

C O P Y

Copy of Letter written by John Burwell Moles & Susan Corn dated June 25th 1879, California, Co. Written to her sister-in-law & brother Rev. John Burnett Corn in Patrick County, Va., who married Elizabeth Adeline Cutler on Nov. 4, 1846.

Dear Brother & Sister:

We received yours of June the 9th in due time and were glad to hear from you again. In writing this I may repeat something I wrote in my last, if so please excuse, as I have forgotten what I wrote before. We are enjoying tolerable health (some chills occasionally) at present and moving along as usual. We have had a remarkably dry season until the last ten days, and now it is very wet, crops and oats almost a failure, wheat tolerable if it doesn't get spoiled in the shock - corn promises a heavy yield.

People complain of hard times, but there is a heap of money in the country if it was in circulation. Generally fifty or sixty thousand dollars deposited in the bank at California without interest. We can sell anything we have for money at low prices to what it was a few years back but what we have today is correspondingly low. The Missouri Pacific RR runs through our town, which gives us a market for everything we can spare. We buy calico from 5 to 8 cents. Factory sheeting 8 cents etc. We suppose you feel an interest in our success and want to know just how we are doing as you ask "what business I follow - how much land I own et."

I have followed farming as a principal business ever since I have been here. I have 120 acres of land, 90 acres in cultivation, 40 acres of it in bottom land, all fresh. We have cleared and fenced it all since '66 (we live in the timber). I sold the place I first settled on last Spring. I have stock enough, consisting of horses, mules, cows, hogs and sheep. I owe nothing and have some \$1200 or \$1200 ahead. We generally raise from 200 to 250 barrels of corn, from 200 to 500 bushels of wheat and 5 or 6 thousand pounds of pork. We have but four children, all boys, and they are all grown. Herman Peter, the youngest, is in his eighteenth year and weighs 160 pounds and sends you his picture. Our children know very little about their kin. Our county is small, consists of both timber and prairie, has a population of some 15 or 20 thousand. The assessed valuation of 2½ million dollars. The real value twice that. Votes about 3000. State County and school tax about one fourth per cent. Our county owes nothing, our State debt is 18,000,000 but our State bonds sell at a premium. Land is worth say \$5.00 to \$25.00 per acre.

We have nearly all religious denominations. The missionary Baptist Church, Methodist, Campbelites are the principal ones. There are only the Southern Methodists that have much hold - some Northern Methodists but they have not done much. Susan and I and the two oldest boys belong to the Mis. Baptist. I think the Baptist hold the most ground. We have just built us a new church in one and half of miles of me and was dedicated last Sunday.

The morals are as good probably as anywhere since the war.

You wished to know our ages. I will be fifty eight next October. Susan will be 53. I have not been able to work any for six or seven years and Susan is failing very fast although has never had any severe sickness.

John Can't you visit us? We would be very glad to see you out here. Susan says you and sister come out see the country and spend some time with us and we will try and go with you up in Saline and see the folks. It is bad for brothers and sisters to separate in their youth and never see each other again. Our Patrick folks have have quit writing. I write so little I reckon by the time you worry over this you will be tired. Write us again soon.

Yours in love

J. B. & Susan Moles

(The original of this letter is in the possession of Miss Margaret Lee Corns of Gate City, Virginia. This letter was written to her grandfather, John Burnett Corn.)