

From James Griffing to Unknown

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Wyandott

Jan[.] 10th 1855

I have just come down to make a visit at my Kansas home, Bro. Goodes. Was happy indeed to find all enjoying such good health and in such fine spirits. It does really seem as if they would become very lonesome living as they do in the woods, and surrounded entirely by Indians, when in Indiana they were permitted from the circumstances in which they were placed to enjoy the first of society, but they seem very cheerful and happy, singing away all gloom and managing in a great many ways to introduce happiness and joy, in their Indian house--

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In passing through Westport on my way here I was glad to take from the office a letter from yourself. If you only knew how welcome they come I am sure you would love to write. Cause why. Because I believe you like to make people happy.

But to your questions as I have but a moment to write. Are you not afraid there from the course pursued at the late election? No more than I would be in Owego. What will the people do? Assert their rights and strive to maintain them. It is pretty clearly ascertained that 2/3rds of the Territory are for freedom. What do you do for windows? Get them at the stores at Lawrence, i.e. sash glass &c. How large is the cabin? Fifteen ft square, commenced but not yet completed. Hope to get time to finish it ere long...How do you cook steak and shortcakes? Well that's a poser[.]

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For short cakes we use one teaspoonful of yeast powders to a teacupful of flour mix with our neat hands, and season with shortning and other fixings to our liking. Our steaks we fry in the spider. Where does Jacob stay when not in use? I turn him out in Uncle Sams big pasture, he takes very good care of himself. Nobody has been obliged to fodder any here as yet. We have had no snow, but very nice weather [*text stricken through*][.]

When do the rivers open and when the last time for James to come? Sometimes in February, but probably it would be better not to start from there before the 1st of March--He may want drawers and wrappers three months of the year, but the weather is much milder and the temperature much more even than there. Sweet potatoes do first rate here, better perhaps than the Irish potatoes.

As to the daguerreotype I have paid Sykes for taking it and shall probably have him do it when I come home this summer. You seemed to speak as if there might be danger in living here. I am sure you would greatly change your opinions after stopping here awhile. We never think even of locking our cabins, never have anything disturbed. Our society is mostly all from the

East, and you feel just as much composed as when in New England.

It truly seems lonesome here at Bro. Goodes after being up in the territory awhile. Our nearest neighbor is Mr[.] Parat from Tennessee, then Mr[.] Sellers then Dr. Still, then Cha's Still, then Rev. M[.] Stewart[,] Methodist minister from N. Hampshire, then Bro. James Still, then a dozen Yankees all in one cabin all and more too within a half hours walk. Out on the prairie on an adjacent claim Mr[.] Ogden is erecting quite a nice frame house. By next fall, I presume that although my cabin will be surrounded on three sides by woods, yet we may count twenty cabins from our doors. It may be many more. I think we shall have an excellent neighborhood and valuable

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neighbors. I like Kansas more and more every day I stay here. Too be sure there is something pleasant in the idea of sleighing.

Jan. 12th

I must soon start for my appointment, and must finish what I have to say now. You seemed to think the Missourians dangerous because I pronounced them more so than the Indians but there is no more reason for a person who attends to his own business to be afraid here than anywhere under the broad canopy of the universe. It is the case that when in Missouri if the people find out that you are from the Northern States, they will spare no pains to discourage your settling in Kansas and will say many unreliable things, all due allowance must be made as they are selfish.--

It will seem like a great while until September yet I think probably your choice a good one. Do you think it will be a pleasant month to travel[?] I should like much to go to commencement at Middletown, and will be entitled to the degree of A.M. if I go, but for two reasons I hardly think I can, the want of time and means. I should not want to go without your company, but for one or two years I shall be obliged to deny myself this so great favor. With the blessing of Heaven, I hope before many years that I may make such a journey without any difficulty or embarrassment. Travelling is quite expensive and my trip to Owego in Sept[.] will cost not far from \$150.00[,]

[*cross-hatched text on page 1*]

which in connection with some outlays that I may wish to make this summer in fencing and tilling my claim, will require the most rigid economy on my part, without I can or should sell my farm in Illinois, which I had rather not do until the land comes in market here.--

If my life and health are spared then Providence favoring I shall be happy to be in Owego in September, a farther journey East I cannot with certainty provide myself, at any rate I should not consent to go alone, and it is very doubtful whether I could get away on time to reach there for commencement. Your household goods that you mentioned are just what we shall want. Send all kinds of seeds you can think of by James if he comes. I have written to him and shall be

looking for a letter soon, and one also from Henry. I hope [MS. illegible] and Henry (with his family) will all come in company, and if they should fall in with some association coming west to Kansas they could come through at quite a reduced passage, otherwise I think it will cost them near fifty dollars each to come. At any rate I would not pay fare only from Owego to Buffalo, and try for this there. There are now three papers published at Lawrence. When I go there again I will try and send you one.

Excuse blunders and ever believe you have the best wishes of your
James