

From John Stillman Brown to John L. Rupur

[page 1]

Lawrence

Sept. 1st 1863

Brother John L. Rupur[,]

We are all well. The Lord hath spared us. Lawrence has seen and experienced dreadful things. You have seen the lists of the dead. The Brick walls can be built up again. But what workman can build up our dead again. Our more immediate friends and acquaintances who were killed are Jno L[.] Crane[,] G.W. Collomore, Joseph Low, Fred. Kimball, Mr[.] Sargent, Mr[.] Sanger, Mr[.] Longley, Mr[.] J.C. Trask, Dr. Griswold, S.U. Thorpe[,] Lewis Carpenter, Dwight Coleman[,] William Williamson, Mr[.] Palmer & son, Mr. Stone, two Spear boys, David Parington, and a good many others that we knew by sight, whose names I cannot now recall.

It was a little after sunrise when three men came galloping into our enclosure and said Quantrell was in Lawrence killling & burning[.] we looked towards the city which lies N.E. of us and saw very distinctly the smoke curling up. Charles took a horse and rode [MS. illegible] to arouse the people. William took the bridle and tried to catch some of our horses. I looked up the guns and swords. We had plenty of arms but little ammuniton. I went out and milked the cows, eat breakfast[,] took a double barrellled shot gun and started for town[.] But after going a few rods I thought how foolish it was to take a gun as I was no marksman and these bushwhackers were sharp shooters; so I laid down my gun and started again for Lawrence[.]

Previous, however, we had carried out our greenbacks of which we had considerable quantity, as a friend had just left me 100 dollars to be paid to another man, and we had some of our own. we also hid

[page 2]

a trunk or two of goods in the late grass.

I walked leizurely towards town and took my stand on the hill west of the city. here I could see the town, and the bushwhackers as they rode from place to place, as they went to their work of death, burning and plunder[.] all the business part of the city was in flames[.] about ten oclock the main body of the brigands had ridden out of town and formed their lines on the south East, in plain sight of the place where I stood[.] I judged there were not over two hundred and fifty. They rode off south burning the houses as they went; we could see their path for ten miles or more by the smoke of burning buildings.

after they had all got fairly away I went home. here I found men[,] women and children. some sixty or seventy who had fled for refuge. To my surprise I found coming up from our ravine the brave Gen. James H. Lane our United States Senator, and soldier. I told him the way was all clear. I had just come from town and the last guerrilla had gone. He then [MS. illegible] about getting a horse and pursing them in hot haste. I believe he did get together a band and went after them, but I have no evidence that he was the means of shooting any[.]

These rebels, and bushwhackers, and guerrillas are marauders, and murderers, were a motley band, as hard a set of fellows as ever rode horse. Some were perfectly brutal, some of a milder type. They came to kill and plunder[.] at first they shot indiscriminately every man that was seen. their object seemed at first to inspire terror, to let no men get together for concerted action. they took I judge in money not less than 150,000 dollars and destroyed in property

perhaps 1,500,000. it may be more.

[page 3]

then again it may be less.

Probably in Lawrence and vicinity two hundred men killed--generally shot through the head, one, two, three, four, five balls in each[.] some men killed under circumstances of the greatest atrocity. Many were burned to death, a great many houses were fired and then put out again by the inmates. Probably not one fifth of the dwelling houses in town were burned, all the stores[,] hotels and business part of the town was destroyed. there were but two or three stores left standing and these were rifled of their goods.

This raid took place on Friday morning about sunrise 21st of August. On Sunday night following we had an awful scare. News came that the "bushwhackers" were upon us again, that they were burning Eudora, a town six miles East, and were just coming into town--oh! what a running and shrieking--the panic was terrific--women[,] men & children flying as for life. Many crossed the river--many fled to the neighboring cornfields, and staid out all night, though we had a terrible thunder shower between ten and eleven oclock. I think the citizens suffered more from fear Sunday night than they did the day when the ruffians came[.]

But we are now settling down to our wonted state of calmness and hopefulness. No one was prepared for such a calamity[.] We all thought that such a band could not enter Lawrence without our receiving some intelligence of the fact. An hours warning would have been sufficient and could have driven them all away[,] if we could have had only an hours warning--we had not a moments. It came sudden as a thunderbolt--the citizens were mostly asleep[.] There had been a great Rail Road meeting

[page 4]

the night previous and all the business men were taking an extra nap.

Some twenty negroes were killed--half of the Germans in town were shot--I mean of the voting men--a Dutchman stood no chance. These miscreants were pursued to their homes--I understand a great many were killed.

Relief in money and goods and provisions is coming in--a great many families have gone East. The shovel[,] the saw and the hammer are again in requisition. The foundations are being cleared away and stores are again commencing to [rise?][.] We can soon recover from the loss of property[.] The loss of life is the great, the essential loss[.]

Last Sunday we had a [MS. illegible] meeting of all the churches in the city. We met at Mr[.] Cordleys Church--the Congregationalist. Mr[.] Paddock[,] the Methodist minister[,] preached the sermon, a long, rambling, pointless affair. Strange how little a man can contrive to say in an hour[.]

Mr[.] [Nute?] is in town looking after his affairs[.] Whether we shall even get together again our Congregation I cannot say. I shall try next Sunday. Mary has gone to Buffalo to spend a year. Sarah is at home almost sick--if well enough she will go into school next Monday[.] I suppose we are, the rest of us pretty well. your chest of [MS. illegible] has at length arrived at Leavenworth. William is at home. I must go to town and visit the sick[,] the dis consulate. Mr[.] Paddock said last Sunday that there were 85 widows in town and 250 orphans made such by these wretches.

Yours Kindly & brotherly[.]

John S[.] Brown