

Oscar E. Learnard to friends

Written just two days after the sack of Lawrence, this letter contained Learnard's observations of and reflections on "the fearful disaster to which this unfortunate town has been subjected." The town's citizens, wrote Learnard, chose not to resist the authority of the U.S. marshal but were nevertheless brutalized by Sheriff Jones and a posse of Missourians. He also mentioned Governor Reeder, Governor Shannon and David R. Atchison, who "made a speech."

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*I am entirely & -
 we are
 not dis-
 air of the
 cess, and
 we are
 Confessed
 them over,
 we are
 nothing or-
 namented
 to be
 over our
 wrong?*

Lawrence, St. J.
 May 23rd
 [1856]

Dear Friends -
 Friend and worse, I
 can only write you briefly, to
 assure you of my safety, after
 the fearful disaster to which this
 unfortunate town has been sub-
 jected. News of which will
 undoubtedly reach you in
 allusion of this -
 I cannot enter into a de-
 tailed account now, but will
 give you a sketch of the
 scene, which unparalleled as
 it is in the history of this country.
 I am well aware will excite
 much feeling and indigni-
 tation - Since the shooting
 of Jones, which proved to be no
 serious affair, as he has again

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which when prepared I think of
perhaps to be printed, I
assess the effect of the
responsable part of "Shiriff of
Douglas County"; and the at-
tempt at arrest of Gov. Reeder -
the U. S. Marshall and others,
have been delightfully enjoyed
in enabling a posse of about
500 men from the South, also
Missouri, "for the enforcement
of the laws". For days they
were encamped (several hun-
dred in number) in this vi-
cinity, engaged in robbery,
of every degree, attended
with some sacrifice of life.
After removal there on
their part, and every possible
on ours to avert the impending
catastrophe, (not that we feared
them, but that we were anx-
ious to see a collision &
further to show the world that
you need have no fear

I have been this day commencing to act in different ways

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of paying a hasty visit to the slaves -
 we had no disposition to thwart
 the action of the U.S. authorities.)
 - day before yesterday, May 21.
 - At the day be remembered, in
 your presence as the scene
 of the grossest outrage ever
 perpetrated under the color of
 law - at day break a large
 force were in possession of
 a high table surrounded the
 tower, which during the forenoon
 was augmented to some six
 or eight hundred in number.
~~armed~~ with U.S. arms.
 furnished by Sherman, with
 banners upon which were
 inscribed Slavery for Kansas,
 and such like ^{dissemination} ~~dissemination~~ -
 Our citizens, for as had no
 others in town. having refused
to accept the assistance
of nearly 1000 men, professed
for me as I am safe, &c.

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from different parts of
the Territory determined to
make no show of resistance
to the authority, and this gave
the Legis the best plunder
of our history -

During summer the J. Marshall
passed into town and made
arrangements without disturbance
to Cassup, the M -
informed the Govt that his
business was done and of J. H.
was in Cassup, a man from
J. H. Marshall met
and demanded a
consideration of all the arms
private and town not
waiting for a reply, he ordered
the arms man into
J. H. Marshall. D. B. Atchison
gave a speech, for con
were planted in the
streets and the
Cassup. The three
State & printing presses,
were included as mis
by Judge LeCompte,
the first support
of their vengeance - the first

10-12-39