

79th Illinois

A letter from JOSEPH JONES of Illinois, a Union private in the 79th Illinois Infantry, written from Murfreesboro, Tenn., to his wife, Nancy E. Jones, February 11, 1863 (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC02739.34)

Febuary 11th

1863

Wednesday night;

Murfreesboro Tennessee;

Johnson's division

Ker's brigade

79. reg. Ill. vol.

General Rosencrans, commander

in chief;

O my dear companion it is with a sober mind that i sit down to night to rite you another letter, the last letter i got from you was last sunday, it was the one the one that you rote at uncle jo millises, the one that he rote some in i tell you i was glad to get it but it was a letter that i could not read for crying, i have received a grate many letters since the batle, but i must acnoladge that i have only rote four letters to you since the batle, but if you could know my condition, you would say that i was [emeiriable], i can not get paper for the want of money, and i guess that ive wil never get any money, we stil have the promise of money but that is al the good it dos, i did not rite mutch in any thing mutch in any of my letters since the batle, but it was a thing imposible for me to rite any thing hardly for the want of paper and time and chance, but i wil try to rite a litle more this time o my dear wife if we dont have trying times it is no use of talking, i have seen some soroful hours since i lost my good pardners, i dont know how in the world phebe jane wil stand it, for it appeared as though it would narely kill me to loose such a good friend as him, for he was the best man that i have seen since i left home, and here i am left, a lone without earthly friends, in a strange land but the god of glory is stil with me and i am determined to hold fast to my savior until i reach my hevenly home. but i hope i wil be permitted to meet you and the children once more on earth, o it dos greave my hart to think of my dear litle family, and that is a good dele of my study, it is a truth a bout gorge cooper being dead, for i seen his grave a few weeks

ago, at nashville when i was out there with the train after provision, he died with the measels, he never had mutch to say before he died, jo was shot through the breast i dont know how long he lived or any thing a bout it i did not see him fall, i wil try to tel you a litle about it, in the morning before new years we was marched out to meet the enemy we went a bout a quarter of a mile through the woods and came to an open field in reach of the enemys guns, we then advanced a bout ninty rods while the enemy was fireing on us [voly] after [voly], we run on to them until we got in about one hundred yards of them and then we opend fire on them by this time i lost sight of the boys, it was not long til orders came to retreat, then our hole regiment scaterd and i got in with another regiment, and i did not get to my regiment for six days i dont mean to try to tell you any thing a bout my feelings or experiances, through that time for i cant do it. but in short i wil tel you that on the seventh day the batle being over i was detaild to help to bery the dead, for we could not do it any sooner for the rebs held the ground where we first fought but now they had left and gone; i found Jo one the line whare we first commenced fireing, he was shot in the breast i dont know whether it kiled him instintly or not but i think it did [Johen] was shot in the back it broke his back he was not very fur from jos i helped to bery them, the rebs took al they had and i had nothing to give them for we al lost evry thing we had. they even took his profiles out of his pockets, i took a lok of his hare and put it in my pocket book, i am a fraid to send it in a letter for fear it wil not reach her, tel her if she wants to resk it to rite and let me know and i wil send it, i am determind to come home as soon as i can get a chance let it be long or short i am as stout as i ever was in my life, and hevier i was one hundred and sixty four pounds i hope these lines wil find you al well and doing well i am a fraid you cant get clothes and such things as you nead but you wil half to do the best you can for i cant help it, i am not sory that i ever went to wor but if i was out now i never would go in another such a wore as this for it is an unholy wor on both sides if you knowed what i do you would think so two i dont want to tel mutch, i think the wor wont last very long for the soldiers wont stay mutch longer, dont say [mutch] noway, you can rite any thing you want to for nobody reads my letters but my self, i must rite alittle to phebe jane so good by for this time

Joseph Jones
to N. E. Jones