

Bray Family fonds

James Bray to Abraham Bray (GA265-41)

March 9, 1874

[PAGE 1]

[right aligned] Springfield Mo

9th [Mach] [i.e. March] /74

Mr A. Bray

Dear Cousin)

f [space] Your

favor of the 12th ult was gladly

rec .. I find that you

have quite a numerous fa^mily

and that you are a Grandfather

how swiftly the time slips away,

it does not appear to be a long

time since, you left Leeds a

Young Man.

We all still continue to

enjoy good health.

The Weather is Warm and
pleasant, and some Farmers
are busy plawing [i.e. plowing] or making
garden – we sow Oats in this
Month & plant Corn in April

There is not one farmer in
100 that Stable their Cows, and

[PAGE 2]

some do not even Stable their Work
Horses, this is a good Fruit
Country Apples, Peaches, Pears, Grapes,
and Strawberries thrive here.

We can raise Tobacco, Cotton,
Sweet + Irish Potatoes.

My Dear Mother enjoys tolerable fair
Health--she sold her farm in Illinois
some Years ago, and the Interest
of the money supports her – she

resides with brother Joseph, who
is married, and has two children
Brother Joseph and my half brother
Benj^m [i.e. Benjamin] F. Flinder, are in partnership
in the Stove + Tinware business and
keep two Stores, one at Desplanes [i.e., Des Plaines] 17
miles + the other at Denton 20 m
North West of Chicago, and are
doing well, tho' [i.e. though] they unfortunately
had one of their Stores and a
portion of their Stock burnt, last
Summer they have just completed

[PAGE 3]

a Brick Store, in place of the one
that was burnt – Brother John is
living in Canada, as you are probably
aware, and only in moderate circum-
stances – Sister Ann is married +
resides in Wisconsin, they own a
Farm of about 100 acres and are

getting along tolerable [i.e. tolerably] well. -

My youngest half Sister is married

to a [i.e. an] Engineer and resides in Chicago

her husband gets \$100 per month. -

These are the brothers + sisters I have

Prairie Farms are improved

with much less labor, than Timber

Farms, and when put in cultivation

can use Reapers on them the first

Wheat Crop - they usually fence

with Rails which they commonly

haul, from [1 illegible letter crossed out] one to five miles, tho [i.e. though]

sometimes a man can get a Farm

with Timber + Prairie adjoining

like mine, my Brook remains

open all winter, and all the Shelter

my Cattle, Hogs & Colts get is the

[PAGE 4]

Timber or a Straw Stack some -

times they build, post and board

Fences, and a good many fence

with the Osage Orange – Building

Lumber Costs from \$1⁵⁰ to \$3⁰⁰ per 100 ft

As I have never been in Canada

I could not advise you to sell

and all come here, as you appear

to have good Comfortable buildings

while here there is very few FARms

with good buildings.

I think the best way would

be for one of your Boys to come here –

one in whose judgement you

could depend, and then after

he has resided here for a time,

he would be able to judge

whether you would improve

your circumstances or not, by

the Change.

Improved Farms sell here
at from \$15 [superscript: 00] to \$40 [superscript: 00] per
acre + Wild Land from \$5 to
\$20 – the Average Price of improved
FArms about \$25 [superscript: 00] per acre,
In Southwestern Kansas, there
is plenty of Government Land
mostly Prairie – the Governt [i.e. Government]
gives 160 acres to Actual settlers [i.e., settlers],
but [but overwitten: and] the best is almost all
claimed by settlers – but a
man with a few hundred
Dollars could purchase a
good claim with some improv
ments – In Kansas they have
a Stock Law, and the
farms lie open, the owners of
Stock are required to keep
them enclosed in a Pasture
which is almost all the fence
required – Here Horses, Cattle
Hogs + Sheep, run on the

open Range – you are aware
that Prairies are covered

[PAGE 5]

with wild Grasses, tho [i.e. though] after
the Land has been pastured
very closely for a few years, Blue
Grass comes in, and supercedes
the Wild Grasses. –

It seems to me is if, there is
a good opening here for a Cheese
factory, as Cows are very easely [i.e. easily]
ketpt [i.e. kept], and Cheese frequently com-
mand a better price than butter
I do not Know of a Cheese factory
in all South West Missouri.

I was not aware that Cousin [cousin overwritten: illegible]
Rachel had come to Canada, I
supposed that She had Settled

in Leeds

Give my Love to Cousins

Rachel and Rebecca –

my wife and children join in

Love to you and all the members of

your family

Your affect [i.e. affectionate] Cousin

James Bray

[PAGE 6]

P.S. We shall be pleased to hear

from you at your convenience. –

Address James Bray

Springfield

Greene Co

[underlined: Missouri]