

From James Griffing to My Dear Wife

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In camp Kansas City

Oct[.] 23rd 18[64]

My Dear Wife

We came here last evening. Price is reported to have entered Westport last evening, and said to have a force of from 20 thousand, to 40. if so and as he is pretty well surrounded, I am looking for a pretty severe contest to day. Our company may be in the midst of a most terrible slaughter. The thing has become more of a reality than I was expecting when I started [MS. illegible]

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believe that every thing will be for the best.

½ past 2 o'clock[.] I commenced writing this morning and an order came that we must drop every thing, and march at once so we came over to the breastworks which Col[.] Jennison had thrown up for the protection of Kansas City. [*text stricken through*] Col[.] Jennison was driven in by the rebels last evening, in to the intrenchments where we are at present Quartered. They are at present fighting a tremendous battle about five miles south of this, the wounded are being brought in, in large numbers. We can see the

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smoke of the battle very plainly, but the wind is quite unfavorable and the continued talking and cheering as the dispatches come in prevents our hearing much of the thunder of the artillery. Still later our men have cut off his long train of commissaries and taken a large amount of his pillage and Price is going South just as fast as he can. An order has come requiring just as many of our men as possible to get horses and pursue after him. I have not as yet been down to the hospital to see the wounded. Our regimental surgeon

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Dr[.] Hidden just told me they were generally slightly wounded[.] he thought but few cases would prove fatal. You can form no idea of the amount of militia here--especially the infantry. I was just down to where the [*text stricken through*] Topeka boys were camped. They told me the Topeka battery was taken by the enemy yesterday and Col. Veals cavalry company was cut off from the main body, and they had not as yet heard from them.

Next morning--Have been standing guard most of the night. News comes that the enemy are retreating

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fast as they can go with our enemy in hot pursuit, fighting him with the artillery and cavalry. A great many hundred have already been killed and taken prisoner[.] Yesterday whilst a portion of [*text stricken through*] the enemy were passing up a lane On the retreat[.] they were surprised by a battery planted in their front which mowed down [*text stricken through*] a large number of them. Our Captain who was ordered down to assist in guarding prisoners, says he thinks we will be ordered home again to day[.] I do hope it will be so that

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I can go out to the battle field, before I return[.] Returning militia cavalry state that the "rebs" are scatterd quite thickly over the ground[.] Preparations are making for a drill so I will leave this and hope to write again soon hoping I may be able to tell you good news about the Topeka Cavalry, as Capt[.] Hannum's Company was among them. Now I would like to hear how you all are this morning.

Ever Your own aff- husband.

James

[*P.S.*] NB. Excuse the dirt[,] grease[,] and writing as it has been done mostly as I could catch it on my knee in camp[.]