

I have very much
pleas'd by your letter
of the 10th inst. and
in answer to it
I have to inform
you that the
Commissioners of the
Land Office have
been directed to
grant you a lease
of the land
in question for
the term of
years at the
rent of
per annum
and that the
same shall be
subject to the
usual conditions
of such leases
and that the
rent shall be
paid quarterly
in advance
at the usual
times and places
and that you
shall be bound
to pay the
rent and to
observe the
conditions of
the lease and
to do all such
other things
as may be
required of
you by the
said Commission-
ers and that
you shall be
bound to pay
the rent and
to observe the
conditions of
the lease and
to do all such
other things
as may be
required of
you by the
said Commission-
ers

London
11th January 1843

Dear Sir
I have the honor to
acknowledge the
receipt of your
letter of the 10th
inst. and in answer
to it to inform
you that the
Commissioners of the
Land Office have
been directed to
grant you a lease
of the land
in question for
the term of
years at the
rent of
per annum
and that the
same shall be
subject to the
usual conditions
of such leases
and that the
rent shall be
paid quarterly
in advance
at the usual
times and places
and that you
shall be bound
to pay the
rent and to
observe the
conditions of
the lease and
to do all such
other things
as may be
required of
you by the
said Commission-
ers

I received your letter dated
11th January 1843. Last month
I had the pleasure of your having
been directed to grant you a lease
of the land in question for the
term of years at the rent of
per annum and that the same
shall be subject to the usual
conditions of such leases and
that the rent shall be paid
quarterly in advance at the
usual times and places and
that you shall be bound to
pay the rent and to observe
the conditions of the lease
and to do all such other
things as may be required
of you by the said
Commissioners and that
you shall be bound to pay
the rent and to observe
the conditions of the lease
and to do all such other
things as may be required
of you by the said
Commissioners

D895,2 transcription typed

Dalwood
Hunters River¹
New South Wales
8th Aug 1843

An exact copy² of a letter from Ishmael Croft³ respecting the death of Richard Sellars⁴ decd.

My dear Father⁵

I received your letter dated 24th January 1842 last month & in consequence of you having directed it to Liverpool Plains⁶ of which place there is no post office, it was lying in post office at Sydney 12 months before receiving it. Have the goodness to direct your letter for the future as above.

I am happy to say that I have now saved thirty pounds to pay the expenses of my wife⁷ & child⁸ to the Colony. But as the time has nearly expired when they will be able to come out at the expense of the government, that is when I have served seven years in the Colony which expires about December next when I shall make application to the Governor agreeably to the regulations and he will cause her to be sent out to me free of expense.

¹ Hunters River. Today Dalwood is a wine-growing estate in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

² It appears that this copy of the letter was made to formally record the bequests of Richard Sellars.

³ Ishmael Croft. Convicted of burglary and transported to Australia in 1836. He arrived in New South Wales on 12 February 1837, on the ship "Norfolk". Born Alvingham 1808. Convicted of poaching September 1833/4, and sentenced to 4 months imprisonment. At his trial on 17 December 1835, Ishmael was described as 28 years old, 5 foot 8 inches in height, sallow complexion, married, light brown hair, dark blue eyes, occupation labourer. William Wells age 35 and Richard Sellars age 47 were convicted at the same trial in December 1835.

⁴ Richard Sellars. Shoemaker of Alvingham. Born 1787. Convicted of assault in 1820 and committed to Louth prison for three years. Convicted in 1835 of receiving stolen goods and transported to Australia in 1836. Died in Australia in October 1842.

⁵ Edward Croft, born about 1768. In 1841, Edward Croft was an elderly widower living with his son William Croft and family in James Street, Louth. Edward died in October 1843. Ishmael's letter was written in August 1843, so Edward may have died before the letter arrived.

⁶ Liverpool Plains is a fertile agricultural area, about 200 km northwest of Dalwood.

⁷ Mary Ann Croft. Ishmael Croft married Mary Ann Sampson in June 1827, in St James' Church, Louth. Neither Ishmael nor Mary Ann was able to sign their name in the parish register. This suggests that the letter from Australia must have been written by a literate person on behalf of Ishmael.

⁸ Charles Croft, born 1829 in Yarburgh. In 1841, 11-year-old Charles was living in Spital Hill with labourer William Rawby and his wife Mary. It looks as though Mary Ann Croft had become the common-law wife of William Rawby. Charles Croft died in 1848 when he was only 18 years old.

I think it best to save all the money I can get for your use on arrival, as my brother⁹ appears to have a good situation, I would not recommend him to leave it for an uncertainty, for at present this colony continues in a very distressed condition and it is very doubtful if he came here that he would get as good a situation as he now holds. Nevertheless, if he is anxious of coming out it would be better for him to wait until I get free in this colony which I expect to be in February 1845, when I shall endeavour to rent a farm for myself.

I hope my son Charles will attend to his business well and make himself proficient in it during the few months he has to remain in England, as his trade is now the best in this Colony and if he is a good hand he will earn here from thirty to forty shillings a week. Also, the materials for his trade are much cheaper here than in England and if he is industrious, he will soon realize a comfortable independence. I cannot omit most earnestly advising him by all means to lead a sober, steady and industrious life as he will find it much to his advantage hereafter.

I am very sorry to have to announce the death of my friend Richard Sellars who expired in October last year. I wrote a letter to John White¹⁰ in November apprising of the fact and stating the manner in which his property was to be disposed of, which was his house he bequeathed to David Fox¹¹ who was in possession of it when he left England, the shop to Henry Shucksmith¹², and the money which was placed in the Louth Bank by Heath¹³ of the Royal Oak and Lowther¹⁴ the Carrier, he requested was to be given to Joseph Sellars¹⁵ eldest son¹⁶. I saw Richard Sellars a day or two before he died & being perfectly aware that he was about to die, the above are the requests he made to me

⁹ Presumably, William Croft, elder brother of Ishmael, born 1802. He was a labourer in 1841. (Ishmael's only other brother, John, died as a baby.)

¹⁰ John White, born 1801, blacksmith in Alvingham. John White's signature at the end of the letter indicates that it was he who made this copy of Ishmael's letter.

¹¹ David Fox, born 1807, agricultural labourer in Alvingham.

¹² Henry Shucksmith, born 1815. Shoemaker (and later farmer) in Alvingham. Died 1904. This document was donated to Louth Museum in 2023 by the Shucksmith family.

¹³ William Heath was publican at the Royal Oak public house in Ugate, Louth, from at least 1823 to 1837.

¹⁴ Thomas Lowther was carrier, and mayor of Louth 1841-42. Died 1842, age 55.

¹⁵ Joseph Sellars, labourer in Alvingham, father of Richard Sellars.

¹⁶ William Sellars, born 1786 in Alvingham was probably the eldest son of Richard Sellars.

then. If you know any remaining friends of old John Graves¹⁷ will you let them know he is dead.

I have lately met with a friend living near me named Richard Wright¹⁸ whose father kept a butchers shop on Lincoln Bridge. He was convicted from Lincoln city jail at the time Winkfield¹⁹ was hung. He is now free & worth about a thousand pounds. He keeps my little property for me & has promised to do so till I get free myself. My property consists of five cows and five calves, and the cows will calve again about Christmas.

You had better write me again when you receive this and if it is possible to get my wife & child out before the time stipulated by the Government, I wish you would do so²⁰. Will you remember me to all friends. I am very well & trust this will find you all the same.

I am very sorry to hear of the sickness you had in your family last year. But you must remember that we are all born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.

I remain yours affectionately
Ishmael Croft²¹

John White Alvingham

¹⁷ The word 'Graves' is indistinct in the original document. A John Graves, born 1888, was a labourer in Alvingham. He died in Alvingham in 1852.

¹⁸ Richard Wright of Lincoln, butcher, age 18, was convicted in March 1829 of stealing a sheep.

¹⁹ George Wingfield was hanged in Lincoln Beastmarket on 27 March 1829, for highway robbery.

²⁰ It seems that Mary Ann and Charles Croft did not go to Australia. Charles died in Louth five years after this letter was written.

²¹ In March 1845, Ishmael was granted his Certificate of Freedom which meant that he could choose to continue in Australia as a settler or return home to England. He died in Australia in 1858.