10-9-1863

Letter from John W. Marshall to Francis P. Porter

John W. Marshall

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Chattanooga, Tenn.
October 9th, 1863

Friend Frank

Pardon me for addressing you but the fact is I am alone this evening and picking up a magazine that brought to my mind very forcibly some of the happy times that I have enjoyed at your house. I thought it agreeable to you and rememb'red the friendship that once existed amid happier days and scenes than those by which I am now surrounded. I wrote a letter to Huldah some months ago but received no answer. Wonder if she is engaged to some chung guard over there and thanks.
I met with her awhile to write to old friends but perhaps she never received it as mail matter is very uncertain here in the army. Have heard that the hardest life I have lead down here in this barren country where all the girls chew tobacco. I can stand it to talk to them once in a while but I have not been able to get my own consent to kiss any of them yet and you may know that times go pretty hard with me when I have not been able to kiss a girl for one a year and I am afraid that the war will last so long that I will be so old that none of them will let me when I get home but by the way is there any prospect of you getting married if there is not you will be in about as sad a fix as myself and it may be that we shall be able to make some arrangement that will tend to the mutual benefit. What a pity that I did not marry before this war broke out then. I had here had some excuses to have offered for staying at home but there I am away from home fighting for my country and some boys are going for my girls and when I write home to tell not what is wrong one won't condone to answer my letters. Another goes off in a long letter trying to plead that she is for the Union which I don't doubt at all as she seems willing to surrender her self for the sake of it. My God what an endless amount of sleep I have lost for nothing and then the time and papers I have wasted in writing to them. Oh! it all sure if it was not that the county
Needs me so bad I would like myself to advise me what to do. But enough of this foolishness. I want you to write to me and tell me where you are and what you are doing and all about every thing. We came pretty near getting our final discharge from Old Bragg during the last two weeks but we are all right and ready for fight again as we are not very anxious for it. We are very pleasantly situated here now as our Brigade have charge of the post and we are occupying a very good house and have things quiet and comfortable for the army at this there is no telling how long it will last but I must close your letter to John. W. Marshall Ordnance Sect 97th Regt C.V.P. Chattanooga Tenn. and believe me your friend in much respect John W. Marshall.
October 9, 1863

Chattanooga, Tenns

October 9th, 1863

Friend Frank

Pardon me for addressing you but the fact is I am lonesome this evening and picking up a magazine that brought to my mind very forcibly some of the happy times that I have enjoyed at your house, I thought if agreeable to yourself I should like to hear from you and renew to some extent the friendship that once existed amid happier days and scenes than those by which I am now surrounded.

I wrote a letter to Huldah some months ago but received no answer; wonder if she is engaged to some home guard out there and thinks it is not worth the while to write to old friends; but perhaps she never received it as mail matter is very uncertain here in the army.

Well Frank, this is the little(?) the hardest life I ever lead down here in this wooden country where all the girls chew tobacco. I can stand it to talk to them once in a while but I have not been able to get my own consent to kiss any of them yet and you may know that times go pretty hard with me when I have not been able to kiss a girl for over a year and I am afraid that this war will last so long that I will be so old that none of them will let me when I get home; but by the way, is there any prospect of your getting married; if there is not, you will be in about as bad a fix as myself and it and it may be that we shall be able to make some arrangement that will tend to our mutual benefit.

What a pity that I did not marry before this war broke out then I could have had some excuse to have offered for staying at home fighting for my country and some body else going for my girls. And when I write home to find out what is wrong, one won't condescend to answer my letters; another goes off in a long letter trying to prove that she is for the Union which I don't doubt at all as she seems willing to surrender herself for the sake of it. My God, what an endless amount of sleep I have lost for nothing and then the time and paper I have wasted in writing to them. Oh! it's awful. If it was not that the country needs me so bad, I would kill myself. Do advise me what to do.

But enough of this foolishness for I want you to write to me and tell me where you are and what you are doing and all about everything. We came pretty near getting our final discharge from Old Bragg during the last two weeks, but we are all right and ready for fight again altho not very anxious for it. We are very pleasantly situated here now as our brigade has charge of the post and we are occupying a very good room and have things quite comfortable for the army altho there is no telling how long it will last. But I must close. Write soon. Direct your letter to John W. Marshall Ordnance Sergt 97th Reg't OVI Chattanooga, Tenn and believe me your friend with much respect.

John W. Marshall
Give my respects to your folks and if you know of any girl who is willing to wait until the war is over, give my love to her, but she must neither smoke snuff or chew tobacco and I would be afraid to trust her if her folks were Democrats.