

THE
ALABAMA HISTORICAL
QUARTERLY

PETER A. BRANNON, Editor

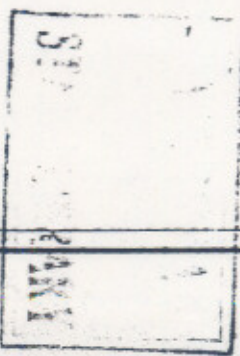


Published by the
STATE DEPARTMENT
OF
ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

VOL. 18

NO. 1

SPRING ISSUE
1956



24th ALA

NEWTON N. DAVIS* CONFEDERATE LETTERS

Contributed to the Department of Archives and History, by Prof. Henry S. Halbert, Pickens County, who was at the time of his death in 1916, a member of the Staff of this Department.

I don't want any more clothes yet. I have as many as I can carry in saddle bag.

Camp Near Tupelo, June 18th, 1862

My dear Bettie:

Your very welcome favor of the 11th Inst. came to hand day before yesterday. I was much gratified to learn that you were all well. You don't know how delighted I was to have a letter handed me unexpectedly backed in your own familiar hand. I could almost imagine that I was sitting by your side and listening to your own familiar words while reading its contents. It was utterly impossible for me to restrain my feelings when I read about dear little Willie. My eyes became so blinded with tears that I could read no further. Alas what tears have been shed, what pain and anguish of heart has been endured on account of this unjust and unholy crusade against the South. Oh would to God that it were at an end.

I am very sorry to hear that Billy Coleman and Jim Murray are so unwell. Joe Leonard is very much distressed about the loss of his child. He heard today by Lieut. Henry that both of his children were dead and that his wife was very ill. I hope that it is not the case. I intend making an effort tomorrow to get him a furlough to go home for a few days, although I don't think that I shall succeed. Furloughs come but seldom now, and then only to the favored few. Billy has been sick for several days and I have been advised by the Surgeon to send him home. Mr. Herron a young gentleman from Pickensville leaves here for home in the morning and I have concluded to send him as far as Columbus by him with instructions to leave him at Mrs. Davis' until you can send the wagon after him as he will

*Colonel of 24th Ala. Inf. Regt., wounded and captured at Franklin, Tenn.

not be able to walk from there home. I am fearful that he will have a long spell of the Fever before he recovers. I thought it best to send him home while I had an opportunity as I do not know how long we will remain here, and if ordered away soon I should be compelled to leave him behind to the mercy of strangers and perhaps never see or hear of him again. I can get along very well without him for a while. I have written to Mrs. Davis to take good care of him until you can send after him.

I am sorry to hear that Jim and Ira have to make such a long march. It is no pleasant job to march that distance through the dust this hot weather. It is impossible to say how long we will remain where we are now, but in my opinion it will not be long. One thing I think certain which is that there will be no more fighting of any consequence at this point. The scene will have to change to some other locality. It is rumored that our Division (Gen. Wether's) will be sent to Mobile and also that it will be sent to Chattanooga. Gen. Beauregard left here yesterday, report says for Richmond. Don't know the object of his mission. If I had my own choice I believe I had rather go to Mobile. I shall write to your Pappa tomorrow. I don't know what to say for the children but the same old song. I go to sleep thinking about the loved ones at home at night and wake dreaming of them in the morning. May God of his infinite love and Mercy Bless you all.

Your Devoted Husband

N. N. Davis.

Send me a viol Paregoric the first opportunity. Your sheet of paper came in good time as I was about out. Will save it for my next letter.

P. S. Since writing the enclosed letter Mr. Herron tells me that he would not leave today, and when he does he is going horseback. I have since concluded to send Joe and Billy both home. Joe has had Diarrhea for some time and does not get any better and is now of no service to Newt. I think it best to send them both home until they get well. Your last letter of the 15th

has just been handed me by the P.M. since I commenced this note. Your former letter was received. All the mail for Baldwin was stopped at Tupelo where we are now. I am sorry to hear that the mule died. I hope Em will become satisfied with the Woods this time. Tell Mrs. Smiley that I shall write to him soon. You must be very careful about the measles and try to prevent them from getting into our family. I should be miserable all the time if you and the children were to have them now.

Your Devoted Husband

N. N. Davis

Camp Near Tupelo, June 25th 1862

My dear Bettie:

As I have a leisure hour this morning I have concluded to spend it in writing you a short letter as it may be several days before I have another opportunity. We will have to move our camp in a day or two and when we do I shall be kept busy for some few days in attending to the arrangement of tents and every thing else necessary. I regret very much to have to move as we may not get as good water at our new camp as we have here. The objection to our present location is that the Regiments are too much crowded they think for health. It is only a mile to the place where we intend moving. We have men cleaning off the ground and digging wells. It is very warm, dry and dusty. The dust sometimes becomes so thick that it is almost indurable. Yesterday our Brigade ordered out for review by General Wethers. It presented a fine appearance when drawn up in line across an old field. Our Brigade is composed of five Regiments. The 24th, 21st, 18th, and 17th Ala. and the 5th Georgia, and Burtwell's Battery of Artillery. Col. Buck has gone to Mobile. He has been unwell for some time before he left. I enclose you a communication taken from a Mobile paper which Col. Buck had published in his defense against a slanderous report which was in circulation in regard to the fight our Regiment had at Blackland. I understood that the same report was in circulation about Columbus and many perhaps have reached you. It would require a long time to write you a full

explanation of the origin of the report, but suffice it to say that it is nothing but the fabrication of a vile, malicious, slanderous tongue without any shadow of foundation whatever. The report was that he was arrested for "Cowardice and unsoldierly conduct in the presence of the enemy". I saw Mr. Jett on last Sunday. I was on duty at the time and had only a few minutes conversation with him. He was looking well. Jenkins came to see me on yesterday. He has been discharged from the service. He says that he is going to Tenn. He informed me that you had sent my Saddle Bags by Hillery Portwood. I shall be very glad when I get them. If we are ordered away before I get them I shall have nothing to carry my clothes in. I have turned over my trunk to the Quarter Master with my clothes in it. If Portwood left home when Jenkins says he did, he ought to have been here before this. I hope he will be here before many days.

Jenkins informed me that Billy and Joe had both reached home safely. I was very uneasy about them. Billy especially as he was very sick when he left here. Billy had five dollars which I gave him with instructions to give it to you when he reached home, or at least all that he did not use. If he has not given it to you get it from him. Your Brother Newt is well. He has gone to the Creek to wash his clothes. The Washer Women have all been sent away and consequently the men have to do their own washing. I learned a few days ago that Capt. McCracken was dead. I was truly sorry to hear it. It will certainly be a great loss to the Company. He died of Tiford Fever at Mr. Snells. I received a letter yesterday from Lieut. Dunlap's Sister. She informs me that he is very sick with Camp Fever. It will be sometime before he is able to return. I fear that you are suffering for rain. It has not rained enough to lay the dust since I camp up. The crops are beginning to suffer very much and if it does not rain soon, the corn crop in this section of country will be sorry.

It is so very warm and dusty that I feel unpleasant all the time. I cannot keep a shirt clean for one hour. I go to the Creek and take a bath, but I soon become as dirty as ever. If it has been as dry at home as it is here I know, the crop must be sorry.

How are my dear little Hammie and Willie and the sweet little Babe. I feel just as anxious to see you all as I did before I went home in April and I pray God that our separation may not be as long this time as it was before. I should be miserable if I thought so. I can't tell how long we will remain here. One Division has been sent to Holly Springs. It is still reported that our Division will go to Mobile. I believe that I should prefer going there to remaining. May Kind Heaven Bless and Protect You.

Your Devoted Husband

N. N. Davis

Atlanta, August 8th, 1862

My Dear Bettie:

I arrived here this morning and have only a few minutes to write to you. I wrote you on the Boat below Selma which I mailed to you from that place. We have had very warm unpleasant trip thus far. I am almost tired out. Have not slept much for several nights.

Billy was drowned in the river at Montgomery day before yesterday. We landed there in the morning and marched out to the Old Fair Ground to cook rations and get ready for the train next morning. We had been there a short time before I sent Billy down to the Spring on the river bank for a bucket of water. While there he took a foolish notion to go into the river to bathe. He striped off his clothes and went in the water and had gone but a short distance from shore when he got into a whirlpool which carried down instantly. He never came up to the top of the water after he went under. I never had any thing happen to me that I regret as much. I shall miss him very much but must try to do without him. I will try to hire a boy if I can. I know that dear little Hammie will cry when he learns that Billy is drowned. I hope you are all getting along well at home. I don't know yet where to tell you to write me at. We leave here in a few minutes for Chattanooga but it is my im-

pression now that we will go on up into Tennessee. Your Brother Newt is still complaining. He looks very badly. My health is good. May Kind Heaven bless you my dearest one.

Good Bye

Your Devoted Husband,

N. N. Davis.

Mrs. Bettie Davis

Care Henophon Halbert

Columbus, Mississippi