

Jason Brown to John Brown, Jr.

A letter from Jason Brown to his brother asking to lend him some money. He offers a share of some land until he can pay it back with interest. He had borrowed from John, Jr. previously. He wants to use it to go to the Rocky Mountains to "scratch a small pile of minerals" which may mean he wants to hunt for gold. He makes references to having to leave Kansas but that it is where he would like to be. He would leave his wife and son in Ohio on their small farm there. On the last page of the letter, Jason indicates that Melchia Sherbondy has offered him some money for a share of what he might make in the mountains. His son Charley wants to go with him and Jason also wants John, Jr. to go with him to the mountains.

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Jason Brown to John Brown, Jr.

Akron O. Jan 3rd /59

Dear Brother

Your letter of Dec 27th is on hand - I forgot to mention when I wrote ^{you} for money, that ^{for} whatever you might be able to let me have yet, and that you gave me before. I want to make you perfectly secure, you may have and own as much or more of our ground, as the money would pay for at the rate I gave for it, until we can pay back the money with good interest. I do not forget the help you have given me before, and if I live, I intend to be able to prove it. - About the Mountains ^{can} again - I had no thought of moving next spring, but if I bring it around so as to leave Ellen and Charley comfortably situated here, I would like to go and see and feel some of ^{the} Country, but do not know as it would be possible or even best - As you say about Hawk Island, I want to hold on to a small spot for a home till a better one can be found and made - Would want to leave them (E and G) in such a way that if accident should happen me and I should never get back, they would have a tolerable home. For this reason we would not like to give it up now to get out of debt, I believe I ~~shall~~ can pay all for it in one year more. You say you must devote this year to making money, so must I, but the question is where can we do it to the best advantage. We might if we could contrive to get ^{here enough to go} there and back, make more in few months than we could in as many years here, (and might not get anything but some experience) but if I could go,

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and leave all right here, I ^{would} start early next spring -
 You may think it a little curious in me to be getting such
 "Wile Guse" notions so soon after talking of making a life
 stay on the hill here. I have never entirely ^{given up} the hope that
 we might some time live in some healthy part of Kansas
 again. I never wanted to leave it, and come here ^{to stay}. The retreat
back here, does not quite come up to my ideal of Courage,
 Advancement, and Progress. If we could have stayed there
 in peace, more likely than not I would have gone with you to
 the Mountains. The trouble on the way up the Missouri River
 prevented us from reasoning rationally then, and perhaps now
 in some measure. The very name of Kansas sounds dearer
 to my ^{than} that of any other Country on Earth! We have dearly earned
 good homes there, and I intend have mine! Another thing
 We as a family are bound together by ties stronger than the mere
 names of Father, Mother, Brother, and Sister - To me it ~~is~~
 is stronger and more lasting than this life, although sometimes
 I have shown a different spirit. I feel cramped and pent up
 here; not because the place is not good enough for us, for so
 far as the bare living for self is concerned, it is good enough.
 But because I sometimes think of doing a little more than
 just to live for no other purpose ^(as Ocellus it) than to "scratch together
 a small pile of minerals," which can only be kept together
 a few moments. I want a little larger field to work in
 for selfish reasons, and for others - You want to live in a
 Mountain Country; so do I, and there is a Climate to suit us all.
 Ellen is trying to help get me off out of ^{the} way, Healthy, instead of
 trying ~~to keep~~ to keep me about House -

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I'll warrant her, and you too for any respectable enterprise when the way is clear; and I'm going to help clear it, - so just make your calculations to start in a year or less - I would want no better fellows than you, ^{and} Alex Hobbs, and "Aunt Nisha" for neighbors. As for Alex he is going to see the Country "Plum Shore" -

John! I am anxious about "Our Charlie"; I want to get him away from a country where there is great danger as he grows up, that his highest ideas of goodness, and greatness, will be in a knowledge of those exquisite refinements, Dancing, Smoking and "Chawing", Drinking, and gentle swearing, and in the way of business; perhaps rise to ^{the} position of "Clark" or proprietor of some 7x9 Doggerly on the shore of, and amid the roaring, breaking, surf of "Ohio Canall" or perhaps at the junction of the Pa, and O, or perhaps in his progress, onward and upward, he may get to be Captain or Second Mate, on some "Vesuel", navigating the same Waters. I want to get him where his Curiosity will continually call him out where his lungs will expand, and ^{the right} fill his soul with the great and Sublime. The Rocky Mountains are my land mark, and I will work on with my face "set forward"

I happened to find some pieces in a Plain Dealer with a map of Kansas that I will send to you with this.

I don't know as it will ^{be best} to go and look next spring, but am exceedingly anxious to begin ^{soon} as possible. Am determined to leave all right here, before starting, -

Your Brother

Jason Brown

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Jan 4th - While waiting for a chance to send this to the Office, I have had an offer of \$200, or more, if I need it to go to Pike's Peak next spring - Melchior Sherbondy offered it unasked by me - He proposes to let me have it in this way - He will run his own risk for a share of what I can make, and if I make nothing, and lose all, it shall be his loss - He will see ^{that} the crops ^{here} are taken care of, and if it is necessary, make the last payment on our little place - We have not decided ^{yet} what share I am to give; will think of it a while, before deciding - What do you think would be right? I am quite determined to go if we can make the right kind of bargain - Now John I am exceedingly anxious to have you go with me - Can't you in some way start on the exploring trip next spring - Where there is a will, there is almost always some way - There will probably be quite a company of Gold hunters go from here next spring - Since I wrote you I have had a letter from Wesley Sherbondy saying that he will lend me fifty dollars till after harvest, which I am going after shortly - That with the 25 you think of lending me, will save me from any trouble with Moonen - Charles says, Uncle John would you please to let Johnny go with me to the Rocky Mountains, and ^{well} get us a little Indian Pony and we'll hunt Buffalo Calves - and shoot Prairie Dogs - Write often J.B.

Jason Brown
Jan 5/59