

Charles Robinson to Eli Thayer

Charles Robinson, writing from Lawrence, Kansas Territory to Eli Thayer in Worcester, Massachusetts, described voting irregularities in the March 30, 1855 election of members to the territorial legislature. Robinson maintained that the election was "controlled entirely by Missourians" who came to the territory, took over the polling places, and cast illegal ballots to ensure that proslavery supporters were elected to the legislature. Robinson also reported that free staters in Lawrence had formed themselves into four military companies, and urged Thayer to send Sharps rifles and cannons for these forces.

Creator: Robinson, Charles, 1818-1894

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Charles Robinson to Eli Thayer

Robinson, C. 355 Mr. Eli Thayer (1)
 1. For E. Thayer
 This is sent to Mr. Rice to advise opening & duty on the day
 Lawrence April 2 1855

Dear Sir

Another election in Kansas Territory has passed & like the first was controlled entirely by Missourians. A few days before the election I was travelling in the southern & eastern part of the territory & met hundreds of people from Missouri on their way to the different voting precincts in the Territory. Encampments were formed in the vicinity of the polls varying in size according to the number of voters required in the several districts to secure their end. The grand rendezvous was at Lawrence where they had the reinforcements stationed for all parts.

At Leavenworth two of the judges of election refused to take the oath prescribed by the Governor & the third refused to proceed when the mob, after snapping pistols at the antislavery judge & threatening to destroy the other judges if they did not leave, proceeded to choose judges of their own & go on with the election. The free state men accordingly abandoned the polls & did not vote. At Leavenworth the judges attempted to conform to the law & instructions of the Gov. when they were mobbed & driven off. No antislavery voting was consequently done at that place.

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At Lawrence about a thousand Missourians took possession of the polls & threatened to hang one of the judges who was formerly from Missouri but anti-slavery if he refused to take their votes & he refused to serve at all. A proslavery man was put in his place leaving but one of the three free soil. He was overruled & refused to serve leaving the field to our enemies & they all voted who chose.

No free soil man could get near the polls till late in the day when a few of our men voted.

I arrived at Lawrence about 3 o'clock P.M. & found the town an encampment of Missourians who had given out that they intended in the night to destroy Lawrence root & branch. We immediately prepared to give them a good time in doing it & kept one hundred men sleeping on their arms all night with a large good watch in all parts of the city. The Missouri spies were out during the whole time & nothing but their finding a large guard patrolling the city saved us from destruction.

At the polls they assailed Mr Bond & friend Stearns who were obliged to leave as it was in the early part of the day & but few of our people were on the ground. Bond was fired at but not wounded. They attempted to frighten Mr Pomeroy & make him leave the polls but failed to do so. Some of their leaders told him confidentially that he was in danger that the people were infuriated & they could not control them nor keep them off from

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Amin - He told them they ^{need} not trouble themselves about him ~~don't~~ let them come on if they wanted to for if they ^{to Mr P. told me himself he} talked to ~~the~~ ^{the} could not keep them off he could. He was not molested - I was told that frequent inquiries were made for me in the forenoon & it was asserted that I would not be allowed to vote. When I learned their desire to see me I went over to the polls & voted & then passed through their camp arm in arm with Mr Brown who also had been threatened. Neither of us was disturbed or insulted although all eyes were turned upon us.

It is said they had two cannon with them. Col. Doniphan also was said to be here & said that next fall they should be on hand again. It is also said that Atchison talks of running for delegate to Congress & bring his voters with him; & A man from Missouri, a Bentonite, says the plan is if he does so for old Bullion to take the field against him & his friends also will see that fair play is had.

Our people have now formed themselves into four military companies & will meet & drill till they have perfected themselves in the art. Also companies are being formed in other places & we want arms. Give us the weapons & every man from the north will be a soldier & die in his tracks if necessary to protect ~~and~~ defend our rights. It looks very much like war & I am ready for it & so are our people. If they give us occasion to settle the question of slavery in this

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country with the bayonet let us improve it. What say can
bring the slaves redemption more speedily - Wouldn't
it be rich to march an army through the slave holding
states & roll up a black cloud that should spread
dismay & terror to the ranks of the oppressors?

But I must close, for want of time. Can
not your ^{secret} society send us 2 or 3 of Sharps rifles
as a loan till this question is settled,? also
a couple of field pieces? - If they will do
that I think they will be well used & preserved.

I have given our people encouragement to
expect something of the Union & hope we
shall not be disappointed. Please inform
me what the prospect is in this direction.

If the Gov. sets this election aside we of course
must have another & shall need to be up & cheering

In great haste.

Very respectfully

C. Robinson

To Hon. Eli Thayer
Worcester Mass.

Thayer Coll