

Transcript of James Moody Brewer letter to Sterling Brewer, Jr., dated January 16, 1866. The transcript is literal. Mr. J. M. Brewer had the habit of ending sentences with a dash or sometimes no period at all. He began many sentences with small letters. There are few indicated paragraphs.

Note: At the time of this letter, James Moody Brewer was 71 years old (he died the next year, April 10, 1867). Sterling Brewer, Jr. was 54 years old (he died April 5, 1885).

Gibson County (Tennessee) January 16th 1866

My Dear Brother, I received your welcome letter dated 24th Decr (sic), last evening and hasten to answer it. I have not heard from you since this destructive war commenced. I did not know but you were all murdered.

I have suffered enough seemingly to kill any man but Providence has spared my poor unworthy life--perhaps for some useful purpose. My health continues precarious--but I am enjoying at this time as good health as usual. I am at this time living at the house of Mr. Burrow, my brother-in-law. I have been here since last Spring. I shall leave here tomorrow, and go to live with Mary who is married and her husband is settling in a village in Dyer County called Newburn. She married a young man by the name of George W. Locke. He was raised at Yorkville and educated at the Academy at that place with my boy--He and John were two of the most affectionate friends I ever saw. George is a very steady boy of a good family. His father is dead--he was once in affluent circumstances--and the family are independent now. He is going into the grocery business. I have lost everything by this detestable war--my negroes (7 in all) have left me. I have nobody to do anything for me. I get up before day of a morning and make a fire--but this I don't mind.

George Locke and all my boys but James have served in the Army all the way. Sam had the command of a company in General Johnson's army. Hite was in Forrest's Calvary. He was in many severe battles. He was at the taking of Fort Pillaway (sp), was with the first that charged the Breastworks. On one occasion he had a horse blown up by a shell & killed without hurting him. None of the boys got wounded. Sam & Hite were in the hard fought battles about Columbia, Franklin & Nashville. Moreau and Wm are here. Wm has been broken completely by the Yankees has lost all his property has sold his land & brought his two children with him to this place--William requests me to say to you that he would like to

get you to take them & let them go to your school--So that he could go into some business to support them. He would rather have them with you than any one else. His children are about the size of your children when in this country.. James is the oldest & is a fine boy to work--he could help you make a crop & then go to school--he is an industrious & will do any kind of work you let him at. William is in a very bad condition and would be glad to get into any kind of business to make a living. I am totally unable to help him as I have nothing myself & no way to make anything--I tried last year to help make a little crop of cotton but my weakness was such that I had often to lye down in the field. Mr Lock and Mary insist on my going to live with them. Newburn is a small town about 8 miles west of Yorkville in Dyer County. Moreau is staying at a Mr. Swards a Son-in-law or Mr. Burrows--he is anxious to go to Mexico. his wife & two little children are at or near Cleveland in Ohio--her father lives there, but I believe don't seem much inclined to do any thing for them. Moreau can't get into any business by which to make any thing to assist them. Letters from Mexico written by Gov. Harris speak in such high terms of that country that it has put a good many persons in the notion of going there. I have no notion to go--for U an totally unable to do so.

My son Hite came to see me yesterday--but left this morning--he has been teaching a school at the college this year. Mr Burnham a son-in-law of Banks Ben (sp) now has charge of the college. He is a methodist Preacher & will have hite to live with him and go to his school. Hite intends upon joining the conference after he gets thro with his education.

Hite is one of the studiest boys I ever saw, just such a one as his brother John (my dear child) every body that knew John loved him he was an example to all-- He was I hope truly religious, and is now in Heaven. My dear brother you can't imagine how much I have suffered in the loss of my dear children. Napoleon was to me a dear child. he professed religion before he died & have hope that he was saved.

I am striving to live the life of a christian and when I am called away from this world of sorrow my hope is that I shall meet with more of my dear friends in that world of Bliss and glory than I leave behind me. Oh my dear companions & children--the hope of meeting with them fills me with joy--My dear Brother if I get to that heavenly world I have no doubt but I shall see you there sometime or other--God grant it.

Sam at this time is studying law in Trenton--he has a pretty

good education and is a good speaker for one of his age. I doubt not he will succeed well at the bar--he is very popular for a youth & many of his friends have promised him business as soon as he gets to practice--he expects to get prepared to take out License next Spring.

James, we intend to educate & put him into some business I don't know which. James grows very fast and is going to make a very tall man. He's learning fast and is very moral. Mary and Hite are members of the Methodist Church.

Our old friend G. W. D. Harris, I learn is fixing to move to Mexico--his brother the governor is the cause of it I suppose and is a gestation of the government. He didn't detest it more than a majority of our citizens. I would write more but have not room . We are all extremely anxious to see you and your family. Our love to all of you. Write again soon--Wm says write to him when you get this letter.

I write with a wretched pen as you see.

I remain as ever your affectionate brother J M Brewer

...Transcribed by Henry Sterling James 2/18/1991