

# Letter From Stevenson, Cadet written Tuesday, November 20th, 1860

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My Dear Sister

Your affectionate letter has been received and would have been answered immediately had not circumstances so conspired as to render it impossible.

You question very gravely as to the part we will take in the civil contest should one ensue in consequence of the election of the abols [abolitionist] nominee. The part that we will take Dear Sister will be forced in a measure upon us, by recurring [referring] to your map. You will notice that our geographical position is such that should the enemy cross from Ohio this (Lex) would be their first point of attack; for all other places west of this, they are little better than abolitionist. Besides our magazine and arsenal would naturally excite their cupidity, the latter of which two, is located in the centre of Barracks. Consequently you see that should they attempt the invasion this would be the first field of battle and in making the attack resistance on our part would be necessarily and honorably called for which in consequence would render fair Lexington the first picture in the bloody scene of devastation.

You ask in the same breath if I would take part in this contingency and endeavour to persuade me to the contrary. My Dear Sister I propose answering this question by venturing the following consideration. On entering the Institute as a Cadet I have sworn as it were allegiance to a constitution peculiar to the Institute and independent of the general government. And when I consider the former [modeled] by the government constitution in its purity and at the time confined to legitimate limits under its authority this I will abide by when the general government shall have been perverted by ambitious and designing men for personal sectional interest. And since I enjoy the privilege and protection the Institute affords I am as you will admit honorably bound to defend its interest when infringed on by the corrupt and aggressive government.

And another consideration is in defending this point- I am assisting to defend a place where a treasure far beyond my life is deposited. I know the enemy will not be rash enough to attack you by sea since your water fortification are so extensive. This reflection consoles me greatly for your safety at home. And moreover by making an effectual resistance here we will be the means of protecting the eastern portion of the state if not routing the enemy in general. So you see my Dear Sister I am compelled first in consideration of the safety of those I have at home and secondly the obligation that so honorably bind me to protect the establishment that affords me the means of assisting to protect you and myself.

All I have said Dear Sister amounts to a mere probability. Believe me there will be no such issue as these extravagant fanatics prophesy. We consider it here as trifling talk, but have prepared in case of an emergency. We have commenced the skirmish drill and cartridges have been distributed to the amount of twenty five hundred. But believe me in the whole it will amount to nothing.

If my letter is uninteresting you cannot blame me. The nature of your question called for it. At present I am in good health and fine spirits--only wanting a heavy pair of gloves to walk post in to make me contented. I have received a letter from Chas. Smith. What he says is unimportant. My love to all and believe me your Brother devoted, Andrew.

P. S. Tell Sister Mary that since I came to reflect I think the Express would be the way that would cause her the less inconvenience and perhaps would be safest. The expense will be paid here.