

Muscatine & the Civil War: The Letters of Daniel Parvin Part 5 Letters- Vicksburg, Mississippi

The letters are in the order they are read in the video segment. The letters in the videos are excerpts from longer letters. Contact Katy Loos at the Muscatine Art Center for full versions of the letters.

September 12, 1863

Vicksburg, Mississippi

I have not re-enlisted yet, and I think that I shall study on it a while yet before I do enlist. But if I was a young man (or what I mean is if I had not a good wife), I should not study long about it. But as it is, I do not think that I shall enlist again. But I make no rash promises for I love my country. And if she needs me, I had ought to serve her. But no more of this for the present.

December 24, 1863 (this is the correct year, not 1864)

Vicksburg, Mississippi

Sarah, when I am sick that is the time that I miss those kind attentions that you used to pay to me. You are on my mind nearly all the time and especially when I am not well.... Tomorrow is Christmas and the thought of home and the pleasant times there will make it a gloomy day to me. But I do not envy anybody in their enjoyment. I only wish that I was in the situation to enjoy myself along with the rest. Tomorrow will be the third Christmas that I have spent in the service of my country and Oh! What a long time it has been to me.

January 31 1864

Vicksburg, Mississippi

I believe that I am doing right in trying to put down this dreadful rebellion. If it was not for this belief, I can assure you that I should not be soldiering now, for it is anything but a pleasant business to me. And I shall be dreadful glad when this dreadful war is at an end. And when that will be, only He that knows all things can tell. But I sincerely hope that the time is close at hand when our beloved country will be again united and peace and plenty will again take the place of war and its natural consequences, which are misery in all its various forms. I do not think that I could be happy if I was to desert my country whilst she needs my services. I thought so when I re-enlisted, and Sarah, I hope that you will not blame me too hard for doing what I considered my duty.

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March 6, 1864

Vicksburg, Mississippi

Now Sarah, I may be crazy and I may of done wrong to love my country so well as to be willing to deny myself all the pleasures of the society of my family and friends. And I might of deceived you by holding out the idea to you that I would not re-enlist. But I was myself deceived for I did not think two days before I re-enlisted that it would have been possible for me to of gone in. And Sarah, if I have done wrong, I pray that you will forgive me for I done as I thought was right. Sarah, I do not blame your being worried about my going in as a veteran. It is enough to vex any woman that thinking anything of their men, and it makes me love you all the better. And if I have done wrong, I hope that you will forgive me. Sarah, I love no other woman as I love you, and I hope and pray that we may live long and happy together.

May 25, 1864

Huntsville, Alabama

Since I last wrote, we have marched over one hundred miles over a rough rocky country and my feet got very sore so that for the last two days I have walked with a good deal of pain. But I have managed to keep up this far. We got to this place around ten o'clock today, and I understand that we strike out for some place farther south tomorrow morning. I am in hopes that my feet will be better by that time. But as the time is so short, I cannot expect them to get entirely well, but I guess that I can stand it.

July 6th 1864

Camp 11th Iowa

Dear wife and relatives,

I again set down whilst the noise of musketry and the boom of cannon is constantly sounding in my ear and attempt to write you a few lines. Since I last wrote, we have seen a good deal of war and its effects. We have moved about 15 miles to the left of where we were when I last wrote. We marched all of one night and nearly all of the next day in order to get in our position. And then our brigade had to drive the rebels off, and we have drove them about 5 miles since we took up our position on the right. We have done most of our marching in line of battle through the brush and in some places it was dreadful thick so that it was almost impossible to get through.