

From Samuel R. Ayres to Lyman Langdon

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Moneka Linn Co. Kansas

Aug[.] 24th/63

Friend Langdon

Dear Sir

Your friendly Epistle was duly recieved and its contence read with great pleasure[.] It does me good to read the correspondance of those whos views in relation to our national affairs appear to be founded on correct principles and on the result of much carrful investigation. being situated as you are with almost every facility of correct information you are well prepared to form a propper estimate of the events and acts which are transpiring around us at the present time. The events of last month to our nation are repleat with intrest and ought to beget greater and unfained thankfulness in our hearts to God for his intoposition in our behalf. Never, or but seldom has it fallen to the lot of a nation to record as many great and important Victories in the space of one month as has been the priviledge of ours during the past.

The surrender of Vicksburg of its self was sufficient to produce a universal thrill of pleasure in the hearts of every loyal citizen, but when we [*text stricken through*] ad the repulse of Price[,]
Marmaduke & Holmes at Helena[,]
Lee's defeat at [*text stricken through*] Gettysburg, the surrender of Port Hudson, the retreat of Braggs army in connection with Morgans capture and several other [*text stricken through*] smaler advantages secured by our armies makes a page in our history that must and will command the gratitude of every true American citizen. But though such as been the brilent
[brilliant] history of the past month yet there has been some transpiring events which are of a reverse charictor. In consequence of Lee's advance on Pensylvania many of her citizens have suffered heavy losses, yet the event in fact has resulted greatly to our national benefit. And such may be the case as regards other movements of a similar charictor. What is to be the future of Kansas is more than I

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can divine at present. Dark clouds at present are hanging over us yet I would not despair. From all I can learn Gen[.] Blunt is placed in rather a critical position having only some 3000 or 3500 men to oppose to Steel who has from 12000 to 15000 men. Blunt has requested reinforcements but Gen[.] Scofield refuses them and orders him to fall back. If Blunt complies with said orders it throws the Indian country open to the raviges of the enemy. Again if he falls back from Ft[.] Gibson there will be no place where he can make a stand untill he gets to Fort Scott, which is a very weak post and hard to defend and if this point is past our Southeastern border is left open to the ravages of the foe. Take it along our Missouri border we are subject to almost constant raids from the Bushwhackers over the line who rob our citizens[,]
burn their houses and murder [*text stricken through*] prominent men.

Last Friday or it may be it was Thursday the troops stationed at the Trading Post were ordered to Kansas City[.] The following night a company of secesh came in and robed som 12 or 14 families and burnt some houses[,]
of the number I am not informed. But the most distressing event which has

occurred in Kansas since the commencement of the war and in fact since the settlement of the state took place last Thursday night. A company as near as I can ascertain numbering near 300 men or I may say demons entered Lawrence killing all they could see in the streets and burning the buildings on each side of Massachusetts St. (the main business St. in the town) without regard to the removal of the inmates of the houses. In the Eldridge House I am informed that 15 women and children were burned to death and at last accounts 130 bodies had been found of persons killed or burnt to death. Many of them were taken from the ruins of burnt buildings[.]

What acts could be more barbarous[,] more inhuman[?] To kill in battle appears bad enough. But to set

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fire to a town and then shoot down all that attempted to make their escape from the flames is an act of barbarity but seldom if ever equaled by the most savage tribes. And these are the men your--I will say our--copperhead citizens wish to aid and abet and on whom they wish to bestow their sympathies[.]

How long shall we be called to endure such outrages I cannot say, but hope for the honor of our country and the cause of humanity that we may never hear of [*text stricken through*] another such an event. [*text stricken through*] The people of Kansas have become used to almost all kinds of abuse and outrage but this last act I think is the climax. It has been reported that when these [*text stricken through*] inhuman monsters had finished their work of destruction and murder at Lawrence they started south on the main road leading toward Osawatomie and Paola burning every farm house for the distance of eleven miles. But for the truth of this statement I cannot vouch[.] reports are so conflicting[.]

It may be that before mailing this letter I may learn the facts in the case more definitely. What I have stated about the burning of Lawrence was communicated by two men who stayed in the neighborhood last night who had passed through the place since it was burnt--saw its desolation and heard their tales of wo and heart rending sorrow. Living as I do near the main government road where all the trains pass hauling [hauling] government stores for the supply of Gen. Blunt's army and the forts Lincoln & Scott I view our neighborhood in danger of being visited by these inhuman bands. And should they make the attempt to burn us out we could not successfully resist them because the most of our men are in the field and remote from home. I should not think strange if Mound City should within a few days meet with a similar fate to that of Lawrence for it [*text stricken through*] is an eyesore to the South[.]

I will defer closing my letter a day or two to obtain what information I can in relation to the above mentioned events.

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Oct[.] 27th

At Eleven O'Clock night of 24th a messenger came to my house informing me that all able bodied men were requested to meet [meet] at Mound City to organize for self defence[.] The turnout was general and resolutions passed expressive of our views of the outrages committed on our peaceable citizens.

I have to go to the Mound to *[text stricken through]* day to make further arrangements and day after tomorrow we are to meet in this neighborhood to organize a company of self defence.

The destruction of life and property at Lawrence was full greater than represented above. Considerable over 200,000 dollars in cash was taken at the loss of property is estimated at over two millions. Over 150 *[text stricken through]* bodies have been found and burried and still the work of interment is going on. You undoubtedly will get the particulars through the press before you get this. The burning of farm houses to Brookline from Lawrence as stated above is correct and was only stopt by Gen[.] Lane rallying som 20 or 30 men and persuing them giving them battle and following them on their retreat. At last accounts he had followed them into Missouri and had them pretty well flanked on both sides and Col[.] Jennison was going to his assistance[.] Quite a number of the vilins had been killed and their dead bodies left along the road[,], most of whom had quite an ammount of green back in their pockets[.] one had \$10,000[.] It is to be hoped not one of them will escape[.] Gen[.] Lane had a narrow escape[.] as the assassins broke open his front door he jumped out of a back windo and run--the [they] fired 3 shots at him but did [not] injour him[.]

But I must stop. Please write often for letters from the east are very acceptable[.]

We are all usually well[.] [Fordis'?] people are well[.] My kind regards to your family[.]

Affectionately Yours

Samuel Ayres