

From Daniel L. Chandler to John Stillman Brown

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West Point, Bates Co. Mosouri.

Sept[.] 25th 1861

Dear Friend[.]

Your kind letter of the 5th reached me in due time and I would have written to you again before this, could I have found a moment's leisure. Since I have been in the hospital, the number of the sick has been so large, that I have hardly had time to get sleep enough to satisfy the demands of nature. Besides we have to constantly change our home, to meet the demands and requirements of the service[.]

My last letter to you was written at Fort Scott, and immediately after [occured] the battle of Dry Creek in which two of our boys were killed and three severely wounded. Quite a large number received slight wounds. After the skirmish at Dry Creek, Fort Scott was not considered tenable, or safe for the army, and we evacuated the place, taking with us every thing that we supposed would be of benefit to the enemy provided they saw fit to occupy the town. The main army were quartered for about two weeks at Fort Lincoln, but the sick and wounded men; were sent to Mapleton, which is situated some six miles north of Lincoln[.] Of course my home was with the sick and suffering at Mapleton and there I remained till the 23d when I was ordered to this place, to attend to those who were wounded in the recent battle at Morristown, in which Col[.] Johnson and one private was killed and three others were severely, though [*text stricken through*] none of them were mortally, wounded.

At Mapleton, we had sixty in the hospital at one time, though when I left, the number was reduced to twenty five, and those were considered out of danger, and all but nine, will be able to join there respective companies in a few days. Of those nine three were those who were wounded by accident, and the remaining three are slowly recovering from a severe attack of billious fever. The wounded men required my constant attention, and just as I began to congratulate myself, that my labors were in a fair way, to be less burdensome, the battle of Morristown took place, and I was sent here, where I find about thirty five on the sick list, besides the three wounded on the battle field.

We lost by death only two men at Mapleton, one of which died of consumption, which is a rare disease in Kansas, and the other died from inflammation of the brain, caused by a blow on the head with [*text stricken through*] a spade, from the hand of a fellow soldier. This soldier is at large, and will go unpunished, notwithstanding the heinousness of the crime that he has wantonly committed, but had his crime been petit larceny instead of murder, no punishment would have been too severe.

With regard to the wounded men, it is astonishing to think, how the human frame, "which is so wonderfully made" can be cut, torn and mangled and yet survive the crash, and become sound as ever, or nearly so, in such a short space of time. At Dry Creek, one of the boys, had his knee torn to pieces by a musket shot, another was shot in the groin among the main arteries of the thigh, and the other had his arm broken above the elbow. At Morristown, one was shot in the back, another in the thigh, and the third, which, is the most wonderfull escape of all, received two buck-shots in the head one of which went in above the eye, making a horrid wound where the organs of size, weight, and colour are prominent and the other shot literally went right through the organ of veneration. Yet with careful nursing the young man will probably survive,

even such severe wounds, which are so near the very [seat?] of life.

Our hospitals are kept in as good order, and as much attention is paid the sick, as circumstances permit. Our Surgeons, especially Drs. Gilpatrick and Scott, are humane men, whose hearts are in the right place, and they are indefatigable in there attentions to those who are so unfortunate as to require medical treatment. They strongly oppose our forced marches or any other movement which ruins the health of the soldier, without promoting or [MS. illegible] the Cause of Freedom and Right. True, they would hardly

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wish to interfere with [*text stricken through*] any movement of the army, though they have a right by law to do so, yet they never fail to make their influence tell, in the right direction.

Mapleton Bourbon Co.

Sept[.] 28th.

I have just returned to this place, with three ambulances containing fifteen sick and wounded men. The army left West Point about the same time bound to Kansas City. They had just returned from a successful expedition against Osceola a town situated some seventy miles east of West Point. The town was sacked and burnt, and a million and a half dollars worth of property was either destroyed or carried away. This large amount of property that was destroyed, consisted of lead, powder and dry goods, with some flour and provisions, for the rebel army. You may think that the large amount of property that was destroyed, too large to be stored in a small town, but I am credibly informed that the amount is not over estimated.

The condition of the State of Missouri is indeed most gloomy, and if the war continues a year longer, her territory will be turned into a desert, and her people will be compelled to seek homes in the adjoining states; Her treatment of the population of Kansas in 55 and 56, is being visited upon her with a seven fold vengeance. It seems barbarous and cruel to sack and burn towns, but I cannot tell how the rebels can be subdued by any other process[.]

Mapleton

Oct[.] 1st.

To-day we committed to the earth the remains of a private, in Capt. Bruce's company from Nemaha County. He was [quite an?] intelligent boy, only eighteen years of age, who has thus early [surrendered] his young life, for his country. His disease was pneumonia and his lungs became so inflamed that nothing could save him though every attention was paid him. Young as he was, he bore his sufferings with out murmuring, and retained perfect consciousness to the last. Though my acquaintance with him was short, yet I was strongly attached to him and I could not reconcile myself to have his remains committed to the earth without suitable funeral solemnities. Peace to his ashes.

Kansas City

Oct[.] 6th.

Three days ago I left Mapleton, with twenty men, who have recovered their health at the hospital, and who will re-join their respective companies. The number left at Mapleton is twenty five all but three of which are considered convalescent. We expect to leave this place to meet the enemy, at or near Lexington hourly[.] Fremont will be their with a large army to co-operate, and a great, and perhaps a decisive battle, may soon be expected to take place. When I say

decisive, I mean so far as the Territory west of the Mississippi is concerned. The rebels have [*text stricken through*] an army of Sixty thousand, and if all accounts are true, our combined army will number fifty thousand. When this numerous body of men meet, if they [MS. illegible] to it, for the men, on both sides are frontier men, who have seen hardship and privation, and whose feelings have become [hardened?] by a long series of real, or imaginary wrongs, and therefore will [not?] be likely to ask or receive quarter.

Dr. Gilpatrick Brigade Surgeon to-day offered me the position of Steward of the whole Brigade, but I do not care to accept the [MS. illegible] I can be more usefull than I am at the present time. The Dr. says that he desires me to be [near?] the main army, when our engagement takes place for he thinks that it is better for me to be with the wounded [MS. illegible] first.

My health continues good. I hope that you will write often and this time direct your letter to Kansas City, Missouri, care of Capt[.] Harvey 4th Regt. I think that the postmasters are pretty punctual in forwarding letters to the army, yet many from neglect of the officers are unquestionably lost. If possible, I should get a furlough, and return to [Ogden?] for a few days to look after my affairs, within a month from this time and I shall go by the way of Lawrence, even if I go out of my way to get there, for I wish to see you.

Please take into consideration the circumstances under which I am compelled to write and excuse all mistakes.

Yours Truly
Daniel L. Chandler

Rev. J.S. Brown