

Lisbon Farm Feb 7th 1870

Dear Andrew

When speaking to you of Daughter Minnie's marriage, without sollicitation you offered to assist me in starting her in house keeping. I take up my pen to say a few words about this

The Farm brought us in debt last year and from all appearances will do so again this year. The reduction in values for produce Taxes. Township County & C are like an old fashioned rent. The exorbitant price for wages are the things that make Farming a poor chance for making money. In my opinion a return to specie payment. or any nearer return to it at this time would distress many a well to do Farmer. Not more than one Farm in fifteen is free from Mortgage some for 2/3 of there value.

It is the custom for the beginner to commence on a heavy mortgaged Farm. The political party that attempts to bring about specie payment. will be destroyed by the attempt The Cranberry Farm has payed better than Lisbon Farm. and promises to increase in paying Vine worms have become destructive to others Becoming fearful of having my vines destroyed. I have spent some money to increase the flood. the only remedy for this pest. I have two large ponds now but still there is not enough of it yet. Since the house was built and the fence put up. every Dollar invested on the improvement of the Bog has payed me ten for one, in a year or two after the outlay. We have in twelve years in N.J. increased the quantity produced annually twenty fold and yet not reduced the price the business appears firmer. and more reliable as we go. Unlike other things this culture is confined to certain localities that are adapted to it. The War made Farming a good business. The Cranberries made good returns. and I improved my Farm by underdraining & marl to a large extent. This is where the money went. and I have it yet in the increased productiveness of the Farm Experience has me how to put them--drains in--in so as to be permanent. The consequence of this is that I was able to refuse Twenty Thousand Dollars for L Farm two years since because it was worth more. The Cranberry Farm yields for better interest on 20 000 than Farms do that bring that price. My stock implements & are worth a thousand or two So that I am better of than when I took the Bog. The Farm I would like to hold for my son. we are all attached to it Emma & all. A few more underdrains, the introduction of Strawberry culture & C on the Sandy ridges say Seven Acres in these. Four in some later kinds of small fruits. With or without our new Rail R that we are certain to have would make the Farm pay (I have inquired into this. and although many have or are giving up this culture. I am sure that I am right my soil is better adapted to it. and I am more accustomed to this kind of care than many that have gone in to it) The Flooding at the bog should be made perfect. The turf makes the sides of the Dam. and when that is taken from. should be finished up and planted in Cranberries. From repeated experience fifteen hundred Dollars spent down would increase the value of the place in Four years Fifteen Thousand Dollars. or pay ten or more per cent upon it

I did want to do these two things and furnish Minnie five hundred Dollars to assist in commencing house keeping this spring. I think that the returns are so certain. and that it is the best for my son. to hold out some bright hope in making the Farm pay. to encourage him in Industrious habits. That in thriving all connected with me would be benefited more or less.

But I cannot get it. and I cannot see how you can assist me in helping Minnie with a likely hood of being payed at any certain time without a sacrifice on my part to make the payment. So would not like to make the bargain for any definite time And you told me you had no money for such things in 1867. So I am obliged to you for the offer although I cannot make use of it

Yours truly
James A Fenwick

Early in the spring of '70 the young folks went to a farm a short distance from Norfolk, Virginia, where Joseph's father, Barclay White, had bought, with borrowed money, farms for two of his sons, Joseph and George.

~~He hoped they could take advantage~~ ^{They was one} of the early efforts to ship fruit and vegetables to New York Market, before more northern farms could supply them.

After the finish of the strawberry season at the Norfolk farm they returned to New Jersey. Then, for the first time, my Mother rode on the new railroad and was assisted in alighting from the train at New Lisbon, by having a large packing box brought to use as a step.

The young couple set up housekeeping in Juliustown. Their first baby, a little daughter, was born _____ and named Rebecca for Joseph's mother.

~~Mother's~~ first baby, ~~little~~ Rebecca, though a healthy, vigorous little thing died _____. Neither the young mother nor the local physician knew how to feed her when nursing must be stopped.

The second baby was born on October 5, 1871, at Lisbon Farm, though her parents were keeping house in Juliustown. She was named Elizabeth Coleman. Grandmother Fenwick had been asked which she would prefer, to have the baby named Mary Fenwick for herself, or for her sister Lizzie. She chose the latter name.

Before baby "Lizzie" is a year old another letter goes from James Fenwick to Cousin Andrew.

(Letter).