

John Brown to Mary Brown and family

In this letter from "Brownsville, Kansas Territory," John Brown made some observations about the harshness of the weather, the health of his Kansas children, their general lack of preparedness for the winter, and the farm work that needed to be accomplished. His only comment about the political situation in the territory came in closing: "I feel more, & more confident that Slavery will soon die out here; & to God be the praise."

Creator: Brown, John, 1800-1859

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Brownsville, Kansas Territory, 2 Nov 1855

Dear Wife & Childrens every one

We last week received Matrons Letter of Oct 3 too late to answer till now. I felt grateful to learn that you were all then well; & I think I fully sympathize with you in all the hardships & discouragements you have to meet; but you may be assured you are not alone in having of trials to meet. I believe I wrote you that we found every one ^{here} more or less unwell; but Walthy, & Sonny, without any sort of a place where a stout man could protect himself from the cutting cold winds, & storms which prevail here (the winds I mean in particular) much more than in any place where we have ever lived; & that no crop of Hay, or any thing raised had been taken care of; with ^{Corn} wasting by cattle, & Hens, without fence; & I may add without any meat; & Laron's folks without any sugar, or any kind of Breadstuffs but Corn ground with great labour in a hand Mill about two Miles off. Since I wrote before, Walthy, Sonny, Ellen, & myself, have escaped being sick; some have had the Ague but lightly; but Laron, & Oliver, have had a hard time of it; & are yet feeble. They appear some better just now. Under existing circumstances we have made but little progress; but we have made a little. We have got a shanty three logs high chimned, & mudded; & roofed with our Lard; & a Chimney so far advanced that we can keep a fire in it for Laron. John has his Shanty a little better fixed, ^{than it was} & we have got their little crop of Beans secured; which together with Sonny's Cakes, Mush, & Milk, Pumpkins, & Squashes constitute our fare. Of Potatoes they ^{have} none of any account. Milk, Beans, Pumpkins & Squashes a very moderate supply just for the present use. We have also got a few House Logs cut for Laron. I do not send you this account to render you more unhappy but merely to let you know that those here are not altogether in Paradise, while you have to stay in that miserable frosty region. We had here Oct 15th the hardest freezing I ever witnessed South of North Elba, at that season of the year. After all Gods tender Mercies are not taken from us & blessed be his name for ever. I believe things will a little brighten here before long, as the Winter approaches, & that we may be able to send you a more favourable account. There is no proper Officer before whom a deed can be acknowledged short of Lawrence & Laron & Owen have not been able to go there at all since we

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got here. I want to learn very much whether you have received any return
 from the cattle from Mr. Hulbut in Connecticut; so that I may at once write
 him if you have not. I trust you will not neglect this as it takes so long to get letters through
 & will greatly lessen my anxiety about your being made in some measure comfortable
 for the winter. We hear that the Fall has been very sickly in Ohio, & other States.
 I can discover no reason why this country should continue sickly but has proved
 exceedingly so this Fall. I feel more, & more confident that Slavery will soon die
 out here; & to God be the praise. Commending you all to his Infinite grace
 I remain
 Your Affectionate Husband, & Father
 John Brown