

Coke Witten

Undated Letter

[missing text] do with cards. I try to remember you and your family at a throne of grace twice a day. I hope you will live with them again in this world and in the world to come.

I must bring my letter to a close. I am your affectionate uncle until death. Write to me again soon.

Wm. A. Witten

William Witten

Shelbyville Tenn.

Feb. 11th, 1863

Dear Brother,

I sit down this evening to write you a few lines to let you know that I am still in the land of the living. The last letter that I got from Mother, she said that you was at home and was very [sic] unwell. Benson wrote to me that your regiment was at Port Hudson. Lieut. Baldwin is going to Arkansas. I send this letter by him, and I want you to write to me and tell me all about your capture and how you fared. You can write here by mail any time.

I have seen sights and heard little things growl since I saw you. I have been in five battles: Oak Hills, Mo.; Elk Horn Ark.; Farmington, Miss.; Richmond, Ky., and Murfreesboro, Tenn.; but have come out safe this far. I cannot begin to write you what I have went through. At Murfreesboro I had my Ramrod cut in two and one hole in my coat, but did not get hurt. When we left Murfreesboro, we fell back to this place. The Feds are still there yet, but I expect we will have to fight them soon again.

[text outlined in a box] Coke described the battle at Oak Hill (Wilson Creek) in an earlier letter. Pea Ridge National Military Park, 10 miles northeast of Rogers Arkansas marks the site of the battle of Elk Horn (Pea Ridge).

Uncle Houston Dickey's son Houston was taken prisner [sic] at the late battle and aunt Susan Miller's youngest son was severly [sic] wounded and had to be lift [sic], and his brother stayed with him, so they are both in the hands of the enemy.

Since we have been here I got five days permit and wint [sic] to Uncle Henderson Smalls and Uncle James Pattersons. They are all well. Uncle James Patterson and all the boys ware [sic] Union and his sons-in-laws are all in the southern army. The last

litter [sic] that I got from Benson was dated Jan. the 7th. He was well then. He has went through some hard fighting. Hack is at the hospital now, though he is not much sick. He is very anxious to hear what became of Euclid. Wilkirs. You must try and do the best you can. I hope we will all be spaired [sic] to see peace once more and all get home together again. Be sure and write to me.

I hope there is a better day comeing [sic].

Your brother until death,
Coke.

Direct your letters to
Shelbyville Tenn
Company F, First Rigimint [sic] Arks. Mounted Riflemen,
McNairs Brigade

Shelbyville, Tenn.

Feb. 13th, 1863

Dear sister & friends,

I wrote a litter [sic] on the 10th to Page & Salina and as Lieut. Baldwin, who is going to Little Rock, did not get of [sic] as soon as he expected, I thought I would write a line more to you. I have written two letters to Mother since the late Battle at Murfreesboro, and if she got them you of course read them. We are still at the same place twenty five miles from Murfreesboro in the muddiest [sic] place that I ever saw. A Horse lot is a fair sample. The Federals are still at Murfreesboro. Our cavilry [sic] keeps them in hot water all the time distroying [sic] thier [sic] provision trains. They will certainly will have to advance or fall back soon, and I expect we will have another fight soon.

Since we have been at this place I got a five days permit and got on the cars at seven o'clock in the morning and eat Brakefast [sic] next morning at Uncle Henderson Smalls'. The distance was one hundred and fifty miles. Uncle Henderson lives on the Railroad three miles from Sweetwater Depot. They ware [sic] much surprised to see me. Next morning Letty Browder, who lives close by uncle Hendersons, went with me down to uncle James Patterson. Stayed there until after dinner next day, and just as we ware [sic] starting James Wesley Dickey rode up. He came on with us about five miles. He is now Presiding Elder, and they all say the best preacher here is in the country. He was verry [sic] glad to see me. Told me that after the Battle he came to our army and spent one hole [sic] day hunting for me. He told me, as all the rist [sic] of the friends did, that anything that I was in need of I had only to let it be known. He even asked me if I needed money. The friends are all will [sic].

Aunt Betsy Neely was living in the lower end of Meigs county. Aunt Eliza Small says she is doing as well as heart could wish. Aunt Ann is in Illinois at William Rector's. William Patterson and Luther at the commencement of the War moved to Kentucky [sic].

Newton is living in Kingston. Uncle James Patterson and all of his boys are Union, but all of his soninlaws [sic] are in the southern army. When we was at Loudon I got three days and went to Uncle Houston and down by our old place. Stopt [sic] at the Meeting house, saw Father's grave, and went as far as Uncle James Patterson. Nothing looks natural except the meeting house & grave yard. It is all just the same as it used to be. There is a Poplar tree at the head of Father's grave that is more than one foot through. This I have no recollection of; it has certainly grown since we left thare [sic].

Tell little Coke that I have not forgotten [sic] him, that if I live until the War is over I will come home. There is a goodeal [sic] of talk here about peace, but although I believe there is a great change in the north of late, I think we will have some more hard fighting to yet.

Aunt Susan Miller has only two sons, Thomas and Charles. Charles was severely wounded at the late Battle & could not be moved and his brother stayed with him. So they are both in the hands of the enemy. Our cousin Houston Dickey also was taken prisner [sic].

Your brother until death,
Coke

Write to me.

[this text is in a box] The poplar tree at the head of John Wesley Witten's grave possibly is the same tree Aunt Alta described to me in 1968 when my family was planning to do genealogical research in Tennessee. However, between the time of her visit and ours, the cemetery had been cleaned and the tree removed.