

Muscatine & the Civil War: The Letters of Daniel Parvin Part 6 Letters- Near Atlanta and then Marietta, Georgia

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.

August 12th, 1864

Camp 11th Iowa near Atlanta

Dear Wife and Relatives,

As this is my birthday, I thought that I would spend a part of it in writing to you. It has not been quite a week since I wrote to you, but most likely our company will be on picket tomorrow, so that I should not have a chance to write for two days. For the pickets have all that they can attend to, to watch the enemy, for our lines are getting pretty close together, and they keep up nearly a constant firing on both sides, and there is a good many killed and wounded every day by this way.

And now whilst I am writing, the balls are almost constantly whistling past me, and occasionally one will strike a soldier that happens to be in its course. But such are the effects of war, and we get used to such things and pay but little attention to them. The rebels shell us nearly all the time here and I tell you that the sound of their shell as they pass through the air is not very pleasant to the ear, for we cannot tell where they are a-going to strike. And perchance they strike the man next to you, and we do not know but what our turn may be next, but that is a chance that we all run for the sake of our country. The rebels attacked our pickets three times last night and we were called up in line of battle each time. But at such a time it does not take us long to get into line and ready for a fight. But I would rather fight them in the daytime if it should suit them, for I can see how to shoot better by daylight.

September 6th, 1864

Marietta, Georgia hospital

Dear wife,

I again undertake to let you know that I am yet counted among the living, and not only that but I am considered doing well. But Sarah I shall be a dreadful homely man when I get well for they took out so much of my jawbone that it will let my cheeks and lips settle in and my teeth are about all gone, and there is various other ailments too numerous to mention now. It will be some time before I shall be able to travel, and I do not know whether they intend to send me north or not. But I hope that they will. Time will tell these things.

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September 12th 1864

Hospital 17th A.C. Marietta Georgia

I will try to give you a history of myself as I remember things from the time that I was shot until now.

When the ball struck me, I was squatting down close to the breastworks. When the ball first struck me, I thought that my head was gone, and then the boys commenced to collect around me. And then I got over on my knees and put my hand up to my face. And I could hear the boys talking and I could think. And I know by that, that I was not shot through the brain and they asked me if I could walk. I told them yes. And they took hold of me and led me back about two hundred yards, and there we met the boys coming with the stretcher. And I got into that and they carried me to the division hospital. And there was three or four doctors there, but most of them shook their heads when they saw me and did not see inclined to do anything for me.

But finally, as they had nothing else to do, they thought that they would see if there could be anything done for me. So they got me on their chopping block and gave me chloroform, but it had but little effect on me for I knew all that was going on all the time. And they took out several loose pieces of bone and one good big piece of my jawbone, it having four teeth on it. After that, they let me go back to my bunk. I believe that they thought that I would bleed to death, and I guess that I did come pretty near it. Well, I laid there and bled all night. And the next day they sent me here. And they fed me with a stomach tube for two or three days, but I found out that I was a-going to starve if I did not find out some other way besides that. So I concluded that I would try some other plan. And I found that by holding my nose that I could drink a little and that is the way that I have to do yet. And I cannot eat anything, only what I can drink, but I can drink almost anything now. But the most of my living is gruel, but I can drink that quite thick now. My appetite is good.

They have taken my name for a furlough, but how soon it will come I cannot tell, but I hope as soon as I am able to travel. As I have filled my sheet full, I close ever remaining yours.

September 21, 1864

Marietta Georgia Hospital

I have suffered a good deal for my country, and if necessary I am willing and ready to die for country if necessary. But I am in hopes that sacrifice will not be required. But there are many that are better than I am that will yet suffer death before this terrible rebellion is put down.