

James Autry Letter

Jackson Miss

Nov 17th/62 Monday Morning

My dear Jeanie

An opportunity presents itself to get a letter to you. I have suffered much in mind since I left you and would now give any consideration for a letter from you.

After leaving home I came down to Abbeville – remained there during Sunday and then went by way of Grenada to Brohon' [sic] where I remained overnight. Found Sister Martha and family well but much perplexed to know where to go and what to do. I dont [sic] think they will go to Texas – Brohon is in favor of going to Calhoun County with most of his force, but is unfixed in any plan for the future. I met Frank there and came with him to Panola town where his Regt is encamped. He is well pleased with his position of private – he belongs to the same Company but is now at home on furlough. I have endeavoured [sic] to get some one to go into Washington Co after our negroes and to deliver them to Brohon but can not get any one to go. I have written to Brohon requesting him to send for them and to do with them as he does with his own. They are nearly all women and children and therefore would not be so apt to run away. I am much perplexed about them and will feel very uneasy until I hear what is to become of them. I hope Brohon however will attend to the matter for me. But this does not give me half a one hundredth part of the uneasiness that your situation does.

I cant [sic] believe that our army will pull back any further south. Holly Springs will therefore be the debateable [sic] point where both armies will have occasional skirmishes. I fear much confusion there on Christmas and oh it almost runs me crazy [sic] to think that you and Ma will be cut off from me and perhaps treated cruelly. Now my advice is, and I hope Ma will reflect and act upon it, this – If you see that dangers threaten you either from the enemy or otherwise dont [sic] hesitate to give up home and furniture and come South. Better that property and everything of the kind should perish than that either one of you should suffer indignities outrages and cruelty. You can call on any of my friends for assistance and must not hesitate to ask for the loan of money if you need it. In case of an emergency both you and Ma can come down to Mr Cheathan' [sic] in Yazoo County. He and his family would doubtless be glad to see Ma and you too. To reach his house you get off the Miss Central RR at Vaughns Station 20 miles from Canton and he lives between that point and Yazoo City some 5 or 6 miles from the main road – or you can go to Calhoun with Brohon if he goes there. Both he and Sister Martha are exceedingly anxious to have you and Ma with them. Let Aunt Tildy and Andy take possession of the house. Tell Ma to send Tom and Harriet South if they are willing to go but not to force them to leave unless it can be securely done. Tom could get employment here or any where south and so could Harriet. Tell the negroes for me that I have always been kind to them – that they have never suffered for any thing in life – that I now rely on them to protect my family – that if freedom is all they want say so and they may go – but that when they leave home they leave to be kicked around and murdered by the poor whites of the North and will soon regret that they are not back at

home. Let them tell the Feds that they are free if they take possession of Holly Spring. I endeavoured [sic] to get Nash to go with me to the Army but the R Road will not release him. I will therefore have to take Henry. Mr. Courtney, who has our negroes in Washington Co has notified me to take them away. I have, as I said above, requested Brohon to send for them – hope he will do so – I have not time, as I am under orders, to remain long enough to attend to them.

Did Sister get off? I am exceedingly anxious to know. I will leave here for Chattanooga, where I learn my Regt is, to-morrow. Direct all your letters to me at Chattanooga. My Command is 27th Miss Regt, 4 Brigade, Anderson Division.

I have every confidence, my own dear, darling wife, in your good sense and judgment and you will now have to act in obedience to the dictates of that judgment. Nerve yourself to understand all hardships and trials and never forget that you are in the hands of a just God who doeth all things well. I pray Heaven that we may soon be again together to enjoy that peace and happiness that was once ours. I cannot doubt that we will again meet – the doubt would render me miserable and I will not think or write about it. You know, my darling, the deep devotion of my heart – that with you he is happy without you life is to him but a burthen [sic] and the grave would be to him a place of – but I wont [sic] write thus –

A thousand kisses to my dear boy – talk to him of me – teach him to be upright, candid, honest, virtuous, brave and above all teach him to be truthful. Teach him to suffer every privation, all kinds of sufferings even death itself matters. rather than to tell a falsehood. Dont [sic] let him become of an envious or jealous disposition – such a disposition renders the posse[ssor] a man of misery and unfit to enjoy life here or hereafter. Never deceive him in any thing – if you promise him any thing always fulfill it even in the most trivial matters.

Say to Jimmy G. if he is with you, that an awful responsibility rests upon his shoulders. God has blessed with with [sic] a bright intellect in return for which he is to be placed in a position of responsibility. A pure, noble, intellectual mother leans on him for consolation and happiness. If he fails in any particular to render obedience, respect and love to such a mother as sure as there is a just God in Heaven just so sure will he be punished. Tell him that God has so conducted matters as to place the happiness of that noble mother within his keeping and if he fails he will be cursed while living and when dead will meet with a terrible hereafter. God has peculiarly blessed him with intellect and he in return will have to guide that intellect so as to place it in the way of usefulness.

Tell Laura I have every confidence in her – that she must be a good gil [sic] and she will never regret it.

If you need any assistance here call on Capt. T. C. McMacken or Gov Pettus or any of my friends dont [sic] hesitate to borrow money if you need it. If the Federals take possession of Holly Springs you know how to conduct yourself.

Kiss my dear mother for me – oh how often will I send my thoughts to you and her. And now, my own dearest one, farewell. God, unto whom all secrets are known and from whom all good cometh, unto Thee I commit my wife, my child and my mother – farewell

Your ever devoted husband.