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Tillicoultry December 10th, 1853

Dear Brother,

I have no doubt but you will be thinking me very careless in not answering your letter long before this time. I had a full intention of doing so but the time I received your letter they were a request for a gardener to the place which I now occupy. I do not know very well what to do whether to come to America or come here. At last I came to the conclusion that I would accept of this place for a time and if I did not like it we would have an opportunity of coming over to see you afterwards. So I thought as I have put off so long that I would just wait until we were a little settled and then I would have some idea how we were going to like it. We are now here nearly a month and I am happy to say as yet I like it very well. I have 2 masters and each of them has a garden. They are very extensive manufacturers. They sometimes employ from 15 hundred to 2000 people that is men boys and girls...I believe when you would leave this country this place would be very small they would be a very few houses in it and now it is pretty a large town with fine shops in it of every description...They manufacture tartans of every kind and colours. There are a great number of manufacturers of the same kind here, but my masters is the most extensive stone one. Tillicoultry is about 6 miles west of Muckhart..... I was nearly 19 years in Blairhill but I have left it at last. Mr. Haig was not wishing me to leave but I have done it for the best. I think I mentioned it before had it not been owing to the leaving of my Father and mother I would have made a shift long before this time but we have taken the first opportunity after their death...I have not seen John nor Agnes nor any of their families since my father's death except Robert Curror who is in this town working in the dye house with the same masters that I am with. He is married lately, he and his wife appear to be doing well.....

You will have had a good number of your old country people calling upon you this last spring and through the summer. I have no doubt but you would be very happy see them all especially your old acquaintance Betty Miller and her husband our old baker. His mother came along here from Alva telling us that she had got a letter from them and they were seeming to like the place very well and the Baker was going at the plough with 2 oxen surely a great contrast betwixt that and baking loaves of bread...I have no doubt but you would be getting a good deal of news about us all as she was coming a good deal about the house and seeing the

infirmities of my Father and Mother. She came often about us, she was very kind in bringing little things to them and they were very happy to see her...I wish very much we were, as she is, settled in america.... you would have Peter Carins calling upon you and his young wife. I think you would have plenty for one year and perhaps we may be some spring troubling you too..... Provisions are very high here at present owing to the soft harvest. We had scarcely a fair day for 3 or 4 months and some of the grain stood until it was completely rotten standing upon the ground which has had a tendency to make provisions dear. Beef is 7 pence lb. the 4 lb. loaf is 8 pence, oat meal is 13 pence per peck I own to low wages and every thing is so very dear it is impossible that a family can save much money. last year the 4 lb. loaf was only 5d what a contrast between the 2 years and now dear brother I must very soon bring this to a close hoping this will find you all well as it leaves us..... and I hope you will excuse me in being so long in writing and not take an example by me but write soon and let us know how you are all getting on. Little John is nearly walking. Elizabeth joins with kind love to you all especially to your wife although I have never had the pleasure of seeing her as yet.....

No more at present but remains your affectionate
Brother William Reid

P.S. Please direct the letter to me Messrs Patons, Gardener
Mary Place
Tillicoultry

Letters From Scotland to James Reid 1833 - 1868
#15 William Reid, brother, December 10, 1853

Transcribed by Glynis Aritake and Lorna Paterson, September 2014