

**John Brown to Owen Brown**

Osawatomie, Kansas, 5 December 1855.

Autograph letter signed, 2 pages.

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(At Mr Adairs)

Osawatomie Kansas Territory 5<sup>th</sup> Decem 1855

Dear Father

We just received your very kind & most welcome Letter dated at Wadsworth Nov 16<sup>th</sup>. I feel very thankful for the interest you still take in the different members of my numerous Family, & for all your efforts to do them good in things spiritual, & temporal. I did suppose fall provision had been made (by way of Cattle to be sold for me in Connecticut) for those at North Elba; but it seems they had received nothing from that source when they applied to you for help. I still hope they [*inserted: are*] releived [*sic*] from that quarter before now; & I would not have asked you to send assistance this way had I thought of your getting a call from them; & would now say that if you have not alrely [*sic*] sent money to me do not by any means distress yourself; in order to do so; as we shall all doubtless get along if you do not. The health of all the companies of your connection here is some improved since I wrote last; & all some better provided with shelters for the cold, & stormy weather. Mr. Adair, & Family all comfortable; but children not stout yet. Of the Two companies at John, & Jasons Camps; all but Three out of the Twelve; may be said to be [*inserted and struck: in*] midling [*sic*] well. Of those Three Jason is much better; Henry Thompson, & Oliver some little better; but quite feeble. We have also made some progress in building; & securing Hay, Corn, & Corn fodder; so that I flatter myself that the animals will be got through the Winter midling [*sic*] well. The last Ten, or Eleven days; have all been pleasant, with constant cold freezeing Nights. Previous to that we had some very severe storms of Rain forming into Ice as it fell: As I become a little more acquainted with this part of [*inserted: the*] Territory I think quite favourably of it; & I would by no means advise those of my friends who are here to leave in search of a better country. We feel more, & more certain that Kansas will be a Free State. At this moment there is quite an excitement here growing out as report says of the Murder of a young Free State man; by a Missourian. Large numbers on both sides are said to be in Arms near Lawrence; & some anticipate a Bloody fight. We do not seem to get direct information of the true state of matters

there; & I think of going immediately there to learn the facts in the case. The distance is about 35 Miles. I will endeavour to give you a more full account of the matter; if there should be much of it. I have no time fixed in my own mind as yet for my return; & have no thought of leaving [sic] before some time in the Spring. We are all very glad to learn of your good health; which we hope may be yet further spared; & that you may still yet be numbered amongst our correspondents. You have ever been one of the most faithful; & punctual correspondents. Shall leave the balance for Mr. Adair or Florella to fill up if they are disposed to do so. May abundantly bless you in your great age. Has your hearing improved any since I left?

Your Affectionate Son

John Brown

Dec. 7.<sup>th</sup>, Dear Father Brown,

Bro John has left part of this sheet for us to fill, & we with pleasure do it. The receipt [sic] of your letter he has acknowledged, & also told much of the news. But two days has much increased the excitement he referred [sic] to, so that now there is actually a state of war. As you may desire [inserted: to] know the antecedents of this state of things as well as the present state, I will try & give them in brief as far as I have been able to learn them.

[2] A young Free State man by the name of [Bowe] had a claim at Hickery [sic] Point, some 15 or 20 miles from Lawrence. A pro-slavery man from Missouri [inserted: who] lived near - went & cut timber on Mr. B's claim. Mr. B. met him one day - charged him with it - some pretty hard words passed. At length Mr. B. started to go away - had not gone far before he heard a cap burst. The Missourian had tried to shoot him. He turned saw him trying to get another cap - rushed toward him; but before he got to him the Missourian shot him dead. Pro-slavery men protected this murderer - Free state men armed to take him - he fled to Gov. Shannon & gave himself up. There was one free state man who saw the transaction. To get rid of him as a witness a pro-slavery man swears that he is afraid of him - fears he will take his life. Has him arrested - and the sheriff started with him to Lecompton to put him in jail. On his way he called at Lawrence. The captain of the Military Company there ordered his men into ranks. This witness, was also a member of the company & no one [hinderer], took his place in the rank.

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The sheriff [*sic*] called on the company and by standers to take him; but none responded. After fruitless efforts he left – went to the Governor. The Gov. went to Leavenworth, called on th[e] U.S. troops. They did not respond – he called for volunteers – raised a company of about 400 & went to Lawrence. Free State men armed & followed them. This was some ten days ago – both parties have been increasing ever since. Missourians report their number at 4000, but it is not thought to exceed 1,000. Lawrence now is said to have in it on yesterday 800 fighting men. All the roads now leading into Lawrence are said to be guarded by the Missourians. Messengers arived [*sic*] here this morn who left Lawrence at nine oclock last night. They report one man killed yesterday morning. He went out of Lawrence a few miles to his claim; was followed by ten Missourians & shot. Lawrence was actively engaged in fortifying the city. Missourian had proposed conditions on which they would leave. That military company must be given up – the presses destroyed, the Union Hotel, which has cost the Massachusetts Em-Aid Com. \$15,000 must be [demolished] and every man [*strikeout*] [*inserted: take an oath*] that he will obey the laws of the Mobocratic Legislature. If these conditions are not complied with they declare a war of extermination – shoot & butcher every man wom [*sic*] & child found in the city. At 9 oclock last night no attack had been made. Waggons [*sic*] could no more get in & out of Lawrence without strong guards. Many going in with men & provision had been plundered of the provision & the men taken prisoners. The messengers came out in the dark by a path little known & not guarded. They report that a wagon had been sent to Leavenworth for amunition – that the commander there said that if he had to fight on either side he should fight with the Free State party. General Pomeroy left this Monday [morning] went to Kasas [*sic*] City thence to Lawrence. Was pursued by [Missourians] – had to swim the Kansas River three times – [reached] Lawrence – had since left to go East to [*incomplete*]

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Note: the man killed at “Hickery Point” who Mr. Adair calls “Bowe,” was in fact a man named Charles Dow who was killed at Hickory Point in the Kansas Territory on 21 November 1855.

Note 2: the “Massachusetts Em-Aid Com.” is an abbreviation for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, a transportation company set up to bring Free-Staters into the Kansas Territory.