

*[Letter from Thomas Rogers Wickenden to Grandma Quaiife (his mother, Charlotte Quaiife's mother). He arrived in the USA in 1870 at the age of 17, so this letter was written when he was 24. He was married two years later to Ida Consaul. The letter was transcribed by Thomas H. Wickenden II, January 2021. Wording, spelling, and punctuation are unchanged, although semicolons have been replaced by periods, and some words may not have been read correctly due to the condition of the letter.]*

Toledo, Ohio  
March 27, 1877

Dear Grandmother,

I have been intending to write for several weeks past but have waited so that I might have more news to tell you, and first I must tell you of an event which I suppose you are not looking for. Yesterday afternoon (Monday, March 26<sup>th</sup>) about 3 PM; Lucy presented James with a fine son, weighting eight and one half (8 ½) pounds. You may be very sure that Father James feels very proud of it and in proportion his Uncles Robert & Tom are equally so, and as for his Grandma (Mother) I will not try to say but let her speak for herself which she will do shortly and probably give more particulars. Lucy's folks are equally pleased and altogether it is quite a joyous time. The little fellow will favor Lucy most. He has large blue eyes and a fine head of black hair, of which mother will send you a sample when she writes. The doctor says that he will have a forehead like his father's. Mother says he will have hands like mine, at any rate they are quite large. So far he has seemed perfectly satisfied with his new surroundings and has behaved himself real well, but he is able to cry nevertheless, and I heard him this morning before I left home. There is no doubt but that he will be a wonderful baby as he is the first of a new generation both of the Wales and of our family, and this leads me to remember that I must congratulate you, dear Great Grandma, the new title you now take, for he is the first of the fourth generation now living, and as I remember this I thank God, whose kind hand has led us all this far, and pray that he will also watch over, guide, protect, and save this new member of the family to whom he has given life. His name has already been decided on and is Leroy William after his grandpa Wales and father, James William, he will probably be called Roy for short; we shall probably have more to tell of him at some future time. I believe Lucy had rather a difficult time, but she was feeling pretty well in the evening and slept well during the night and both she and the baby were doing well when I left home at 7 am this morning.

Mother, Mrs. Wates, stepmother to Lucy and one of the neighbors were present at the time and Mother will stay and take care of them until Lucy is able to get about. Robert and I will take our meals at Jim's and sleep at home during this time. For further particulars, I must leave for Mother. And now Grandma as I have as another event to chronicle which so far as I know, you have not heard of direct that is, that since Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, you have had another Granddaughter, for at that time John Quaiife was married to a young lady named Eva Weaver. The whole of Uncle Roberts family were present and have been here ever since. Of these things I will say more further on. The Weding was not a surprise and yet I had no idea that it would be so soon untill John told Mother sometime in January last that it would be sometime in March. Eva, the bride, is a very nice young woman. Her age I don't know, but she is near John's age I guess. She is not very large but is good looking, and a quiet disposition, very kind and affectionate and has good common sense and a good share of perseverance and carefulness about her and further than that they both love each other very much. Her folks are very respectable, have some property, are living in Ironville. They are very pleased with the match, I believe, and have

helped them considerable in fitting out with furniture. Last Christmas they gave Eva a very nice bedstead, bed, and all the necessary earthenware for a bedroom and have given them other things besides. At present John and Eva are living in a part of their house, but they have rented a house which they will be able to move into shortly and will then keep house for themselves. I think that John has done well and a good thing in getting married. He is a good fellow and willing and ready to work but lacks a little in perseverance and carefulness. Eva has both these characteristics, I think, and together, I think they will do well. John's own testimony is that he has saved more money since he has been keeping her company, than he ever did before. But there is one important thing that I have neglected to mention being that she is a good earnest Christian which is of as much importance as all the rest put together. As I said. Uncle and the whole family came to the wedding. We did not know of their coming until Sunday as they came on the following Tuesday, and as we were daily expecting Lucy's trouble it was not very convenient for us but part of the time they have been in Ironville and the rest of the time Sarah Ann and Mary Jane stayed at my house and Uncle, Aunt and the two little ones stayed at Sam Jarret's about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile away from us. We of course were very glad to see them. I had not seen S.A. & M.J. since they left here six years ago, and Mother had not seen them since they left England. Of course they have grown since then, but in other respects they are the same as they ever were. Their faces, dispositions, etc. are the same as when I first remember them. The little ones are grown quite fast but they are quite backward in their learning which I think is a great pity. Uncle & Aunt are both well but looking rather thin. Uncle has been working very hard all winter holding special meetings with good success. I expect some of the will write to you very soon. A week ago last Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> last we were all at James' to dinner. It was the largest meeting of the family that there has been in this country. We had a very pleasant time. We thought and talked of you all at home, and though the family may never all meet again on earth, we hope to meet above were parting will be no more. Uncle & Aunt and the little ones go back home this week. S.A. & M.J. will stay a week or two longer. A friend of Uncle's got them passes on the railroad for a part or the whole of the way. I don't know which but it has saved them a very great deal. If the had not got the I believe the girls were not coming.

I must now tell you a little about myself. I am working in the City Council Engineer's Corps, earning two dollars (\$2.00) per day and steady work. The longer I am at the business the more I like it, as it not only employs my hands but my mind also. I have to study a great deal and expect to keep on as long as I am in the profession. It is a work that is never all learned and it will always pay a man for the time he spends in study. Business has been very dull during the last three years but the times are brightening and I hope that after a while things will be better and I think I may fairly expect that I shall do better so far as dollars and cents are concerned than I have hitherto done. But I do not complain as I have done better than many others for which I am very thankful. My work in the Church & Sabbath have occupied a large portion of my spare time. I am deeply interested in the work and find that it fully repays me for the time & trouble I put into it. And besides that while my own soul is blessed, I rejoice in the belief that others also are blessed. And while I feel my own insufficiency and weakness, I look to him for help who is able to make the weak vessels strong in his might.

I don't know but that some of you may think that I forget you because I don't write oftener but it is not so. But my time is often so fully taken up that I can't find the opportunity and you must accept this as my apology.

The fact that John is married leaves me in a sense alone, but there it is as it has always been. Jim & John always seemed to get ahead of me at first but I generally used to come out all right in the

end and I hope I shall in this case. Anyhow I am not alarmed. I have built part of my house, and after a while will build more. Then when the nest is ready look out for the bird. In the mean time I am not idle, and have one lady companion that to say the least I esteem very highly and if every thing comes out as I anticipate and I have no reason to doubt but what it will, I think that I shall do as well as the rest. But, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I enclose a photo of myself which is a specimen of Rob's work. We sent some pictures of Mother a short time since. I hope you received them safely.

Robert is getting along very well, is a good boy, growing fast and learning faster. He will write soon. Mother is well. She has felt the cold weather some but has got through the winter all right. We all join in kind love to you and to all.

Dear Grandma as I write these lines the thought comes to me that God has preserved you to a good old age, and I thank him for it & for your life, and also for the kind care with which he has watched over you and all of us. And the thought comes also that sooner or later, perhaps at no distant period, the Lord may say to you, "come up higher" and while it is with sadness that I think of this, yet I rejoice that there is so bright a prospect before you, and I pray that when you come to "the valley & shadow" his rod and staff may support and comfort you. And that his presence which is always with us, may be specially so with you – at that time, and may his truth satisfy us wholly so that we may all at last meet to praise him forever, is the prayer, of your,

Affectionate Grandson

T.R.Wickenden

P.S. I expect to write to Emma next.