Dear Cousin: When I parted with you last fall I promised I would write you a letter soon after my arrival, but negligence of the due and proper things of importance to write has prevented me from addressing you until the present time. The same lack of news still exists, but thinking you might be glad to hear from your old friend I am writing to assure you of hearing from you, I have sat down to fulfill my promise, not doubting that your communication will be gladly received & duly answered.

My health has been good since I left you, with the exception of a slight intermission the first week after my arrival. The family are usually well & tolerably contented, much more so than I expected they would be. There was some complaining at first, about being in a house & an occasional sight of health, for friends and kindly left behind, but of late they seem more resigned to their fate. I am not so much as ever sick, but this I am inclined to doubt from the fact that she does not exhibit any of the symptoms of a person under the influence of such an affection as a malady. This disorder usually causes a loss of flesh. But in her case it has had a contrary effect for she is now fleshly than she ever was before.

I have been engaged in a new kind of business this winter, practicing one of the arts not one of the fine arts. I would not have you think nor is it one that is very well calculated to improve the mind, though it is as good for the muscular powers of the body. Though not very agreeable, yet it is very useful & one that is very necessary to an inhabitant of a new country. Perhaps you are growing impatient to know what wonderful art is I will tell you in due course. Splinter and Susie say you will write me right after you are gone.
From very Reverent Sir, The Trades. I intended last fall to teach school this winter, but the urge being how to understand the ways and people of a school, I have concluded to work for a living. I have often regretted this choice & wished myself in a school, I think after this I shall prefer teaching to work especially in the winter. I would advise you, if you ever get sick of teaching schools, to go to work one winter, it will not only cure your bad temper all future, but in the same decade, Benjamin, as that time since, received a letter from Rockwood, by which I learn you have not been to the west, or you. To Texas, but are engaged in teaching schools in your own district. I make those young ones mind. I hope you have got over your southern fever or in other words your inclination to go to Texas. Permit me to give you a little advice on this subject, though I am aware it is contrary to rules of good judging to give advice undesired. Well! My advice is that you purpose going to Texas until you have committed some sin for which you will be obliged to quit the country in order that your character may agree with the majority of the inhabitants of that country. Last fall, Dear a young man about your age, a son of B. Fulks, who spent the preceding winter in Texas. He represents the conduct, social & moral condition of the inhabitants as most deplorable. It's going to Texas not a very funny notion. I hope you will not get over your west in fever until you have made one journey to this country. May I not expect to see you at this next summer? But come out & don't stand.
spend this summer here I think it would be for your health. The expense is but small & you will see the worth of your money. Time
Gadora says, in the State, would come,
There is a gentleman living by the name of Barker lately from Kansas City. Esq., who says that a year & a half or two years ago he read
an account of Talent Patching death in a newspaper, thinks it was in Buffalo paper & an extract from it was in New Orleans paper. Mr. B. & his wife say they've read the
account & said Talent Patching farmer of Newton City Co., Ind., & they also say that they conversed about it & were convinced they
are not mistaken. When you have read this you will know as much about the matter as I do.
I have no doubt myself of its correctness.
To day is Sabbath. We have been miles to a little
Log school house about seven by nine to attend one
reading night Old R.A. Ensign preached. This of all
the days in the week is the most solemn. It is then
that our folks think most of the enjoyments of life
past, & are led to contrast their present religious
privileges with those they formerly enjoyed. But I
think it will not be long before our privileges will
be as equal to those we enjoyed in our former
place of residence. We have had the last seven
winter's snow experience. Since the middle of Nov.
we have had good sleighing with the exception of
a few days in January when we had a snow & the
only one we have had this winter. It is now the
12th day of March, but their things bright & it is too cold at times impossible to be any
degree of comfort. The snow has not been over a foot deep. This is said by the oldest settlers
as the deepest snow they ever knew in this country.
I have been living at home since I came here & expect to this coming summer & winter some for myself & some for others.
I want you to write to me as soon as you receive this & give me a short account of our things since I left. Let me know what all the young folks are doing & what you are doing. Don't waste time or money. Don't go to any store. Remember my compliments to all engaging parties.

Yours truly,

Lidah [Signature]

Boston, May 26th, 1873

Johnston, N.C.
March 16, 1873

[Handwritten notes and signatures]