

"WORDS FROM THE PAST"

These letters are furnished this site through the generosity of Patricia Hines Hall, direct descendant of James and Verlinda Lawrence Rhea.

Letter #1: The series of letters starts with a letter from Charles Y. Estes to Lewis Rhea, Morgan County, Apple Creek IL. In 1843 they were living in Huntsville, Randolph County, MO.

June 4, 1843
Huntsville, Mo.
Randolph Co.

To Lewis Rhea
Morgan Co. Apple Creek IL. State

Dear Brother and Sister,

Through the mercies of God we take the opportunity to let you know how we are at present. Hope these lines find you all well. Lucy and children are well. I am very poorly at this time though on my feet some. I mended slow from last spring spell.., though us had some days are a little better. Been some time since a letter from you. I wish to hear how you are doing. Hesiacle can plough a little. Charles is 2 years old, the 18th of May. Rebecca was born the 4th day of February, Jason and Mortica can chop weeds a little.

We have 6 acres in corn knee high. Some flax, 2 bu. of oats. Sold 2 cows and 2 calves, 13 hogs, 8 head of sheep, 1 old mare and colt. Not enough to live on. Times are very hard. I can't see no cash. I recon you had a hard winter. It was very hard in Kentucky. We got a letter from Harvey dated in April. Old Grandmas was well and all the connections but himself. Lucy to know or have you heard what has become of Patsy and Brother Thomas Rhea. Let us know in your letter.

Dear Brother and Sister. Religious has become cold. We resort you in the name of the Lord and Savior to live near him. Let your prayers smile deep in your heart, for that good may come to your prayers, and I write.

Charles Y. Estes
Lucy

This letter to Lewis Rhea, Rhoda, James and Verlinda & Children.



Letter #2: Written by Betsy (Harvey) Lawrence to James and Verlinda Rhea in Apple Creek, Morgan County, IL., dated May 20 1848

Monroe Co. Ky.
May 20, 1848

Dear Son and Daughter:

I take the opportunity of writing you a few lines to inform you that I am in tolerable health, though I am much afflicted with pains. Hoping these few lines may find you all well. I have the mournfull task of informing you of the death of your father. He died of dropsy after an illness of from March 17 thru 28 of April 1847. He appeared perfectly willing to die. Willing to lay down his life in prospect of a better world.

We had broke up and gone to live with our son John. We had started to brother James Harvey when he was taken sick, on his way to Francis and Harlands were he died. Harvey was taken sick about the time his father was. He never saw his father in the time of his sickness, though in about a mile of here. He lay apparently at the point of death for about 6 months. He is now about, though not yet well. One of Francis and harvey Harlands children (one of the twins died in the time of your fathers sickness.

Brother Austin committed suicide by shooting himself in the forehead last Christmas Eve, was a year ago, no cause known. Brother Thomas got his leg broken last winter, accidently by cutting down a tree, also his helpers child Samuel died. The rest of the connections are all well as far as I know. I make my home at my son John, though I stay among my children a good part of the time. I am at Brother James Harveys where my mother lives. She is in good health for a person her age. She desires to be remembered to you. Twas whole year after his father died and has received no answer.

Times are very hard. Money scarce, corn worth one dollar and 50 cents a barrel, wheat is worth 50 cents a bushel. Bacon 6 and one fourth cents a pound. I want you to write as soon as this letter comes to hand and let me know where Rhoda is, and if she is near you. Tell her to write to me as soon as she possibly can. Direct your letter to Paces Post Office, Barren Co. Ky. No more at present but remain your loving mother
Betsey Lawrence



Letter #3: Letter written by Betsey Lawrence to Adam and Rhoda Vansel

Monroe Co. Ky.
May 25, 1850

Dear Son and Daughter,

I received your letter of June 25, 1848, which gave me great satisfaction to hear, of your good health. I am as well as I generally am. Hoping these few lines may find you all well. Thomas Harvey is dead. He died the 6th of February last with something like fluse complaint. Joseph R. Harvey, son of Wilson Harvey, died the 28th of April with breast complaint..Harvey Lawrence is still very feeble state of health. hecan go about but not able to do anything. The rest of the connections and friends are generally well as far as I know.

Elizabeth is married. She married a man by the name of Phillip Amet, she has one child named Winfred Scott. He is a widower and very highly respected man.

wanted to know how your name sake was coming on. She is dead. She has five other living, their names are John Aaron, Rhoda Elvira, James Nelson, Clinton Harvey and William Henderson. James and wife have had seven and four died. Harvey and wife have nine, all living with them. Her two last were twins, and one of them died. John and wife have one over five years old.

I make my home with John though I am now with my mother at brother James. Mother is not in very good health, though she keeps about. She wishes to be remembered to you all. I got a letter from Lucy dated November 28, 1849. They was all well. She is living in Davis Co. Missouri. If you want to write to them direct to Gallatin Post Office.

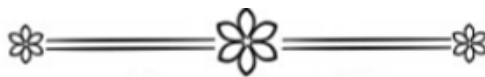
This has been the worst winter and spring ever been seen here. Almost a continual rain ever since last fall, till about two weeks ago. Since then the weather has become more seveled, consequently people are not yet done planting corn. On the 20th of April, the water was highest ever known for 26 years. It has done great deal of damage washing away all fencing and breaking all the mill dams. Corn is worth 1.25 a barrel, wheat very scarce. I cannot tell you the price. Bacon is worth five cents per pound. I want you to write me as soon as this letter comes to hand.
So no more at present.

Your affectionate mother
Betsey Lawrence

to Adam & Rhoda Vansel
and Verlinda and Jame Rhea

P. S. Thomas Rhea is married and has one child. He married a girl by name of Susan Margaret Parke, daughter of James Parkes.

Addressed to Mr. James Rhea, Waverly Morgan Co. IL. from Tompkinsville, Ky.
May 28, 1850



Letter #4: From John Harvey Lawrence and his wife Polly Atteberry from Salt Lick Kentucky April 13, 1856, to Verlinda Rhea and children, Waverly, IL. telling about their children and the conditions in Kentucky.

Sulpher Lick Kentucky
April 13, 1856
Monroe City

Dear Sister,

I have taken my pen in hand in answer to your letter of the second of March and was grateful to hear one more time from you and family that you were enjoying good health, and in a prosperous condition. As to the health of my family, it is tolerable good at this time, except the whooping cough. The children has that tolerably bad, though now pretty well over it. Mother was taken sick some time last fall and all hope for her recovery was vanished, but she has recovered. She was taken with palsey, at Uncle James harvey's ever

since before Christmas.

Brother Harvey Lawrence departed this life some time in the spring of 1854. I do not recollect the month or day. I take from the letter I got from you, you was not appraised of his death. His departure was caused from Breast Complaint...

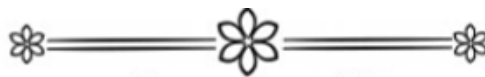
Now as to the balance of the connections. They are all well as far as I know, and doing well now. Something about the products and prices of old Kentucky. the garden spot of the world.

Stocks of all kind very high and still looking up. Horses generally worth from \$75.00 to \$200.00. Cattle, milk cows is worth \$15 to \$20. Work cattle well broke at least 3 years old worth \$40 to \$50, and that up to \$100.00. Stock hogs at thsi time is worth 4 cents per pound. Corn is worth \$1.50 to \$1.75 per barrell. Wheat from 75 cents to one dollar a bushel. oats weorth 25 cents to 30 cents a bushel. and now a few words about the winter. We had had the coldest winter this winter as ever in Kentucky known. The commenced a few days before Christmas and lasted until about the first of March, and this far we have had a cold and very backward spring. The most backward spring I ever saw. We have three children. All sons. The eldest Elbert Patton is eleven years, the second John Elzey is 2 years. I must now bring my letter to a close, but desire you to write to me every opportunity, and still remain your affectionate brother and sister until death.

John H. Lawrence and Polly Lawrence

To Verlinda Rhea and children Waverly, III.

A few words to Rhoda and her companion. I desire to be remembered to them in love. said in your letter previous they had moved to Missouri, but had now moved back. i desire that they write. Love and compliments also. John Lawrence and Polly.



Letter #5: From John Lawrence to Rhoda and family and Verlinda and family from State of Missouri Sullivan Co. Mo. March 10, 1857

In this letter he states that Sister Lucy lives about 60 miles from him in Daviess Co. Mo. Says if you want to write her, send letter to Sullivan Co. Gallatin Post Office.

The State of Missouri
Sullivan Co. March 10, 1857

Dear Brother and Sister,

I seat my self to write you a few lines to let you know we are all well at this time.. Hoping when these few lines come to hand they may find you all enjoying good health. We are in the State of Missouri, Sullivan Co. We landed her 23 October last of 1856. I live about 60 miles of Sister Lucy. Me and family was up there in January on a visit and they were all well. She has 200 acres of land and could get \$10.00 an acres. Has four yoke of work cattle, 2 good milk cows, and one good young mare and she lives in Davis Co. If you want

to write to her, address your letter to Sullivan Co. Gallatin Post Office. Now I will tell you something about the times. Time is hard and harder coming on yet. meal is 60 cents a bushel and very hard to get. Flour is \$1.50 a hundred, meat is worth 6 to 8 cents a pound. Milk cows from 20 to 30 dollars.

The connections are al well as I know. When I left there mother was living with uncle James Harveys I don't like Missouri as well as I expected tooo. I don't expect to stay here long. I want you should write me and let me know how times is there and what you think a man could do if he was there with wife and small children and nothering else. Polly says she has 3 likely but can't afford a girl. One going on thirteen, one six and one, one. Let me know how labor is there what a man could get a month. Direct your letter to Sullivan Co. Milan Post Office. I must bring my lines to a close by saying fare thee well.

John Lawrence

To: Rhoda and family and Verlinda & family



Letter #6: From Metcalf Co. Ky. February 28, 1863

Written by Nancy Lawrence Hanlon and her husband Ted to Verlinda Rhea and family.. Waverly, Morgan, IL.

Metcalf Co.Ky.
February 28, 1863

Dear Sister,

It is with pleasure that I seat myself this Saturday evening to pen you a few lines in answer to yours, i received a few days agowhich I read with pleasure and was glad to hear from you and that you were all well at that time. We hope that these few lines may come to your notice and find you all well and doing well. I have no news of interest to write you but that we are all well and hearty and trying to lead a quiet and peaceable life in the peaceable life in this unfriendly world.

You said you wanted me to let you know something about all the connections. They are all well and fine.. as I know that is living about here is your old uncle, are all dead, but your Aunt Patsy Davice and Anny Harvey that are about here.

Dear Sister when I opened your letter and saw your miniature I thought I would give the world if it had been mine priviledge to see your face. But we can't see each others face..I can look on your picture. Dear Sister you said you wanted me to send you my picture. I fair would if ther was any chance.. If I can get my likeness drawn. I don't know of no one here.. I want to go to Sister Betsy in a few weeks. I will see if there is any artist down there, If I can have any I will send you my picture.

Brother John has gone to Kansas. Started last September thirty. Betsy is living about 18 miles from me. She as 2 children, a boy and a girl. Winfred and Debby is their names. I want you to write ever chance. We would be glad to see you all.

Well I will tell you how many children I have 5 living 2 dead, 7 boys, 2 girls living. John Aaron, the two girls died, Rhoda and Linday Janice. Nelson William, Henderson White, Willes Richard, Edward Newton, Minty Mansennery, Alice, Jacobe Masterson, Belrena Elizabeth Emhert. Now I have given you the names of my children. I will tell you the distance as near as I can how far it is to the place you were raised. it is about five miles from here. Now I will close my few lines by saying to you, write son and often, and I will answer your letters. I know no more at present, only I remain your till death.. No more from this time fair you well. I was in a hurry and did not tell all the names so I will tell Clinton Harvey.

This letter from Nancy Hanlon and Ted Hanlon to Verlinda Rhea and family.



Notes from Pat: All these letters were copied from copies of the original letters, and provided to me by family members of James Harvey Rhea, 1980. The spelling and composition are the same, except I put spaces between the paragraphs for more readability.

In 1830 Charles Y. Estes was a witness to a marriage between Lewis Rhea and Rhoda Lawrence. Lewis's mother Martha Rhea gave permission for him to marry Barren Co. Ky. The following year James Rhea, son of Thomas and Martha Rhea Rhea(that is correct, she was his first cousin) m. Berlinda(correct spelling Verlinda) Lawrence. and by 1831 October they were located in New Berlin, IL. In 1833 they were Charter members of Berlin Baptist Church.

Patricia L. Hall
co-founder of Rhea Family Association
Editor of RFA newsletter
founder of Craig Society for Genealogical Research
Editor of CRAIGS newsletter
phhgene@aol.com
Listowner of Rhea-L@rootsweb.com
Listowner of Craig-L@rootsweb.com
Listowner of KSMiami-L@rootsweb.com

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