

From James A. Holmes to John W. Geary

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Lawrence

Oct. 2d -- 1856

Your Excellency J.W. Geary

You request of me a statement of the causes, so far as I know of [*text stricken through*] which led Martin White to attack Ossawattamie. I have been in that place during the whole of the recent disturbances, and am acquainted with antecedents of Mr[.] White. He has been since his arrival in the Territory a violent pro-slavery man, though at times has declared himself in favor of a Free State.

He has resorted to Every artifice within his power to force the Enactments of the bogus Legeslature on the people. He has persecuted by [having?] the agent to arrest and imprison, some of our most Estimable citizens.

Thus matters stood in July last when some person or persons, not residents of or known to any of the people of Ossawattamie or its vicinity, came to White's house, and after demanding admittance were fired upon, when they returned

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the fire and then left taking with them several horses belonging to White.

White went to Missouri the next day, taking with him his family and all his effects, leaving word that he would be back within a given time with a thousand men, drive the free state men from the country and burn their houses.

After inflamatory and exaggerated speeches for weeks throughout the borders of Missouri, he returned at the head of four hundred and ten (410) men, with one field peice under Capt. Reid. Early on the morning of August 30th this force appeared before Ossawattamie, after the advanced scouts, of which White was one, had first murdered two peacible men who were passing from one house to another about one and a half from Ossawattamie and leaving a third, with upwards of 20 ball holes in his body, for dead. One of these murdered men Mr[.] White boasts of having shot with his own hands. After a short conflict with some twenty or thirty men who tried to defend the town, they drove them and proceded to plunder and burn houses. They Robed the mail, pillaged and burned two stores and twenty

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houses.

White then returned to Missouri and is now raising men to come and commit further depredations, promising them so much per month, and on the 29th of September last, positing information was received at Ossawattamie that some of his men had rendezvoused within twelve

miles of Ossawattamie. Not a more aggravated case of murder and, without provocation, has occurred in the annals of the outrages in Kansas[.]

The pro-slavery faction of the vicinity of Ossawattamie, presuming on the cowardice of the free-state men, first commenced the outrages of robbing[.] murdering and house-burning; but when the free-state men combined to defend themselves, then many of them were arrested for treason, and various crimes.

We only ask to be left in the quiet possession of property, that we may follow our usual peacefull pursuits, and our lives may be secure. In order to secure this desirable state it is necessary that our people should organize in some manner for our self-defense and in behalf of the citizens of Ossawattamie by whom I am delligated I ask of you this

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permission -- to organize for self defence -- that we may repel such wanton attacks as this herein stated, without laying ourself liable to be arrested under the charges of murder or treason.

Respectfully and Truly yours

Jas H. Holmes

In behalf of the people of Ossawattamie