

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Section 9, Pages 241 - 266

Civil War letters written by Lewis Stafford of Grasshopper Falls, Kansas, to his girlfriend Kate Newland, also of Grasshopper Falls and later Lecompton and Topeka. Stafford served in Company E of the 1st Kansas Infantry as a Lieutenant and then a Captain. The regiment was formed at Fort Leavenworth. The headings on the letters are from various locations and give a sense of where his regiment was stationed. The locations include Fort Leavenworth, KS; Chillicothe, MO; Tipton, MO; Lawrence, KS; Fort Scott, KS; Fort Riley, KS; Trenton, TN; Corinth, MS; Grand Junction, TN; and on the Mississippi River. Almost all of the letters include expressions of his feelings for Miss Newland and he conveys his emotions about her quite eloquently. Many of the letters describe the movement of the regiment from this place to that, the social life (including mentions of drunkenness) in the Kansas towns where they are staying--particularly after pay was received, and rumors about where they would be sent. Others include his impressions of the areas through which they were traveling and details of his day-to-day military activities. Stafford died in a logging accident on January 31, 1863, at Young's Point, Louisiana.

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That - several other officers feel about - this war, in the same manner - It is not a life of patriotism, but a great - disgust - towards those who are at the head of our armies and the Government - It is plain to us that there is unbounded corruption existing in all their actions and aims to put down the rebellion -

Well, Kate, you will think I am very uninteresting this time, but there is a great dearth of news at present - If I could get a leave of absence I would, and come home - But that is one of the forbidden things at present, a leave of absence, now, has to be granted from the War Department, at Washington - With all these things to keep me where I am, you certainly will have no serious objections against me, for not coming home - I wish you were present to witness some of the "Division Drills" we have - It is a splendid thing to witness the various evolutions - I must write to your Uncle, then to Mr. Hicks - Then to Frank at home in Vt. and my long neglected correspondents will be in debt to me again - But at all times I am remembering Kate -

Affectionately Yours
Lewis Stafford

P.S. Give my respects to your mother -

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Lumpkin's Mills Miss
December 1st /64

My Dear Kate:

We are a good way down in Dixie land. On the 20th ult we left our camp near Grand Junction, and on the 29th passed through Holly Springs to this place. On both days there was some skirmishing but it was done mostly by our Cavalry. Yesterday a reconnaissance was made in which the Kansas 1st took a part. We drove the rebels pickets and out posts in to their Forts on the Tallahatchie River some ten or twelve miles from here southward. It was a lively time with us and them too, for we soon made it so hot that their small force could not resist us. The deadly missiles flew thick and fast all around and about us and strange to say no one was hurt. We accomplished our object and returned to camp. I was tired, hard marching and not but little sleep for the past two nights, made me little heed the terrific Thunder Shower that came on early after our return to camp. We went within sight of the rebels, Forts on this side of the river. They are strong fortified and all think they will make a big fight. I am thankful none of us were hurt, but it will be a miracle if we escape so again. Indeed it seems so this time. It was no

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part of the plan to make an engagement. Our Regt-
has got a good reputation and we hope we
maintain it in the coming fight in two or three
days the worst and all will be known. The enemy
may retreat from here to Jackson Miss. and
may send only show fight to both our march -
Our advance against them has commenced in
earnest, and if the weather permits and our troops
successful we will be near Vicksburg before New Year.

I received a letter the night before we left Grand
Junction, from your Uncle Robert. I am very
sorry you have been sick, and that your Mother also
has been sick. Your Uncle's letter was full of regard
for you self as well as for your Mother. He told
me all about how the Judge was situated and thinks
it would have been better for your Mother's health
to have staid in the old place. I really wish,
as strong as ever that I was a home. He seemed
to think I should be at home soon. I hope some
good fortune would favor me to get there long
since, but I almost despair at times of being able
soon. I have often given you the reasons why I
cannot. Still I hope for the best. I have no fears
but that in time I shall get home. But that is not
the purpose, even if we were not married for four
or five months after I got there. I have no desire to
postpone the time at all. I must close as the mail leaves
in a few minutes. Affectionately ever your
Lewis Stafford

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

I will write again soon if nothing
prevents -
Ledi



Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

1862, Dec. 1

Camp of the 1st Regt. Kansas Vols.
December 1st 1862

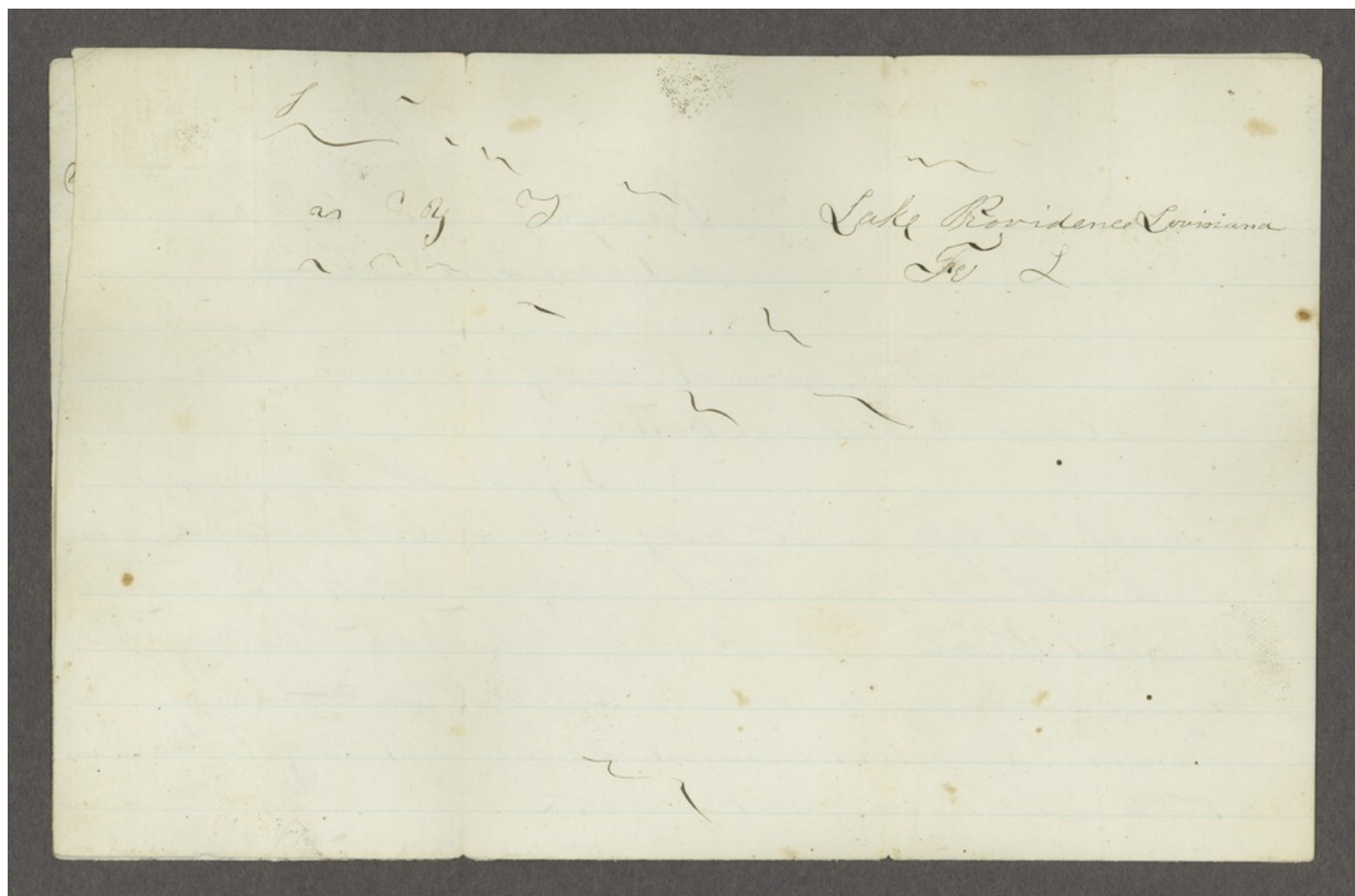
To all whom it may concern in
case I fall in battle

I give all my property
much or less as it may be to Kate Newland
and all the pay that may be due me from the
United States and only ask that she may take
it in memory of me. If she will go ~~and~~ to
Pownol Center Vermont and visit my father
it would be a great favor.

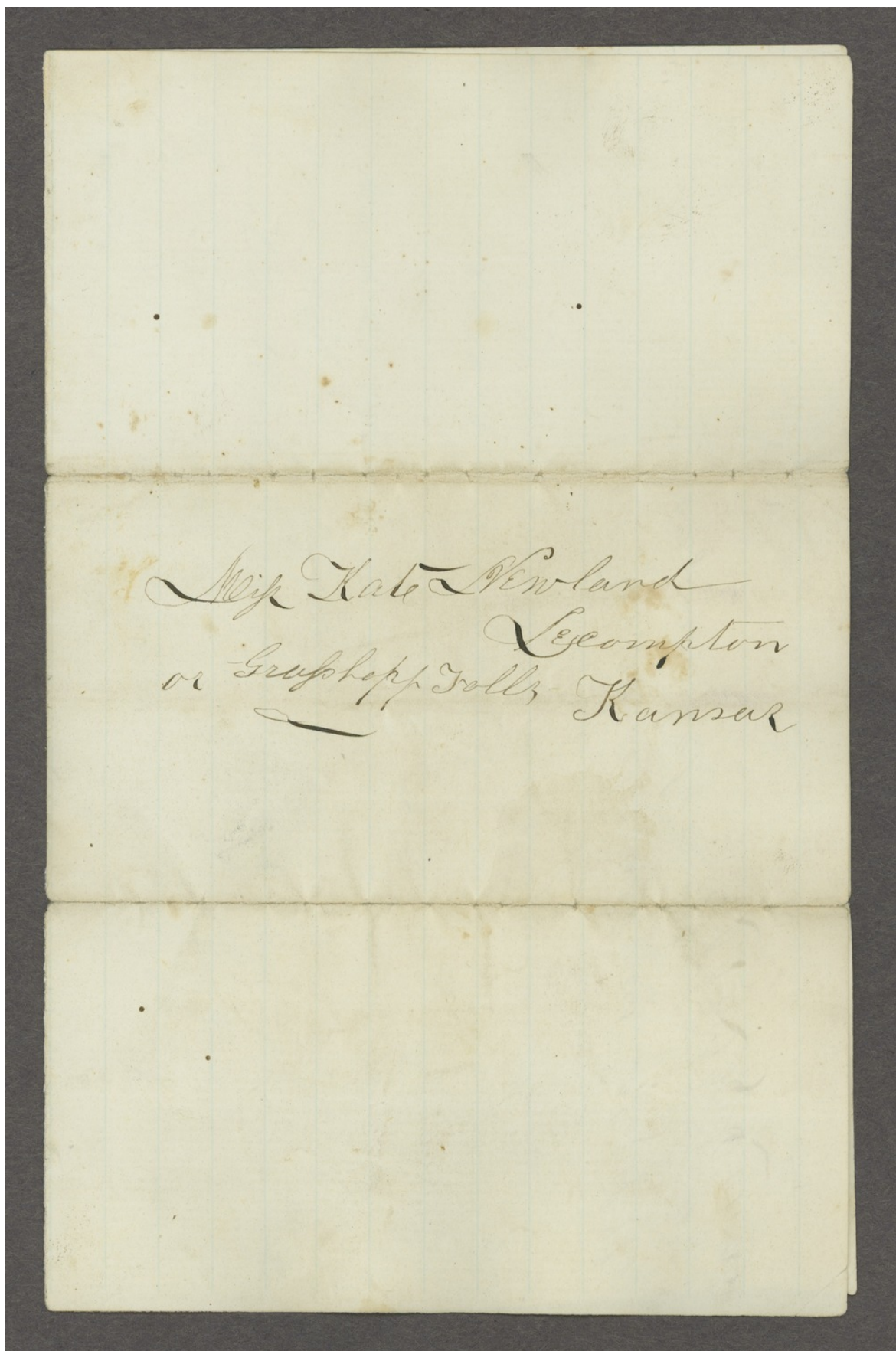
Lewis Stafford

The above is a correct copy of the
original taken by
L. H. Howard

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence



Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence



Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

1862, Dec. 5

Camp near Atleyville Miss
December 5th 1862 -

My dear Kate:

In my last - I
wrote you, that we had just returned
from a reconnoissance which
was so successfully made. The day before
I thought that the rebels would make
a stand, and that an awful battle
would ensue on the succeeding day.
We were apprised in the afternoon,
only a short time after I had put
your letter in the office, that the rebels
had retreated southward, and the
order was to follow. We being in
the advance of the infantry, were
among the first to pass the fort, that
looked so formidable the day previous
when the iron throated monsters
inside of it, vomited forth their
fury and destruction against us -

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

all now was quiet-except the heavy top
of our soldiers the rumbling of our artillery
or the wild hurrah of some one as he
mounted the, now, decimated earthworks
of the enemy - Two or three miles farther
brought-to the Tallahatchie River - A part
of our Cavalry had crossed early in the day.
The enemy had destroyed the bridges and
before we could cross another had to be
built - We lay all night - shivering on the
banks of the river - Early in the morning
Col Scales Brigade crossed over and
soon the whole of Genl McArthur
Division - Here, on the south side of
the river, the rebels had put-up the
strongest-earthworks I ever saw. They
had a stronghold indeed, but from
some motive they left them, probably
to save their necks - Well we were
all gratified at the result - and hope
they will keep their legs in motion
untill they get-home, or run into the
Gulf of Mexico - Our army is now all

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

across the river - It is, the river, but little
larger than the Mississippi - but it is deeper -
When we shall leave here it is impossible to say - But it will not be long if I
understand the movements - It rained
all day yesterday last night and is still
raining and snowing - We of the Kansas
1st know what hard soldiering was long
ago, but I pity the new troops, who have
just left their homes and feather beds -
So long as we are upon this expedition
it is of no use for me to try to get
away from here - But as soon as we
get into a permanent camp I then
will try again - Your uncle said you
proposed going to Topeka, to stay some
time. I hope you will not in
any event forget to write to me -
for I am as ever.

Affectionately Yours
Lewis Stafford

Signed to 1st Kansas Regt -

McArthur Division

Army of the Tennessee -

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Portage Road, arriving earlier for a second out
 and go the other way. And it is as you chose
 to go, it is a long time in the past you
 to go, it is a long time in the past you

Camp near Abbyville Miss

December 15th 1862 -

—My dear Kate!

Your kind letter, en-
closed in one from your Uncle, was
gladly received on Friday last week.
No words of mine can express the
joy it gives me to get your letters.

But, again I am sad when I know how anxiously you are ex-
pecting me home, and I find that
it is impossible for me to get there,
for how long a time I do not-
know. But I am anxiously an-
ticipating for circumstances to occur
by means of which I may be able
to get home. O how often I have
asked myself the question, will
this war come to a close, so that
those who wish to leave the service
can do so. And will it; all hope so.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Our Army is at a stand still, just now, except its employment in the building of R.R. Road Bridges which the rebels destroyed, and bringing in Cotton that is baled up ready for shipment. On Saturday, I was one of a party which went 12 miles from Camp after Cotton. We got near 300 Bales. This at present prices is a large draft on the Confederacy. And it was small with some other quantities. The Government is employing the contrabands in several places, to pick the Cotton of which there is large quantities left by the rebels, and now going to waste. The advance of this Army is near Grenada some forty five miles south of this. The Confederate Army is between Grenada and Jackson Miss. We hear but little of what is going on in front. I don't have any fears in regard to my safety. I fear sickness more than the danger of

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

a battle field - But there is only a little sickness now in the Army -

Kate, I beg you forgive me if I intrude with a little advice - Your Uncle wrote that he wished you to come to Lawrence and stay until I got home. You say in your letter you will go to Topeka soon, and stay there some time. Now what I ask is that you go to either one or the other ^{the} places, and you can tell where you will be most likely to enjoy yourself, and stay there until I return home - which I hope will not be many months distant - If you will do so, the expense whatever it may be for so doing, shall never trouble Judged I should come home, and we could be married, and then I might return to the Army again, but it is impossible in this Army to get a leave of absence - But I am not able to do as I wish - I do not ask you to leave home and your Mother, without consideration of many facts -

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

I feel that I am the cause of making Judge
Shen your enemy - and often have you told
me how much he annoyed you all on my
account - how as the time may be much
longer than either of us think it will, before
I can get home I am anxious ^{that} you
are secure in happiness as much as
possible, and ask you to do as you
desire to do, go either to Topeka or to
Lawrence - and stay until I return
and Judge Speer's finances shall not decrease
by your doing so - Kate, you are dearer
to me than all other friends - I have
known no lessing of my love toward
you - I hope you will not think it wrong
in me to have asked the above - I have
done it - from no other feeling or motive
than love, and a desire to make you
happy - And with an earnest prayer
that you may be happy - I remain as ever

Affectionately Yours
Lewis Stafford

P.S. Write me as often as you can and
remember this - say you will agree to what
I have proposed, and when I get your
reply I will then express myself
more fully - Pray do not hastily reject -
and think I meant to do you any wrong -
It is in your own persons and can be kept
there - With love I am ever yours L.S.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Colierville Tennessee -
January 8th 1863

I wrote to you from Abbeville on the 18th of December but am afraid you did not receive it, for the chances are that it was destroyed. I hope not read by a confederacy - I hope you did get the letter, and further hope & decide that my propositions were favorably received. I left Abbeville on the 18th when Gen. McDowell's Division marched south - Our Regt. is in his Division. We went 12 miles South of Oxford, arrived there on the 20th. The confederacy mounted our horses and mules and made an attack on our line of communications and captured Holly Springs, destroying a great quantity of commissary stores & ammunition - carrying away clothing and such other things they needed. They met with but little resistance, for the officer in command at H.C.S. at that time, is either a fool, a coward or a traitor, for he had ample warning that the Confederates were coming, and plenty of means at hand to repel them - Well the Confederates will always succeed, in doing as they please when they find such men in command. They burned up two trains of cars. But by chance, one train was between H.C.S. and Oxford and was saved.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

A large force was immediately sent back to take possession of that place again. It consisted mostly of Genl McIntosh's Division. Our Regt. was sent back, and took the cars on the 21st and left everything behind to come after us when the remainder of the troops came up. The cars came to within eight miles of Vicksburg. The next day several thousand troops marched in to town to assert the supremacy of the Stars & Stripes and find that the confederacy had proceeded farther north on this equestrian tour. The rebels destroyed the largest portion of the business houses in this pretty town. The ammunition they set fire to exploded and set fire to the whole center of the place and it was completely burned up. Vicksburg is by far the prettiest town I have seen in the South. Our soldiers committed a great many excesses, and no one for a while attempted to stop them. I am ashamed and despise our soldiers for their meanness. But when officers allow men to do such things I cannot restrain my own. But it is very degrading to the Army to allow such things to pass unobserved. The Kansas boys are not so bad as some I have seen, but they are bad enough surely. The people of the South where our troops pass surely feel the effect of war in more than one sense of the word. It is plunder, plunder and nothing but plunder. Our Genl. & Col. look on and see the men do it. So the war is waged. It is a lack of brains & nerves, a great destitution of the

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

principle of honesty & self respect - that makes things as
 they are - Since we came back to Holly Spring the
 main army has followed - From there we came
 to this place where we are enjoying the noble position
 of B. Road. guards again - This is the first opportunity
 I have had, since we left Abbeyville, to write to you
 You have been upon the tramp ever since - It is not
 very cold here yet - and but little rain has fallen
 so far - Today it is raining - How glad I should have
 been, to have been at home, with you during the holidays
 I hope you enjoyed them, among your many friends
 I presume I shall be characterized as a slow coach
 in getting home - But one of these ^{days} not far off
 I hope and expect to get home - But so far it has
 been of no use for one to try to resign - When it will
 be the question I am anxious to hear answered -
 This war ought to cease - Our Government has gained
 nothing this far toward putting down the rebellion
 I am anxious to get home, this life in the army
 is using up hours and days of time, that ought
 to be expended in civil life - If I knew how to do
 it - I would not be long about accomplishing such
 an object - I only hope that some good fortune
 will attend our armies and that success may be theirs -
 When once this rebellion is put down then all who live
 will be able to go home - Write me soon and
 remember me to always affectionately Yours
 Lewis Stafford

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Kate I would write more if I felt assured you had got
the letter I wrote you Dec 17th - But in any event - you
may rest assured I will write as often as I can -
I hope to hear that you are either at Lehigh or Leavenworth
When you are at either of those places you can write to me
often - At least I hope you will - Letters directed to me
at La Grange, Tenn. will reach me readily - & though
if sent to Columbus, Ky. will reach me - Letters would
come by the way of Memphis - The R Road from Columbus
south is so destroyed that it will be some weeks before
the trains run upon it - Give my respects to
your Mother and accept my love yourself
L. Stafford

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Miss Kate

On Board the Steamer *Jennie Deane*

January 21st 1863.

My Dear Kate:

It has been so long a time since I have received a letter from you, that I am fast coming to the conclusion ~~you are~~ must more neglectful than you were wont to be, or that my letters have given you cause not to write. I received a letter from your Uncle, when our Regt. was in Memphis he informed me you were at Topeka and were going to school. I was very glad to hear the news. But, I thought of your promise to write to me from Topeka as soon as you arrived there. I feel that I cannot do myself any credit by attempting to find fault, if there was cause even, and so I will say no more. Our Regt. has been so very busy for the past three months

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

that I have not written to you as
often as I wished I could. We are
now on our way down the River
for the purpose of attacking Osage
at least all suppose so. Kate, you
may think I do not wish to get home
and that all my promises were made
to deceive you - but you will greatly
err in thus thinking. If I could
have half seen what I have since
experienced and now have a knowledge
of, when I was in Kansas, and had
the opportunity for doing so, I should
have resigned and staid at home.
But I am not master of circumstances
which so far it seems Feely
has made. I have been sadly disappoint-
ed in not having been able to carry
out all my promises, which I was
so desirous of doing. The time at
present looks as far distant as
it did two months ago. I can offer
no encouragement to your expectations.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

"come home." How anxious I am to
hear from you, you cannot imagine
me capable of feeling. Will you write
to me, and tell me the cause of this
long neglect in writing. Your thoughts
are as sacred with me as to yourself.
Your last letter was one I received un-
closed in one from your mother. I
have said I will not complain, I will
not. But I would be free to state facts.
I hope sometime to be able to prove
to you how sincere I am in my
love. I know that we all must be
patient, and that the good time will
come in the end. I write thus very
hastily so as to have it mailed at
Helena Ark. as the boat does
not stop long. Good by with
the affection and love of
Lewis Stafford

Write soon.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

The boat goggles so I can barely
write.

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

Miss
Mouth of the Barrow River
January 24th 1863

My Dear Kate:

The fleet containing Genl
McArthur's Division arrived at this place yesterday -
Here we found Genl McLernaud's Army, some
of the troops on land but most of them on the
boats. Nothing of interest transpired on our
voyage down the river. We passed Helena
the second day from Memphis, at which place
I left a letter to be sent by mail to you -
I had hoped, that at Helena, I would find
the 5th Kansas, the Regt in which is Swight Kelly
and Ed Pierce, as well as Bob Clayton and
many others whom I am acquainted with.
But the 5th had been gone some two weeks from
there, on an expedition to Little Rock, Ark.
I know nothing of the intentions or purposes
of our Army, and can scarcely give a definite
opinion. But of all things they do attempt -
I really hope, the plan is not to take
Vicksburg by an assault. We may succeed
in such an attempt, but I doubt - Men however
brave they may be, will hesitate and falter when
they have long beforehand, become convinced that
almost certain death awaits them in an

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

undertaking of the kind that will present itself at Fick'sburg - It is well, that we do not understand the plans of our Gents. But we only hope that their plans may be those of success. I thought long ago, I could not endure the service but a short time, and now I only wonder that I have been able to do so - There is not a day scarce an hour, in which my thoughts do not revert back to home and particularly thee - Kate. I do not know as I have studied your heart aright, but I believe it the embodiment of love, enduring patience and forgiveness. A love without selfishness, a patience linked with forgiveness, to endure the slight and neglect, offered towards your warm and generous heart - forgiveness to forgive the shortcomings and negligence to respond in an equal manner to the pure love of your warm heart offerings - Yes I believe all this and more. I have often thought how strange a courtship ours has been, with you to excite me to be noble and do right, the false character others would dress me in, and the passions of youth, to restrain among those who would be my friends but in truth are my worst enemies, and in a place and under circumstances best adapted to bring disgrace and dishonour upon our teachers and ourselves. Amid all this covering of darkness, your image of love and forgiveness has shone resplendent, asking

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

me to ever press onward, that the day was not far distant in which you would flight, that love and faith to me, and that we might be happy - That would life be worth without happiness in knowing we possessed the love of the one, loved better than all the rest. The sum of all human happiness is love - Love begins with hatred. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

Indeed Kate nothing in this world would give me more pleasure than to grasp you once more by the hand, and listen to your voice. This may seem like a school boys passion, but not it is something more. I would know if you entertain the same feelings towards me, as you once did. That if time, my own actions, nor the actions of friends have wrought no change in your feelings. So not think I distrust you - But the pleasure to hear the assurance that I am still loved by you, would be a real happiness. And how anxiously I am awaiting for the time to come in which I may be made glad by getting home - I have never yet thought, I should not return. I have no ambition to allay, that keeps me here. I am here because, circumstances compell it to be so - I hope these things soon will change. Untill then remember me as

Affectionately Yours
Lewis Stafford

Lewis Stafford to Kate Newland correspondence

We just now got orders
to disembark and go into camp, but to hold our-
selves in readiness to get aboard the boats at a mom-
ent's warning. But what an awful country for the
poor soldier. Death stares him in the face, in
more ways than one. The country is low and flat
the banks of the river are naturally overflowed, but
the people have built levees or high embankments
to keep the water from overflowing the whole country.
Strange indeed look the trees covered with moss.
The moss is a dirty greenish color, and is pendant,
hanging down to the ground often. There is no
natural scenery along the river, and the artist
finds it tedious, when one thinks of the
great evil, the war that is desolating the country.
The river Mississippi is a picture of sublime
grandeur, but the sameness of its banks scenery
gives it a dull sluggish appearance. But of
what a volume of water, it rolls on, and on,
as it has done for centuries, in its proud majesty,
unaffected by the influence of civilization, and
the angry passions of men. Boom, bang. There the
iron boats are at it. Our army is now engaged in
digging across the bend, to turn the river away from
Vicksburg. Tomorrow it is expected it will be
open. What then I can't tell for more of it I know
But good by, write soon and think of him who
so often thinks of you —
Lewis Stafford