

Cyrus Kurtz Holliday to Mary Dillon Holliday

Cyrus K. Holliday, founder of Topeka, Kansas Territory, wrote from "Up the River," Kansas Territory to his wife, Mary Holliday, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, describing the difficult living conditions for him and the other men at the future site of Topeka, where they had been visited by Governor Andrew H. Reeder. Holliday assured his wife of his health and requested that she explain to Mr. Drew Lowry and Mr. McFarland in Pennsylvania why he had not written. He praised the beauty of the country and expressed his vision of its future, ending with a request that she write to him.

Creator: Holliday, Cyrus Kurtz, 1826-1900

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Cyrus Kurtz Holliday to Mary Dillon Holliday

Direct as usual - to "Laurence K. L."

"Up the River" K. L.

Dec 10, 1881

c/35

My Dear Mary - I have thought that I could not spend this Sabbath morning in a more appropriate manner than in addressing another letter to you - Consequently I now find myself at 11 o'clock A.M. seated on the end of a trunk and writing upon the end of a half barrel keg - a little better picture than when I wrote to you from the bottom of a pewter platter upon which I had just eaten my breakfast. This will give you some idea of life in a new Territory -

I believe I addressed you last from Lawrence - I am now thirty miles above Lawrence on the Kansas River assisting in starting a new town - We are just about in the central portion of the Settled territory

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and with perhaps the best landing
and the most eligible site for a
city in the entire country - Governor
Reeder passed through our place day
before yesterday and spoke very
encouragingly of our enterprise -
I hope all will go well -

You can't tell, Mary, how glad
I am that you are not with me.
That we have to endure is almost
beyond belief and you never could
have gone through it - It is a long
time since I have seen anything
in the shape of a bed - I have a
Buffalo robe and two blankets in
which I roll myself and lay down
to rest upon the bare ground with
boots, hat, overcoat and all on -
Our food is mush, molasses and
bacon, mixed plentifully with dirt
three times each day - Thus we
live in Kansas - Yet notwithstanding
all this I have never had better
health in my life - growing fatter

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and heartier each day.

A more lovely country country
I certainly never saw - and yet
it looks worse now than at any
other season - I am told by those
who know that in the Spring and
early Summer when the grass and
shrubs and flowers appear it
is beautiful beyond conception.
So I think it must be - And
in a few years when civilization
~~the~~ by its magic influence shall have
transformed this glorious country
from what it now is to the brilliant
destiny awaiting it. the Sun in
all his course will visit no land
more truly lovely and desirable than
this - Here, Mary, with God's kind
permission, we will make our
home: and I have every reason
to believe a home it will truly
be - I want you to tell Mr
Drew - Louie and thus the
reason I have not written to

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them - that is; the inconvenience
of writing - and if you see Mr
McFarland - the Editor - you may
mention the same to him - I will
try and write to them all
before long - I do not know
when I will return home, as yet.
As soon as things are so as
not to require my attention here
I will go back - but I find that
it will be greatly to my advantage
to be on the ground -

I have not had any letter
from you yet - I hope Mary, you
will remember me often in writing.
You would appreciate the matter
better if you could see how anx-
iously our men inquire for letters
whenever a wagon approaches
our cabin - Among others I inquire
every time but as yet have had no
favorable response - Please remember
this - My love to all - Your
loving husband wishes you much
health and happiness

C. K. Holliday