by the writer.

<sup>25</sup>Caleb Wilson married Martha Faucett in Orange County, North Carolina, August 18, 1831. His brother, Anderson, married Martha's sister, Amelia (Millie, Emilia), February 14, 1829.

**PIONEER  
LIFE IN  
MISSOURI**





July 4th, 1836, Clay County Missouri<sup>26</sup>

Dear Brother and Sister: I have taken up my pen at this time with more pleasure to my Self than usual and no doubt more Satisfaction to you all. We are all well and also Josiahs and Calebs family is well with all enquiring friends John Thompsons family is also well, also Holding Thompson.<sup>27</sup> & instant I hear of no Complaint in the Neighborhood. The reason I have taken up my pen at this time is to addres you on the Subject of Mormon, as this Subject has been the order of the day for Some time and has been gaining ground on boath Sides. They have been flocking in here faster than ever and making great talk what they would do.<sup>28</sup> A letter from Ohio Shows plainly that they intend to Emigrate here til they outnumber us. Then they would rule the Contry at pleasure. Another letter Shows that they are Borrowing all the money they Can to procure land here & they Buy all on a credit that they Can get and they promise the most Anormous prices ever heard of. They have offered 1000 Dollars for a tract of 80 Acres Sold 12 months ago for 250 Dollars. This was to get a hoalt in a neighborhood & then they would harang the rest away & get theirs at their own price. They have entered 1600 acres in Clinton Co. in the last few days Besides what they have entered in Clay & Ray Co. They settle in towns as we Call them, one of which Contains 250 in our township, Besides another in Washington township nearly as large. They have got a revelation from Smith<sup>29</sup> that they Shal have the Missouri By money or Blood and God has Commanded them (they Say) to Sell their flocks and Hovels and procede to the Mo. and Buy land that they may rest & these revelations are witnessed to By the 12 apostles Some of which

<sup>26</sup>This letter is addressed to Samuel Turrentine, North Carolina, Orange County, Red Mountains, and postmarked July 9. The origin of the name Red Mountain is unknown but apparently it came into general use for the town nearest these North Carolina farm lands is today known as Rougemont, North Carolina, a French adaptation of this original name.

<sup>27</sup>Mention of these names which are evidently familiar to the home folks in Carolina supports the supposition that some people from Orange County other than their kin went with the Wilsons to Missouri.

<sup>28</sup>Mormons began settling in the Jackson-Clay County area in 1831. Their customs, religion and political attitudes aroused the prejudices of their neighbors. This letter expresses the typical reactions to the situation—mass meetings, extradition orders and mob actions. The problem had not been completely solved when this letter was written in 1836, but two years later the main body of the church had moved to Caldwell County and established in the town of Far West. It was in this year that the Mormons' property was confiscated and they were banished from the state by Governor L. W. Boggs. For a more complete, general account of the Mormon War see Herman C. Smith, "Mormon Troubles in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review*, IV (July, 1910), 237-251, or Elder Brigham Henry Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions* (Salt Lake City, 1900), 139-173.

<sup>29</sup>Joseph Smith, leader of the Mormons.

## MORMONS GOING TO CHURCH



are amongst us.<sup>30</sup> They are Still going on in their usual way of lying, raising the dead, Casting out devils, Healing the sick etc.<sup>31</sup> In this way they have Still been anoying us from day to day. I was informed by a respectable neighbor that they are living on Rochhoalts panama,<sup>32</sup> in the woods, in wagons in tents in Bark Houses in Cabins etc. This town is 4 miles long & so thick that you will not be out of Sight of a den the Hole route. This State of things is alarming. You may depend all our officers are elected by us the people & we might as well allow one man to give 100 Votes as to allow 100 mormons to Vote at all. A letter from Tennessee Shows that 10 Churches are to remove from there this fall & next and a letter from this Shows that they have taken hintland<sup>33</sup> & will elect all their own officers from among the Brethren & even remove the postmaster by petition and are to Send 1500 from that town to Mo and now you may See Just where we are we are to Submit to a mormon government or trample under foot the laws of our Contry. To go away was to Just give up all for if emigration once Begun none would buy our land but mormons and they would have it at their own price So we were resolved what to do. We thought of petitioning the governor but He was Sworn. We thought of fleeing. There was no place to flee to. We thought of fiting. This was Cruel to fight a people who had not Broke the law & in this way we became excited. I never Saw as much excitement in my life. On 24 of June we worked the road<sup>34</sup> and nothing else was talked of. They passed us in every way and in Considerable numbers & we got very

<sup>30</sup>The Mormons believed in heavenly revelation just as in Biblical times and by this means their earthly priesthood or leaders were designated.

<sup>31</sup>Edward Channing, explained in *A History of the United States* (New York, 1922), Vol. 5, p. 488, "The Mormons had their own ministers, settled their own disputes among themselves without going to courts of law, and healed their own sick by their own methods, and thereby aroused the jealousies of ministers, lawyers, doctors, and politicians."

<sup>32</sup>This seemed to have been a colloquial term for plain.

<sup>33</sup>The most logical explanation for this word is that the writer hurriedly ran together the words "hint" and "and."

<sup>34</sup>It was customary for each man to give a specified amount of work each year on the upkeep of the public roads. *The History of Clay County*, 119, states: "In February, 1836, the county court divided the county into 42 road districts, and appointed overseers."

hot before night to think that we had to work a road for the invaders of our Contry to travel & at last go and leave them our farms & Seek a new abode for ourselves & our Children. So down we Set to talk it all over Before we parted and it was proposed that we Hold a meting at John Carols the next week to which I objected & proposed it Should be Held at the Schoolhouse of John Tellerows which was agreed to. The question was then who would attend. Some Said they would & some Said nothing & Caleb Wilson proposed that all Should come out into the road who was willing to attend and then was 16 out at the moment & two left in the woods who we Beleive to be mormons or mormon friends altho one of them has Come over to our side Since. So we appointed 28th for our meeting. I then felt awful. I went up fearing there would none attend But to my Joy & Surprise when I entered the panama I saw them flocking in every direction & when I came up I found a large & respectable assemblage from this & other Cos and if you enquire who was there I can only Say all of us. We were gathered together as one man. The Preachers of the Gosple were there, the Elders of the Churches was there, the gray headed fathers were there the Beardless Buoyes were there & the Memorable Spirit of 76 was there. We then appointed a Committe of 7 persons to draw up a preamble and resolutions declaring the intention of our meting & what Coarse we intended to pursue which was in effect to drive them away if they would not go without and ordered the same to be published in the far west.<sup>35</sup> We also appointed 10 Delegates from Washington & 10 from fishingriver township to hoald a general meting in the town of Liberty on 8 July with delegates from all the rest of the townships in our County whose duty if Should be to appoint a Committe to offer the mormons terms & remove them away. This done we returned home & on the following night, I mean the night of the 28 we were alarmed by hearing that there was 35 wagons & 300 mormons within 25 miles of us & making for our County & Proposed that we met at W E Prices & Ralied our forces & Stop them on the road and we obeyed the Call of our Contry, the Call of liberty & freedom and by 10 in the morning we had about 100 Volunteers all mounted on Horseback with their rifles in their Hand. We then proceded to make Jesse Clark Commander in Chief & W E Price the Second in Command. We then mounted and While the frosty Hairs of Uncle Jesse led the way we followed Close in double file to attact the enemy. We also Sent on to Spies to See where they were laying and to return us word. We had proceeded down the road about five miles when we

---

<sup>35</sup>The *Far West* was a weekly newspaper published in Liberty between 1836 and 1839.

Saw Some of these reches Coming & then Called a Halt & examining found them to be Just what i new them to be on first sight Mormons. Our officers tole them our declared intention and desired them to return and not go into Clay County & toale them if they did presist it was at their own risk. But they did not hesitate But turned round their wagons & put Back like they thought old nick was after them. We followed Close on their rear and Soon was overtaken By Mr Wetton whose 3 sons were with us and informed us that general White with his 250 mormons from his town were in pursuit of us as he believed from what he had Seen & learnt from one of our Party who had been waching their movement we then placed our picket guard on a high panama while we Stationed another in the timber where the road led out of the panama & waited for their attack But in Vain for not a mormon was seen. The Vote was then taken whether we Should take another road by which we should avoid the attack of White or Whether we returned the Sameway So as to meet him. It was desided in favor of meeting him by a large majority. We then sent out our advance guard & returned home without being molested Before the sun was down and the Conseracy was Strong for S. B. Cummins, Wm. Faucette, John Crosset, D McTaggart, John McTaggart, Josiah Wilson, Caleb Wilson, Griffen Hopkins & my Self entered into a resolution to mess together & fight by each others Side & die like Ishmael in the presence of our brethren. On the Same Day which was the 29 the excitement was So great that there was a meeting Held in Liberty & proposals made to the mormons which they did Except the substance of, which was that those mormons which had no land or crop on hand Should leave the County forth with. Those who Have land bee allowed to Sell the Same, Gether their Crops & leave the Contry. Governor Dodge Being in town offered them the wisconsin teritory which they accepted & promised to move thither as there was none there to molest them (Dodge is the governor of this teritory).<sup>36</sup> And as soon as Smith Can get a Stump of a revelation, that will become the promised zion. I have no doubt this movement has Saved a agaon [agony] of Blood to this Contry if they only Comply and it is only for want of No [numbers] that will make them do it. They had provided 330 gunflints and a Barrel of powder for the war But they found our numbers Could be raised to 10000 if necessary. I doubt not But we would Whip them two to one. Not that I Boast of our

<sup>36</sup>In 1836 the Wisconsin Territory included the whole of Iowa and Minnesota as well as parts of the Dakotas. General Henry Dodge was the Governor of this Territory from 1836 until 1841, then again from 1845 until 1848, and served as a United States Senator from Wisconsin after it was admitted to the Union as a state.

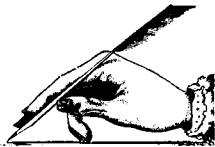
Selves But the Spirit that possessed every Breast plainly Showed that they would either possess their Contry or the toombe. Another thing excited the people more was that they had spread their doctrines among the Savage Indians and acknowledged them as Brethren who was to possess the land with them and that they were ready to Join them at any time. These are the grounds we occupy and the principal. We defend these principals at all Hazzards altho we are trampling on our law and Constitution but we Cant Help it in no way while we possessed the Spirit of 76. I would also inform you that we had meetings in the foresaid Townships on July 1st & 2nd to form Volunteer Companies and I think we shall average about 50 to a Township which if I ant mistaken will make 500 men and I will also show what Each county will furnish if needed to drive the Mormons. By this you may See what abomination the mormons is held in the Mo. They have drove them from many Counties Heretofore And now I wish only to remark that this is a true Statement as I Can give & I do beleive I am as well acquainted with the affair as any one For I was one of the first that stood forth to oppose. I attended

[here at the completion of a page, the writer penned a table in one corner of his letter approximating the available volunteers from each county in the area]:

Jacks.	600	(Jackson county)
Clay	500	
Van Br.	500	(Van Buren county)
Ray	400	
Layf.	1000	(Lafayette county)
Jonst.	700	(Johnson county)
Clint	300	(Clinton county)
Caldwl.	300	(Caldwell county)
<hr/>		
Total	5300	

the first meeting in Clay County. I was one of the Committe to represent Fishingriver township in the general meting. I was one of Vols. that went to Stop their Emegration and have talked with the Chairman of the meting in Liberty and red the proceedings of the Same in the far west, So I Cant be in the back ground in this Case. So if you see any other Statement no odds from what Source it may arise up to this date, you may rest assured it is false for I have told you the truth, the hole truth & nothing But the Truth. I would also inform you that business is above gaining its usual attention and afew days ago a man would not buy even a Sheep or Cows. I have understood today that they want us to bear their Expenses away

or Some of them wont go & if this is the Case it wont Cost us much as high as powder & lead Sells here and these are the only expenses we will pay. We were also about to procede to appoint those who Could not go to attend to the affairs of our families at home And I would also Say that a smooth faced lad fell in my file who heroism minded me more of quinn more than any one I ever Saw and altho we passed his mothers door twice he would not leave us altho he had no eat from the day before, only 3 Biscuit I gave him (I nearly mention this for the attachment I have to a stranger and a frent to liberty & freedom in a lad) Another worthy of remark was a man who was a cripel from his youth who had always walked on Crutches then walked with his Crutch under one arm and his rifle under tother and Caried His Sadle Bags Stuffed with Bread & Bacon which he divided amongst all. I am sorry to Say that there were Several outrages Committed on the night of the 28. Six of our party went to a mormon town. Several mormons Cocked their guns & Swore they would Shoot them. After Some Scrimiging two white men took a mormon out of Company & give him 100 lashes & it is thought he will Die of this Beating. I now Close my letter til friday the 8th when I hope to give you a few lines about the proceedings of the general meting. Your loving Brother & Sister til Death we remain, A. WILSON, EMELIA WILSON N B as soon as this fracas is Settled we will all Write to mother and give her a full account of it.



State of Missouri Clay County Aprile 26 1840<sup>37</sup>

Dear Brother: I take this opertunity of informing you that we are well at present & hope these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessings of god. We have just got through one of the hardest & Longest winters I ever saw. Theire has moare stock died heire last winter than I ever heard of. Some has Lost as high as a 100 head of hogs & but few have alost a good many. I Lost abought 20. The moast of them was pigs. It is to coald heire to raise pigs in the

<sup>37</sup>This letter is addressed to Samuel Turrentine, Orange County, North Carolina, The Red Mountain, Buffalow Creeke. Buffalo Creek was a small stream which flowed through the Turrentine farm, joining Little River, and eventually the Neuse River. This letter has the figure "25" marked on it which was presumably the postal fee to be paid on delivery.

winter. Leather is high heire but it will be cheaper \* \* \* <sup>38</sup> for there is a quantity of hides taken of this spring. We have lost our preacher again. He was on his way from pennsylvania heire and was burnt to death on a Steam Boat loaded with cotton. We are without any preaching onley of the Cumverlen<sup>39</sup> order and that not offen. If you have a spear one there he is badly needed heire. Religion is not attended to heire as mutch as it is there. There is but few sundays but what I can heare the crack of the rifle some where in the neighbourhood, though it would Surprise you to hear how Liberal people is in subscribing to a preacher for a man in moderate circumstance to pay from 5 to 7\$ looks like they are charitable if they are sinners a good preacher heire could get 300 \$ a year. It is stated heire that the mormons is in that countrey preaching & making some converts. I should like to know whether it is so or not. If it is I think they had better be stopet for a preacher that aint fit to preach in the missouri is not fit to preach any where. As to that dispute between the Ioway and Missouri it is abought some land lying between the two states and is claimed by boath. The line will be established buy Congris or the Ioway govinor will \* \* \* his claim for the govinor \* \* \* his right. It lies 250 miles from us I think it will be settled without the sword.<sup>40</sup> Money is the dearest heire I ever saw it. It is not to be borrowed at no per sent for it aint heire to lend. There is a considerable fall in the moast of articles that is in market. The whigs layes it on the democrat administration. There is several turedned whigs for the want of money but I doant see that they pay of their debts aney faster now than before.<sup>41</sup> I am sorry to tell you that the caus of Temperence is Loosing ground heire verely fast. There is several Steam Distilleries in our section of countrey & I am afraid

<sup>38</sup>The ellipsis indicates torn places in the original letter where the words become indistinguishable.

<sup>39</sup>There were churches of the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination in Clay County as early as 1826 but there is no indication as to any particular church close to the writer's home. In North Carolina, this family of Wilsons and the Turrentines belonged to Little River Presbyterian Church, an active organization in Orange County today.

<sup>40</sup>When the Territory of Iowa was established in 1838 a boundary dispute arose over a 9-mile strip paralleling the present state line. Trouble arose over the attempt of a Missouri sheriff to collect taxes in 1839 and both Missouri and Iowa mobilized troops to protect their interests. A compromise averted bloodshed and in 1851 the Supreme Court finally fixed the boundary at an old 1824 Iowa, Sauk and Fox Indian Purchase line. The dispute is popularly known as the Honey War because of a satiric poem by that title published in the *Palmira Whig*, October 26, 1839. The local story was that a Missourian cut down three bee trees on the disputed tract and the owner, an Iowan, had him tried and he was fined \$1.50. For a more detailed account see John L. Thomas, "Some Historic Lines of Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review*, 111 (July, 1906), 259-274, or *History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties, Missouri* (St. Louis, 1887), 363-377.

<sup>41</sup>This was a period of growth for the Whig Party. The dissatisfaction and split of the Democratic-Republican Party after the presidential elections of 1824 and 1828 between John Q. Adams and Andrew Jackson forces, had eventually resulted in the formation of the National Whig Party in the spring of 1835. This party was made up of the Henry Clay and Adams proponents, and anti-tariff and strict constructionist of the South under the leadership of John C. Calhoun. The followers of Jackson were then called Democrats and at their State Convention in 1835, they drew up a platform opposing the United States Bank, a protective tariff, and Clay's land bill and supporting Van Buren for President. See Leota Newhard, "The Beginning of the Whig Party in Missouri, 1824-1840," *Missouri Historical Review*, XXV (January, 1931), 254-280.

in a few years moar it wil \* \* \* at measure. But you wanted to know where Anderson is. He was in the Notaway Countrey<sup>42</sup> 75 Miles from heire. He is doing first rait. He had 10 acres in wheat & cleared 10 moar last winter for Corn tho it is heare say to me for I haint been at his house since last January was a year. I want to gow this fall to see the Turkeys. It is abought 150 miles to the No. west of us & I allow to Call and see him as I go out. I understand it is one of the Finest places in the world. Theire was a draft heire to rais men to go a gainst the Indians on the first of march but they have not been taken of yet. I saw in a paper the other day their \* \* \* men to be taken from your state to help settle that dispute between America & England. That will be wourse than our Ioway dispute. Wheat looks as well as I ever saw it. Corn is worth 1.25 a bu. & wheat \$1 bu. hemp \$ \$ [?] a hand, oates 37½ cts. bu bacan 4 cts a lb Coffee 20 Sugar 12½ salt 1.25 per barrel Iron 12½, Castins eight cents a lb. I sewed some hemp last yeare but the season was to wet at first. It is Sorrey, hemp seed is worth 2\$ a bushel.<sup>43</sup> I think money will be moar plentiful in the fall. Theire is several \* \* \* was starting to santifee \* \* \* they will bring a good chance of money to our Countrey. Wm. Wood has not got to this Countrey yet nor I haint heard where he is.<sup>44</sup> It is reported that him and Steven Clarks wife was rather friendly. we have had several leters stating it to be true & wanting his friends to discountenis him for his conduct. I wish you to write to me what you know about the surcumstance. Theire is none of his friends that believes it. They doant wish to discountenis a man tha is inisent of Sutch Crime. All of Clarkes friendes belives it or pretend \* \* \* making a smart handle of it hire to try \* \* \* people against him before he Comes. Tell Daniel that I thought he was moar of a Charitable Carricter than to let his father in Law maintain his wife all ways. I think the oald Gentleman would be doeing his duty to not let him have her att all.<sup>45</sup> I want you to send me a hound slut buy the first one that comes heire. I have lost mine buy the bight of a rattle snake. There

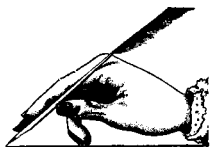
<sup>42</sup>Nodaway County takes its name from the river, Nodaway, which is an Indian name signifying placid. The county is located in the northwest portion of the state, bordering Iowa. See *The History of Nodaway County, Missouri* (St. Joseph, Mo., 1882), 85. Anderson Wilson evidently left Clay County soon after his participation in the Mormon skirmish, though the Census of 1850 does not reveal him in Nodaway County.

<sup>43</sup>These prices compare favorably with those in North Carolina at the time. The March 19, 1840, issue of *The Hillsborough Recorder*, contained the following market prices: Bacon 8¢ per lb., Coffee 12½¢ per lb., Corn 65¢ per bu., salt \$2.00 per barrel, wheat 80¢ per bu.


<sup>44</sup>Possibly this was a kinsman expected from North Carolina. The maiden name of the writer's mother was Wood.

<sup>45</sup>The writer is probab y teasing his brother-in-law for being slow in romantic matters. Daniel Turrentine made his home with his brother, Absolom Turrentine (who married Fanny Wilson), and died in 1854, a bachelor.

is no such dogs heire. The wolves is worse this spring than they have been since I came heire. They kill one or moar sheep nearley every day. If you have a good pack of hounds I wish you would come \* \* \* \*<sup>46</sup>



Missouri Clay County June th 8 1840<sup>47</sup>

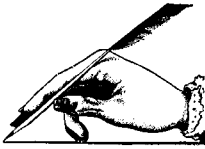
Dear Mother: I take this oportunity to in form you that we are well as usel at present and hope these lines may find you enjoying the same Blessings. I received a letter from you on saturday last whitch gave us great satisfaction to heare of your health. It was desined for Anderson I suppose. I will send it to him as soon as I can. Theire is no post office in 40 miles of him and I dont expect I can send it till after harvest. My wheat and oats looks very prommising now. I have abought 12 acres in Corn. It looks as well as aney in the neighbour hood though not moar than half leg and knee high and it is now the 4 of June. I expect you will say corn heire is that high to but in 10 days of good weather it will be waist high. I have 25 or 30 Acres cleared. It is nearley all bottom land and first rate. I want to clear 4 acres moar nex winter and then I will have as mutch as I can tend. I have 30 dollars worth of blank on handes but times is so hard I cant get the money for it nor cant get what is owing to me. Traid of all kind is verely dull here and a considerable fall in the moast of articles. I cant send you a verely lengthy letter for want of something to right. You can tell Gilbert that Nathen is living with me yet.<sup>48</sup> Tell Jackson<sup>49</sup> that if he had what dirt I emty out of my shoes when I am plowing to put in one of his hills of corn he would see what corn the Mo. would bring. Nothing moar but remaining your Loving Child till Death  CALEB WILSON

<sup>46</sup>The remainder of the letter is damaged. It is signed CALEB and dated May 2, 1840.

<sup>47</sup>This letter is addressed to Mrs. Jane Wilson, Orange County, North Caroline, Little River. It is a double letter, one page being from Caleb Wilson to his mother, followed by two pages from Josiah Wilson to his mother.

<sup>48</sup>Gilbert and Nathan were slaves of the Wilson family.

<sup>49</sup>The writer probably refers here to his nephew, Jackson Latta, the son of his sister, Elizabeth, who was the widow of Solomon Latta.



Mo. Clay County June the 8th 1840

Dr Mother: I once more embrace the opportunity of sending you a few lines to inform you that we are well except Caleb Thompson.<sup>50</sup> He is not sick but is dwindling away very much but hope these lines may find you all in good health through the mercies of God. I am glad to hear of your health & also Fannys and hope she may bring Absalom another heir.<sup>51</sup> As to politics they are run very high. The political line is drawn so tight it is as strait as a shingle and but very few will go over to either side. My wheat and oats looks very well. My corn is very small. It was too late planting. I worked at my new ground till time to plant it. Just as I got ready to commence planting there came a great rain that put me back but I must try to mend by industry what I lost by being too late. I shall get over my corn the second time after breaking the middles in about 3 days more; that is my old ground. I got my new ground planted in good time. I calculated to plow my old ground over twice more. Perhaps you will say you can make corn in N. C. by plowing your ground over 6 times. Well so you can. I know when I plant 10 acres and plow it 6 times makes 60 acres. I tried to get 25 loads of corn off the 10 acres in N.C. I tilled 40 acres and got 25 loads. I plowed it 6 times which makes 240 acres of plowing saved here. I do not keep but one regular plow horse, there I had to keep 3. There I wore out about 70 lb of iron [plowshares] in a year. Here I do not wear out 5. There I had to work from Monday till Saturday night. Here I can get half a day in a week to amuse myself. I have about 16 acres in corn. I want to clear more this winter of bottom ground. My calculation is to get 10 acres of bottom ground in and it will be good for 100 barrels of corn one year with another. I have 1 mail colt this year and 2 horse coats. I think they are the best I ever had. The wolves have nearly ruined me. They killed 2 yews that was with lamb and 4 lambs. They killed 5 of my Berkshire pigs which rates at 2 \$ a piece but I had the pleasure to hear of him being brought to ample Justice a few days ago for all his rascality. I heard from Anderson about 3 weeks ago. He was in Casteel Creek

<sup>50</sup>This statement supports the possibility that some of their neighbors in North Carolina went to Missouri with the Wilsons.

<sup>51</sup>The wish of the writer came true in part for in September, 1840, Fanny presented her husband with a son. Unfortunately the child died before the year was out. He was named Harrison Turrentine, presumably in honor of Benjamin Harrison.



NEWLY CLEARED LAND

a hunting horses. It is reported he talked of entering land thar and leaving where he was. As to the truth of it I cant say.<sup>52</sup> I havent heard as to their health since I rote to you last. As to Hopkins he lives not far from Liberty. Works at the waggon making trade. He has got him a piece of land. I know not the quantity nor quality. He goes as fine dressed as ever. It is a fact he makes money like a man & spends it like a fool.<sup>53</sup> We have had the changeablest season I ever seen. The 4 & 5 of this month was warm enough for harves. The morning of the 7th the frost was severe enough to bite the blades of my corn. I have Peggy and Rebecca Jane going to School this summer and intend to send Wmson [Williamson] after harvest.<sup>54</sup> The times is so hard that every thing is low. Money can not be collected nor borrowed and I suppose the bankes is determined to keepe it so til after the presidential election to shoe the people that it is the administration that produces the hard times then after that I suppose they are to be let loose like we read of the Devil being done to deceive the people. I must quit riting and go to plow for we are obliged to finish working our corn against harves for the corn is so thick and high after harves that neither man nor horse can stand it to plough. Nothing more at present but remain your loving and affectionate Child til death.

JOSIAH WILSON

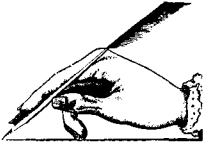
I would be glad you would rite by the barer of this.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup>This explains why the Census of 1850 did not reveal Anderson Wilson in Nodaway County, for he probably moved again before that time.

<sup>53</sup>In his letter home written in 1835, Anderson Wilson mentioned a Griffin Hopkins who was a close associate in the Mormon skirmish. Presumably this was a man who migrated to Missouri from North Carolina with the Wilsons, possibly even a relative.

<sup>54</sup>These were three of the eight known children of the writer. The Census of 1850 named seven children in this family.

<sup>55</sup>Evidently there was travel between Missouri and North Carolina to some extent as the writer expected this traveler to return to Clay County.



M. O. Clay County Aprile 22nd 1849<sup>56</sup>

Dr. Mother: I have taken my pen in hand to inform you that we are yet the sared monuments of God tender mercies & all in reasonable health at present & hope these lines may find you & yours in the same like enemtiabie blessings of Heaven. I will humbly acknoledge that I have mistreated you in not riting to you sooner than I have and hope you will grant pardon to me when you hear my excuse. I have been led through so many fiery trials & troubles. Sutch senes of persicution that it seemed that I could not compose my mind to indite a letter to you. But I can praise my God that he has kept me & not forsaken me. I have given Absolom Turntine<sup>57</sup> an account of my worldly prosperity and I shall aim to give you a corect account of my advirsity & beleiving it to be as mutch harm to ly on paper as with the tounge I shall confine myself to truthe til I give you a few hints of my trials & troubles & then if roome will give you something else. Last July Caleb was elected to the Elders office in the presbiterian Church & one Dr. Clark. Caleb conduct has been sutch for some years after we had been in the church that we could not promise to honor & obey him and of course we objected to his being ordained. We ware asked our objections. He came to my house once to prayer meeting. We spoke as cheerfully to him as ever we did to any person & he would not speak to one of us. He would pass us going to & from meeting & would not speak. These was our objections. But we toale the session if they wish to ordain him if they would give us letters we would not be in the way but would withdraw from the church. After some time Caleb found he had to creatuers that would clear him from the charges. (these two was John Crosett and Portious Clark bothe being elders) they would clear him of the charge of not speaking to me at my house by swaring that he did. Now I can proove that Portious talked of his conduct the next morning after it happened & John Croset reproved Caleb for not speaking to us & give Caleb excuse to me & then offered to sware that he had spoken to me. Caleb knowing how these two retches was going to sware he went before the session & had me sited to proove these things so we met with a good congrega-

<sup>56</sup>This letter is addressed to Mrs. Jane Wilson, N. C., Orange County, Hillsborough.

<sup>57</sup>Absolom Turrentine was the writer's brother-in-law.

tion for I went & got 6 or 8 respectable men not interested to tend the day of the trial. When it came on, some requested a comperemise. This I agreed to provided they would give us letters whitch they did. After a good many trials they got Caleb ordained for the preacher did not think sutch a man aught to be put in but at lengthe they compeld him to ordain him. I was toal he [the preacher] thought to make him back out and laid more promises on him than, any ordaneray man could preform but [he] swalered them all. [When] he got throo his cerimoneys the congrigation was requested to acknoledge him by hoaliding up their hand but their was not one lifted. Some time after, the presbetery revoked our letters to forse us back in to the church. (whitch they say themselves was the worst act they ever done) when this was done by the advise of 3 members of the church Wmson [Williamson]<sup>58</sup> sessioned Caleb Wilson & Portious Clark for fallsh imerality and unchristian conduct. The prebitry would not try it but sent a comitty to try the case. One of Williamsons main witnesses was sick & another was not there. They forced him in to a tryal & not having his witnesses they ware bothe cleared whitch was the basest peice of rascality i ever seen transacted at that time. This was no sooner done but the session cited me to appear to answer 4 charges against me. 2 of them was all corect & I would acknoledge them if it had not been I wished to have the witness who was a elder sworn so I could get to examin him. He proved on oath that the preacher had toale 3 lyes diferent times when that was done he then denied teling them. The 4 and last charge was telling a falsehood & the preacher name to it for a witness as he could not get no other witness to sware to it. He would not do it but without any imerality I was expeld from the church, a unheard of circumstance before. But as to what I had done or said I have not repented of it for I had not sined in it but it was done to gratify a malignant Devilish sperit that remains in Bob Scot the preacher Portious Clark & C. Wilson. They are done with us now but they are not at pease. In 12 months they war all coloqued together agains us. Bob Scot Caleb Wilson & Portious Clark has fell out. They have pronounced Scott a publict liar whitch can be proved with ease I expect and it is a general opinion that he has no religion. He has pronounced Portious Clark no more fit for elder than a oale negro women & Caleb no fitter than a stear. Caleb & Portious has I suppose charged him in Presbitary and it is stated he has or is going to prefer against them. This is dog eat dog all the time. The presbyterian Church is now a by word a reproach

---

<sup>58</sup>Williamson Wilson was the son of Caleb Wilson.

and a disgrase I beleive to religion. It is generally beleived that Caleb & Portious will brake the church up. I must tell you also after Caleb had got us drove off he then tried to get a letter till he would go to where that oald hore of his belong I suppose.<sup>59</sup> As to them expelling me from the church I am not sorry for it. The way it was done I would not swap conditions with them that done it. We are toale that all things shall work together for good for them that love God. I am willing for him to be my Judge as to this matter. We are to rejoise when people speak all maner of evil agains us for his sak they have come very nigh this with me. My dependance is in God my Saviour. I beleive he will keepe me & preserve me & on the day of judgment I expect to be acquitted of them charges & receive a crown of glory according to my trials and persecution here. I must close my letter to you for want of room. I am & hope to remain your loving child til death.

JOSIAH WILSON

As to Scotts swaring I toale a falshood there is no doubt but he would [have] done it, and if he had, I certainley would put him to court for I can proove by 8 men I did not. One of them was one of the elders, one a methodist Preacher in good standing & I have sertificates from another 4 of their hand whitch I have showed to numbers. One of his subscribers who was disinterested in ever way say that Scott soar and more beleive it. If he did it was willfull.

<sup>59</sup>This family quarrel possibly centered around Caleb Wilson's second wife. He married Martha Faucett, a sister of the Amelia Faucett who married his brother, Anderson Wilson. This marriage took place in Orange County, North Carolina, August 18, 1831. The Census of 1850 lists the wife of Caleb as Terrah Wilson, indicating the first wife had died and he had married again. No other reason is apparent for the cause of the lack of speaking on the part of Caleb, and it seems obvious that this disagreement was based on deeper grievances than a mere slight of this kind. In the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for Clay County, Missouri, the marriage bond was issued to Caleb Wilson and Terrah Clark, Jan. 5, 1846 (Book of Marriage Records B, page 64). The Administrator's Bond recorded in the Clay County records for the estate of Caleb Wilson in 1880, gives the name of his wife as Margaret, indicating a third and later marriage. The will of Josiah Wilson, recorded in the same county when he died in 1894 at the impressive age of 94, gives the name of his widow as Hannah, indicating a second marriage for Josiah.