

John Kagi to his sister

John Henry Kagi, sometimes known as Brown's "Secretary of War," is "in prison at Lecompton," Kansas Territory, when he writes this letter to his sister on November 20, 1856. Kagi, along with John Ritchie and several other free-state partisans, had been arrested by U.S. Marshal I. B. Donelson, supported by federal troops, on September 18 at Topeka, and subsequently charged with "highway robbery." (See, Kansas Historical Collections, 4:561) Although "in prison," Kagi assures his sister that he is safe and could be rescued at anytime; "I hesitate only because we may get out some other way, and because a forcible rescue would bring on a terrible winter war, which I do not wish to see." Kagi was killed during John Brown's Harpers Ferry raid in October, 1859.

Creator: Kagi, John Henry, 1835-1859

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John Kagi to his sister

Kagi, J. H.

37406
KANSAS STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr. Paine at Geompton,

Thursday, Nov. 2nd 1858.

My dear sister:

I last evening received your letter dated Oct. 1st — just one month ago — the first letter I have received from you for upwards of eight months, although I have written to you quite often the past summer. I have but little time to write to you, as I have yet to write to Helen, and have now but a few moments at my disposal, for I am Cook — Chief Cook to-day.

We are divided into messes. I am now there are seven of us. I am said to be one of the best cooks in the lot. I'll show you how to do it. We have purchased some dried apples to-day and I am going to try to make some pies. Now do you suppose I'll make it with no eggs, sugar, or spice, or milk.

You seem to think that there is danger of my being killed. Alas! no, there is no more danger of my being killed than there is

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of your doing so. Our friends will take us out at any time I say the word. A Regiment, the same one in which I was a Lieutenant, will come to our rescue any night I give the orders. I hesitate only because we may get out some other way, and because a forcible rescue would bring on a terrible winter war, which I do not wish to see. Keep cheerful! I will yet see you in Bristol.

I have heard nothing from father since he left Bristol for Nebraska. I have received only one letter from him since he came home from California. That was written from Philadelphia.

I have been every day expecting him down from Nebraska, and cannot imagine why he does not come. I think he must be sick. Trains come through from Nebraska city every day, and I get that he will be along with some of them soon.

I am glad that your health has been improved.

I could like to name all the people

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to whom I would like to send my
respects, but cannot. I should not
have the time if I could. I have for-
gotten the names of two-thirds of the Bristol
folks, yet I should know all their faces
I think, but do not believe any of
you would know me from John.

I can tell you but a small part of
things here. You probably get a chance
to read the National Era, and I
trust you will see more than I can
tell you here. I am a Regular Corres-
pondent to the Era, and my letters I
trust will probably be as interesting as
direct ones to you.

I tell all my friends that I think them
for their sympathies, and will yet
be able to throw the face to face.

Write soon, directing to Poplar
Kansas.

I remain, as ever,
Your affectionate brother,
J. Kagi