

From W.J. Clabey to Alex M. Bedford

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Nebraska City[,] N.T.

Aug[.] 13th 1865

Mr[.] A[.]M[.] Bedford

Dear Brother[,]

After four long, dark, wearisome, years of strife and suffering through which you have passed, you are again permitted to enjoy the company of your family. A pleasing privelige indeed: one doubtles you fully appreciate.

Welcome, dear Brother, thrice welcome to your devoted wife and dear litle children; whose society will appear ten fold sweeter than ever before. After four years of ill spent time and nothing gained we can only hope, that profiting by past experience, and our industrious habits, we may make the succeeding four years more profitable to our pecuniary interests and to a great extent mend the breech already committed in our Estates. We will look back upon these unfruitful years not with feelings of regret; when we think of the many pleasing associations formed during our long absence among the people of our choice; but with pleasing emotions and gratitude to Kind Providence, who, while He had seperated us, by a [MS. illegible] gulf, from our families, placed us among such a people --

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Many have been the changes since we last saw each other. While you have been draged from Prison to Prison and doubtless suffered much, I have seen many new places and traversed the Western wilds to the Rocky Mountains and am now settled down here in a home of my own and by using economy[,] energy[,] and industry am trying to make for my wife & little ones a decent support, but expences are so very high here that it is hard swimming to keep above the currant's surface.

I have just returned from off the Plains[.] had a very hard trip, owing to so much rain[.] We had a mule killed by lightning while in the harness at the same time I was shocked by the charge. The mule was worth \$200[,] a considerable loss for one so poor as I, but I very resignedly submit to the loss and feel thankful that while we have seen so many of our poor fellow beings, mangled & bleeding, placed under the dark sod; we are today in the enjoyment of health and of the company of our families and friends[.]

What a poor[,] weak[,] insignificant worm is man -- grumbling and discontented he is never satisfied -- place him in whatever position you may he is still ungrateful,

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allways striving; allways strugling and for what end. These are reflections that often engage my leisure moments. But we will not discuss this morning the "Chief End of Man[.]"

I suppose you are going to still live in MO at your old home. Write to me Alex and tell me all the news and your prospects of living down there in quietude and unmolested[.] I should like to be near you all for the pleasure it would afford my wife to see her Father & sisters more frequently[.] But such is not the case at present, & my love of nativity has been alienated by force of circumstances[.]

I find here in Nebraska City & Ter[.] a society which is hard to find any where else. We can boast as good community here as any where. The Abolitionists of MO say that the dregs of that society has gone to the bottom and of course they having risen to the top are Lords of the day; but I say that the scum allways rises to the top.

Father will remain with you or will he go to his farm. Tell him now is a good time for him to go to Ky and get that widow that Mr[.] Russel used to joke him about. How does your renter act since your return. I had the pleasure of meeting our old and esteemed friend Jeff Patton

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on yesterday[.] he was not looking so well as when I last saw him. He said that since he had taken the Oath he had become sick in consequence of it.

This has been rather an unfortunate day for me. This morning while I was chopping some wood a stick flew up and struck me on the upper lip splitting it through and at noon while feeding my mules one of them kicked me on the arm, both hurt me for the time being but neither wound is "mortal".

This leaves me enjoying good health but my family is not so well. Jennie has been unwell all day complaining very much of her stomach and bowels. Our youngest child has had something like Flux of which there is a great deal in the city[.] This is a very unhealthy country for children.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I will close this pencil scribble. Jennie joins me in love to all the relations & friends[.] May you live a long and prosperous life and ever have your pathway strewn with Flowers of the richest fragrance and may guardian Angels gather therefrom a wreath, that, when you come to yield up this life, they will place upon your brow.

I have the honor to be
Very Respectfully Your Bro[.]
W.J. Clasbey

[P.S.] Excuse Pencil writing[.]