

Charles Brand Letters

Biography of Charles Richard Brand

Charles Richard Brand was born in Neustadt, Saxony, Germany on May 27, 1839. He came to Detroit with his parents in 1850. He enlisted in the Union Army August 14, 1861 as a sergeant Company C, Ninth Regiment, Michigan Infantry Volunteers. In 1863 he became Orderly Sergeant of Company G, Ninth Regiment. On August 7, 1863 he was appointed 2nd Lt. by then governor Austin Blair. Evidently he never got news of this for he continued to serve as a sergeant until October 15th, 1864 when he was promoted to 1st Lt.

He participated in all battles in which his regiment was engaged mainly Stones River and Chickamauga. He also was slightly wounded by a buckshot and captured during a raid by General N. B. Forrest's cavalry brigade at Murfreesboro. He and the rest of the prisoners were paroled and after rejoining his unit he spent the remainder of his service in Tennessee. On June 21, 1865 he was appointed Asst. Commandant of the Union prison at Nashville and continued in that post until sent home for mustering out on September 15, 1865.

On February 20, 1866 he married Elizabeth Jack with whom he had corresponded during the war. In October of that year he also became an American citizen. He opened a painting and decorating business in Detroit and he and Elizabeth had eight children, one of whom died soon after birth.

Charles Richard Brand died January 19, 1909 after a years [sic] illness.

Nashville, July 24th 1862

Friend Elizabeth!

Your pleasant letter of the 18th inst [sic] reached me yesterday, and as matters of some importance have lately transpired in this neighbourhood [sic], which will no doubt be interesting to you, I sit down to give you a faint outline of things as they happened. Saturday July 12th we received Orders to be ready to march in a day or two this was pleasant news for us soldiers never like to stay long at one place, however agreeable their situations may be. The evening was spent laughing talking sporting and guessing the place of our destination. It was near midnight ere I spread my blanket under a large tree to sleep and dream. I dreamed of home and friends untill [sic] the shout, rouse up boys the enemy is coming! awoke me not thinking that there was any probability of an attack I turned lazily over, remarking to my brother I have seen people robbed of their sleep before now by the same means I am not going to get up, when a yell such as I never heard arose, the trample of 300 horses was heard and in another minute firing

had commenced and men were falling around me like leaves. The scene was grand and terrible, a continuous cracking of firearms, the balls whizzing past us, the groaning of wounded and dying shall never be forgotten by me In 10 minutes out of 200 men who rose that morning sound and well, 11 lay stretched lifeless on the sod, while about 80 lay heavily wounded in and around our Camp. 8 of the enemy lay there also dead, a great many of them they had managed to carry off with them. Sescesh [sic] finding that they were loosing [sic] men to [sic] fast retired, and the [crossed out] our regiment or rather the rest of 5 Companies took up their post inside of a close picket fence. We laid there about an hour when Adjutant Hull rode up, requested me to select six men to post on the corners of two streets, and keep the enemy in check. Arrived there I found six more men, with these we kept the enemy from our flank and great sport it proved to us. Any thing within 1/2 mile, that looked like sescesh [sic], was sure to get the benefit of a ball. About 12 in the course of two hours laid to rise no more. Sometimes madded by our fire about 100 would come at 3 of us at full speed, when we would just climb over a fence step behind a tree and fire at them as they dashed by. At last I received orders to collect my men and return to camp as they had surrendered. Cursing loud and deep was heard among the men, and it seemed to me, those killed were far better off than those remaining; to think that the Ninth Michigan a regiment considered A No 1 among the army should have to surrender was mading [sic] indeed, and to see men who had talked Union, turn round against us and southern ladies laugh at us was bitter beyond description. I hope to be exchanged without delay and if I get back to Murfreesboro a few men will have to suffer if I do get punishment for it. Next we were ordered to pack up our personal property and be ready to march. Our tents were then set afire and away we went. Midnight found us 22 miles from the old camp. The enemys [sic] consisting of the Texas Rangers the first and second Georgia and the first Kentucky, all Cavalry Regiments, treated us civil, the Texas rangers very kindly, guarded us to McMintsville [sic], 4 miles beyond which place we were paroled not to take up arms against the Confts [sic] States until exchanged. Tuesday night we started again for Murfreesboro and from there to Nashville a distance of 72 miles each way, where we arrived Friday night worn out tired hungry and sore all over, since Sunday we had only had, one piece of cornbread without any salt in it, a day. I received only one wound, a small ball, hit me on the side, but striking fortunately a bone it flattened and shortly after came out.

Company B was Provost Guards in Murfreesboro and in the courthouse when attacked they killed 34 shooting out of the windows. The 3d Minnesota Regt and the first Ky Battery were camped about 1 mile from us in a good position they numbered about 800 men, but their Colonel – Lester – being a coward surrendered without a struggle. They shared our fortune in all particulars except a good deal of contempt for having given in so easy, while the Rangers respected us as having done our duty. We are now in Nashville, tomorrow we start for Louisville.

James Kearney is well but stands on his dignity, he says he sent two letters and his likeness, but has received no answer.

I don't remember having heard George say anything in regard to his likeness.

I hope we will soon have a chance to make those miserable Canadians fear us, if we can't inspire them with love for us.

There if you are not out of patience with reading this letter, yours is far ahead of Job's patience. But you have a good idea now of what took place. I hope I shall see old Detroit soon, for without arms or anything to do, it is a miserable life we're leading. My address is the same except the place, which may be this place Louisville or Camp Chase, Ohio.

My best respects to you and remember me with a letter as soon as possible is the sincerest wish of

Your Friend
Richard Brand

Chattanooga April 28th 1864

Friend Lizzie

This morning while parading the guards my eyes fell on a person whom I should at once have recognized if his sunburned face and increased dimension had not made me hesitate. Walking up to him, I politely asked his pardon if mistaken, enquired if I had the pleasure of beholding Mr. P. Russel formerly of Detroit in the gentleman before me; to which he replied such was the case and expressed his surprise at seeing me here. He had just arrived from Kingston having finished the work to be done there, but is again in Employment of the Government on a steamboat. Gordon, he reports as well and getting very fat in spite of poor living and homesickness. Capt [sic] Mansfield graciously gave me permission to spend the day as I pleased, so we had a walk all over town, climbed the highest hill to have a good view of the surrounding country and see the sights in general. Mr. R. having gone to transact some business, I have some leisure time on hand the first half an hour since my arrival here.

We have to drill early and late and to study the rest of the time. So you see we have scarcely time to eat, sleep and play. Hard isn't it As I remarked there is half an hour at my disposal and I do not know how to spend it more agreeable to me, than by writing to you. I had a very quick trip, leaving Detroit Wednesday 10 P.M. and arriving here Sunday 5 A.M. The place looks as dilapidated [sic] as ever a large fire broke out the day before I came destroying a large block of stores.

Every thing is quiet, hardly a gun is heard from one End the week to the other We hear but little of the outside world nor is there anything important transpiring here. But few troops remain in and about town, they are mostly on the south side of Mission Ridge. We expect [sic] marching orders in a few days, still that is no reason why we should march as any soldier knows. Nor are we very anxious to go. The prospect of carrying a gun and knapsack in this hot weather is no very inviting.

How are all the folks in Detroit Mr. Gordon in particular?

Enclosed I send the first installment of trophies from the Sunny south. The faded Flowers. I gathered them this morning on the mountain.

I suppose George has returned to Camp Chase. His time must soon be out I think. Camp life don't agree with me as well as formerly, not that I like it less but my health is not as good. Headache troubles me a good deal. By the way Edward Aiken has been examined and recommended as first Lieutenant of a Negro regiment. He feels proud of his promotion. Sergt [sic] Nuhfer has also received an appointment of this kind. But there goes drill call and the Capt [sic] thinks I had better go out with the Battallion [sic] as he can't or wont [sic]. Give my best respects to Mr. And Mrs. Ray, your mother in fact all friends and accept the same for yourself.

Very Respectfully
Your Friend
Richard
Write soon if you please

Barracks G Mich. Infty [sic]

Nashville May 22nd 65

Friend Lizzie

Your favor of May 12th came to hand a few days ago, it assured me that you were still in the land of the living which I had begun to doubt.

We have been busy this month making garden it has been rather difficulty to procure seeds but the Officer in charge of Cumberland Hospital has kindly given some. I have some ladies slippers in the garden which will blossom in less than a month.

My Captains [sic] wife arrived here three weeks ago, she is a very pleasant and agreeable woman. Since then LT Col Wilkinsons [sic] wife has come also the wives of several other officers, and several more are expected. It makes camp life pleasant to have ladies there. There is no saying when I shall be in Detroit, it will depend on how soon the Regiment is to be mustered out. If within three months it will not be worth while, if [illegible] they mean to keep us this year I shall most likely be in Detroit sometime in July.

Nashville is full of paroled Rebel prisiners [sic] returning home. Some of them have money and will find their homes and friends others have no money and will find their homes destroyed their families scattered and gone. I can't help but pity some of them.

At last the war is Ended at least as far as hard fighting is concerned. As far as I am concerned I am heartily glad of it. I think I can Enjoy peace and quiet after four years of toil and excitement. Our present way of soldiering is very Easy, good barracks little work and plenty of fun, take the place of dogtents [sic] hard marching and one Hard tack a day. And yet campaign life is the pleasantest.

The middle of last month I took a lot of rebel prisoners to Louisville one of them a young girl of 17 years. She figured on the rolls as Mary A. Wright 1st Sergt [sic] Co 'F' Crosbys [sic] Scouts. Our men captured her at Bristol Station she was dressed in mens [sic] clothes.

We have [illegible] several women at the prison for speaking disrespectful of the President. They are very saucy and impudent, threatening to take the gun away from the guard at their door.

James I presume will soon be in Detroit. I hope he will get married and settle down into a quiet respectable citizen and father of a family. He has done his share towards putting down the rebellion. I thought perhaps you did not like to have him know I had your picture.

Give my compliments to your mother and family.

Very Respectfully
Your Obdt [sic] Servant
Chas R Brand

Office Military Prison
Nashville, Tenn., June 23rd 1865.

Friend Lizzie

Your favor of June 18th came to hand yesterday and as you intend to leave Detroit I answer it at once. I am well as usual and should like to satisfy myself in regard to your health and wellbeing by personal observation but there is little prospect of it.

Genl Parkhurst had me detailed for duty at the Military Prison, with a name and office of an enormous length it takes me about a half an hour to write it, and to convince you Ill [sic] write it out in full - Lieut [sic] and Assistant Commandant and Acting Assistant Quartermaster Military Prison Department of the Cumberland. There don't you pity me? If I didnt [sic] have two good clerks it would take me all day to sign my name and rank.

My duties are manifold and require my attentance [sic] from 6 oclock [sic] A.M. to 11 oclock [sic] P.M. and to prevent the confinement from killing me I take a ride on horseback every morning at five o'clock. The country around Nashville is very pleasant, and a gallop of about eight or ten miles give me a good appetite for breakfast at nine. I have to provide rations, clothing and Garrison Equipage for one thousand men, attend

to the cleanliness of the prison examine permits to see prisoners and keep the huge machine agoing as Genl Barrett who is Commander in Chief stays in the office but a few hours from half past nine oclock [sic] to twelve oclock [sic] A.M. I have very pleasant quarters, the best Ive [sic] had since I came into the service. There is a great deal of [illegible] property for which I have become accountable perhaps ten thousand dollars worth, which needs daily looking after. To give you an idea of my daily doings Ill [sic] give you a description of one days [sic] life. Rise at five, ride untill [sic] six look after communications from all sources and open and read all the letters addressed to prisoners untill [sic] Eight. Next look into every room and cell in the prison to see they are clean, give orders to the non commissioned officers about the prison, look at their and the Surgeons [sic] report untill [sic] nine and sometimes later. Breakfast at nine. Then visitors are admitted untill [sic] twelve whose permits I look at.

Consult the Genl what is to be done or undone sign requisitions and look over the books. At twelve the Genl leaves and I sit down to write letters sign Returns and attend to Quartermasters [sic] duties or go to town for papers and vouchers. Dinner we have at four as it is to [sic] hot to eat oftener. Take another stroll through the prison and see to repairing of cells, whitewashing (it is done twice a month all through) and other little affairs untill [sic] dusk. Then generally one or the other of the Ninth officers call in and we talk about of whatever comes up. At half past nine we have a slight lunch set out if one should feel like eating. From that time untill [sic] eleven I generally sit at the office window and listen to what is going on, when I light a cigar and take a final walk through the prison to see that all is right and it is generally midnite [sic] before I go to bed.

This is about the usual routine of work. I like it, time passes fast, and pleasantly. Once in a while I go to the Theatre or opera and Sundays to church if it isnt [sic] too hot or too cold or too rainy or too dusty. I hope youll [sic] have a pleasant time in Toledo.

So you have Sunflowers in your garden. I cultivated Bachelors buttons very largely also a few sunflowers. Dont [sic] you think the two will come together?

Remember me with a letter within a reasonable time if you please.

Give my compliments to Mr [sic] and Mrs [sic] Ray and your family and accept my best regard for you.

Your friend
Chas R Brand

Address as usual
Box 715
Military Prison
Nashville Tenn