

From John F. Youngs to Jenney and Mother

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Camp Montgomarie Mo[.]

Sept[.] 18th 1861

My Dearist Sis Jenney[.]

I wrote Brother Thomas some two week since, & what has been done by Gen[.] Lanes little armie in the miene time you have doubtless gathered from our public Journals; I will onley say it has been one continual programe of March[.] persist[.] Scurmish & occasionally a retreat but our retreats have been seldem well timed & in good order.

You [*text stricken through*] have I suppose had news of the battle of Dry Wood, which took place on the 2nd of this month but for fear that you are not correctly posted I will give you a short detail of the fight; on the evening of the 1st, a party of some 75 crossed the Missouri line

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& advanced toward Camp Johnson near Ft[.] Scott, when some two miles from the camp they [*text stricken through*] took possession of a hurd of 54 mules & commenced an immediate retreat. 2 companies of Cavalry [*text stricken through*] under command of Col[.] Johnson after persuing them some 4 miles found that they were supported by 6 or 7 Hundred men well mounted & under command of Col[.] Reines but notwithstanding theire superior numbers, the brave & lamented Johnson formed us in line of battle & gave the signal of contact at which the whole Secesh force broke in wild disorder[.] we pursued but onley succeeded in the killing of 2 & taking 3 or 4 prisoners.

the next day came off the battle of Dry Wood 12 miles East of Ft[.] Scott[.] in which our force of Exactley 520 mounted men under

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command of Col.'s Montgomarie and Johnson fought & held at bay for the term of two hours & twenty minutes a force of 7000. the Enemy had 5 pieces of artillery & we only one 12 pounder however, our loss was 14 in killed & wounded, that of the Enemy we learn to be 60 or 70[.] the onely miracle is that our entire command was not cut off, we had a fine position under a hill as rather in a deep [*text stricken through*] ravine & when the Enemy approached within shooting distance we would pour in such a volley of Sharps Rifle balls as to caus a retrograde movement in the lines of the advancing thousands[.] fortunately the artillery of the Enemy threw shot & shell to high to do no harm[.] the air overhead was one continual whis & whis, it was amusing to see some of the Boys dodge &

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laug at the same time; we retreated in good order; Since after we have been buisy scouting with an occasional scirmish[.]

yesterday at day break fell one of the bravest & best men of Kansas[,] Col[.] H[.] P. Johnson, 450 Cavalry [*text stricken through*] & one company of Infantry left this past the Evening previous to break up a secession camp at Morrystown numbering some 3 or 4 Hundred[.] we reached them at day break[.] Co[.] E of which I am first Lieutenant was in a advance[,] Col[.] Johnson in advance of us[.] he fell pierced by 6 balls, two of our Boys fell at the same time[.] when the news spred through the line that Johnson had fallen, every man was fired to a pitch of desperation[.] we rented the camp[,] took 15 [*text stricken through*]

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prisoners & 150 Horses[.] 5 of the prisoners have since been shot, such is the war in which I am engaged & acting as an Officer, it is die on the field or die as a prisoner[.] The Enemy commenced by shooting our prisoners & we mean to help them in the game.

Now Jenney[,] the fates of war ar as all times unsertan, I may die in this war, as I may be rememberd in time to come as one of the defenders of our Country & our flag.

Direct to Lieut[.] J[.]F[.] Young[,] Ft Scott Co[.] E 5th Regiment KV[.]

My love to father & Mother

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P[.]S[.]

I did intend to write to you my Dear Mother but I am hurried beyond measure, all that I can say at preasant is that your many good lessons & far better examples are the the study of your wandering Boy when the camp is still, the dead beneath the sod, and the wounded & sick removed from the camp of the soldier, & by the love of God I hop to follow those examples in such a manner as to reap the rewards of a quiet & good old age. But on the other hand if I die in this Holy War remember that I inherit my soldier

[*written sideways in right margin*]

blood from you & die if I mus[t] as becomes a soldier & a brave man,

Your Son

Johny

[*written in top margin of page 1*]

This letter may be long in reaching you[.] our mail passes by way of LeRoy.

[*written in top margin of page 5*]

we have no black ink in camp