

[Letter from J. T. Black, a cousin in Alum Creek, Texas, to K.K. Rector in Fisher County, Texas]

Alum Creek Texas  
Feb the 5<sup>th</sup> 1884

K. K. Rector  
Sweet water Texas

Dear Kenner: I have been thinking a long time that I would write to you – but – kept putting it off, from one month to another until today when I rec'd [received] yours 29 ult [previous month] So after reading, I sat right down to try and answer it. I am getting so its nearly impossible for me to write a letter – but will do the best I can. I believe I have the best start to-ward farming I ever had. Have plenty hands to work all my land – and they are all working splendidly. Have nearly all my corn ground broken up – and some cotton lands – and working 100 acres on the halves, 50 with (two) hired hands – and then balance rented. I made a very good crop last year; considering the long drought in the summer

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I now have an abundance of corn to [unclear] me – and have sold over 500 Bushels since Xmas [Christmas]. I sold it every bit on time taking good security at 75cts [cents] per bushel. I had just over 100 Bales of cotton – averaging 513# to the bale and sold at an average of 8 ¾ cts. I killed 23 pretty good hogs – so upon the whole I made a pretty good years work. You stated that cattle “was on the boom” in your section I wish you had told what the different grades were worth per head – I have 60 odd head, and am anxious to sell all but about five milch cows – they are too expensive to have to winter them here. I had a letter from Bob Shiff the other day – and he said eastern cattle were not hardly worth any thing in his section – that the [fence?] trouble had thrown so many western cattle (of good flesh and blood) on the market that they would not make any bid on eastern cattle at all. If I had money now is the time I would buy, and take my chances on them going to better figures. I can

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buy cattle here now 35 and 40 %cent cheaper than I could last spring. We have had a heap of drizly [drizzly] murky weather in the past few weeks and it or something else has caused a good deal of sickness. Mrs W. stayed with us from the first of October until a few days before Xmas, and I dont [don't] think she was out of the house but once during the time. I did all I could to get her to stay with us till spring, and then when the weather got warm, go out and stay with you till fall and I thought she might get well. I think I will get her to go to your house in the spring. John Bluck is in a bad way – don't [don't] think he can live a great while – has lost his speech entirely. I feel very sorry for him – dont [don't] know of a man in the whole country but what could better afford to die than him. His wife has a young babe. Maida was quite sick last Friday – in fact came very close to dying – she had been in bed several days but I did not think she was much sick – the doctor had seen her the evening before, but she took with spasms

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and violent cramping in the feet and hands. It occurred just at 12 oclock and the hands had just come in from the field and I sent speed for the Dr. In the mean time I got an old white woman and four negro women (all live right at us) and got one hold of each foot and hand – rubbing with mustard and washing with Hot water, and pouring all the hot coffee I could down her throat. She got nearly past shaking twice but we kept up the mustard rubbing and hot water till the Dr. come which was just 55 minutes and he went to work, and in about an hour and a half after he got to her he got the cramping stopped. I just tell you it was the worst scare I ever had, I thought she

would die in spite of all we could do before the Dr came. I shall always believe she was poisoned for she had been taking Prussic acid that morning but the Dr said the whole vial he left would not get her in the fix she was in, but he said the symptoms

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were exactly like lead poisoning. Dr. Powell now thinks the whole cause was a very disordered stomach. She is now doing very well, and I think was up in four or five days. Write to me Love to Cousin E & the little ones

J.T Black