

My Dear Papa
I have not written for some time
nothing unusual has transpired in
Camp. I wrote Pa Public a long letter
which I sent to you for a soldier.
It is a great task to me to write
a letter to any one besides yourself
and I don't know why
and myself of trying to write something
that I think will be very interesting
to my dear Papa to do. Camp letters
to me are the most interesting things
in the world to read. I have not
any but the same old story over
and over. I become perfectly sick
of them that does not mind the matter
any. I am compelled to submit to it
but for a change at times is
preferable to this dull
writing camp life. I fear that
when this cruel war comes to an end
and the soldiers from the army
are sent home that the Confederacy
will be filled with idle
and indolent paupers all
of the parts of the South
which will be a sad scene.

I wrote you on Monday last
and your kind mother
said that this is rather
long for you to read
and I don't know
why I write so much
to you. I have not
any but the same old
story over and over.
I become perfectly
sick of them that
does not mind the
matter any. I am
compelled to submit
to it but for a
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the parts of the
South which will
be a sad scene.

1863

...the age. ... have had several days hard rains since I wrote you ... last night. You last of course had to ... of the officers who happened to be ... pitched in last night. Had they ... with water and of course had to ... the remainder of the night. ... had you known me any thing but pleasant ... to be thoughtful enough to dig a good ditch around my ... tent so as to convey the water off and consequently my ... not disturbed by the rain. The creek will also ... getting very full and the current did not ... country is becoming almost impassible. Our ... wagons have to go from 25 to 25 miles after ... and when it is they leave the Peche woods they had a ... time of it getting along. I had had no ... from the front in the last few days. ... I believe in that quarter. ... exceptions of an occasional Cavalry ... We have had that time and again that the ... have advanced upon ... I don't see how it is possible ... prove false. ... I don't see how it is possible ... them to advance upon ... I don't see how it is possible ... are in their present condition. They have

... way
... road upon which they could advance with
infantry together and for Rosecrans to grasp all
his forces upon that one road, would be to subject
himself to certain defeat and his army to certain
destruction. I think him to be to have and should
it himself be clear in all any such a trap.
It is my honest conviction however that he will advance
to attack us just as soon as the condition of the
country and roads will permit of, but when that
will be it is impossible to say. I think
is impossible in the very nature of things for two
such armies as we have here to remain
so contiguous to each other and that too, without
any natural barrier between, and did fight
they are bound to do it or else one of the
party must retreat so as to widen the interval
between them. The Federal army is so much
superior to ours in numbers, that public opinion
will force Rosecrans to advance upon
Bragg and attempt to drive him back out of
the state as soon as the condition of the
roads will permit. The more I think of it
and see the danger of our position, I am
more and more convinced that Rosecrans will fight, but

he wants to have the odds very much in
his favor. I fully expected before this time
to have heard of a great battle at Vicksburg
but it seems that the Rebels have no other
plans sufficiently important to bring
the engagement yet. They seem to be very
determined efforts and spare neither means or money
in their preparations. I have my little fears that
they will be successful in taking the place. It
has proved invulnerable thus far in all their attempts
and I think will stand so. By the way speaking
of Vicksburg reminds me of Jac & Gordon who
he returned to his Regiment at. I shall place his
address I would write to him. If you can ascertain
any please inform me. I heard from Bro. Johnson
a few days ago through young McCallister who
returned to his Company a few days ago. He
has been almost sick for a long time. He says
that John and family were all well but that
he was becoming very unwell. He says that the
Congress Law would take him. He is not
40 yet and I guess he will have to go un-

Camp near Shelbyville Tenn
Thursday Feb 19th 1863

My Dear Bettie

I wrote you on Monday last since which time nothign unusual has transpired in camp. On Tuesday I wrote Dr Peebles a long letter - that is what I call a long one for a soldier, and which I trust will reach him safely. It is a great task to me to write a letter to any one besides yourself and I dont know why either unless it is because I take too much pains and worry myself by trying to write something that I think will be very interesting. And that I assure you is very hard to do. Camp letters to me I think would be the dullest things in the world to read. We have nothing but the same old rutine over and over every day. Sometimes I become perfectly sick and tired out with it, but then that does not mend the matter any, so I am compelled to submit to it at last from necessity. Any thing for a change at times is preferable to this dull inactive camp life. I fear that when this cruel war comes to an end and the soldiers from the army are sent home, that the Confederacy will be filled with idlers and paupers all as the fruits of laziness and indolence contracted while in the service.

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We have had several very hard rains since I wrote you last. Night before last it rained very hard indeed and some of the officers who happened to have their tents pitched in low ground, had them completely flooded with water and of course had to spend the remainder of the night sitting up in their tents. That you know was any thing but pleasant. I happened to be thoughtful enough to dig a good ditch around my tent so as to carry the water off and consequently was not disturbed by the rain. The creek and Rivers are getting very full and the common dirt roads through the country are becoming almost impassable. Our forage wagons have to go from 25 to 35 miles after forage and when ever they leave the pike roads they have a time of it getting along. I have had no news from the front in the last few days. Every thing I believe in that quarter, remains quiet, with the exception of an occasional cavalry skirmish. We have had report time and again that the enemy were advancing up us, but as yet they have all

proved false. I don't see how it is possible for them to advance upon in any force while the roads are in their present condition. They have

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but one road upon which they could advance with Infantry and Artillery and for Rosencrans to mass all his force upon that one road, would be to subject himself to certain defeat and his army to certain destruction. I think him to be to keen and shrewd to let himself be caught in any such a trap. It is my honest conviction however, that he will advance to attack us just as soon as the condition of the

country and roads will permit it but when that will be I am not prophet enough to tell. It is impossible in the very nature of things, for two such armies as we have here at present, to remain so contiguous to each other and that too without any natural barrier between, and not fight. They are bound to do it or else one or the other party must retreat so as to widen the interval between them. The Federal army is so much superior to ours in numbers, that public opinion will force Rosencrans to advance upon Bragg and attempt to drive him back out of the state just as soon as the condition of the roads will render the move practicable I believe that Rosencrans will fight, but

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he wants to have to odds very much in his favor. And that he undoubtedly now has. I fully expected before this time to have heard of a great battle at Vicksburg but it seems that the Yanks have not their plans sufficiently matured to bring on the engagement yet. They seem to be very determined efforts and spare neither means or money in their preparations. I have very little fears that they will ever succeed in taking the place. It has proved invulnerable thus far in all their attempts and I think will remain so. By the way speaking of Vicksburg reminds me of Jace, I wonder has he returned to his Regiment yet. If I knew his address I would write to him. If you can ascertain, please inform me. I heard from Bro. John a few days ago through young McLelland who returned to his company a few days ago. He has been absent sick for a long time. He says that John and family were all well but that he was becoming very uneasy for fear that the conscript law would take him. He is not 40 yet and I guess he will have to go unless

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he can find some way to evade it as a great man others have done. Has your Papa Succeeded yet in procuring a substitute for Ira yet It is not such an easy matter now to get one, since they have learned that there is such a strong probability of having some fighting to do. The light is becoming so dim that I will stop writing for this evening and conclude my epistle tomorrow.

Friday morning, Feb 20th - I have just finished eating Breakfast and by the way of making a start I will give you our bill of fare. Corn Bread Stewed Hash made of Hogs head - Hog Brains and warm corn batter cakes with corn; coffee with plenty of Sugar. This is rather better better than our usual bill of fare. Sometimes we we have to come down to Bacon and corn Bread alone. Yesterday I had Pickled Oysters for dinner which was fine. They were given to myself and Col

Dennett by a young man just from Mobile. I am not much a lover of oysters but seemed to be better than any I ever eat before. I suppose that it was because they were put up in Vinegar. I have no craving appetite

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for any thing sour like Pickles. Some months ago we could buy Vinegar from the Commissary any time we wanted it but now we never see it. But I suppose we ought not to complain of our fare for it is as good as could be expected, in fact much better than I expected we would have this time, twelve months ago. Numbers of poor people throughout the country would be thankful if they could only live as well as we do.

Judging from your last letter I would suppose that you were nearly ready by this time to plant corn. But if you have had the same amount of rain at home that we have had here, you could not have done much plowing lately I do hope that you will be blessed with a good wheat crop this year. You are such a poor hand at eating corn bread that I dont see how you managed to get along without flour. But I suppose you do like the rest of us, make a "virtue of necessity" and submit with as good a grace as possible.

I could feel so much better satisfied if you had a good comfortable house to live in. I know that the old log tenement must have gone pretty well to decay by this time. I can imagine every heavy rain that comes how you are pestered moving things about from one place to another to protect them from sundry and

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divers leeks scattered about though the house. It was in a very leeky condition when I left home and it must be much worse by this time.

How is Tilda and her Baby and Mariah and her Baby getting along. I suppose that Em is satisfied with her experience in that line. Has John taken unto himself a wife yet. I hope that Green has recovered from the injury he received in his back some time ago when rolling logs.

Tell John that I want him to do his best this year and see how good a crop he can make. I think that he can do much better than Joshua did last year.

On Monday next our Brigade will have to go out on Picket again to stay for one week. We go out on the [-] Pike about seven miles from Shelbyville the same place that we were at some three weeks ago. I do not regret much having to go, but I hope that we will have better wether than we had before. Last night the wind blowed very hard all night, but this morning it is clear and pleasant but I fear that I will not remain so long. I will write you again while on picket if I have any opportunity of doing so. If I should not you must

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not get angry. I will be certain to do so if I can Little Newt is very well. He is out with some of the Boys this morning getting wood. He enjoys fine

health now and always appears to be in fine spirits
Never gloomy or desponding but always cheerful and
contented. The dear little children I hope
are all well. Nothing would afford me so much
pleasure as the privilege of paying you all a visit
and behold your smiling faces again but that pleasure
is denied me yet. I can but look forward to the
day when peace - bright smiling peace will rise
again upon our once happy but not now persecuted
and almost desolate land. When we can all bid adieu
to the scenes of strife and bloodshed and wind our
way homeward to meet the dear ones we love and
embrace them in our arms no more to be separated
while time with us shall last. Tell them all howdy
and give them a kiss for Pa, and may the God
of peace be with you and comfort you my dearest
one - Good Bye

Your devoted Husband
Newton