

4-10-1863

Letter from Marshall Blair Clason to his father

Marshall Blair Clason

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Franklin, Tenn., April 10th 1863.

Dear Father: -

I rec'd your box (the mess chest) on the afternoon of April 7th. It came by express to me from Nashville, and was forwarded to this place from Nashville, without much delay. It takes sometime for a box to get reached at the Louisville office, owing to the slow accommodations afforded to the Express Company. I understand only one car a day is allowed to the Express Co., and private freight is entirely prohibited, under the penalty of confiscation.

The box cost me \$1.25, from Nashville here. I suppose it cost you fully \$8.00. I judge from the weight of the box, 153 lbs. I found everything in excellent order, except the apples. ^{But} half of them were more or less rotten. They were only a few that were badly rotten, the others had only rotten spots in them. I have not made much progress in the box. I have tried the apples, the quigger snaps, and a few potatoes. The other excellent things are untouched. It will last me, (I mean the eatables) fully a month. The drinkables, I expect to keep on hand fully six months. The horses radish and pickles, I do not intend to pass away very suddenly. The medicine I commenced taking yesterday. I have not ^{been} commenced taking it long enough to judge of its effects. I am taking it for a cold. The boots fit me splendidly, and are just the thing. I am under many obligations to you for them. I will appreciate them when I come to long marches this summer, although I have no assurance that our regiment will move from this place for some time to come. This place is fortified, and is expected to be one of the chain of forts on the present line of Rosecrans. We are occupying this country surely. You can certainly Cal.

culate on all Middle Tennessee being ours in 40 days. Then for East Tennessee, along with Burnside. We are going ahead. The army is confident, and the enemy is despairing. They calculated on European interference and our own dissension, ~~neither~~ of which calculations have been realized. I think one more year of active war will settle the ~~the~~ question. I am not so sanguine as to suppose that this summer will see the end of the war, but in the months' time men's minds will be settled on the question. We are bound to be victorious. And as far as the negro question is concerned, I am well settled on that point. I would take every nigger in Tennessee, if it was necessary for our use or our safety, just as I would every horse or every rail, or every bushel of forage. I believe in making war on war, not peace, principles. In fact, farther I am in favor of nigger requisites, if there is any fight in them, and they could be brought within civilized restrictions. In fact (and I express the opinion of the army generally) we are opposed to negro insurrections. In fact we would regard them as rather favorable news. It would distract the enemy and give them business at home for their armies. All nations at war with powers having servile populations have encouraged them to revolt. And I think, if we do not encourage them, we should take advantage of them, and not give ourselves any trouble about allaying internal dissension in an enemy's country. War is limited by few rules. The constitution of the United States does not control Generals in making war. They are above it, unless especially referred to, ^{and then they would not obey it unless consequent} military law is above all civil laws and constitutions, in a country, the scene of war. The constitution of the United States is just as dead as letter in the army as the Statute of Wisconsin regulating the duties of constables. It is impossible for

it to be otherwise. But enough of this politics. We have a big job to do, and all hands must help, and I have no objections to the assistance of niggers, arabs, chinese, turks, barbarians or Serphians, Greek or Jew, ~~bond~~ bond or free. If mules could be of any assistance in kicking, I would sharpen their shoes, organize them into a regiment, and see if the rebels could not be brought to a realizing sense of their condition by a little or a great deal judicious kicking.

My wife said they were anxious to know which article I ate first. Well, I think you could have had no doubt, after you knew how the chest was packed. The apples were on top, and of course I ate them first. I warrant you bet on apples. I almost ate my way through the apples to the things below them. My curiosity did not equal my appetite.

The Paymaster is here. We did expect to be paid yesterday and are expecting him to-day. Owing to the fact that I hold a new office ~~there~~ will be some circumspection about my pay. I will receive pay as kept for only 8 days, from Feb. 20th the day of receipt of my commission to Feb. 28th. — I will have to wait for my Adjutant's pay, from Jan. 1st to Feb. 20th. But \$200.00 until my muster out papers are rec'd. They will probably arrive in a day or so, and then I will draw my pay of the Paymaster here, who tells me he will remain here a week or ten days longer. I shall send my money by express to Milwaukee, and will direct in the accompanying letter the disposition I desire made of it. I shall send the deed filled up with this letter. ~~And~~ I will mention one dollar as a consideration. That is sufficient in law, unless this new exercise law requires the actual consideration to be stated. I will leave it blank.

I wish you would keep Annie with you as long as she will stay. I desire her to make a long visit. You will find her as pleasant all the time. She is one of those guests whose welcome lasts a very

long while I am prejudiced, but I think few women are as good as she is.

Graham is disturbed with signs of attack. We are preparing for it. A brigade reinforced us night before last. We feel secure. If I am engaged in a battle, you shall hear of it by telegraph. I have made arrangements for communicating with you and my wife speedily.

I am getting along very well with my company, and under the new regime, I am willing to remain where I am. We have a Lieut. Col. assigned to us, who just suits me, and who will bring out the regiment. We are all right now. We want a Major of the same kind.

I am in good general health. My love to all. Tell them their kindness in sending me the box and its contents is warmly appreciated. - Did Annie make that roll of butter. It tasted very fine. I know I would enjoy it more, if she made it. I wish you could keep her with you all summer. Don't let her consider this the last visit. Take good care of her health. Have a watchful eye over her. These April winds and storms in Illinois, may injure her. Tell mother I would like her to write me a letter expressing her opinion of her new daughter.

Your son

M. B. Blason

Tell Annie Col. Reid is quite well, though not seriously so, and is endeavoring to get as far home. Get all you can for my land. It is no use to sell land high.

M. B. Blason

P.S. - Before I mailed this letter, we were attacked by the enemy, and fighting has been going on all the afternoon. Only one regiment the 4th Regt, and the cavalry were engaged to-day. The whole force was put in readiness for battle, but it did not fully commence to-day. We are expecting a battle to-morrow, and a victory. We have the material here, or in other words Gen. Graeger has got the "tools." It is now nearly 12 o'clock at night. I have made my preparations for to-morrow. I expect a sound night's sleep, and to-morrow I will be ready to fight. I will try to do my duty, and if I do it, and should fall, neither myself nor my friends will be ashamed of the manner & place of my death. My love to all -

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Your son
M. B. Clason

Tell Annie Col. Reid is quite unwell though not seriously so and is endeavoring to get a furlough home. Get all you can for my land. It is no sin to sell land high.

M.B.C.

P.S. — Before I mailed this letter, we were attacked by the enemy and fighting has been going on all afternoon. Only one regiment the 40th Ohio and the Calvary were engaged to-day. The whole force was put in readiness for battle, but it did not fully commence to-day. We are expecting a battle to-morrow and a victory. We have the material here or in other words Gen. Granger has got the "tools." It is now nearly 12 o'clock at night I have made my preparations for to-morrow.— I expect a sound night's sleep, and to-morrow I will be ready to fight.— I will try to do my duty, and if I do it and should fall neither myself nor my friends will be ashamed of the manner or place of my death. My love to all.—

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