

3-6-1864

Letter from Marshall Blair Clason to his father

Marshall Blair Clason

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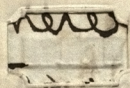


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Camp 12th Ohio Vol Infy
Near Crossville, Tenn.
March 6th 1864.

Dear Father! —

I have received several letters from you within the past month, which I have not answered, on account of want of time I have been very busy with a multitude of duties ^{which} were crowding upon me. I was also in front with my command in the reconnaissance of the 14th U.S. towards Dalton, during the latter part of last month. You have no doubt learned the particulars of this in the newspapers. I ~~do~~ was not under fire, neither were the other regiments of our Brigade. We held a Gap in the rear of the troops. We could hear the firing very distinctly. It was only about 8 miles in our front.

Our command is now under marching orders, ^{but} I think nothing serious is in the wind. The rebels are growing rather bold in our front, but I see no signs of any general attack on us, and we are not prepared for any general attack on them. We are considerably embarrassed by the absence of veterans on furlough. When they return, I think the movement will ^{com}mence, and sooner, if their place is supplied by ^{troops} from other quarters. I think a movement is necessary from this point to prevent the rebels from reinforcing ^{Polk's} ~~Sherman's~~ ^{who} is opposing Sherman's advance. I think a grand advance at this time would tell heavily upon the re-

bellion I am anxious that decisive blows should be struck. The war has already lasted too long. In my opinion, delays are very dangerous. Three years have nearly elapsed since actual hostilities began, and large armies still confront us. Although I think the military subjugation of the South is a difficult and tedious undertaking, and would probably occupy a number of years yet in its accomplishment, yet I think it is possible in 3 or 6 months to come to have accomplished such victories, and occupied such important points, and gained such decided military advantages, as to make the Southern people realize the utter hopelessness of their cause, and cause them to make terms with the Government. And in my opinion, this is the most wise and politic adjustment that can be made of the present difficulty. While I would fight to the last extremity before I would yield an inch of our territory, or permit the establishment of a new government within the old limits of the United States, I would be willing to concede to them protection to their rights. I would not indiscriminately punish them, and I would withdraw many of the radical measures which have been adopted during the present war. If our army should capture Mobile, Atlanta, Charleston, and Savannah, do you not think there would be a willingness on the part of the Southern people to accept honorable terms? I do not think the army desires to wage the war to any other end than to free the negro. Slavery does appear

where the army comes, because there is no law to sustain the master's authority, and the darky leaves where he gets ready. He becomes teamster, or enlisted among the colored volunteers. He is to an officer, or as a laborer in the various Departments, and the master can say nothing. But the darky is not popular with the soldiers, and they will not stay away from home one day on Cuffee's account. The darky will have to look out for himself. I am glad slavery is dead. I believe it will exterminate the negro, but better let the system perish and the negro perish than that the system survive Tennessee and Georgia would become great States under the influence of free labor.

I have received several photographs from you recently. I received yours, mother's and George's. The last one was my brother John. I recognized it immediately. He was a grand some child, and would have been an influential man, had it pleased God to let him grow up. I think of him very often, and I have never ceased to mourn his loss. We should erect a monument over his grave at Dayton. We have a whole lot there. Mother's picture is natural. She looks somewhat older than when I saw her last, over 2 years since.

I am sorry you have not settled your business affairs with Mr. King. I hope these things may be arranged without a resort to legal proceedings which are both tedious and unprofitable. However, I would not wait on him. I would commence proceedings forthwith, and this may hasten

his movements somewhat. I am amused at Henry King's
remarks. All the business is, is due to your credit, your cap-
ital, your skill and your influence. King was bankrupt
when you went into the concern, & he leaned upon your
credit while you were not interested in the business.
Annie has, as she informs me, notified you of her readi-
ness to furnish the required funds at a moment's notice.
She has made all the preparations, and she can tell you
more about it than I can. She has been advised to avoid
any vicissitudes which might arise, in case of my
death, to have the part purchased by funds from her father's
estate, put in her name. It would be inconvenient for me
to divide our separate interests, and therefore, as you suggested
when you will cause the bills of sales and deeds to be made
to her of the entire share intended for me. This will be alto-
gether best, and will avoid complications in the adjust-
ment of accounts. When I come home, if I live that long, I
will have the affair properly arranged. I think it better
until I have made a will, to have everything so shaped
that the legal adjustment of my affairs, in case of my
death, will not conflict with my desires.

I see by the newspapers that an attempt has been made
by Congress to impeach Judge Miller, and I was afraid a par-
tisan majority would, from partisan motives, persecute him.
But I see that the prosecution has fallen to the ground, and
that the Committee on the Judiciary will report adversely to
impeaching him. The Judge will stand higher than ever af-
ter this discomfiture of his enemies who are intensely malignant.

In a brief letter which I received from you a day or so since,
you think I ought to be promoted, and instance the cases of others who
have attained to a higher rank than myself. Well, I am contented
where I am, and it will not be derogatory to my character if
I leave the service with no higher rank than the one I at pres-
ent hold. Rank is in a great degree the result of accident.

and quite frequently of personal and political favoritism. I have been complimented highly since I have been in the service, and have been offered 6 times staff appointments, 5 of which I declined. I have been ^{con-}sidered superior in all branches of the service. ^{in which} an infantry officer is ~~expected~~ ^{expected} to be acquainted. I presume I will be promoted sometime, but my only chance is in my own Regiment. Ohio Regiments permit no transfers into other regiments, except by general ^{consent}, which now-a-days is very difficult to obtain. I have ^{had} whatever merit I possess sufficiently recognized. I ^{am} ^{con-}tent with the present rank. Before a year I may ^{be} ^{higher}. Gov. Brown only promotes regularly, unless the senior officer ^{is} unfit, and that must be proven.

I have forwarded my application for a leave of absence for 30 days. I have not yet heard what action has been taken upon it. I hope it will be favorable, although the chances are against 30 days. But it did no harm to ask for that much.

I am now Judge Advocate of Div. Court Martial, and have a number of cases to try. The parties are Commissioned officers. I am trying a Lieut. Col. on a series of charges, none of which are very serious.

I am well, and am enjoying myself. I have been paid to Dec. 31st 1863. I expect to bring my money home with me. The little speculation to which I previously referred is likely to turn out well. I collected a \$100.00 on the 20th February, and accordingly have only \$100 at risk, although ^{on} the 20th inst. I am procured \$250.00. If I succeed I will

have done well.

My love to mother, George and Charlotte Remember
me kindly to all my friends -

Yours son
Wm. C. Garrison -

Camp 121st Ohio Vol. Inf'y
Near Rossville, Geo.
March 6th 1864

Dear Father: —

I have received several letters from you within the past month, which I have not answered on account of want of time. I have been very busy with a multitude of duties which were crowding upon me. I was also in front with my command in the reconnoissance [sic] of the 14th A. C. [[?]] towards Dalton, during the latter part of last month. You have no doubt learned the particulars of this in the newspapers. I was not under fire, neither were the other regiments of our Brigade. We held a Gap in the rear of the troops. We could hear the firing very distinctly. It was only about 8 miles in our front.

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Your son
M. B. Clason