

The letter is from James Rankin to his brother William Rankin of Rankin mill in Boonville Township, Cooper County, Missouri. It was written June 25, 1849, predating the Civil War. James lived in Hickory County at the time. He talks about the cholera, mill business, and family. James owned a mill on land in Hickory County that he had purchased from Amos Paxton mentioned in this letter. Col Heart and Gisse are undoubtedly one in the same and refer to Jesse Heard one of the pioneer families of Hickory County, Missouri; although it could refer to Jesse Hurd of Cooper County, Missouri either the father or the son of Vernon Hurd. Curvy Wheat is a type of wheat in which the leaves curl up and around the stem. Connor refers Connor's Mill located close to the William Rankin mill in Boonville Township, Cooper County, Missouri but further downstream on the Petite Saline Creek.

By 1860 James Rankin had moved back to Cooper County and was living a couple of miles as the crow flies from his brother. James lived in Township 48, Range 16, and Section 9 while his brother, William, had his mill in Section 19. Stokely Seat owned land in Section 16 and married the sister of James and William Rankin; so the bridge mentioned in this letter could have belonged to him.

Contributed by Tracy Hebert whose grandparents were Henry Gibson and Myrtle née Rankin Hurt.

June 25<sup>th</sup> 1849

Dear Brother

Yours of the 5<sup>th</sup> **Instant** come to hand a day or two ago. And was glad to hear that you are all well these colora times. I was anscous to hear from you, for I was afraid the cholera would spread **back** in your neighbourhood as it did in 33- There has been several cases in **Warsaw** and some 8 or 10 deaths & the **last** accounts we have from there **it** was on the increase, but so far it has been confined to the town, no cases in the country and I suppose one half of the inhabitants have moved out in the country. We have no dread of it in our section and if it does get out in the country with you, I want you to bundle up and come out and stay till it disappears in the country, **entirely**.

You want to know what contracts I made with Col **Heart** about the Curvy Wheat, it was just **this** he came to the mill and wanted to sell. I told him I was not buying, he said he was not in want of the money or would wait till spring and after talking a while I told him if he **chose** to put it in the mill I

new you would buy so soon as you come home, and we finally agreed that he would deliver it and you was to pay him whatever it was selling for in Boonville at the time he **cald (called)** on you, or that is from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October **I think** till the \_\_\_\_\_ of March, now understand you were to pay him what it was worth in Boonville when he chose to set his price, and not what it had been worth at any other time, he said there would be some 500 Bushels as well as I can recollect, and Mr. Curry was to have put in his crop on the same **condisions**, but I understood before I left that he had sold to Mr Conner. What was worth about 45 cents at the time these contracts were **maid (made)**. I think **Gisse?** has treated you badly and I fear from what you write your Bayler is going to cost you very high. What is the demand for Lumber at this time--- You write the water was about giving out with you, if so you had not such rains as we have had, it has been raining **allmost** constantly. I don't know how long, but the farmers have not been able to get all the corn planted that they intended to plant and **has** had no season to work what they did plant and the prospect is that there will be very little made this year The wheat crop is the most promising we ever had, but I fear It will not fill out well & plump, the oats look remarkably well, and we are in a world of **Grass**. I am getting out some cooper stuff to make **Pork Brls (Barrels)** this coming winter, I have no wheat sowed & but little corn planted so I trye and make a little **somehow**. I could sell my place **but** and would but Jane is opposed to selling & by the way I would rather live on it than any place I know of in the state if I could make anything to live on, but I am two old and stiff to farm.

Janes mother died about the **midle (middle)** of May & Wesleys oldest child is **unwell** & I rather think will not live long And Amos **Paxton** got a letter from Indiana a few days ago from a Mrs Murphy a sister of Janes & Wesley, her husband is dead & she in a rather bad situation Wesley will start for her in a few days to bring **her on** to this country. Samual Walker talks of going to Boonville some time this **sumer** with a team, if he does I want to send in to get 2 ploughs 1-2 horse & 1- one horse plough, for **the place** we have in this **county** is of **no account** in the world.

I am glad to hear Mr Seat got his **Bridge** off his hands for I did have great doubts wheather Paddy **Wilsons work** would pass muster, or not. I am about buying a Land **Warrant** to locate 160 acres more land, I believe land will look up in price & if the Gen Government comensis (**commences**) making a rail road from any point in the state to Californey, then Missouri will be a New York of a state forth with, but a I have to give **this rest** page to another matter. I must conclude, I wish you to **write** often & let us know how you all get along & I am **anxious** to hear **how?** Your steam mill & how the **cistirn** does, **Rspy (Respectfully)** Your Brother  
Jas Rankin

www.mogenweb.org/cooper