

From Edward Fitch to Dear Parents

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7 letter home

When you write put your letters in an envelope

Lawrence Sept. 8th 1855

Dear Parents[.]

I believe it is not long since I wrote to you but important steps have been taken and of them you should be informed. I don't know what I have written to you about my city affairs exactly but the facts are these: when I arrived here this summer I found that I could not have the lot for which I bargained on Mass. St. and I found that city property was almost valueless. S.N. Wood had neglected my business and taking all things into consideration with the advice of another lawyer (fight dog with dog) I have concluded to protest Wood's note and in order to have anything to show for the two hundred dollars paid, I thought it best to improve the best lot in the interest deeded to me. So last Tues. I made a bargain with a carpenter to build me a house on that lot and to go right to work on it and have it on before Allen, Woods agent, had a chance to jump the lot. Wed. & Thurs. Allen was gone to Big Spring, and Mr. Jones (the Carpenter) went to work and has begun to frame the building. The house is to be 12 x 14 ft., ten feet posts, and will cost \$175.00[.] I shall probably rent the lower part for about 1.50 per week and have the upper part to live in myself. When that is done I shall be able to hold that lot at least and if I don't get any more, that lot will be worth the two hundred dollars some time perhaps. No city interest had ever been sold last spring for so much as 500, and it is the opinion of some of the persons interested that Wood will be willing to settle for a less sum than 300. My good opinion of Wood is gone. I have found three persons who were waiting for me to pay Wood so that they might get the money and all of them wanted about two or three hundred apiece and all to come out of this three hundred that Fitch was to pay.

Emery and I had been over to see the man that was on my claim and on last Thurs. he came to see me to know if I would buy his improvements and I set Sat. as a day I would come and see him. Sat. Emery and I went out there. We found that he had got fifteen acres almost fenced and quite a log cabin. After talking a while he offered to take 150 dollars and I offered him 125. We could not agree and it was left in that way. In the afternoon he came over here and we had more talk. I had between the times seen Grover, one of the men who lived here last winter and who now lives close by the claim, and he told me that if I could get the claim for 125 I had better give it. I told the man that I would give him 125, or leave it out to three men, neighbors, but he would not do that. I talked with him all the time till almost night. He offered to split the difference with me and I would not do that; at last we made this trade. He is to finish the fence and I am to give him 155 dollars. I concluded it would cost me about \$30 to finish the fence and he could finish it better than I could for I could not do it alone and if it was not

finished what ever crop there was would not be worth much. There is a little broken up and a crop of turnips on it.

I expect to go on to the claim in a week. I shall cut some hay I think and I don't know whether I shall sow any wheat or not. So you see that when I have paid 175 for my house and 155 for my claim I shall not have any money, hardly, left to settle with Wood with for I had only 400 when I got here you know and I have made only about 20 dollars since I got here, so it will probably be the case that I must have some more money. Though I did not mean to ask for any

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more. It is thought by some that I can sell my claim for about 300 now but I think after buying it twice I shall keep it.

I am in pretty good business here now. Our sales will amount to \$16 per day on an average I think and if I stay here and live on my claim, I must have a pony to ride in every morning and out at night. I have one now in view that I can have for 50, saddle, bridle and all and it will not cost me anything to keep it and I can let it for enough to pay for him in a few months. But I can't walk out and in from my claim. It is 3 ½ miles and I can have the school to keep if I want to, I expect, at least so one of the committee told me yesterday and it is expected to commence next month.

Coleman says that if I get safely on to my claim again it will be worth \$1200.00 and he says I am a fool if I sell for less than that but I should probably sell for that or less.

Yesterday & day before have been very hot days but today is a little better, there is more air stirring. It was so hot yesterday that large hard apples laid on a bench at the east end of our store baked almost through, a number of them. I eat some of them and they were much like apples baked in the stove but such days are uncommon though Sept. is our hottest month here.

There has been a great convention at Big Spring fifteen miles from here. They have adopted a platform and nominated Gov. Reeder for Congress. We have a ratification meeting here tomorrow night at which Col. Lane, (formerly member of Congress and Gov. of Ind.) and others will speak, perhaps I among the rest. You probably saw by the paper that I spoke at the ratification after the great Con. here. I am going in strong for Gov. Reeder though he is a Democrat, though I should rather have him go to the Senate from Penn.

There has been a free negro here for a little while back and the Pro Slaver men have been trying to prove that he was a slave and get him away. He was on a claim just north of mine and last Sun. the news came in that there had a party gone to take him. A lot of us armed with Sharps rifles went out under the command of our Orderly Sargent to protect him but the slave holders backed out and dared not try anything. If they had we should have pitched in to them with our rifles.

Tell Albert and all the rest of the folks to write to me. They have time enough. Tell Albert Gov. Reeder is a Democrat. If you will come out father and live here I will give you half

of my claim. Give my respect to all inquiring friends but the most of this letter it will be proper to keep to yourselves.

Your aft. Son, Edward P. Fitch

[P.S.] If I find that I must have more can you raise it of that Sudbury man? I should think if not that Uncle Doctor might help me a little.