

Battlefield  
Near Murfreesboro  
Jany. 3, 1862 [1863]

My Dear Margaret,

Oh how glad would I be to communicate with you in a reasonable time. We have had three days terrible fighting here and the contest not decided. But our men are very hopeful. I heard from James last night, he has not yet been hurt - have not heard from him today. My dear I am unable to write how I feel - when I get time I will try to write you at length. How thankful should we be! God grant the soldiers protection. I think our army will be successful. Captain <sup>Downe</sup> wounded not seriously, William Munford slightly. Milton Munford taken prisoner, but he will be returned in a few days or as soon as the fight is over. Elias Skelton & Henry Curl killed. 102 killed and wounded in the 58th. About 20 killed the rest wounded and generally doing well. At least 1,000 killed and wounded in our division. I have that many under my care. Oh my dear it is terrible beyond description. It is astonishing to see anybody come out alive. Dearest we should be thankful that my life so far has been spared. If I ever see you I will try to give you some idea of the scene. I stood on a high hill collecting the wounded the entire day of the first day's fight and saw the two armies contending. Oh how often I would wish for the sun to go down and stop the fearful contest. I felt as if Joshua had commanded it to stand still. My fine little <sup>man</sup> saved me from being captured by running. Ira Wilson is all right. Dr. Adams is well. Write a note to Mrs. Adams at Petersburg. Dr. Holtzman was captured. I do not know when the contest will be over but feel pretty confident of success now. Must now stop and go to work. Will write again as soon as the struggle is over.

Goodbye,

Your loving husband,

W. W. Blair

Staff -  
Medical Director, Wood's Div. But the field

OR 20, pt 1 pp 221, 463, 474  
 Mansfield  
 Jan 3<sup>d</sup> 1862

My Dear Maryant

Oh how glad would I be to communicate with you in a reasonable time - We have had three days terrible fighting here and the result - not decided. But - we are very hopeful. - I have seen James last night but had not yet been hurt - have not heard from him today. - My dear I am sure I will write as I feel.

When I get time will try to write you at length. - How thankful should we be! - God grant the same protection. - I think our army will be successful. Capt. Journey wounded not seriously. Wm. Thompson, slightly. Milton Mansfield taken prisoner - but he will be returned in a few days or as soon as the fight is over. Elias Skelton & Henry Courl killed. - 102 killed and wounded in the 58<sup>th</sup> - about 20 killed the rest wounded and generally doing well. - at least 1000 killed and wounded in our division - I have what many

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under my care. — Oh my dear it  
is terrible beyond description — It is  
astounding to see any body come out  
alive, — Dearest, we should be thankful  
that my life has so far been spared.  
If I ever see you I will try to give  
you some idea of the scene.

I stood on a high hill — collecting  
the wounded — the entire day, of the first  
day's fight, and saw the two armies  
contending, Oh, how often did I wish  
for the sun to go down, and stop the  
fearful contest. I felt as if Joshua  
had commanded it to stand still.

~~My dear little man saved me from  
being captured, by running.~~

Genl Wilson is all right, & so Adams  
is well. — Write a note to Mrs Adams  
at Petersburg — So Holthman was  
captured — We do not know when  
the contest will be over, but feel pretty con-  
fident of success now. — Must now stop  
'and go to work. — Will write again  
as soon as the struggle is over.

Yours loving husband  
Chas. Blair

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Battlefield Near Murfreesboro  
Jany. 4th 12N.

My Dear Margaret,

It is about noon and the battle has ceased for the present and my dear I hope forever. Oh you can have no idea of what it is like - but first I heard from James three hours ago. He is well and as eager for the as ever. As he was going on the field I bade him goodbye scarcely hoping to see him again. But God in his mercy has seen fit to spare us both. You will unite with me in sending thanks for our protection. I wish I could but see you to tell you some of what has taken place. Various reports will be written of the fight and from there you can glean something of an idea of the engagement. Since the war began there has been no harder fighting. The two armies have now been on the same ground respectively since the evening of Dec. 30th/62. On the morning of the 31st our right wing under command of McCook was surprised and one division (Johnson's I think) retreated in utter confusion and came very nearly ruining our whole army. Such a terrible scene!!! I can now imagine what "Bullrun" was.

The Rebel cavalry ran in and for a time took possession of my division's hospital and I escaped by my horse. After getting out of their musket range I stopped and tried to rally some men who were straggling back to the rear and go back and drive them out of the hospital, but neither bugging, coaxing, shaming or threatening would induce the cowardly scoundrels to go back with me. Failing in this I then went on to the main battlefield hoping to get a regiment to come to the relief of my hospital, but when I got there the confusion was little better in the rear. I found my ambulances scattered every where and at once began to collect and direct them, and I remained there in full view of the fight - until 3 1/2 p.m. Oh my dear, what a day. I thought the sun was never, never going to go down. Since then I have been superintending my hospital - containing about 1,000 wounded. I have the credit of having taken care of more men and of keeping my camp in better condition than any other Med. unit on the field. But I have worked faithfully my self, and have made everybody else under me work. I have just heard that the Rebels have evacuated Murfreesboro. I hope it is so for I don't want to see them again.

Since the battle commenced, all idea of getting to Louisville has for the present been abandoned. I do not know how soon we can get our wounded transferred to hospitals, but until that is done and until there is no prospect of an immediate battle, I could not honorably leave my post of duty. I have heard nothing from Washington yet nor from home since we left Nashville. But I suppose the mail will begin to run soon. I want you to hear

from me, for I know you will spend many anxious hours, when you hear that a battle is going on here - oh dear when will the terrible strife be over?

But my dear I must stop and go to work. You will have to put up with short letters now for a while -

Goodby, my dear,

Yours,

William

Write to Bloomington and to James Blair that I am safely through another battle.

1-4-1863

Battlefield near Murfreesboro  
 Jan'y 4<sup>th</sup> 12 M. 1863

My dear Margaret

It is sabbath morn'g, and the battle has ceased for the present, and my head throbs for ever, Oh you can have no idea of what it is like, — but just I heard from Lewis three hours ago, he is well, and as regards the day as now, as he was going out the field I bid him good by, scarcely hoping to see him again, but God in his mercy has seen fit to span us both, you will write with me in rendering thanks for our protection, I wish I could but see you to tell you some of what has taken place various reports will be written of the fight and from them you can glean something of an idea of the engagement, since the war began there has been no harder fighting, the two armies have now been on the same ground respectively; since the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup> for the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> our right wing under command of McCook was surprised, the one division (Johnson's I think) retreated in utter confusion, and came very nearly ruining our whole army, such a terrible scene!! I can now imagine what "Bull Run" was.

The Rebel Cavalry came in and for a time took possession of my Division Hospital, & escaped by my horse. After getting out of their hands camp, I stopped and tried to rally some men who were straggling back to the rear, and go back and drive them out of the Hospital, but without begging, coaxing, shaming, or threatening would induce the cowardly scoundrels to go back with me, — Failing in this I then went on to the main battlefield, hoping I got a Regiment to come to the relief of my Hospital, but when I got there the confusion was still bitter than in the rear, I found my ~~ambulances~~ scattered everywhere, & I ~~was~~ began to collect and direct them, and remained there in full view of the fight until 3 1/2 P.M., Oh my God, what a day I thought the sun never, never was so long going down, — since then I have had superintending my hospital — containing about 1000. wounded, I have the credit of having taken care of more men, and of keeping my camp in better condition than any other field hospital on the field, but I have worked faithfully myself, and have made anybody else under me work, I have just heard that the Rebels have evacuated Memphis too, & I hope it is so for I don't want to see them again.

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 to Louisville has for the present been abandoned, I  
 do not know how soon we can get our wounded  
 transferred to Hospitals, but until that is done  
 and until there is no prospect of an immediate  
 battle, I could not possibly leave my post of  
 duty, I have had nothing from Washington  
 yet, our friends since we left Fairfaxville,  
 but I suppose the mail will begin to run some  
 what you to hear from me, for I know you  
 will spend among our anxious friends, when you  
 hear that a battle is going on here - Oh how  
 when will this terrible strife be over?  
 But my dear I must stop and go. Dear old



1-4-1863

you will have to put up with short letters  
now for a while. —  
Goodbye, my dear  
Grand

William

Write to B. Stoughton  
and to James Blair  
that I am safely  
through another  
battle.

Battlefield near Murfreesboro  
Jany. 8th, 1863

My dear Margaret,

I am still here on this field of carnage and death. My estimate of 20,000 killed and wounded is very nearly correct - of course you will see glowing accounts of our victory but you can just believe a small portion of that, for we came very near being ruined ourselves. I have my camp reduced now to about 500 and will send perhaps 300 of them to Nashville tomorrow.

I have been very much exhausted by the work, but I am getting the hardest of my work over and will have time to rest and recruit up a little. All of my things were sent back to Nashville during the fight, but they were all brought up this morning and I will get the use of them today.

We of course know nothing of when we will have to fight again but the Rebels will be ready as soon as we.

Dr. , a classmate of mine, just now called to see me and will take this note to Nashville. I hope to hear from you as boats are arriving at Nashville as the doctor is waiting on me to get through. I wish you would write Bloomington and James Blair as I have not time to write more than to you.

From you loving husband,

W. W. Blair

Battlefield near Manchester  
 July 8<sup>th</sup> 1863.

My dear Margaret-

I am still here in this field of carnage and death, my estimate of 20,000 killed and wounded is very nearly correct. — of course you will see glowing accounts of our victory but you can just believe a small portion of that, for we came very nearly being routed ourselves. I have my camp reduced now to about 500, and will send perhaps 200 of them to Ashville tomorrow.

I have been very much exhausted by the work, but I am getting the burden of my work over, and will have time to rest and recruit up a little. All my things were sent back to Ashville during the fight, but they are all brought up this morning & I will get the use of them today.

We of course know nothing of when we will have to fight again but the Rebels will be ready as soon as we.

So look a classmate of mine, just now called to see me and will take this note to Ashville. I hope to hear from you today as boats are arriving at Ashville. As I do so is waiting on me to get through. I wish you would write to Blooming ton & Samuel Blair as I have not time to write more than to you.

From your loving husband

Battlefield near Murfreesboro, TN  
Jany. 8th, 8 p.m., 1863

Well My Dear,

Again I am enjoying my tent. I have had a pretty hard life of it since we left Nashville. I have not had my clothes off since then, but as soon as I finish this letter I shall take them off and go to bed right. I had my tent and all my things brought out but on the 1st inst. All baggage teams were ordered back to Nashville - that shows you that victory was not altogether sure to our side - and I just got them back since dinner today. Tonight I feel quite "at home" compared with my situation for ten days past. My rest is likely to be disturbed by the groans of the wounded during the night - but my it will be so much more comfortable that I think I can sleep.

Genl. Wood has made an official report of our movements up to the night of the 31st. I have not seen it nor do I know the character of it, but I feel safe in saying that when you see it you can rely upon the statements it contains. He is not given to exaggeration. He will give a plain and intelligible statement of facts as they occurred. The report I understand will be published in the \_\_\_\_\_, hence you will have the opportunity of seeing it. The Genl. was slightly wounded and being very unwell was sent to Nashville that night after the severe battle. I was sorry to see him leave, but things have gone along pretty well since. Rosecrans has behaved very well. During the fight, except he was not up with us on the evening of the 30th as he should have been. He is a great favorite with the private soldiers. He goes around amongst them and talks to them and that pleases them very much. I just received your letter of the 28th and 30th this evening - and of course was very glad to get it. I am surprised that Hight would write such a letter home. The books Mc sent were tumbled into a box amongst the medical stores of our regiment and hauled around march after march. Some were used for wrapping paper, a few were given to the negroes, but the boys gave the greater part of them to the natives as we marched through there to get rid of hauling them. But for me the books would have been thrown out at the side of the road. As to them bring a school for he niggers at our \_\_\_\_\_. I am at the first of it. I asked any "boy" if ever there had been a school there. He said, "dey was trien to learn a little for a night or two, but they dun quit that long ago". "Didn't none of them learn nuthin nohow" - and I think these are very nearly the facts in the case. It is astonishing that army correspondents have such a propersity to exaggerate. It seems impossible to give a simple statement of facts. But one thing I must say for Mr. Hight he has really been making himself quite useful since the fight.

I would like to give you something of a history of the battle but my observation was limited to our part of the field. That on which our Division fought, and of that Gen. Wood's official report will give you a better account than I can give you for I could just see that they were our troops and see them fighting and see the Rebels shooting at them, but could not distinguish our Regiment from another. The shells and balls frequently fell around where I was most of the day, but it did not occasion a feeling of fear, but of the most intense anxiety, for the manner in which our right wing under McCook acted in the morning, made me feel exceedingly doubtful as to the result, and we were in a terrible place for the enemy were in front and Stones River was in our rear and that could be crossed only in a few places. And if they had defeated us we could not have taken any of our transportation out. But in the providence of God it was ordered otherwise and I hope that the terrible slaughter may do some good. There are various rumors in regard to the success or our arms at various points, in KY after Morgan, at Vicksburg & c. & c. but our newspapers are so prone to tell fabulous stories that these reports have to be received with a great deal of care. I hope they may be true for no one desires a successful issue more than I. To read the papers one would think that at the inspiration of every battle the thing will be about wound up, but unfortunately we find that is not the case. I must now stop and go to bed as I am very sleepy. Praying for a nights rest and protection I will say Goodby.

Jany. 9th 1863

My dear - I have had a fine nights rest and feel a great deal the better of it. I am sending off another lot of wounded men this morning and will send this letter to Nashville by some of them. A large mail came out last night but it has not been distributed yet. I expect to get another letter or two from you today. There is nothing new here. I expect to get this camp reduced in a few days so that I can get back to . We will have a number of wounded that they cannot be moved for some weeks. Those I will leave in charge of two or three surgeons and as many nurses as are necessary and then send all the rest of their regiments and go to myself. I am glad you are getting your wood in. Hope you will get along comfortably. Have not heard and scarcely thought of the box of sausage but as I get relief from the wounded I will begin to think more of my own comfort. I want to take a ride over the battlefield again before I leave this point. Our camp is just at one edge of it. We have literally ruined a very magnificent country residence here by putting the wounded in and around the house and yard. But I have but little sympathy for the owners as they are Rebels.

From your loving husband,

William

BLAIR 1-8-1863  
- 1-9-1863

Battlefield near Memphis Tenn  
July 8<sup>th</sup> 8. P. M. 1863

Well my dear

again I am enjoying my tent. — I have had a pretty hard life of it since we left Nashville I have not had my clothes off since then, but as soon as I finish this letter I shall take them off & go to bed right. I had my tent and all my things brought out but on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. all baggage team were ordered back to Nashville — that shows you that victory was not altogether sure to our side — and I just got them back since dinner today tonight. I feel quite "at home" compared with my situation for ten days past. My rest is likely to be disturbed by the groans of the wounded during the night, but my bed will be so much more comfortable that I think I can sleep. —

Genl Wood has made an official report of our movements up to the night of the 31<sup>st</sup>. I have not seen it — nor do I know the character of it, but I feel safe in saying that when you see it — you can rely upon the statements it contains, it is not given to exaggerations, He will give a plain and intelligible statement of facts as they occurred, The report I understand will be published in the Commercial, hence you will have an opportunity of seeing it. The Genl. was slightly wounded and being very unwell was sent to

Nashville that night - after the seven battle, I was sorry to see him leave, but things have gone along pretty well, since, Rosecrans has behaved very well, during the fight; except he was not up with us on the evening of the 30th as he should have been. He is a great favorite with the private soldiers. He goes around amongst them and talks to them and that pleases them very much.

I just read your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> this evening - and of course was very glad to get it. I am surprised that Hight would write such a letter home. The books we sent were tumbled into a box amongst the medical stores of our Regt. and hauled around - much after march, - some were used for wrapping paper a few were given to the negroes, but the boys got the greater part of them to the nation of Ky as we marched through them, to get rid of hauling them. But for me the books would have been thrown out at the side of the road.

As to their being a school for the niggers at our Head Quarters. I am at the first of it. I asked my "boy" if you then had been a school there he said, "they was tried to learn a little for a night or two, but they dew quit that long ago" "they didn't none of em learn nuthin nohow" - and I think these are very nearly the facts in the case. - It is astonishing that army correspondents have such a propensity to exaggerate - It seems impossible to give a simple statement of facts. But one thing I must say for Mr Hight - he has really been making himself quite useful since the fight.

1-8-1863  
1-9-1863

I would like to give you something of a history of the battle, but my observation was limited to one part of the field, — that on which our division fought, and of that Genl Wood's official report will give you a better account than I can give you. I could just see that they were our troops and see them fighting and see the Rebels shooting at them, but could not distinguish one Regt from another, — the shells and balls frequently fell around when I was most of the day, but it did not occasion a feeling of fear, but of the most intense anxiety, for the manner in which our right wing under McLeods acted in the morning, made me feel exceedingly doubtful as to the result; and we were in a terrible place for the enemy were in front and Stones River was in our rear and that could be crossed only in a few places, and if they had defeated us we could not have taken any of our transportation out. But in the providence of God it was ordered otherwise, and I hope that the terrible slaughter may do some good, — there are various rumors in regard to the success of our arms at various points, — in Ky after Morgan, at Vicksburg &c &c, but our newspapers are so prone to tell fabulous stories that these reports have to be received with a great deal of care, — I hope they may be true, for no one desires a successful issue more than I, — To read the papers one would think that at the expiration of every battle the "thing will be about wound up", but unfortunately we find that is not the case.

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I must now stop and go to bed, as I am very sleepy  
praying for a night's rest and protection I must  
say Good by - -

May 9<sup>th</sup> 1863.

My dear — I have had a fine night's rest and  
feel a great deal the better of it, I am sending  
off another lot of wounded men this morning  
and will send this letter to Barkville by some of them  
A large mail came out last night but it has  
not been distributed yet, I expect to get another letter  
or two from you today, there is nothing  
new here! I expect to get this camp reduced  
in a few days so that I can go back to the  
Drs., we will have a number of cases so  
badly wounded that they cannot be moved  
for some weeks. — When I will have in  
charge of two or three surgeons and as many  
nurses as are necessary and — then send all  
the rest to their Regts., and go to the Drs myself.  
I am glad you are getting your wood in  
stop you will get along comfortably, I have not  
heard, and scarcely thought of the box of sausage  
but as I get relief from the wounded, I will begin  
to think more of my own comfort, —  
I want to take a ride over the battle field again  
before I leave this point, our camp is just at  
our edge of it, — We have literally ruined a very  
magnificent country residence here — by putting the  
wounded in and around the house and yard, — but I have  
but little sympathy for the owners — as they are Rebels.  
From your loving husband  
William

Head. Qtrs. 1" Division 21"  
Murfreesboro, Tenn Feby. 22, 1863

My Dear Margaret,

Another week has passed - it is now Sabbath night and I am alone - yes alone even in the midst of a multitude, alone when compared with the enjoyment of home and its endearments. Notwithstanding I have some kind friends and men who have acted nobly towards me here. Yet I will bid them all advice for the loved ones at home. It think if Milton Munford regrets leaving the army he doesn't regret it enough to come back into it. I don't think his wife need be at all alarmed about his coming back. I would like to hear from him to know how he feels. This brings the anniversary of the birth of Washington. There was some demonstrations this morning, in memory of that event. Each Division had a National Salute of thirty four guns fired near their Head Qtrs. just at sundown. There must be as many as 10 divisions here which would make 340 rounds. It sounded a little like the eventful 31" of Dec. yet I could stand behind our guns with a much greater degree of safety and complacency than upon the day of the battle.

For this evening there was nobody shooting back and nothing but powder used in our cannons. I see by the papers that extensive preparations are being made to celebrate the day tomorrow. I am invited out to dinner tomorrow by Dr. Todd, one of the Surgeons of our Division. Dr. Huse the man whom I left in charge of the Field Hospital is to accompany me. Dr. Glick would have been invited had he been here, but he will take dinner with his wife if he is able to at all. He left here in very poor health. He had irritation of the spine - of the same nature of Robert's attack only not nearly so severe. Yet I will not be surprised if he is unable to return to the service. I thought this morning when I got up that I would go out somewhere today but the day was cold and disagreeable and I just kept my tent all day. Read my testament for a while then Shakespeare! Then the Louisville Journal and as soon as I get through writing will go to bed and read the testament until I go to sleep. I read myself to sleep every night - or something, and then wake up before daylight every morning - but I don't get up until "Nat" comes and makes a fire for me to get up by. I have my tent nicely fixed - have a floor in it - a piece of "matting" to lay by the side of my bed.

We have never been so long in one place since we came out, and we will have to stay here for sometime yet, being completely "       bound". The army will not be able to start out any sooner that it did last year. We left Nashville on the 29th of March for Shiloh, but where we will go this year seems hard to tell. It would not surprise me much if the contest would be in

the region of Vicksburgh, but no one can tell. If we should have to go down there we would not hear from home so regularly and we get the Cincinnati Commercial very regularly at two days old. But my letters seem to be much longer getting out from the length of time you run without hearing from me. From the way the papers talk we, down here, think things are improving some in the North. I really feel some better as to the conditions of things at home. The impression of sentiment by the army has had something to do with straightening things up though, and if we could not get a good victory we would entirely put down this copperhead Democracy. But that will require some work on our part and involve the loss of many a dear life.

I received a letter yesterday from Dr. Wylie saying he had rec'd a telegram stating that those boxes had been shipped on the 16<sup>th</sup> which would give them ample time to get to Nashville by this time. After I came to Nashville I telegraphed Evansville to have the boxes shipped to Dr. Wylie so that he could be there to take care of their arrival. I have some hope now of getting, but for sometime past I had about given them up as gone. If I get them through and delivered its the last set of boxes that I will undertake to bring to the army and shall try and make out on what I can get by myself, however pleasant it might be to get things from home. I think I will be able to get those things from home. I do not know what the people at home think about my not getting along with them any better than I did, but I know it was not from any neglect or mismanagement of mine. It was simply one of those things, although extremely annoying - yet could not be avoided. I hope to live long enough to pay, that contemptible thing in the shape of a man Baird for his conduct towards me. Burr Polk showed himself extremely small in the matter too, though of that I don't wish to speak for he did anything that was very tangible, yet he was manifestly afraid to talk to me in the presence of Baird. He acted more like a whipped dog than anything else, but I don't wish to bring his name in, or refer to him out of the family. Maybe I'd be afraid to talk to an acquaintance of mine in the presence of Genl. Wood!! I see by the \_\_\_\_\_ that Burr Polk's name is before congress for the position of Asst. Adjt. Genl. Yaryan, one of Genl. Woods' aids made a rough but yet one of the truest remarks a few days ago in regard to aids and Adjts. Genls. that I have heard in a long time. He said there were more d\_\_\_\_\_d fools acting in that capacity than in any other department of the army. Burr however is not a fool yet he lacks manliness. His appointment to that position will make Joe Fleming Capt. of that company. Henderson told me that Joe was \_\_\_\_\_ the but Company officer in the Regt. and his men liked him very much. How did Mrs. Mangram get along up at Louisville. I pity the poor woman. Andy felt very much mortified that he did not get to see her. The 33rd has not come into this vicinity yet. The boys in the Regts. here are very anxious to see them. But my

dear I must now stop for tonight praying for a nights rest and protection for us all. May write a little in the morning before breakfast. I guess you are all in bed by this time - all but you anyhow.

Good night.

Good Morning My Dear - I have had a comfortable sleep and hope you have too. It was quite late before I got to sleep. My feet got cold and i had to get up and make a fire and warm them. If I had been at home I would not have had that trouble, I could have put them beside yours! The ground is frozen this morning - quite cold - the coldest since my return, but it will not last long. My rest during the middle of the night was disturbed some by some men who had been celebrating Washington's birthday by a drunken rivalry, but after all became quite I slept very comfortably. I am going over to the 58th this morning to see if I can collect any money on my old accounts there. By the time I get back to the Regt. and get everything paid up. I had but about 20\_\_\_ left. But I hope I an collect enough to keep me. I want to keep just as little on my hand as I can possibly get along with. If I should need any from home I will let you know in time. It is Breakfast now. Goodby.

From your loving husband,

W. W. Blair

Head Quarters 1<sup>st</sup> Division 21<sup>st</sup> O.C.  
Murfreesboro Tenn Feb 22 1863

My dear Maryant

Another week has passed - it is now sabbath night, - and I am alone - yes alone - now in the middle of a multitude, alone when compared with the enjoyment of home and its endearments, - notwithstanding I have some kind friends and ones who have acted nobly toward me here. yet I will bid them all adieu, for the loved ones at home. - I think if Milton Murford regrets leaving the army. he doesn't regret it enough to come back into it, I don't think his wife need be at all alarmed, about his coming back, I would like to hear from him, - to know how he feels, - This being the anniversary of the birth of Washington, there was some demonstrations this evening, in memory of that event. Each Division had a national salute of thirty four guns fired near their Headquarters. just at sun down, - There must be as many as 10 divisions here. which would make 340 "pounds" - it sounded a little like the eventful 31<sup>st</sup> of Feb. yet I could stand behind our guns with a much greater degree of safety and complacency than upon the day of the battle,

For this evening there was nobody shooting back  
and - nothing but powder used in our cannon,  
I see by the papers that extensive preparations are being  
made to celebrate the day tomorrow, - I am in-  
vited out to dinner tomorrow by Dr Todd one of  
the Surgeons of this Division, - Dr Wise the man  
whom I left in charge of the Field Hospital is to  
accompany me, - Dr Glick would have been  
invited had he been here, but he will take dinner  
with his wife if he is able to do so, - He left  
here in very poor health, - He had irritation of  
the spine - of the same nature of Pott's at-  
tack only not nearly so severe, yet I will not  
be surprised if he is unable to return to the  
service, - I thought this morning when I  
got up that I would go out somewhere today  
but the day was cold and disagreeable and I  
just kept my tent all day, - read my test-  
ament a while, then Shakespeare! - then the  
Louisville Journal, - and as soon as I get  
through writing will go to bed and read the test-  
ament until I go to sleep, - I read myself  
to sleep very early - on something, and then  
wake up before daylight - very morning - but  
I don't get up until "bat" comes and makes  
a fire for me to get up by, I have my tent  
nicely fixed - have a floor in it - a piece of  
"matting" to lay by the side of my bed, &

2-22-1863

We have never been so long in one place since we came out, — and we will have to stay here for some time yet. — being completely "mud-bound". The army will not be able to start out any sooner than it did last year, — we left Ash Grove on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March. — for Shiloh, — but where we will go this year seems hard to tell, It would not surprise me much if the contest would be in the region of Chickasaw. But no one can tell, If we should have to go down there we would not hear from home so regularly, — Now your letters come through very slow, the one you mailed on the 17<sup>th</sup> I recd on the 19<sup>th</sup> — but they don't come that quick regularly, — and we get the Cincinnati Commercial very regularly at two days old — But my letters seem to be much longer getting out — from the length of time you were without hearing from me. — From the way the papers talk us, down here, think things are improving some in the North, — I really feel some better as to the condition of things at home. The expression of sentiment by the army has had something to do with straightening things up there, — and if we could now get a good victory we would entirely put down this Copperhead Democracy, — but that will require some work, on our part, and involve the loss of many a dear life,

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INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I rec'd a letter yesterday from Dr. Wylie saying he had rec'd a Telegram stating that those boxes had been shipped on the 16<sup>th</sup> — which would give them ample time to get to Washville, by this time, — After I came to Washville I telegraphed to Louisville to have the boxes shipped to Dr. Wylie so that he could be them to take care of them on their arrival. I have some hope now of getting, but for some time past I had about given them up as gone. — If I get them through and delivered — it's the last set of boxes that I will undertake to bring to the army and I shall try and make out on what I can get for myself, — however pleasant it might be to get things from home. — I think I will be able to get those things here some time this week if they ever come, I do not know what the people at home think about my not getting along with them any better than I did, but I know it was not from any neglect or mismanagement of mine, It was simply one of those things, although extremely annoying, — yet could not be avoided, I hope to live long enough to pay, that contemptable thing — in the shape of a man. — Baird for his conduct toward me. — Burr Polk showed himself extremely small in the matter too, though of that I don't wish to speak, for he did nothing that was very tangible, but he was manifestly afraid to talk to me in the presence of Baird. He acted now like a whipped dog than anything else, but I don't wish to bring his name in, or refer to him



William Henry Smith Memorial Library

out of the family. Maybe I'd be afraid or ashamed to talk to an acquaintance of mine in the presence of Genl Wood!! — I see by the Com<sup>d</sup> that Burr Polk's name is before Congress for the position of Asst Adjut Genl. — Gargan — one of Genl Wood's aids — made a rough but yet one of the truest remarks a few days ago, in regard to Aids and Adjut Genls, that I have heard in a long time, He said there were more d-d fools acting in that capacity than in any other department of the Army, — Burr however is not a fool yet he lacks manliness — His appointment to that position will make Joe Fleming Capt of the company, Anderson told me that Joe was decidedly the best Company officer in the Regt, — and his men like him very much. — How did Mrs Mungovan get along up at Louisville, I pity the poor woman, Andy felt very much mortified that he did not get to see her, — The 33<sup>d</sup> have not come into this vicinity yet, — The boys in the Regt have an very anxious to see them, But they can't. I must now stop for tonight — praying for a night's rest and protection for us all, — May write a little in the morning before breakfast — I guess you are all in bed by this time, — all but you anyhow, — Good night,

Good morning — my dear — I have had  
a comfortable sleep — and hope you have too,  
It was quite late before I got to sleep — my  
feet got cold and I had to get up and make  
a fire and warm them. If I had been at home  
I would not have had that trouble, I could have  
put them beside yours! — The ground is  
frozen this morning — quite cold — the coldest  
since my return, but it will not last long,  
my rest during the middle of the night  
was disturbed some by some men who had  
been celebrating Washington's birthday by  
a drunken revelry, — but after all became  
quiet — I slept very comfortably, — I am go-  
ing over to the 68<sup>th</sup> this morning to see if I can  
collect any money on my old accounts there  
By the time I get back to the Regt and get  
everything paid up, I had but about 20¢ left,  
But I hope I can collect enough to keep on —  
I want to keep just as little on my hand  
as I can possibly get along with, — If I  
should send any from home I will let you  
know, in time — It is Breakfast now  
Good by

From your loving husband

W. W. Blair

Head. Qrs. 1" Div. 21" \_\_\_\_\_  
Murfreesboro, Tenn March 18, 1863

My dear Margaret,

Although I have little to write yet - it is the middle of the week and you will no doubt be willing to get a letter by the time this reaches you. We have had a grand "Review" here today of this Army Corps. It is hardly possible to give you a full idea of a review by letter, but I can tell you something about. The troops were all ordered out in full dress and all their accouterments on. The Regiments of each division (there are three divisions in this Corps) are stationed in a line two deep which make a line more than half a mile long. Our division was stationed in front - them about a hundred yards in the rear of ours - Gen. Palmer's Division and the same distance in rear of that was Van Cleve. I took a position out in front. (I would have been in the rear if it had been a battle!) a little distance off so that I could see the entire army about 8,000 ran out - the remaining 5,000 in this Corps were on duty at various places. Gen. Rosecrans made his appearance and with his staff officers rode down the front line taking his hat entirely off as he passed the flag of each Regiment. When he reached the front of the line, which did not take him long for he had a splendid horse and rode at a rapid gait he turned and rode quietly and leisurely up in rear of the line, to the head stopping frequently to talk to the private soldiers. He then rode down and up the other divisions in the same manner. He then came around in front and took a position near the center and the entire force marched in review before him, each Regiment of course trying to do their best marching. Some of them marched beautifully. The Artillery of each Division was stationed along at intervals between the Regiments. The sight was a very beautiful one. I wished many a time whilst it was going on that you could have been here to see it. I thought too, how nice - how magnificent it would have been if this had been at the close of the war. I could then have enjoyed it. But as it was it rather made me sad. Our army is again in good condition. Many of those back about Hospitals and deserters through the states are being brought up and by the first of May we will have a more efficient army than ever we had. Mrs. Rosecrans is here now and rode out and witnessed the review today. I was not near enough to her to see her personal appearance but she is said to be rather a plain looking lady. Mrs. Wood is also here making a visit. I met the Genl. out here on the road a few days since. They stopped and gave me an introduction, and asked me to call and see them but I have not done so and do not suppose that I will, she will of course enjoy the Genl's. company better than that of strangers. - Well my dear I must stop for tonight and may write a little more in the morning.

As ever your affectionate husband William

Thursday Morning 19th

Your letter of the 13" mailed the 14" came on the 17". I am glad Andy Wright still gets a little something to meet current expenses - but you can just keep that and use it at home. I will be able to get along here until I can get some from the Govt. Scott is making a great affair of his trial indeed. The idea of a preacher (he is a disgrace to the church) calling on Tim French, I. V. Hill, & c. to prove his character is rather too ridiculous to take place in a civilized country. He would make an excellent inhabitant for Utah. Brigham Young would be a very suitable associate for him and I have no doubt is as good a man at heart and has just as much religion.

A lot of contraband came in yesterday morning bringing three horses - one of them a pretty good black horse six years old. I told Mister \_\_\_\_\_ that I would take care of that horse - whereupon he was soon haltered up in my stable. My mare will soon have a colt and if I have to account to the Government for the horse I will turn over the mare and keep the horse - a very convenient way of swapping - generally it takes two to make a trade, but this way it only takes one. I intend to try to keep this horse for the one the Rebels took from me if I can. James got his peaches all right, I never thought to speak of them. I have not seen him since I wrote last. Joe Minnis is here. Don't know what he is after. He knew nothing of matters at home that was of any interest to me. He says he is not able to be a soldier on account of a sore leg. But unless he has some business here he would be as well at home trying to raise some corn for those who are out. If the conscription should be enforced this spring it will surely make laborers somewhat scarce at home. I believe I will send a package of your letters home by him. It will save me from carrying them around with me and I'd not like to lose and destroy them. I will just give him the package and not tell him anything about what it is - as you will get this letter sometime before he gets home as he is intending to stop at the 80th. My contraband horse looks very well this morning. I think he is going to be a pretty fair animal. He would about make up what I lost at Fayetteville. A number of our friends are lying in jail and have been all winter. They have a terrible time - not any worse however than many men who have gone from the north. I had a fine nights sleep - a little lonely! The buds are beginning to swell on the trees here now. A few days of such weather as we have now will give us a green forest again. But no preparation for farming - for two reasons. The people have no horses or mules left to use and but for negroes to use them. If the whole Southern Confederacy was like it is around here and between here and Nashville, a few months more would wind it up. But unfortunately away from our army they can go on with their work as usual. It looks a little like raining this morning. My

breakfast will soon be ready. Good morning. I expect a letter  
from you today.

As ever yours,

William

Head Quarters 1<sup>st</sup> Div<sup>n</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> O. I.  
Manufactow Town March 18<sup>th</sup> 1863

My dear Margaret

Although I have little to write, yet it is the middle of the week, and you will no doubt be willing to get a letter by the time this reaches you. We have had a grand "Review" here today, of this Army Corps. — It is hardly possible to give you a full idea of a Review by letter, — but I can tell you some things about. — The troops are all ordered out in full dress, and all their accoutrements on. — The Regiments of each Division (there are three Divisions in this Corps) are stationed in a line, — two deep, which makes a line more than half a mile long. One Division was stationed in front, — then about a hundred yards in the rear of ours. — Genl Palmer's Division, and the same distance in rear of that was Genl Cress, I took a position out in front. (I would have been in the rear if it had been a battle!) a little distance off, so that I could see the entire Army, about 8,000 men out — the remaining 5,000, in this Corps were on duty at various places. — Genl Povey made his appearance, and with his Staff officers rode down the front line, — taking his hat entirely off as he passed the flag of each Regiment, — when he reached the front of the line, which did not take him long, for he had a splendid horse, and rode at a rapid gait.

He turned and rode quietly and leisurely up in rear of  
the line, to the head, stopping frequently to talk to the pri-  
vate soldiers. — He then rode down and up the other  
divisions in the same manner. — He then came around in  
front and took a position near the centre, and the entire  
force marched in review before him, — each Regiment of  
course trying to do their best marching. Some of them  
marched beautifully. — The Artillery of each Division was sta-  
tioned along at intervals between the Regiments. — The  
sight was a very beautiful one, & I wished many a time  
whilst it was going on that you could have been here  
to see it; — I thought too, how nice — how magnificent  
it would have been, if this had been at the close of the  
war. — I could then have enjoyed it; But as it was it  
rather made me feel sad. — Our army is again in  
good condition. — Many of those back about Hospitals  
and deserters through the States are being brought up,  
and by the first of May we will have a more efficient  
army than ever we had. Mrs Procerans is here now  
and rode out and witnessed the review today. — I was  
not near enough to her to see her personal appearance,  
but she is said to be rather a plain looking lady. Mrs  
Wood is also here, making a visit. I met the Guild and her  
on the road a few days since. She stopped and gave me  
an introduction, and asked me to call and see them  
but I have not done so, and do not suppose that I  
will. She will of course enjoy the Guild's company better  
than that of strangers. — Well, my dear, I must stop for  
tonight — and may write a little more in the morning.  
Believe your affectionate husband  
William

3-18-1863

Sunday morning 19<sup>th</sup>

Your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> mailed the 14<sup>th</sup> came on the 17<sup>th</sup>.  
 I am glad Andy Wright still gets a little something to  
 cover current expenses. — But you can just keep that  
 and use it at home. I will be able to get along here  
 until I can get some from the Govt. — Scott is  
 making a great affair of his trial indeed. — The idea  
 of a preacher. — (he is a disgrace to the church,) calling on  
 Jim French. I V. Still &c. to prove his character is  
 rather too ridiculous. To take place in a civilized coun-  
 try. He would make an excellent inhabitant for  
 Utah. Brigham Young would be a very suitable associate  
 for him, and I have no doubt is as good a man at  
 heart and has just as much religion.

A lot of contrabands came in yesterday morning  
 bringing their horses — one of them a pretty good  
 black horse six years old. — I told Master Big  
 that I would take care of that horse, — when you he  
 was soon hobbled up in my stable, — My man  
 will soon have a colt, and if I have to account  
 to the Govt for the horse. I will turn over the man  
 and keep the horse. — a very convenient way  
 of swapping, — generally it takes two to make  
 a trade, but this way it only takes one. I intend  
 to try to keep this horse for the one the Rebels took  
 from me, if I can. — James got his preaches all  
 right, I never thought to speak of them. — I have not  
 seen him since I wrote last. — Joe Morris is  
 here. I don't know what he is after. — He knew



nothing of matters at home that was of any interest  
to me. He says he is not able to be a soldier  
on account of a sore leg. — But unless he has some  
business here, he would be as well at home trying to  
raise some corn, for those who are out. — If the  
conscription should be enforced this spring it will surely  
make laborers somewhat scarce, at home. — I believe  
I will send a package of your letters home by him  
it will save me carrying them around with me, and  
I don't like to lose or destroy them. — I will just  
give him the package and not tell him anything about  
what it is. — as you will get this letter sometime  
before he gets home, as he is intending to stop at the  
80<sup>th</sup> — My contractor here looks very well this  
morning. — I think he is going to be a pretty  
fair animal. He would about make up what I lost  
at Fayetteville, a number of our friends there are  
lying in jail and have been all winter. — They had  
a terrible time. — not any worse however than many  
men who have gone from the world. — I had a  
fine night's sleep. — a little lumpy! — The birds  
are beginning to pull on the trees here now. — a  
few days of such weather as we have now will give  
us a green forest again. — But no preparation for  
farming — for two reasons. — the people have no horses  
or mules left to use, and but few mules to use  
them. — If the whole Southern Confederacy was like it  
is around here and between here and Nashville, a few  
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