

Burtonville Lewis Co Ky. April 16th
1888

My Dear Brother and sister

It was a great pleasure to me to receive a kind and affectionate letter from you it duly came to hand I appreciate your kind invitation of coming to Texas to make my home with you my days on earth are few I would be better satisfied with a Dear Brother to die than than where I am but I hope the Lord will comfort me in that trying hour if I can get the means I will try to come this Fall Brother how much more would it cost by the way of Brother Hiram he has never invited me to visit him when he was in here on a visit he made a present of five dollars and said I should not suffer while he lived but he is old and not near me and liable to die soon. I get Alvin W. says the same I think Alvin will assist me in coming to Texas I have thought if I lacked means if I were to stop at Brother Hiram he might fit me up to get rid of me write me what you think of about it I am truly sorry for the trouble your son is in I hope he will be honorably acquitted I see Hiram Ward He says he received no letter from you since you was here in Ky and G. W. Kreider received none Alvin told me he would answer your letter he is getting an extensive practice he has little time to write times are harder here than I ever knew our corn crop failed on account dry wether we had no rain from about the first of June untill fall fruit failed entirely vegetable failed meat and bread is our food the poor cant get means to live on and are suffering for the necessaries of life Corn is ^{at} 75 per bushel potatoes ^{at} 1.50 to ^{at} 2.00 Bacon ten cents

Brother I see L. D. Farrar he is expecting a letter from you
We have a cold wet spring farmers are behind in crops
There is a good many sick and a number deaths pneumonia
Has been fatal Edgar Wallingford died a few days ago with
Consumption Bud. W. son I think Sister Annny knew him
Mary Conald wrote a letter to Sister Annny I suppose it
Has come to hand Charles Henderson wife is in the Lunatic
Asylum you did not tell about your crops whether they had
be good we had a storm here lately blew down fencing and
Timber and few barns James Appligate and wife sends their love
To you you must write some to them they are friends to me

Brother excuse me my wright hand is crippled my fingers is
drawed I cant straighen them cant grip with it
If I can get means and have health I will try be with you some
Time this fall if the lord will I will close by saying
Prepare to meet your god in peace that is my daily
Meditation pleading with the saviour to be prepared for
Death and enter into that rest prepared for them that love and
Serve the lord I care not how much I suffer on earth
If I can die in the lord and happy eternaly no sickness no
Trouble no dieing but happiness for ever and dear Brother
And sister if we dont meet on earth my prayer is we will
Meet in heaven where we will part no more forever
If we are faithful and live wright we will die in piece
Blessed are the dead which in the lord they shall rest
From all their toils tell how the Church is prospering
I must stop I remain affectionate Brother S. Wallingford

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Commentary by Nick Wallingford, 21 September 2008

This is my transcription of a letter from Lewis Bean to his brother Thomas Ginn Wallingford. Lewis was somewhat older than T.G. and was known as the 'drinking' brother – almost every family letter refers to it...

The handwriting is quite tortured, as Lewis explains in the letter. Readability is also difficult due to his use of capital letters – instead of putting one at the beginning of a sentence, he begins each new line on the paper with a capital letter, regardless of where in the sentence that word might be!

While he addresses the letter to Brother and Sister, that is just a convention – T.G. is his brother, but T.G.'s wife Annie Tucker Wallingford is his 'sister'.

T.G. and Annie have obviously extended an invitation to Lewis to stay with them in Texas. At the time of this letter, T.G. was 60 and Annie was not quite 28. They would have two of their three children together (Alvin and John Pinckney) by this point in time.

Lewis complains about another brother Hiram who has not been so charitable, he feels, as T.G. Hiram did die, in fact, about five months after Lewis wrote this letter.

Doctor Alvin W. that Lewis refers to is Alvin Monroe Wallingford, a son of their older half brother Mark Wallingford. Alvin was well on the way to establishing himself as a medical doctor in Mt. Carmel, Fleming County, KY. T.G.'s oldest child with Annie, now 2½ years old, was named Alvin Monroe, probably after this Alvin...

Lewis' sorrow about T.G.'s son's trouble refers to Robert Thomas Wallingford – but I'm not certain which 'trouble' was involved. A few years later, R.T. and brother in law Reuben Boulware were involved in some shootings in Waller County, TX, but this letter precedes that by about four years.

I'm not sure who Hiram Ward is, but G.W. Reeder is George Washington Reeder, a nephew of both T.G. and Lewis, a son of Elizabeth Wallingford Reeder, the older half sister of both.

L.D. Farrar, who was expecting a letter, was married to Sarah Hull, daughter of Sarah Wallingford Hull, another of T.G. and Lewis' half sisters.

Edgar Wallingford was James E. Wallingford son of William Francis Wallingford – known in several letters in the family as "Bud". Bud was another nephew of T.G. and Lewis, the son of William Wallingford, their older half brother. Lewis says that Annie had known Edgar – highly likely as he was only two years older and they lived within a few households of each other in the 1880

Fleming County census.

Mary Arnold is a daughter of Peter and Sarah Arnold, also living in this same area – close to Wallingfords and the Tuckers.

I'm not sure who Charles Henderson is – he may just be another neighbor rather than a relation.

James Applegate and his wife refers, I believe, a grandson of T.G. and Lewis' Uncle Joseph (the brother of their father Nicholas). The Applegates and Wallingfords intermarried at various times, so this might not be right, but it seems to fit the ages and location. James was, in fact, not too many years younger than T.G., and may well have interacted with him when T.G. was in Kentucky five years earlier.

Lewis never did make it down to Texas, and there were no real accounts of him drinking in these last few years of his life (nor are there any reports that he stayed on the wagon...)