

From S.S. Abney to William Van Lear

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Minerva, Morgan Co. Mo.

Dec. 5th 1860

Dear William,

I have been waiting for a long time [*text stricken through*] expecting you to write to me but I suppose you have forgotten me[.] I have been very anxious to hear how my affairs were progressing[.] I recd. a Letter from Mr. Isrills last week stating that Moore wanted his money & that Mr. Tubberman had been kind enough to pay it[;] for this act of kindness give him my sincere thanks[.] He did not inform me what he paid or anything about[.] only that Mr. Tubberman would want it when he would pay in the [Taxes?].

Wm. I will be under a thousand obligations to you if you will arrange the matter with Mr. Tubberman[.] I would be truly mortified if he was put to loss or inconvenience for this out of kindness[.] I have good [due?] papers but to cash it it is out of the question to talk about, then our banks have suspended[.] confidence is destroyed that there is no meting exchanges accept at ruinous loss[.] Gold & silver is worth a premium of 5 per ct. and will be no better[.] probably worse untill our governmental affairs assum[e] some [MS. illegible]. I flatter my self Wm. that you can arrange the matters to satisfactory untill time will take a change[.]

We have the hardest time you ever seen, the severest drought I ever seen in any country[.]

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there is hundreds of our people that have to go 4 or 5 miles for every drop a water they use[.] they cant put up their [MS. illegible] for the want of water [*text stricken through*] and stock now is begining to fall off[.] we have had cold freezing weather that has been very bad on stock[.] we are well of here compared to others[.] our spring is dry but plenty of water in the branch [MS. illegible][.]

I built my hog pen on the branch & am feeding my hogs there[.] We have plenty of corn & will have plenty of pork, but that is all we have to live upon. We made no wheat[.] oats[.] or Hay[.] that corn and Hungarian grass all our dependence to get our stock through the winter[.] Flour is worth from 4 to 5\$ per hundred[.] Coffee 20.00[.] Sugar 12 1/2. these are luxuries that we dont indulge in[.] only occasionally when visitors comes in we take it as corn bread and pork and by way of change hominy & pork, and many other changes but still it is corn, but we should not complain[.] we are well off in this county[;] all have made enough to live upon[.] which is not the case in many portions of the country[.]

L.S. left here some ten days ago[.] he gives a terrible account of Calaway[.] they sold off their stock at what they could get for it and many of them will have to buy their bread and meat both & when farmers have to do that it is tight times[.] We are taught our lesson by experience that if Providence does not send us the early and latter rains it matters not what kind

of soil we have[,] how we cultivate it[,] the increase will not be gathered[.]

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We are all enjoying very good health[.] I have got our [MS. illegible] & getting along pretty well[.] your aunt Sally is living with us. she could not stay at the old place[.] she is better contented than I expected[.] her health has improved since she came here[.] I built her a room at the end of the House[,] cut a door wher[e] the window was that she can step from her room to Martha [MS. illegible] at pleasure and I tell you she makes them stir around[.] she keeps the little negroes a trotting & that keeps her employed[.] she can do more work than any woman I ever saw[,] particularly at knitting[.] they have to keep the wheel going night and day A[nd] spin the yarn as fast as she wants it[.]

I am afraid I will tire your patience[.] I must close[.] I have no news that would interest you. you will have seen before this reaches that troubles have broke out in Kansas[.] Montgomery has [commenced?] robbing and [marauding?][,] took possession of fort scott but will retreat now[.] there are plenty of troops ther to meet him & as soon as the troops return he will commence again & so it will be[.]

if G.A. Wise was prudent we would no troubles in Kansas[.] we are on the eve of perilous times[.] we not what a day may bring forth but we still hope for the best[.] I have met with some severe troubles[,] some we [MS. illegible] such that I never can forget and never will enjoy the same health & [spirits?] again but it is [MS. illegible] [*text stricken through*] I have to [be?] it[.]

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I think my relatives treat me very badly[.] there is not one of them that ever write me a line[.] I think right hard of [MS. illegible] Davis[.] he might write to me & give me the news of the neighborhood[.] Write to me as soon as you can[.]

I remain your friend

S.S. Abney