

4-16-1863

Letter from Marshall Blair Clason to his mother-in-law

Marshall Blair Clason

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Franklin, Tenn., April 16th 1863.

My Dear Mother: -

I have been sitting up quite late to-night, in adjusting the clothing accounts of my company, but I could not retire without at least commencing a letter to you. However, I am fearful it will be but little more than a business letter. And first to the business. I was paid off on Monday up to Feb. 28th 1863. I drew \$234.45⁰⁰ for 2 months. I have spared \$200.00 to send home. I concluded to send it ~~through~~ the State Agent, Maj. Williams. I deposited the money with him, to be delivered to you. I enclose the receipt, which you will deliver to the Co. Treasurer when you draw the money. The money will probably be in Delaware by the 1st of April. I desire you to be so kind as to make the following disposition of the money, when recd. - I desire you to hold \$100.00 subject to my wife's order, at her. for her own use, \$40.00 converted into N.Y. Exchange for my father, J. W. Blason, and \$30.00 for yourself, in part-payment for the horse which you sold me when I entered the service. I am sorry that the payment of this debt has been so long delayed, and also that I do not fully pay it now, but it shall be attended to at an early day. I am much obliged to you for your kindness to me in this matter. Fan has rendered me excellent service. She is a very superior animal, although I do not think she can ever be taught to stand fire. I have allowed the Whapham to use her, although I can have her whenever I need her. - She is exceedingly well taken care of, much better than I could take care of her, in my present situation. I intend to take her home with me, in case I should return from the war.

I must acknowledge myself, under many obligations, and I feel very thankful to you, for assisting Annie in sending that ~~very~~ ^{accp.}

table box of eatables, &c., which I rec'd by express some months ^{and} half ago. Everything was of a most superior quality. I believe I have never eaten better peaches except at your house. Let. Morris expressed himself in the highest terms in their favor. I enjoyed them and everything else the box contained. I have since rec'd. box from home, containing eatables, and some cooking conveniences. I also received a splendid mess chest from home filled to the brim with almost everything which could delight a soldier. In camp, a man appreciates many things which he would pay very little attention to at home. Anne rather ridiculed me at my becoming enthusiastic over a most convenient little stew kettle which father sent me. She thought I was just as enthusiastic as if I had "discovered a new line of beauty." Well, I must confess that I would be much more pleased to find discover things which would add to the attractiveness of my table, than to discover new lines of beauty. I have come down to the practical view of it.

I'm drawing from the County Treasury, at Delaware, the \$200⁰⁰ which I forwarded to you through the State agent, you will present to the Treasurer, the enclosed receipt, and acknowledge payment on the back of it. I chose this method of sending money home, in preference to the express, because the express has been robbed ² times frequently of late, and in case of delivery to the State Agent, the State guarantees its delivery beyond every contingency.

I presume that you are pretty well satisfied with my views on the war question. I think I have testified my faith by my works. I think I am now about right. My views on most matters connected with the war have very much changed since I came into the army. I am an unqualified war man, and am in favor of prosecuting it to the bitter end. I am in favor of making it a 20 yrs war, if it needs

long a time to accomplish the object we started out to accomplish. I will agree to serve until the end of the war, if my career of usefulness in the service is not cut off. My views on the negro question are materially changed. From my ~~own~~ observation, I am satisfied that the institution of slavery is ~~an~~ a great evil and a grievous curse. I see hardly any redeeming features. Its tendency is to ~~thicken~~ rather than refine the sensibilities of the white race. The feeling of the master to the slave is that of contempt for his inferiority, and that of the slave to the master, hatred on account of his oppression. It is an awful state of society, and I thank God that the curse is not extended over our whole land, and that the state in which my lot is cast is relieved of its contaminating influence. I think no master has any cause to put any trust in the fidelity of his slave. I have never heard a single one express a feeling of affection towards their master. It is always the reverse. And this is the case with masters who are reputed the kindest. & I am also in favor of negro soldiers, if they can be of any use. I have no delicacy in the matter. I would have not the least objection to fighting by the side of a negro regiment, provided they fought well. I am in favor of using all legitimate means for crushing the South into obedience. It must be done, and it shall be done. ^{part to Prof. McLaughlin or any body else} You may know this.

We have been having stirring times around Franklin, ever since we occupied the town. The enemy are right in front of us. We can find them very readily by marching three miles to the front. There have been 3 battles & considerable fights near here, since Feb. 11, when we entered the place. The one last Friday, occurred ^{night} in town, although the enemy endeavored to throw a body of force in our rear, by crossing the river three miles above us. They were foiled in the attempt. Had they succeeded in their attempt, the first attack would have been made on our ~~front~~ camp. The whole affair was a decided success on our part. The enemy were repulsed all along the river.

Our regiment was not engaged in the fight. The only regiment of infantry in the fight was the 40th Ohio, which was on picket over the river at the time of the attack. And which of course was first assailed by the enemy. The cavalry did the remainder of the fighting. The 1st Regiment was under arms during the fight, and took its position, but neither it nor any of the other infantry were attacked. The next ^{day} we were marched three miles east to the ford where the rebels endeavored to cross the day before, and we remained there, awaiting the enemy until all ~~possibility~~ of expectation of being attacked had subsided. The newspapers have no doubt given full particulars of the engagement, and there is no need of my relating them. Capt. Jimmy Watson is in the 40th Ohio, and although he ~~was~~ ^{is} at the time, he left his tent, crossed the river, and rejoined his company when the firing commenced. I ate supper with him last night. He looks somewhat older ~~than~~ ^{than} he did when you last saw him, and exposure has injured his complexion.

I enjoy myself in the army. I really like the service. Of course I would not stay in it a moment, except from a sense of duty. Nothing except duty could separate me from Annie. I enjoy good health, and have been on duty every day since I entered the service. I think no other officer in the regiment can say that much. I prefer being a captain to being an adjutant. I have a good company, and they like me. I think I will compare with any of the captains, and I know I stand well with the ~~the~~ ^{the} 1st of the Regt. I have a good record. I know it is honest, and I intend to keep it so.

I hear from Annie 3 times a week. I am happy to know that she is in good health, and that she is enjoying herself with my parents & family. I think the visit will do her good. The day & June weather in Milwaukee is exceedingly healthy and bracing. Annie and I have been very happy since our marriage. Very few have been as happy as we. I have found her all my heart could wish. She becomes dearer to me every day we live. May God bless her, and preserve her, and restore us to one another in His own good time.

I am glad to hear that Vernon is well, safe and prosperous. I hope he may be permitted to return in safety to the loved ones. Give my love to Nellie and Frank, and to him.

Col. Reid has been quite sick for some time past. His disease is not of a dangerous type. He will be unfitted for duty for 2 months. Mr. Williams is well. Chaplain Stokes wishes to be kindly remembered to you. He says he is dispensing your bounty to the sick, and it has done him a great deal of good.

Good byes. God bless you and yours. May we meet again. I hope always to be regarded by you, as an honorable man, and a faithful ^{and tender} husband, to the dear one whose happiness has been confided to my care.

Yours ever M. Blalson

Franklin, Tenn., April 16th 1863

My Dear Mother: —

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I must acknowledge myself, under many obligations, and I feel very thankful to you, for assisting Annie in sending that very acceptable box of eatables, &c. which I rec'd by express some month and a half ago. Everything was of a most superior quality. I believe I have never eaten better peaches except at your house. Col. Irwin expressed himself in the highest terms in their favor. I enjoyed them and everything else the box contained. I have since rec'd ^a box from home, containing eatables, and some cooking conveniences. I also received a splendid mess chest from home, filled to the brim with almost everything which could delight a soldier. In camp, a man appreciates many things which he would pay very little attention to at home. Annie rather ridiculed me at my becoming enthusiastic over a most convenient little stew kettle which father sent me. She thought I was just as enthusiastic as if I had "discovered a new line of beauty." Well, I must confess that I would be much more pleased to discover things which would add to the attractiveness of my table, than to discover new lines of beauty. I have come down to the practical view of affairs.

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We have been having stirring times around Franklin, ever since we occupied the town. The enemy are right in front of us. We can find them very readily by marching three miles to the front. There have been 3 battles or considerable fights near here since Feb. 11. when we entered the place. The one last Friday occurred ^[[right]] in town, although the enemy endeavored to throw a heavy force in our rear by crossing the river three miles above us. They were foiled in the attempt. Had they succeeded in their attempt, the first attack would have been made on our camp. The whole affair was a decided success on our part. The enemy were repulsed all along the line. Our regiment was not engaged in the fight. The only regiment of infantry in the fight was 40th Ohio which was on picket over the river at the time of the attack and which of course was first assailed by the enemy.— The cavalry did the remainder of the fighting. The 121st Regiment was

under arms during the fight and took its position, but neither it nor any of the other infantry were attacked. The next day we were marched three miles east to the ford where the rebels endeavored to cross the day before and we remained there, awaiting the enemy until all expectation of being attacked had subsided. The newspapers have no doubt given full particulars of the engagement and there is no need of my relating them anew. Capt. Jimmy Watson is in the 40th Ohio, and although sick at the time he left his tent, crossed the river, and rejoined his company when the firing commenced. I ate supper with him last night. He looks somewhat older than he did when you last saw him and exposure has injured his complexion.

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I am glad to hear that Velorus is well, safe and prosperous. I hope he may be permitted to return in safety to the loved ones. Give my love to Mellie and Frank and to him.

Col. Reid has been quite sick for some time past. His disease is not of a dangerous type. He will be unfitted for duty for 2 months. Dr. Williams is well. Chaplain Drake wishes to be kindly remembered to you. He says he is dispensing your bounty to the sick, and it has done them a great deal of good.—

Good bye, God bless you and yours. May we meet again. I hope always to be regarded by you as an honorable man, and a faithful ^[[and tender]] husband to the dear one whose happiness has been confided to my care.—

Your son
M. B. Clason