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American Machine Products Co.

Marshalltown, Iowa

August 31, 1937

Mr. J. B. Francis
Sedley, Sask., Canada-

Good Morning, Cousin Jonathon:

I am delighted to have heard from you, under date of August 27th, and for the information you have given.

When the folks were at Allen's at Renfrew, something was said about the size of Jonathon, the son, and the remark was made: "If you think he is big you ought to see Big Jonathon." And I take it you are Big Jonathon. Out here in Iowa where the tall corn grows some of the rest of us attain a size... for instance, I used to be 6'4" (have settled down a quarter of an inch) and weight from 207 now to 220 in the winter time.

Your reference to the size of the farms you have remind me of the time I had correspondence with a friend down in Texas. At the time I was editor of a club publication and he happened to see a copy in the Ft. Worth Rotary Club of which he was a member. In one copy I commented upon a farm of some 2000 acres in Iowa that had been sold not many farms that large in Iowa. He came back with newspaper clippings, and a letter, telling about a ranch down there of about 2,000,000 acres, and emphasising that it was some 30 miles from the front gate to the front door! The funny part is that he was not lying about it... a few years ago the estate was divided into smaller parcels.

I assume that you are raising wheat, since that is the picture whenever Saskatchewan is mentioned. Here's hoping you are not suffering from drouth. We have had some good rains down here when needed and the crops never looked finer.

The letter you mention has me all excited- for two reasons: first, that it must be from Elisha Francis who settled with his family in Rhode Island when coming from Ireland to the USA, and lived one time at Pawtucket, but for the life of me I've not been able to get but meagre information about the family. Second; 1847 is the year of the first USA postage stamp and, being a collector, such an envelope with the stamp affixed, with the family name thereon would interest me tremendously. It may not have a stamp, since stamps were not immediately popular.. Still, that does not destroy the interest in that envelope, or cover, as we call them. I hope that you might be persuaded to part with it.

I have a letter from Elisha Francis to his brother James, your great-great grandfather... and this would be the same Elisha, but this cover has no stamps and, I think, was written in the 1850's.

Perhaps, you would be interested in knowing that (perhaps I told you in my other letter, which is at the house) your great-great-grandfather was James Francis and lived at Lissacurran, County Armaugh, Ireland. He had three sons James, your great-grandfather, who settled in Upper Canada; Elisha, who settled in Rhode Island, and Jonathon, who settled in Virginia as near as I have been able to learn, but of whose antecedents I have no record at all.

It is in such an early letter as you mention that some reference might give me a start- hence, my keen desire to see that letter, and any others you might have of the early days.

I note that you are 30 years of age... I was born in 1883... but you do not say that you are married and have a family. Nor any information about the others I mentioned in my previous letter. Can you not help me?

When I get more information about the Jonathon Francis-Margaret Carswell branch, I will send you the genealogical diagram I have... you will be surprised at the 'mess' of Francis' here in the United States and up in the States of Oregon and Washington, closer to you than they are to me..

that is, distance.

Tell me more about Margaret Carswell living in Renfrew. Your grandmother had the same name.. What is the relationship?.. and is she a Miss or Mrs.? Don't like to make any mistakes?

Funny that she is not on my list. You and I had cousins living at Renfrew for many years-- scattered now-- the Kearney's, Graham, Garnet, Edwin, Harold and Marian, children of Eleanora Francis, my aunt, daughter of of Samuel Francis, brother of your grandfather Jonathon, besides your Uncle Allen.. Still I have no record of any Margaret Carswell other than your grandmother.

As I read your letter again I note that your last word speaks of 'Miss Carswell', still I would like to know about her before I write.

My father came to the state about 1875 and in a few years got into the lumber business; the saw mills at Muscatine, Iowa, cut up the logs that were floated down the Mississippi River from Wisconsin. When the timber got scarce the estate father worked for went into banking and father was put in charge of the bank... strange how these two activities predominate in the family. Your uncle Allen.. No that is not right, but an Allen Francis was a lumberman around Renfrew, and your antecedant in Lissacurran was a lumberman.

I wonder if there is on your Bryson side and old correspondence with early Canadian stamps there on you could send me... I would prefer the stamps on the envelopes. A stamp collector seems to know no shame.

Hope I have not worried you with this long letter, and am only sorry that I am not able to talk to you in person. I await your response.

Cordially

Edgar A Francis

E. A. Francis

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Ed.Note: Created from Edgar's file copy which did not have the letterhead or signature.