

From James Griffing to Augusta

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Wakarusa

April 6th 1855

Ever loved Augusta

I have been waiting before I wrote in order that I might tell you just how things would work with our new pioneer friends that have just come on. I was very glad indeed to have them come, and to see them, but as it has proved, and if I had the matter to manage again I would I think manage differently, i.e. I would have Henry come on first and get all things in readiness, and then have his family come on in the *[text stricken through]* fall.

However as they are here perhaps it is all for the best. The children in their new situation have been quite troublesome. Whilst on the cars Velma had the end of one of her fingers pinched off by the door, which was a source of much trouble. And when on the boat nearly all owing to the exposure and exceeding bad weather took bad colds, and have also been troubled with the diarrhea, but they are now much better and Henry thinks begin to act like themselves again.

As the claims were all taken about here that were of much value, in company with James and a Mr[.] Barnard, he started last Monday up in the vicinity of Topeka, which I rather think a promising portion of the territory, and is about 28 miles above here on the Kansas, where I heard claims might be obtained. The timber claims were all taken, but good desirable prairie claims might be had within about 3 miles of Topeka and *[text stricken through]* 4 from Tecumseh, *[text stricken through]* near Deer Creek a tributary of the Kansas. And as we wished to all locate near each other we

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Purchased a timber claim containing some 40 or 50 acres of timber and have taken claims each side of it so as all to derive advantage from the timber. it cost \$50, a little over \$16 apiece. In ordinary seasons I think water will be abundant, and then good stone for building are convenient. Should the government survey prove favorable, James will have a fine bunch of timber on his claim in addition to what he bought, as it joins timber on one side, and on the other a local Methodist preacher has a claim named Wentworth. He told me to say "that he liked the country pretty well, but that he was not always a going to spend his life away out here.["] He speaks often of home, says he never was away before to stay any--and I suppose so very great a change will often give him homesickness. He seems to feel much more contented since he has taken his claim and gone to cutting the logs for his cabin, and if he will only be contented he cannot help doing well.

I left him yesterday morning busy at work, and came down after Henry and his family who will probably go up Monday, when I am in hopes he will begin to *[text stricken through]*

feel quite at home. We pitched a tent near the timber and constructed a sort of temporary cabin for Henry, and tried with very few conveniences to do our own cooking. I gave the boys a sort of initiation in the business and Ja's thought he could do his own cooking in my absence. The first bread I baked was made of flour, meal and water mixed with a little lard--and when cooked weighed less than a brickbat. This with some bacon fried constituted our first meal. We commenced our frugal repast, and I kept waiting to hear some compliment upon my bread, but as none came,

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I [MS. torn] ventured to break the silence, by asking James how he liked the bread. Giving it a side glance he said "If I was at home and our folks should offer one such bread I would not eat it, but here I have such an appetite it tastes quite good.["] I think the country will agree well with his health, if only his mind can be kept from brooding on his home. I am sometimes almost afraid that no inducement, be it ever so great[,] will ever cause him to remain here for any great length of time. Please when you write rather encourage him by all means to stay--Topeka will I think become a place of much importance as it is in the center of the best part of the territory.

You can hardly think how fast the emigration is pouring in from the free states. We have been greatly wronged, our rights invaded at the elections last week: armed forces from Missouri came and took possession of the ballot boxes and pretty much carried on the election as they pleased. Their proceedings will only work against them. The free state men left the polls almost in a body and would not vote. The judges of the election have reported the conduct of Missouri to the Governor and he has taken the poll books and report of the judges, and I understand has gone to lay the matter before the president. I think Missouri is making her last struggle for Kansas knowing that a large proportion of her citizens are free state men, and are determined to use coercive measures with them, and oblige them to subvert to her will--vain dreamers. They little think of the [*text stricken through*] unbounded import embodied in that familiar sentiment of Kossuth's, that truth crushed to Earth shall rise again. The eternal years of God are hers--

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You will please to pardon the exceeding brevity of [MS. torn]. I shall have just as much as I can tend to for a few [MS. torn] the boys have taken me from my regular work in a great measure. James says you talk some of going to Hartford for medical aid. If so I hope the trip without the aid, will prove a source of strength and greatly encourage you. I do believe inhaling the pure air of this climate will do you good.

But stop.--I was told when James first came to my humble cabin and peeked in the door (as I was away on my circuit) he told a friend with him, that he did not believe his sister would ever live in a house like that. And leaving your own comfortable home and come away here, I guess you would have come to the same conclusion, but it is the best we can do here until we surround ourselves with the conveniences for doing better. The demand is so very great for lumber, and the facilities for making it so small as yet the people cannot get scarcely any, but we

hope soon to get a little at least.

Since I commenced writing a man by whom Henry sent to Westport, has returned with a very nice cookstove and the trimmings. Nancy is commending it very highly, and begins to talk and feel quite cheerful. The children are playing with buttons and seem enjoying themselves, and I think after they become acquainted they cannot help liking here very much. I do hope the children especially will be healthy, for if they should be sick, you know they could be disposed to blame me.-- Henry is much pleased with the country, and I guess will enjoy good health here.

Bear my kind regards to your parents, also to my own mother should you see her, as well as to Sarah, Mary, Ralph & Stephen, and any of my friends that may especially inquire. My meetings are quite well attended, but I am sorry that I do not have more time for study. Oftimes, pray for me, and know always that you share the affection and kindest regards of your James

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[P.S.] James wished me to tell you that his address would be Topeka Kansas Territory[,] mine is still at Lawrence[.]