

From James Montgomery to George L. Stearns

[page 1]

Mound City, Kansas.

Dec. 10th, 1864

Maj. George L. Stearns:

Dear Friend:

I am now at home and in good health.

My health became very poor, while I was in the South, and I came home on sick leave, about the first of August.

When my leave expired I was worse instead of better; and seeing no prospect of being soon fit for service, I sent in my resignation and got my discharge.

I had just got able to eat my breakfast at the table, when Price's Raid brought everybody, in Kansas, into the field. I took command of thirteen companies of white, and two of black militia, and joined Genl. Curtis, in Missouri, where we performed our share of service, particularly in the battle of Westport. In that battle my second

[page 2]

son showed great steadiness of nerve, and skill as a marksman.

The enemy were hurried through Kansas so rapidly that they had little time [*text stricken through*] for mischief; and our little town escaped without injury; though a battle was fought close by it, and in sight of my place.

When this last named battle was over, my wife and daughters, with other female friends hurried to the field, in search of friends, each hoping for the best, but fearing the worst. Their anxiety was soon relieved by hearing that those they sought were still safe, and pursuing the enemy: They were, however, in time to be of use in relieving the wants of the wounded.

We have had a very wet fall; and the winter, so far, continues wet. I had sowed twenty acres of wheat, and plowed seventy acres more, which I intended to sow, when I was interrupted by Price's Raid. The [*text stricken through*] weather, while we were in the service, was the best of the season; but the very day I got home it commenced raining; and has kept the

[page 3]

ground so wet, ever since, that I could do nothing with it. Our labor, however, will not be lost, as the land, plowed this fall, will be in good condition for Oats and Hungarian grass, with only the labor of harrowing.

The quantity of corn raised on my place this season, is about One hundred acres: averaging thirty three bushels to the acre, and selling, in the field, at \$1.50 per bushel: the purchaser hauling it himself. I have sold some at that price, and could sell the product of a thousand acres at that if I had it[,] wheat is \$2.00, oats the same as corn. Prairie hay \$.10 in the

stack. Cattle, Hogs, Mules, and Horses, in proportion to everything else. At these prices, farming pays better than fighting.

I have been thus particular in writing about my private affairs on account of the interest which I know you take in my welfare. My oldest son is still with the Regiment in Florida.

I am now exercising my skill, as a Carpenter, in the way of adding conviniences to my dwelling. A truce to private matters.

[page 4]

There are a number of young men here, who wish to enter the service. In view of the fact that our state gives no "Counties," while we are far ahead of our quota, I have advised them to enlist in Massachusetts, or some other state which pays large bounties. They have not the means to travel on, but I will forward them, if by so doing, I can benefit myself as well as them.

Now, I wish you to inform me what bounty your state pays, on enlistment, and what aid to the families of enlisted men.

If I find I can save myself, and something more, by the Operation, I will bring you a few recruits, this winter[.]

With sentiments of the highest esteem and grateful remembrance of old favors, I remain

Your much obliged Friend

James Montgomery

[P.S.] Remember me to Mrs. S. and the boys.