Bloomington

Dec 9, 1862

Dear Judge,

I received from Col Dickey this morning the following dispatch

To Judge Davis

or Leonard Swett

Col McCullough killed in battle, buried by the enemy

Flag of truce gone for body

L Lyle Dickey

To be the messenger of this unwelcome news to his already afflicted family was one of the most unpleasant acts of my life. After a little reflection I went just to Mrs. Orme. The news shocked and affected her much, but she bore it with as much fortitude as I could expect. She asked me to go with her to her mother.

We found her sitting up and laterably [sic] comfortable. Fanny was sent for and I told them that I had horrid news for them and I must ask them to brace themselves up and bear it. They said they would and I told them. The shock to Mrs. M. seemed to be relieved by her fears for Fanny. For a few moments Fanny bore it composedly but she soon partially gave way and for a while we were alarmed for her consequences. Soon however she seemed to recover and although the whole scene was one never to be forgotten, they bore it with more composure that I supposed. I have seen all of them twice sense [sic] today. The blow is hard and tells upon them all.

I never saw our whole community so shocked. I went into court and read the dispatch and as I turned around from the judge I noticed every man in the room was standing upon his feet. We have a bar meeting in the morning.

I think some lady companion ought to be with Mrs. Orme this winter. I have been with Mrs. O today considerably. She is nervous – thinks of her husband constantly and as she says being alone she has no one to keep her from thinking. There is in Washington … probably, a cousin that she would like to have come and spend the winter with her. I am afraid if she is left alone her anxiety may injure her health. Frank Orme knows this. Mrs. S. and I think he ought to send her out here. I shall talk with him in the morning. I thought perhaps you might say a word to aid in this matter.

Yours truly

Leonard Swett

P.S. we have heard nothing else except the dispatch. One thing I forgot. Dr. Dums [sic] received this morning, a letter from Capt. Bloomfield dated the 3rd inst stating he had heard that McCullough was killed the day before and that his and another reg of Cavalry formed the advance guard of Grant’s army. L.S.