

3-31-1851

**Letter, Richardson Owen to Stephen A. and Mary Brown; 3/31/  
1851**

Richardson Owen

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March 31<sup>th</sup> 1851

Stephen A. Brown Esq<sup>r</sup>

My Dear Son & Daughter

I am glad to acknowledge the receipt [sic] of your communications which came very safely to hand under the direction to Beech Grove.

I am not conscious of receiving more pleasure from any letter in my remembrance & that you may know the cause I have Only to refer to the intimation in two instances of the existance [sic] of those great principles of Christian fidelity in your minds, which cannot fail when cultivated as you are doing to render their possessors blest & happy. You have in the Outset of your Conjugal relation reard<sup>d</sup> an Alter [sic] to the god of your Ancestors in your family. Bless<sup>d</sup> shall be the deed, and precious, its remembrance in future years when the hand that pens this prediction shall be long cold in death! Nobly done my son & may the lord God of Jacob bless you with a true & faithfull [sic] Spirit to him & you shall never want any good thing. O that I had language to express the Joy which fills my spirit when I look down the vista of many years & hope that to the latest generation ~~my~~ posterity will be found walking before god & striving to serve him whom my soul Adores with a perfect heart & a willing mind [.]

O Mary My daughter you are blest indeed with one who loves you for your Creators sake & subordinately to him only and yet how great the Obligations on you to deserve in the highest possible degree an Affection Consecrated on principles so high! Blessed as I hope you ever will be yet dont forget for one short moment that it is God your father who gives you All [.] Be gratefull [sic] to him: & it shall double your Joy & bliss & ever be found ready to surrender at his call any blessing which he kindly loans you & consider duly that any good he takes from

us is to be found in him again. I can hardly tell why it is that in writing to my Children I am so prone to sermonize them. I think some times that I will quit it but before I am aware I find my self under full head way again. O it is because I love my God so that I want all to love & praise him with every breath. We are all well & I may say very well, my own health very good indeed & you wish to know as much as possible about the Country - the land its price & how I think it would suit your Ma & indeed I expect your self & Brothers & Sisters. I would say a thousand things more than I am aware I can in one short letter, & indeed I hardly know how to shape my course on this subject between prose & poetry between the dulness of a too literal description & the Colourings of fancy. I must not be as Miltons Devil when he starts him over the infernal bogs of Chaos half flying & half running on the faithless soil of non existence, in quest of Paradise to seduce our great federal head. I will be as well balanced as I am able & here you who read must balance too & reflect well & wide as you read. This region has its evils & no one may expect a Paradise here for fancy to nestle & riot in & where the air is spiced with perpetual perfume. The greatest evil to be feared is that it may be more sickly than some other regions & yet one can hardly tell why this fear is indulged when you see a fine community of hearty looking people & see no case of disease. Several I have seen raised here who have scarcely or never had an hours sickness. This is no poetry Its prose not till a day or two past have we had a Musquito (28 Mar.) to attempt an annoyance & now few & far between. But we may have sickness & musquitos hereafter but this is rather poetical. In casting over the light of Antient history I am not aware of any Nation, Tribe or people who ever became great or powerfull without one of two things.

That is a fertile soil or commerce. The most remarkable nation on the records of History possesses both with manufactories added & that is the English nation. Tiro & Sidon I think become great with only one to wit commerce. Egypt become great with only one to wit her soil of the fertile Nile. Carthage with both soil & commerce. Now the soil of this region is perhaps nearer a parrallel [sic] for that of the Nile than any Other I know of & the Commerce tho in its infancy<sup>[sic]</sup> has a Giant's proportions. Stand a few hours on the shores of the Great Mississippi and witness the rush of comerce & it literally Overwhelms One. Nothing can ill<sup>[sic]</sup>ustrate it while yet in its infancy<sup>[sic]</sup> The world seems coming [sic] together [sic]. Large stean vessels with something like a little colony on board hurrying to & fro, making the country ring with the chime of their bells to give the expectants on shore a hurried notice that they cant be detained. All, all, that this fertile soil can produce here finds a ready market or a passage to one There is 3 or 4 places which can be bot [sic] near us & I think that those with improv<sup>[e]</sup>ments will cost from 800\$ to 1200\$ pr quarter section or from 5 to 8\$ pr acre & well are they worth it. Yet except in peculiar cases every one who aims to move here ought to come & consult his own fancy [sic]--Judgment has but one verdict to render while many take their fancy for their Judgment. I think you would do well [Ms. torn here] especially with a friend to stand by you at first. Your Ma should [Ms. torn] One on whose Judgment she could rely & any aid I can afford her if it [Ms. torn] settle here I shall be delighted to render & I should rejoice to have her & the family near me believing I could aid her much & especially settling the first year. The new relation in which we stand gives me more freedom to urge the sons to come out & look & see for her & let us try to live near to each Other. One thing is sure the lands of this section<sup>###</sup> of necessity

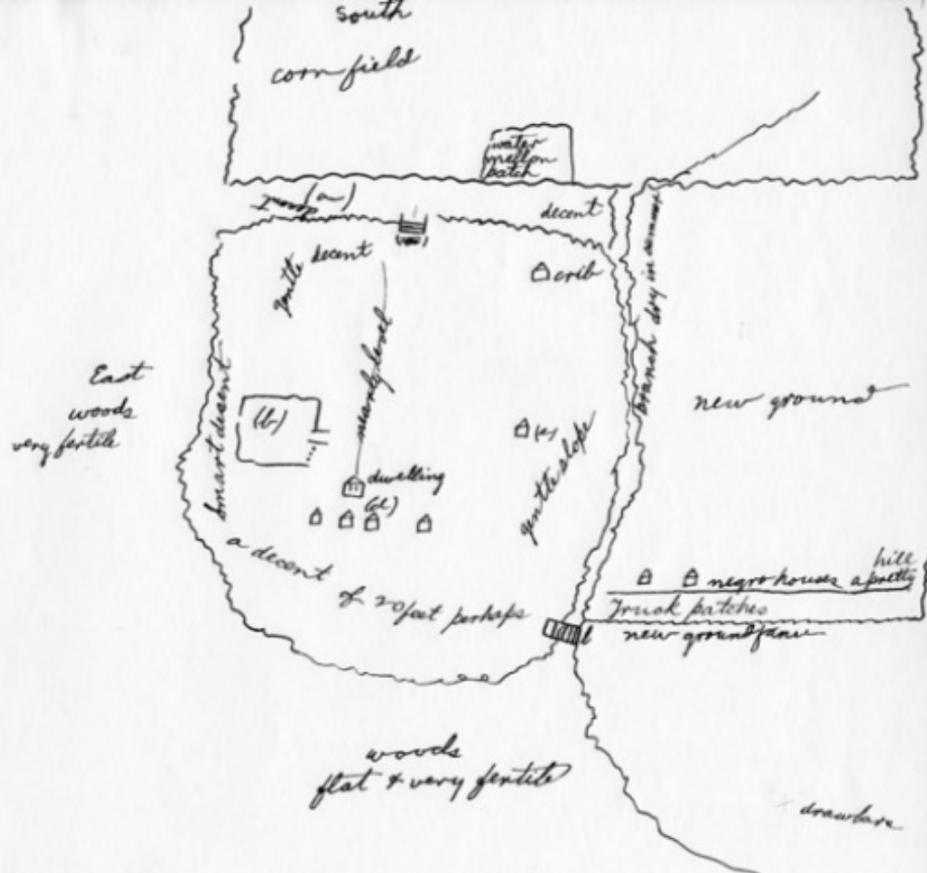
rise greatly in value. I feel no anxious cares about making a sup/p/ort here as I used to do in former years. I shall not be surprized with a favourable year that I make double the corn that would suffice us, & with 2 or 3 hands less will (if my overseer is a Judge) double my old home crops in cotton. Time will e'er long decide the question. There are many kind folks here & some who cannot be excel<sup>d</sup>. Gen Pillow is a man of patriotism, humanity & lib/e/ral & noble sentiments & his steward no less so perhaps. Helena is not lib/e/ral in its police owing to the old settl[er]s having been men of narrow & selfish minded speculating views if I mistake not (which I hope I may do) men have to be changed from the offices they hold & their influence must die and when such changes come as come they must there [will] be a great & noble country fill<sup>d</sup> with a polished & refined race of men. The tendency to this state is most evident. I never have seen people generally more desirous to have the Gospel preached & even the most wicked are wishing to have preaching. O if I am spared to live my time must be more than ever devoted to this great & blessed work. I think God has brot[er] me here for his own wise & gracious purposes & I feel borne along by a mighty faith in God. He is ever at my right hand & he will give me a mouth to plead his cause. Give my best wishes to Bro. Bartee & lady & to Bro. Neely and tell them I am here in the wilderness (not of Judea like John) but the wilderness of sin Just where the cause of God has been wounded, bruised & lacerated by a thousand wounds & bleeds trod/d/en underfoot by men bearing the title of Methodist ministers. Here I am and if to be m[ar]tyred<sup>r</sup>[er] I think God would give me grace for the trial [Rs. torn] O blessed Saviour how sweet to suffer in thy cause & for thy name?! I have wandered from a discription[er] of the physical feature of the country to its moral traits, and you must bear with my scat/t/ering manner. This place requires much labour to moothe/?/

its aspect & to develop its rich resources [sic] generally the timber is proportionable to the vast fertility of the soil but no one can look on it but must feel willing to embark [sic] a capital in such stock. The promise is truly fine. 30 years wear has been try<sup>d</sup> on one place named to me & its best crops are the last decidedly. But it is needless to extend such remarks for I know after all many would not like [it] because of rough roads or it may be for the want of one bridge or a muddy branch or bad house (all which are temporary in their nature) & would leave the country with disgust where these accidents might happen. This is the country of all others for men of forecast & manly enterprise. I feel desirous to gratify Mary with a view of new home where if the same pretty play ground is not to be found yet the same kind providence rules which made the whole earth & adorns the Spring with its flowers. Come Mary and see the wonderfull [sic] works of God filling the whole world with wonders. Our Lott [sic] in which our house stands is an area of about 8 acres perhaps not quite so much, perhaps 6. If you look at the an/n/exed diagram you will see the shape of the lott [sic] a fence running round it, and you look out South to a lane (a) where 125 steps you see (1) a pa/i/r of draw bars, on your left hand & east you see (b) the garden on a slope rather too great for the beauty of a garden. It stands in advance of the house but not before it,--off to the left enough for a tolerable yard, back of the house is a shed which looks north and in that direction you see marked (d) four little houses in a line <sup>E & W</sup> / which is a kitchen smoke house, a little shanty & a hen house coming in order from E to west as named. (e) on your right hand is a shanty 60 or 70 steps from the house now a smiths shop made such temporarily. The whole area is on a hill or pone if you please, rounded in a regular manner North where the de/cent is more direct or steep declining to a rich & fertile level. South the pone widens &

the de/s/cent right & left lessens & is gentle & handsome. This de/s/cent is on the right or w. terminated by branch or drain which makes something of a sweep or bend giving an oval form to the lott [sic] on its w. boundary. Easterly it terminates in a rich level 60 or 70 paces distant on which is a heavy growth of gums, sassafras, Oak, Elm, Mulberry, Hic/k/ory, dog-wood & red bud. In the lott [sic] I think there are 1 doz Mulberry [Rs. torn] many hic/k/ories & Elms. Half dozen or more of wild cherries, some [Rs. torn] some red buds 30 or 40 feet high now in full bloom & beautifull [sic] and quite a number of gums of both kinds. South beyond the lane in front is a field now planted in corn of 40 or 50 acres run/n/ing out westerly and on the right hand to the west adjoining the house lott [sic] is a new ground field of near 40 acres. Thus you have a view of our wild new home as nearly as I can describe it except that I should have set down a number of stumps cut off too high by a negligent manangement [sic] of our predecessor, long large vines hanging 40 or 50 feet from the lofty trees are every where to be seen and sometimes troublesome to get rid of. There is no beautiful [sic] sandy creek near us but one of muddy bottom. Flowers are abundant & Bees I expect do well. Our fruit trees came with the Books in a seperate [sic] Box but you were a little remiss in making or in keeping a special contract for their shipment by which I pay<sup>d</sup> roundly but so glad was I to get them that I had no mind to scold. One tree would pay the 11\$ freight. Henry's letter covering a draft has so far fail<sup>d</sup> & the man on whom it is drawn ought to be warned not to pay it without my own assignment. The Bank too ought to be notified & your P. Master looked to. Did he see or was he notify<sup>d</sup> of the contents of Henry's letter? Please see to this matter & consult with someone to know how best to act & urge to speedy action. The bal. of my mo. had better be sent in a draft on N. Orleans, and that under every precaution

as some here about know that I expect so. Give love to my dear friends  
& receive a large share for yourselves.

R. O.



south  
corn field

water  
melon  
patch

road

decent

with  
decent

decent

East  
woods  
very fertile

Smart decent

(L)

narrow level

dwelling

(L)

gentle slope

new ground

drainage ditch in summer

a decent

of 20 feet perhaps

negro houses a pretty hill

fence

new ground fence

woods  
flat & very fertile

drawbar

P. S. My omissions & erasures deserves or requires that I state that a multitude of cares respecting my domestic affairs constantly urging to study & arraignment [sic] causes it to be difficult for me so to enter into the spirit & feelings which thro you seeks for information and therefore it proves an arduous task to suit my language to the discriptions [sic] which I can only conjecture may be interesting. I could answer specific questions readily so far as my knowledge extended. Write me frequently.