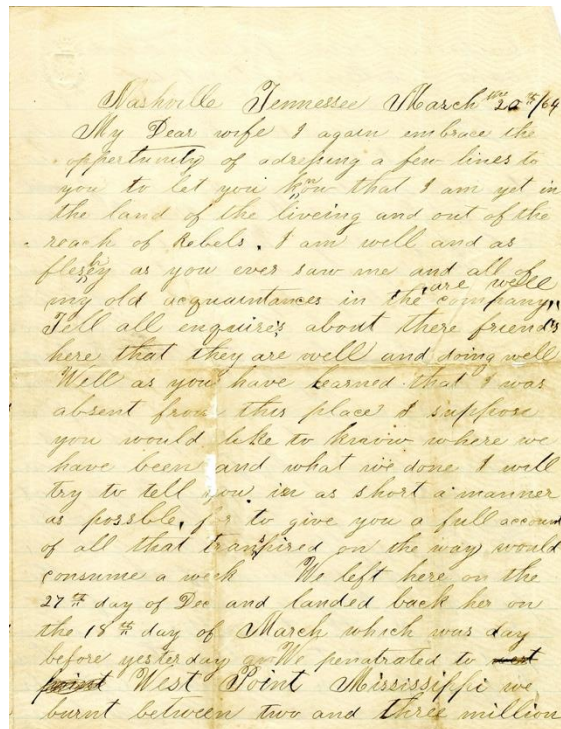


Letter from H. M. Misemer to His Wife

March 20, 1864

Manuscript: HL_MSS_21-07_02_35



Shawville Tennessee March 20th 1864
My Dear wife I again embrace the
opportunity of addressing a few lines to
you to let you know that I am yet in
the land of the living and out of the
reach of Rebels. I am well and as
fleshy as you ever saw me and all of
my old acquaintances in the company
Tell all enquirers about these friends
here that they are well and doing well
Well as you have learned that I was
absent from this place I suppose
you would like to know where we
have been and what we done I will
try to tell you in as short a manner
as possible, for to give you a full account
of all that transpired on the way would
consume a week We left here on the
27th day of Dec and landed back here on
the 15th day of March which was day
before yesterday We penetrated to
~~point~~ West Point Mississippi we
burnt between two and three million

Transcribed by Faith Dillard

For English 618: Research Methods in English

Instructor: Dr. Brian Gastle

December 12, 2022

Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography was prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English degree program at Western Carolina University (WCU). The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship.
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which texts we use are made available.
 - a. Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the graduate students. While they take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are possible. As they learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires meticulous research and corroboration by authoritative sources. Our objective is to provide transcriptions and annotations of WCU's Special Collections materials that will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, patrons, and all users of our library's resources.

If you wish to submit an emendation or correction for this document, please email Dr. Brain Gastle (bgastle@wcu.edu).

Introduction to Document

This letter is a letter written from H. M. Misemer to his wife, Martha Misemer.

Many times, the author writes their 's' as a vertically long and stretch out form of the letter. This could often be mistaken for a 'f.'

Unless otherwise noted, words written in superscript indicate the two lines, formally called carrots, which mark the above insertion of a word, phrase, or number in the manuscript. When seen with words or phrases, this sign usually marks an afterthought of something skipped over or not written in logical, syntactic order due to haste. Also, superscript could indicate words written above the line or inserted above/between words that are not paired with a carrot in the manuscript.

Words will be spelled as written by the author in the original manuscript. Words that are hard to understand in the original spelling will include a footnote of the modern and/or correct spelling of the word.

Brackets ([]) will show logical inserts made by the transcriber when the author leaves out small things, such as punctuation at the end of a sentence. Other breaks of modern, 'proper' grammar, such as subject-verb agreement, capitalization, and comma rules, will be overlooked and included in the transcription, so as to best maintain the voice of the writer.

Transcription

[MS page 1]

Nashville, Tennessee Marchth 20th /64

My Dear wife I again embrace the
oppertunity of adressing a few lines to
you to let you kⁿow that I am yet in
the land of the liveing and out of the
reach of Rebels. I am well and as
fles^hey as you ever saw me and all of
my old acquaintances in the company “ are well¹ [.]
Tell all enquires about there friend's²
here that they are well and doing well [.] 1³
Well as you have learned that I was
absent from this place [.] I suppose
you would like to know where we
have been and what we done [.] I will
try to tell you in as short a manner
as possble⁴ for to give you a full account

¹ This superscripted phrase is written directly above ‘the company.’ This is probably due to running out of space on that line but not wanting to split the sentence. In the manuscript, the placement of the phrase is indicated by two vritical minims (‘ ‘)

² ‘Their friends’ is grammatically inferred here.

³ A period is inferred here by the capital letter in the next word. Throughout the paper, the writer seems to use longer spacing to infer the end of a sentence.

⁴ A mark that resembles a comma appears after the misspelled version of ‘possibly,’ but it is most likely only a blot or mark on the paper, because the author abstains from the use of commas throughout all other parts of the letter.

of all that tran^spired ⁵ on the way would
consume a week [.] We left here on the
27th day of Dec and landed back her on
The 18th day of March which was day
Before yesterday an We penetrated to ~~west~~
~~point~~⁶ West Point Mississippi [.] we burnt between two and three million

[MS page 2]

bushels of corn fifteen hundred
bales of Cotton captured 1500 negroes
3000 horses and Mules Killed and
captured 800 or 1000 Rebels and only
lost about 150 or 200 men [.] we⁷ also
tore up and destroyed 40 miles of ~~rail~~
the Mobiel and Ohio Rail Road⁸ and
cut up generaly [.] We had 7 or 8000 men
all Cavalry and mounted Infantry and
when we all got together it looked like
there was enough of us to whip the wour-

⁵ The 's' is in superscript, because the author of the letter appears to have written it above the word as an afterthought, due to the realization of his misspelling.

⁶ 'west point' has been striked through but is still legible. Here, the author made amendments to capitalization mistakes in his writing.

⁷ After 'we,' the word 'all' seems to have been erased. It is inferred that he began to spell the next word, 'also,' wrong, and he corrected his mistake by erasing the start of the word and writing it again.

⁸ "The road was chartered in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky in 1848 as a way to bypass the slow, uncertain river travel to New Orleans with fast, reliable travel to Mobile. Construction began in 1852 and was completed at Corinth, Mississippi in April 1861, creating the longest railroad under a single charter in the US." Robert F. Schramm, "The Mobile and Ohio Railroad." *Admiral Raphael Semmes Camp #11*.

ld and the balance of cr^eation [.] But our
trip was not to fight But to make a raid
into Miss---⁹ which we done and accomplish-
-ed all we were sent to accomplish and
returned loosing only five¹⁰ men in our
regiment [.] none of company F was hurt
but have all got back to Nashville [.]
We had a fright at Oakalony Miss¹¹
And through disobedience of orders on the
part of our Brigade commander from
General Smith¹² [.] it resulted in a stam –
-peed for about two milles¹³ there was three
Briggades of us [.] our's was behind and the Rebs¹⁴
Aimed to surrounded us ~~and~~ in the absence

[MS Page 3]

Of the other Briggades and that is why
we had to stampeed [.] But when we got
up with the other Briggades we tured¹⁵

⁹ Mississippi.

¹⁰ Page is slightly torn in the middle of this word. The 'v' in five is missing, but the complete word is used in this transcription, because it fits contextually, as this word is meant to inform his wife on how many men are lost in this event.

¹¹ Town in Yalobusha County, Mississippi, United States

¹² This is most likely referring to Andrew Jackson Smith, who was the major general of the XVI and XVII Corps of the Tennessee Army. See "Andrew J. Smith" for more detail.

¹³ Miles

¹⁴ Refers to the Rebel or Confederate Army.

¹⁵ Turned

loose on them and made them pay
dearly for following us [.] we lost Lieut -
Colonell Cook of the 2nd E Tenn [.]¹⁶
he was wounded and left in the hands
of the Rebs But we killed Colonell
Forest nephew of General Forest¹⁷
which is a sort of balanceing of accounts [.]
Well we had a long and tiresome March [.]
we traveld about 8 or 900 miles a part
of the time in the coldest weather
I ever saw without tents only such
as we could fix up with our grim
blankets [.] But I¹⁸ did not suffer
but verry little with cold [.] I was nearly
dead with cold when I left here But
I was determined to go if possible [.] there
was about ten days that I couled¹⁹ not
speak above my breath more than
half the time [.] I could have got perm-
-ission to come back any day But I

¹⁶ Colonel Cook was part of the 2nd East Tennessee Regiment, which was made of Union cavalry. This regiment was formed July 1862. See "Search of Battle Units" for more detail.

¹⁷ Nathan Bedford Forrest: Confederate general in the Civil War. Nephew's name is unknown. See "Nathan Bedford Forrest" for further information.

¹⁸ Word is scratched out directly after 'I' but is not able to be deciphered.

¹⁹ Could

still hung on like grim death
to a dead nigger ²⁰[.] The raid is over

[MS 4]

and I am back at Nashville
as stout and harty as ever I was
and notwithstanding I like gre^en
back²¹ I would not take one hundred
dollars for what I have seen in the
last three Months and have it²²
blotted²³ from my memory [.]
martha if I ever get home again
in peace and I believe that I
will surely get home I will be
a goodeal²⁴ better Satisfied with our
little poor home [.] in fact I would
not give it ^{for} no home that I saw in west
Tennessee til I got back to Paris [.] there is some
pretty land about paris But the balance of
West Tennessee is the poorest Country I

²⁰ *Hung on like grim death*: to do something with extreme determination, to hold onto something very firmly (Grammarist.com)

²¹ *Green back*: a monetary note issued by the United States during and immediately after the Civil War, and not backed by gold or silver (now *historical*); (in later use more generally) a dollar, a dollar bill; (in *plural*) money. (Oxford English Dictionary)

²² Here, the beginning of what seems to be the word 'blotted' is scribbled out.

²³ Blotted

²⁴ Good deal

ever saw [.] in fact the country is littealy²⁵
destroyed [.] the fencing and a great many
houses are burnt up and the Country is
no account for any thing [.] Mississippi²⁶ is
a poor Country as a general²⁷ thing but
I saw some of the best land in Miss
that I ever saw Any where [.] I thought I
had seen big piles of corn But I was mistaken²⁸
for the corn was all in Mississippi [.]

[MS 5]

O Martha you dont know how
anxious I was to hear from you
while I was gone [.] I imagined that
you was ded²⁹ and I would have given
any thing³⁰ for a letter from
you [.] I was so uneasy I could not
sleep nor be still any where [.]
O Martha you are all in all to
me [.] there is nothing on this Green
earth for which I would wish to

²⁵ Literally

²⁶ Mississippi

²⁷ A 'y' on the end of general seems to be scribbled out.

²⁸ All the other words on MS 4 after 'mistaken' are written up the right margin of the paper.

²⁹ Dead

³⁰ Two unknown words scribbled out here.

live if you and the children were
taken from me [.] the wourled³¹ hath
no attractions for me except in
you and them and I want you
to take as good care of yourself as you
can and dont strive to make more
than a support [.] we are both tolerable
young yet and ¹ think that we can
make a liveing without you killing
your self at work and hope and
trust and pray that this cruel wick-
-ed and uncalled for war may soon
end [.] I also pray to our farther³²
in heaven ^{to} Spare me through these
trying times and r^eturn me to you

[MS 6]

there to nestle on thy bosom
and to behold and eⁿjoy thy
sweet smiles [.] Martha you said
you wanted me to send you my
likeness [.] I haveent³³ ~~got~~ had it

³¹ World

³² Father

³³ Haven't

taken yet [.] I will try to get it
taken tomorrow and send it
by Old John Dixon³⁴ [.] he is here
now and is to take this letter
to you and I will try to get him
to take my likeness provide^d I
can get it taken [.] you said you
wanted me to burn your letters [.]
I will comply with your request
all though I hate to give them
up for reading your is at
great satisfaction to me yet I
am willing do any thing you reque
st [.] I told you I got a letter from my
brother Philip³⁵ [.] he says I can only
immagin³⁶ the satisfaction he has in
knowing that he has a Brother and
a son that are patriotts in deed [.] he
has no confidence in men who hollow
fro the Union and are not willing [.]

[MS 7]

³⁴ Unknown person, possibly a courier or a fellow soldier

³⁵ H. M. Misemer's brother

³⁶ Imagine

Martha I ^{have} written Enough foolishness [.]
I would like to tell you more about the
trip but I fear you are tired of reading such
axsn epistle all ready [.] in my next letter I
will send you the names of all the Towns
and countyes and distances from here to each of
them [.] Well Martha when I got
back here I ^{found} five letters here from you
and one from my Brother Philip
in Mo³⁷ and yesterday I got one from
his son in the Union Army at Helena
Arkansas which makes seven in all that
I have read in a day and a half and
you may guess that I have not done
much else [.] you dont know how happy
and how thankfull I was to an all
wise God to heare that you and the
children Except Dollie was well and
that ^{you} had plenty to eat and wear [.]
now perhaps you think that I dont
think of or care any thing about Dollie [.]
If you do you are mistaken [.] I love her

³⁷ The abbreviation for Missouri

And want to see her as bad as I do the rest [.]

[MS 8]

to show there faith by
their works he says he dont think
any thing But the point of
the bayonette the mouth of
the cannon and the destruction
of Slavery will bring perma-
-nent peace [.] he says all the rest
of the connexion But him his
family and one of ³⁸Brother
Jacobs boys are Secesh³⁹ [.] I forgot
to tell you that Sol and Lee⁴⁰
are here [.] I was glad to hear that
Father had moved in the house
With you But sorry that he⁴¹
^{was} obliged to do so [.] Martha do the
best you can a bout farming [.]
I know not what to tell you un-
-less I was there to see If you can

³⁸ Possibly Jacob P. Brient, a captain in the 3rd Tennessee Cavalry. (“Union Officer Prisoners”)

³⁹ *Secesh*: A secessionist. Also secessionists collectively. (Oxford English Dictionary)

⁴⁰ Martha Misemer’s brother-in-law, Solomon Bogart. Lee appears to also be related to the Misemers, but further information is unknown.

⁴¹ Unidentifiable word scribbled out after ‘he.’

only make enough to live on [.]

I⁴² dont care if you let father make

What he can and keep it [.] I close

By Subscribing my self H. M. Misemer

Your loving husband [.]

⁴² A letter seems to be scribbled out after this word.

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