

The following letters were contributed by [Jean A. Best](#)

Dear Son John and Family,

After about two weeks delay, I will try and answer your last welcome letter which found us in reasonable health and so this leaves us and we trust it will find you and all yours well. We have a very wet Spring. We have had --- (probably now) rain for 7 weeks. Quite a time to get oats and flax sown. Considerable of the early March sowing of oats was killed by the freeze and drowned out by the wet and had to be sown over. Some persons have just got through oat sowing. George has not got his flax sown yet on flat land and wet. Would have sown about today or tomorrow but for the big flood rains of night before last and yesterday. The land is all a slush with water and mud. Wheat is coming out finely and also grass. But little corn planted yet on account of the wet. We have not a hill planted yet. On low or flat compact lands early planted potatoes rotted badly. I planted over 1/2 acre before the rainy weather, up and growing finely. Cultivated twice on red and mostly dry land. George planted 1 acre in potatoes between wet spells on dry red land they are coming up nicely. Well, John, the talk is nearly all about the late wet Spring and the war. One company has been made up in Dade Co. and will go to Jefferson Barrack, St. Louis the ___ (word missing) of this week. One went from Golden City Barton Co. last w--- (probably week). Every body are eager to get the weekly, half weekly, and daily papers to get the news fresh. We are taking the Twice a Week ----lic (possibly Republic) from St. Louis. Mo. We get it Tues. and Fridays. The Union and Ex-confederate veterans are both equally in for freeing Cuba and flaxing old Spain. I will now give you a brief statement of some of your relatives. Your grand pa Best's father's name was Enos Best born in Pennsylvania. He and one of his brothers went to Ky. He married Margaret Anderson a Scotch Irish girl near Danville Ky. and they soon moved to Indiana Territory as it then was and settled in Crawford Co. Ind. He was in the yellow Jacket Co. in the Indian war by Tecu---sey (probably Tecumseh) and fought in the battle of Tipacanoe in Ind. under general W. H. Harrison. ___ (probably He) died soon after he got home ___ (probably from) the war. Your great grand pa Wisdom was born in Va but early moved to the upper Counties of Ky, and then settled in then Adair Co. His name was Thomas Wisdom and he had a Son Thomas who went to Oregon its first settlement and they lost track of him. James Wisdom was your grand pa by your mother. His mother was a Stapp. Some of the Stapps are in this country from Tenn. Your grand ma Wisdom's maiden name was Baldrige daughter of Thomas Baldrige. Scotch Irish. You were born in Adair County Ky. as it was then but _____ (unreadable word) Mecalf Co. part from Adair and part from Barren County. You were born the head waters of East Fork of Little Barren River. Ky. We lived near the head of East Fork of Little Baren river and moved to Mason Co. Ill in 1859. We left Ky in _____ (unreadable word) Co. Sept. 28th and landed in Mason Co. Ill _____ (unreadable words) remember some of our moves in Ills. In Sept. 1877 you left Ills for Kansas. and we sold out there in 1882 and on the 12th day of Sept. started on the train for Dade Co. Mo and landed at Lockwood on the 13th about 11 o'clock. and next day even ___ (unreadable word) came out to where we n-- (probably now) are. but our chartered ___ (looks like car) did not get to Lockwood till Sat. noon. and we took off our stock and took all we c--d (probably could) that day to our new home. and here we are yet. And we will remain in S--- West Mo. what few days we have left. I am teaching _____ (unreadable word) class ___ (unreadable word) Sunday school and preach now

and then and give Bible readings. If you find any Wisdoms in Oregon you may claim kin with. You can tell them your mother was a Wisdom, daughter of James Wisdom, son of Thomas Wisdom of Ky and then of Ill. Your father in Love. A. L

Calumet, Okla.
Dec. 31- 1911

Dear Brother John and Family-

It has been some time since I recieved your letter but will write before the year is up. and havn't much time left to do it in, not quite 8 hours left in this year. We have been having some real winter weather. Rain, sleet, snow and lots of blow. It hasn't been so awful cold not more than Zero any time and that only one night and I am not sure it was Zero. we are very glad to have rain or snow for it means a crop another year. feed is so scarce in this country. we have corn fodder and Kaffir corn fodder and a very little corn and a few oats from last year. our health is fair. Grace has had more trouble with her throat but not bad as last year. I have Rhuematism but not bad as it was last year. John is well. Charlies live 1 mi away. He was here for a while today. They were well.

They are here every few days. They have very bright children And sweet as they can be. I am of the opinion you have some you think are just as bright and sweet too. But I don't think they can possibly love you any better than my Grand children love me. You know we and Charlies lived together for two years and then have lived only 1 mi apart. Ide miss them very much if they should move away. But Charlie is a great fellow for home and his wife likes to come home just about well as he does. Well Delbert has got back to his home stead and seem to like it. So Wilbur wants to try Canada? If he will write Delbert he will sure tell him something about Canada. I will give his address. It is Mr. D. B. Van Gundy, Stock's P. O. Alberta, Canada via Edmonton and Athabaska Landing or this the way Grace addresses Stock's P.O. via Edmonton and Athabaska Landing Albl. Canada. either will reach him all right. I wish we could sell for what we gave for the place and then we could go there too. I would be sorry to leave Pa yes very sorry. And he is so feeble. I did so much want to go to visit him this winter But money will be awful scarce before another crop is raised: we will have to borrow some to put in another crop. for we will have to buy feed for horses and it will come high. Will have to buy some hay as well as grain. But I don't want to complain and am not complaining just telling you why I dont visit Pa. I wish you could see him before he passes away. Ma wrote in her last letter that Pa said. If he couldn't do much he could pray for each of his children. And I am sure he is doing it and Im so glad he does. Do you write to him? If not do write him a good comforting letter. If you love him and appreciate his Christian life write and tell him so. Oh you don't know how happy it would make him. I know ma wasn't what she ought to have been to you. But she will have that to answer for to One who knows all about it. Pa doesn't write any more and at times does not have use of his mind other times he does. We read in the Bible of the blessed ones who were seen in Heaven. and when asked who they wase. The answer was. These are they who came up through great tribulation and surely, Pa will be among that number, for he surely has had years of special trial, but they will soon be over. The day of sore trial will be done And he who has borne then so patiently here, will soon be gone. When I get to thinking of him, sometimes. I can hardly stay away from him. May be I'll go yet this winter to see him. We sent him \$5 for Christmas. I did think Ide

write to Will and you and George. And see what you could do toward helping them. But I didn't. Geo. sent them \$5. and Ma says they will get along fine. Pa is _____ (unreadable line) fore noons any at all. Ma says he eats well and sleeps well but seems to just be wearing out. If he lives until next May he'll be 82 years old. If they can sell they will come to visit us and then go to Ills to spend their days. Now write and tell where your children are and hope you are getting along. Lovingly yours Sister Susie Calumet, Okla. Jan. 10, 1928 My Dear Brother John: I recieved your letter today. So glad to hear from you again. Sorry for -y (word is unclear) It must be hard to be left to raise a family alone. Hope she may Keep well and be able to enjoy her family now about Willie Best. He left San Francisco some time after the Earthquake (I don't remember just how long.) He told his wife he was going to hunt a job and so far as I know, she never heard from him. A woman who used to know him in Mo. Saw a name just like his in a paper in Canada. It was W.A. Best, Edmonton Canada and he was Secretary in some Enterprize there that is all I ever heard. Geo. is in Kansas City, Mo. I know nothing of the others. The last I heard of Eva She was living in Stockton Cal. You wanted to know in what part of Indiana you were born. You were not born in Ind. at all. Our Father Andrew L. Best was born in Harrison Co. Indiana May 24th 1830 Our Mother Elizabeth Jane Wisdom was born in Metcalf Co. Ky. July 17 1832 and died May 2 - 1868. In Decatur Ill. I was born in Metcalf Co. Kentucky June 5-1855. You were born in Metcalf Co. Ky Nov. 20. 1856 Jimmy our own little brother was born in Metcalf Co. Ky Aug 10-1858 He was only little over 2 yrs old when he died. He was buried in Mason Co. Ill, near Forest City You remember Ma was buried in Decatur Ill. Pa was buried in Thawville Ill. I wish he could have been buried near Ma. but I had nothing to say. Ma died in Ark. and was buried there. Our brother Geo is in poor health his daughter wrote that he was almost blind. poor boy there seems to be there is no hope for his sight improving as he has internal Cataract and it cant be removed I am so sorry. He was my favorite of Pa's last children. He was an affectionate boy and not like the others. They were more like Ma. I am glad you are well and donot have to work if you don't feel like it. I am in better health than when I was younger. Folks who have known me for a long time say I don't look a day older than I did 15 or 20 yrs ago. but they forget first because I looking well they think I'm not looking old I tell them when I get to be 100 yrs old they may call me old. not that I am anxious to live so _____ (word missing). I want to live as long as the Dear Lord has any thing for me to do and when my work is done He will take me home. I have suffered quite a lot in my time but now I'm free from pain and not often sick. When I am sick I don't worry just leave it all to my Heavenly Father willing to stay or go as He thinks best. Grace and I work hard but we enjoy it. We always have plenty. Pay the Taxes and Interest on \$2500. so you see we are pretty good managers. If I should get so I couldn't work we would have to sell the place. but long as I am able to work we'll stay here. We have the best of neighbors. Have a nice big church near us only 1 ¼ miles and good ____ (unreadable word). We have a car and can go when we need to and have time. Delbert you know is a Preacher. he has a good work about 70 mi from us. We went to see him. ThanksGiving. Charlie live 4 ½ mi from us. He has one girl in College and one in Highschool. They are doing good work I think. The Oldest expe---(probably expects) to teach next year. He has 10 children. I must close or you'll have to get some body to read this for you, Lovingly, Sister M.S. VanGundy

Calumet, Okla.
Jan. 10, 1928

My Dear Brother John:

I recieved your letter today. So glad to hear from you again. Sorry for -y (word is unclear) It must be hard to be left to raise a family alone. Hope she may Keep well and be able to enjoy her family now about Willie Best. He left San Francisco some time after the Earthquake (I don't remember just how long.) He told his wife he was going to hunt a job and so far as I know, she never heard from him. A woman who used to know him in Mo. Saw a name just like his in a paper in Canada. It was W.A. Best, Edmonton Canada and he was Secretary in some Enterprize there that is all I ever heard. Geo. is in Kansas City, Mo. I know nothing of the others. The last I heard of Eva She was living in Stockton Cal. You wanted to know in what part of Indiana you were born. You were not born in Ind. at all. Our Father Andrew L. Best was born in Harrison Co. Indiana May 24th 1830 Our Mother Elizabeth Jane Wisdom was born in Metcalf Co. Ky. July 17 1832 and died May 2 - 1868. In Decatur Ill. I was born in Metcalf Co. Kentucky June 5-1855. You were born in Metcalf Co. Ky Nov. 20. 1856 Jimmy our own little brother was born in Metcalf Co. Ky Aug 10-1858 He was only little over 2 yrs old when he died. He was buried in Mason Co. Ill, near Forest City You remember Ma was buried in Decatur Ill. Pa was buried in Thawville Ill. I wish he could have been buried near Ma. but I had nothing to say. Ma died in Ark. and was buried there. Our brother Geo is in poor health his daughter wrote that he was almost blind. poor boy there seems to be there is no hope for his sight improving as he has internal Cataract and it cant be removed I am so sorry. He was my favorite of Pa's last children. He was an affectionate boy and not like the others. They were more like Ma. I am glad you are well and donot have to work if you don't feel like it. I am in better health than when I was younger. Folks who have known me for a long time say I don't look a day older than I did 15 or 20 yrs ago. but they forget first because I looking well they think I'm not looking old I tell them when I get to be 100 yrs old they may call me old. not that I am anxious to live so _____(word missing). I want to live as long as the Dear Lord has any thing for me to do and when my work is done He will take me home. I have suffered quite a lot in my time but now I'm free from pain and not often sick. When I am sick I don't worry just leave it all to my Heavenly Father willing to stay or go as He thinks best. Grace and I work hard but we enjoy it. We always have plenty. Pay the Taxes and Interest on \$2500. so you see we are pretty good managers. If I should get so I couldn't work we would have to sell the place. but long as I am able to work we'll stay here. We have the best of neighbors. Have a nice big church near us only 1 ¼ miles and good _____ (unreadable word). We have a car and can go when we need to and have time. Delbert you know is a Preacher. he has a good work about 70 mi from us. We went to see him. ThanksGiving. Charlie live 4 ½ mi from us. He has one girl in College and one in Highschool. They are doing good work I think. The Oldest expe---(probably expects) to teach next year. He has 10 children. I must close or you'll have to get some body to read this for you, Lovingly, Sister M.S.VanGundy