

From Leigh R. Webber to Miss Brown

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Ft. Scott, Bourbon Co. Kansas

March 8th 1862

Miss Brown

This Regiment arrived at this place about noon yesterday. The weather was excellent for marching and the roads the best we have ever had for a journey of such a length. We had plenty of transportation, and the men rode a good deal when tired.

Yet it came very hard on them. Many who never dropped out of the ranks during all the hard marches of last summer, got tired and dropped out. Much of the time, we appeared like a crowd of scattered travelers, rather than a Regiment. I suffered intensely from pain in my knee, which was sprained on the march from Sedalia to Lexington. I had to ride all day Wednesday, and could sleep but little for 3 nights.

Monday we marched 18 miles and came 3 miles this side of Prairie City. Tuesday we marched about 23 miles and camped on the south bank of the Pottawotamie Creek. We crossed the "Mary Day Queen" about 11'O'clock Tuesday. But there were no bridges over the next two creeks, so I had to strip my feet and wade across in the icy water. We saw the 12th Wisconsin about noon Wednesday come in from Kansas City about a mile behind us, but they passed us about 5 miles after we camped. And went to Ft. Scott by another road.

We had some rare sport Wednesday afternoon, in camp. Some of the boys found a pole cat in a hollow log, and smoked him out. Such yelling, laughing and shouting and running, were scarcely ever heard when the animal made his appearance and dealt out some of its essence of 2 or 3 of the men! A few rabbits (which [MS. illegible] bristles) were also killed. So some of the men got some fine fresh steak.

We passed through Moneka about 10'O'clock Thursday. It consists of one store, one closed tavern (the "Moneka House[") and some half a dozen other buildings. Some of the men went up to the tavern door to try to get

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some "rot" but came back swearing that it was "played out." I did not see Mr. Stark, and did not know where he lives.

Two miles South of Moneka is Mound City which is a thriving place I should think, situated on the South bank of a large creek[,] well timbered, and having a steam saw mill. Fort Lincoln where we camped Thursday night is on the North Bank of the Osage River, where I also had to wade.

Ft. Lincoln consists of an area surrounded by breastworks of earth, and inside are several large sheds, as temporary barracks for soldiers and stables for horses. It is well-situated to [*text stricken through*] prevent any army from crossing the River. We camped however on the South Bank, in a fine grove of large timber cleared of under brush by former camps.

Ft. Scott is located on the South Bank of the Marmaton River. It consists of 3 or 4 large buildings for barracks, and storehouses, just on the edge of the upper bank of the river and there is quite a large village around these on the level prairie. There is an interval of bottom on each side of the River between the upper and lower banks. On the North side the bottom is some half a mile wide, wet, and muddy like the bottom of the Wakarusa at Blanton's Bridge. That on the

South side is but a few rods wide. Both upper and lower banks are abrupt and the bottom of the river is muddy. There is a steam saw mill on the edge of the lower bank, on the South side, directly down from the Barracks. The River is well timbered.

We are encamped 1/4 mile South of the village, where a fine ravine flows by on the East, just on the edge of the camping ground. The 12th and 13th Wisconsin Regiments are encamped West of the village about half a mile from us. The 12th arrived an hour or two after we did.

It is the general report here that we are to be pushed South towards Ft. Smith in the coming week or two. If so, I feel sure that we shall have even a harder time than we had last season. We are to be allowed but one wagon [to?] the company, and we cannot carry clothes and blankets enough to keep us comfortable. Besides it will take so much transportation for horses

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that we shall be scant of provisions. I cannot approve of the policy of starting out an expedition till the grass grows sufficiently to supply forage. The first of May will be early enough. I dread even the thought of another tramp like that of last summer. But if we start soon it will be vastly worse.

We are all eager for a fight, And if we get into another battle I doubt not that we shall go in to kill and get killed. "For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower, Never panted for the appointed hour" "As I until before me stand, This rebel chieftain and his band." But we are tired of tamping about to get into a battle[.] It seems [MS. torn] if that our men had gone through so much toil and exposure added to privations, that they are a good deal broken down and cannot [MS. faded] as much as they once could. But I will not allow myself to borrow trouble. [MS. illegible] come fast enough.

Charley Coleman [MS. faded] took us on Tuesday evening coming [up?] with Col[.] Seward who staid back with his bride. You know he was married Sunday morning. Charlie staid with us that night, and left us in the morning. Just before we started Monday morning, I went into the Marshal's office, and said "I guess I can get along without wearing my pistol while we stay here, if you choose to let me have it." "Very well" he replied, "you shall have it." As I was going out he said, "I am sorry that such an affair has occurred." "So am I somewhat," said I. "But I cherish no hard feelings about it." "Neither do I" he said. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Yet I am of such a disposition that I can't be [*text stricken through*] politic in such cases. "What recked the chieftain, if he stood," "On Highland heath or Holy Rood."

When I got here I found two letters from my sister awaiting me. She told me who was appointed administrator on the estate and who were appointed appraisers of the property. They are men on whose honesty and discretion we can rely. She says that father died on the same day of the week and of the month, that mother did 16 years before, and he was also buried on the same day of the week and month.

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On the march I lost my gloves, and have nothing but that pair of mittens now. I have bad luck with mittens and gloves, but must have them, cost what it will, if they are to be had. If that box of clothing comes, before Mr. [Nute?] starts to join us, I shall be very grateful if you send me a pair of mittens by him. Also I want a fine-comb and a coarse one[.] I forgot to buy them in Lawrence and can't find [none?] in this place. We have had nothing to eat but hard bread since yesterday morning. Nothing but coffee to drink it down. But we have just drawn rations. I have just drawn a new [MS. faded] and pair of [shoes?]. I want nothing more but a pair of drawers,

that is, in the way of clothing.

I had an excellent nights sleep last night, and mean to enjoy all the comforts possible, during our stay here, as that may be the last for some time[.] I wish we might be paid before we are sent off, but I suppose not. I guess the people at Lawrence have experienced the truth of [*text stricken through*] issue of the Kansas Chronicle. "He (the soldier in the Kansas First) runneth in debt, for the wares of the marked man, promising to pay [*text stricken through*] the tenth day; and lo; on the Ninth the Regiment marcheth to another Post." I hope they will never get pay for the whiskey, and that is the greatest bill.

My love and best respects are due you all. Whenever I can I intend to let you know how I fare. Some say we are to be left here to keep this Post. It will be the best place for the men we have yet been in. There is scarcely any whisky to be had here. Enough at present.

From your sincere friend  
L.R. Webber