

Charles Santee Letters

Camp near Nashville Nov. 21 1862

Dear Sister

I embrace the present opportunity of writing a few lines to you in answer to yours of the 8th inst. which I received last evening. It found me in good health and I hope these lines may find you the same. I think it quite strange that you have not heard from me for so long a time for I have written to you two or three times since we were at Shelbyville but I suppose you never got my letters nor I have not got yours. I have had but two or three letters from you since we were at Louisville. I wrote a letter to Father day before yesterday. Well Lydia, Mat Blair has not got back to the regt. yet. I heard last evening that he was at Camp Chase in Ohio. And Sergt. Williams has not get here yet neither. I heard that he is at Springfield in Illinois so I guess my shirt has gone up the spout. But perhaps Sergt. Williams will send it down for I understand that he has a good many things for the boys. So I think he will send them down if he dont [sic] come himself. I will tell you sometime the reason why he is detained at Springfield. Well Lydia, we was out on a reconnoissance [sic] again night before last. We was called at 12 o'clock at night but did not leave camp till 4 in the morning. We were out about 8 miles and drove the rebels out of their snug and cosy [sic] dens in a hurry. We came up to them about daylight and gave them a few rounds of shot and shell which soon made them skedadle [sic]. But I guess that was all for I dont [sic] think anybody was hurted [sic]. I am sure I did not see anyone that was hurt. The enemy did not return the fire, they were most all cavalry and therefore kept out of our way. Well Lydia, what is the best word up there? How is every body and every bodys [sic] friend getting along? We are all getting along finely down here. The boys are all well but Allec Depuy. He is sick and in the hospital at Nashville. I do not know whether he is getting better or not. I have not heard from him since he went there nor I do not know what is the matter of him. Well how are you all getting along anyhow? I suppose you have got through husking corn long before this time, and threshing done, and nothing more to do till next spring. Well I am in hopes that I may be able to be up there next spring to help you along with the work but still it looks rather dark. Have you had nay snow up there yet? If you haint [sic] we can beat you for we had a little snow when we were in Ky. [sic] yet. Who is doing to keep school in the Bend this winter? Or haint [sic] you going to have any school up there this winter? I dont [sic] see where the shollars [sic] are to come from anyhow. But I must close. Write as soon as possible and I will remain as ever your true and affectionate brother.

Charles

P.S. Direct 5th Brigade Gen. Sills Division Nashville, Tenn [sic]. Care Capt. B. Wood

Camp Nashville Dec. 8th, 1862

Dear Sister & Brother

I seat myself this afternoon to write a few lines to you to let you know that I am still alive and well. I received your very welcome letter of the 22 ult. this day noon. It was the first line I have had from you for some time. I was sorry to hear that Father was not well. I am in hopes that ere [sic] this reaches you he may be in good health again. I do not know how soon we will leave this camp but I suppose we will leave in a day or two and perhaps it will (be) tonight. Lydia, I suppose we are going to have a great battle near this place in a few days. It may be tomorrow or next day and it may be a week yet and perhaps we may not have much of a fight after all. But it is the general opinion now here that we will have a very hard battle. It is said that the whole rebel army of the southwest is concentrating at Winchester and Tallahoma [sic]. If this be true we may expect to have some work to do. But I guess they will find their match for we have a powerful army here. An army that never has been whiped [sic] and one that is thought to be invincible. But if they should happen to defeat us here our cause is desperate. But if they give us battle here I believe they will not want to fight us again very soon. Well Lydia, you spoke about Brother [illegible]. I wish I could be up there a few days about Christmas and New Years and have a few fellow soldiers with me that I know. To use a soldiers [sic] term we would clean him out. We would make him (take) the oath and confiscate his property especialy [sic] such as chickens, pigs, and the like. No more at present but remain as ever your true and affectionate brother.

Charles

P.S. Dont [sic] feel uneasy about me. I will write again in a few days if we have a fight and I get through safe.

Camp near Nashville Dec. 16th, 1862

Dear Sister

I take my pen in hand this morning for the purpose of writing a few lines to you in answer to yours of the 7th inst. which I received last evening. It was the first letter that I had received for several days. I have wrote 6 or 7 letters home since we have been at this place but that was the first answer. But perhaps you did not get all of them or else I did not get yours. I never received the little note you sent in the letter of J. H. W. nor he never got the letter. Well Lydia, how are you getting along this winter? I suppose the weather is pretty cold up there by this time. We had quite a heavy rain here yesterday and last night but today is bright and clear. We were out on a forageing [sic] expidition [sic] yesterday and I tell you we got a good soaking. I have never been as wet but once or twice since I have been in the service and that was at Shiloh. Lydia, I have heard that

W. D. D. in writing to the Dixon paper stated that at the battle of Shiloh the flag of the 34 went down and the lines began to waver until Col. Kirk went and picked it up and waved it. I will admit the flag went down but it was because the order was for us to lay down and the bearer in laying down carelessly let it come to the ground but he raised again the next moment. But as for Col. Kirk raising it that is an absolute falsehood. He did not tutch [sic] the flag that day at all. I am willing to swear to this for I know it to be the truth for I right close to the flag all day and I know that Col. Kirk did not raise it. I write this because it has been published in several papers and I think the honor should be bestowed upon the one that deserves it. Miles Bahen is the color bearer and he was wounded and gave the flag to Jas. Wurls one of the color guards and he brought it off the field in triumph. I wrote you a letter the other day in which I stated that we expected a hard battle at this place. We did expect it at that time but the alarm seems to have passed away and no fight yet. About that 5 inches of snow, I did not see it. I saw about one inch and a half over here in our camp. I was not over to the camp he is in but it is only three miles from here and I cant see how there could be so much difference in so short a distance. But I must bring this to a close. Answer as soon as convinient [sic] and give me all the news. I remain as ever your affectionate brother.

Charles

Camp near Nashville Dec. 25th, 1862

Dear Friends at home

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I received your welcome letter last Sabbath evening. It found me in good health ['Dec 25 62 Camp near Nashville Dear Friends at home' written at the top of page] and I hope these lines may find you all the same. Well how are you all getting along up in the Bend? How are you going to spend New Years? We are not doing anything in camp today to amount to anything. We were out on picket day before yesterday and came in yesterday morning but we had scarcely got our things put away before we received orders to strike tents and load wagons immediately and be ready for a march. Well we went at it and in a few minutes our knapsacks were packed, our tents struck, and our wagons loaded and we were on the line all ready for a march with three days rations in our haversacks. Well we started off and went about one mile. There we halted and rested about an hour, then we were about faced and marched back into camp but in about half an hour we received orders to be ready in 15 minutes to move camp. Well we waited about an hour and then we got orders to unload wagons and be ready to march by daylight this morning. Well daylight came and we waited till about nine o'clock then we got orders to pitch tents and police our streets. And we are here yet. But the orders came this very moment to move tomorrow morning. The latter I do not think will be countermanded. I think we will move in the morning. I do not know where we will go but I think we will go down to Nolinsville

[sic] about 15 miles from here and I have no doubt but that we will have a little fight before we get there. But it is scarcely [sic] likely that our division will get into the right for there is troops enough in advance of us to whip all the rebs there is down there. We heard today that Gen. Thomas just more than whiped [sic] John Morgan and his gang of cut throats up at Gallitin [sic] yesterday. We do not know whether is true or not but we all hope that it is. We also heard that they have evacuated Fredricksburg [sic] and that they are fleeing from before our advanceing [sic] armies in every place. I hope all these reports may be true but we have had such good news so often and as often disappointed that we cannot rely upon anything that we hear. But should these reports be true the prospect of peace looks quite flattering at present. But I do not believe them yet nor I dont [sic] believe we will have peace very soon neither. I have made up my mind to stay till my three years are up and I believe if I live that even then I will have a chance of reinlisting [sic] in this same war. I may be mistaken in this and I hope that I am but I cannot see anything now more that I could a year ago to insure a speedy close of the war. I hear that there is quite a split in the cabinitt [sic]. I hope it may be for the better. I dont [sic] think things have been carried on quite rigid enough. I also heard that there was a likelihood [sic] of McClellan being reinstated but I hope this above all other things is not true. If he should be reinstated our government is gone up the spout. It is reported that the president had been shot at three times in the streets of Washington. Bully for the president if he only dont [sic] get hurted [sic]. Well I received those stamps you sent me. I am very much obliged to you for them. Well Lydia, I must hurry this to a close for the cannons are booming now and we may be called out to right in a few minutes but I guess it is only our forage train attacted [sic]. They attact [sic] that nearly every day. They attacted [sic] our regt the other day when we were out but you better believe they cut sticks when they saw our cannons come up on the hill and wheel around, hail Columbia but didnt [sic] they run. And they attacted [sic] us on picket too day before yesterday but a few shots made them skedadle [sic]. I guess I have written all the news so I will close. Please excuse all mistakes and bad writing for I am in a great hurry. Write soon. I remain as ever your brother.

Chas. Santee
Direct Second division
Co. C. 34th Regt. Ills. Vols.
Camp near Nashville, Tenn.

The number of our brigade is changed and I do not know exactly what it is or will be but I suppose it will be second. Gen. Johnson is now commanding the division in place of Sills.

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Jan. 7th 1863

Friend Lydia

It is with a sorrowful heart this afternoon that I pen these few lines to you. We have had a great fight and a great victory won. I came out without a scratch but as sorry to inform you that your brother, Charlie fell while defending the Stars and Stripes. He was shot dead at the first fire. He was one of the best boys in the 34th and beloved by all that knew him. No doubt you will hear of it before this reaches you. I buried him myself and gave him as good a burial [sic] as the circumstance would admit of. He carried the colors in the fight. The color bearer being sick at the time. When the rebels came on us they were 20,000 strong and were commanded by Gen. Hardee. We had no support and when the word was given to retreat the boys broke and fled in all directions. It was a general stampede [sic], A bulls run race. They took me prisoner but while they were taking [sic] me away a squad of our cavalry came down on them and they had to save themselves. At night I was ten miles from the battle field. You may think it strange in my running [sic] but I did not think it safe to halt under that distance. The fight lasted 8 days and was plenty long enough for me. In our company we had 22 wounded, 1 killed and 1 missing. The company is all broke up and I have no more desire to be in the servis [sic]. I never did have much and have less now. I wish myself at home again to see my friends and more. Charlie has a Bible and a few other trinkets in his knapsack and also two pictures, yours and Miss Evans and will send them to you when his knapsack comes if you wish them. The weather here is very fine now but during the fight it rained almost every day and night. A full account of the fight you will see in the papers and there is no use in my giving you a full description of the fight because I cant [sic] do it. With these few remarks I will Close. My respects to you and the rest of the family. No more. Write soon. From your true friend.

J. H. W.

In camp near Murfreesboro, Tenn.

January 22nd 1863

James M. Santee

Grand De Tour, Ills.

Dear Sir---

Glad tidings are ever borne the most rapidly, and ere this the intelligence had reached you through many sources [sic] doubtless of the death of your son Charles Santee who fell among the brave at Murfreesboro the 31st of December. Severe illness has prevented me from communicating with you before, but now, as the commanding officer of his company, I cannot forbear to speak of the many good qualities of this young and

brave soldier as they have come under my notice during the sixteen months of an active campaign. Always at his post, always prompt, cheerful and obedient he had the respect and love of officers and men. There was no place of honor or danger that called our men that did not find him among the foremost. At Shiloh he especially distinguished himself by his bravery and coolness. In the many lesser actions and skirmishes in which our regiment has participated his good conduct has been noticed by many. In the last great struggle which swept down so many of the brave men of my company, it was not my fortune to participate being prostrate by sickness, but the few who are left of us tell a heroic tale of our color bearer. It was his lot to bear our ensign and nobly did he stand up amidst the iron storm and leaden tempest that rained upon our regiment. He fell early, and now sleeps upon the field where he acted so nobly. It is better to die at home and surrounded by ones relatives and friends, but it is glorious to fall as did he upon the advanced line, his face to the foe and enshrouded in the folds of the glad which he had borne so gallantly and bravely. We fell his loss greatly in the company, but we know that there are those on whom it falls with more crushing weight. To you I offer the sincere sympathy of myself and my company in your bereavement. We ask to share in the grief occasioned by this sad casualty, for we all knew, loved and respected him.

Truly your friend
Benson Wood
Capt. Co. C. 34th Ills.

East Chester Jan'y [sic] 29th 1863

Mr. Santee:

Dear Sir,

I have read in the Dixon paper the death of corporal Charles Santee and I feel that the least I can do is to tell you I am among the number of those who mourn the loss of that brave soldier. the peace democrats of the north and their darling friends the cursed slave holders of the south may laugh at your grief and say it is only a "mud-sill" that is killed but you can tell those men that your son carried the star spangled banner on the bloody field of Murfreesboro and died there, a hero after God's own heart. Priests may get up in the pulpit and deliver glowing panegerica [sic] on what are called the great men of this world, marble columns may show people were the proud men lie buried, but your Charlie needs no priest to sing his praises, no monument of stone to cover him. Let him rest where he fell, his body guarded by the angel of freedom, for whom he was not afraid even to give his life and his happy spirit has found in Heaven the reward which God keeps for those who fight for truth and eternal justice.

I am with great respect Your friend

Wm. Seton

Captain 4th N. Y. Vols.
East Chester\
West Chester Co., N. Y.

Camp Sills Near Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Feb. 6th 1863

Dear Friend Lydia

Having just come in from off of picket and received your kind and welcome letter. I will now proceed to answer it. Nothing new has transpired since the battle at this place though the rebels pickets are within six miles of this place. We have a skirmish with them every time we go foraging [sic]. We can have a fight here at any time but I am not anxious for it after passing through what I have. I am willing to call it quits with them and go home. I dont [sic] know whether I will succeed as well in the next fight as I did in this one or not. I can do no more that I did here and that was to put my trust in the Lord. I feel sorry that the death of Charlie has caused such deep gloom over your family but not any more than it is with me. He was a brother to me. You wanted to know what his last words were. I was not close to him but Sergt. Newcome of Co. H. informs me that when he was struck he asked Charlie if he should help him away. He answered no take the flag. I will not need any help and fell. Those were the last words that he was known to utter. He fell as hundreds have fell defending the old flag of our country. On Tuesday night after Emmert, Charlie and myself had lain down to sleep he made this remark. Said he, John Henry tomorrow night we three will not sleep together in one bed and such is the fact. He stated to me that if he fell in the fight he wanted me to bury him. I promised him I would and have fulfilled that promise. Those handkerchiefs that you sent down to him by me I have sent to you by Doc. Newitt and also his Bible and those pictures. If ever I get home I will come down and give you the full particulars because I cant [sic] do it with pen and ink. J. B. Emmert and J. P. Lahman are going to answer your Fathers letters today. With these few lines I will close. Hoping [sic] to hear from you soon. From your ever true friend.

J. H. Wingerd

P. S. If anyone comes down after his body, I will assist them all I can as I know where he was buried.

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tenn.
February 24th, 1863

Esteemed Friend

It is with pleasure this evening that I seat myself to answer your kind and welcome letter which was thankfully recieved [sic]. It was not my fault that you did not recieve [sic]a

letter from me for I wrote you a letter some time ago but I still excuse your liberty. Our brigade has been detached from the division to work on the fortifications at this place. So you see we are armed with pickes and spades and right skillfully we use them. I would much rather use of one of them that I would a musket. The works that we are building here are very formidable and if the rebels will hold on for a little while yet till we get ready they may come and bring their whole force with them. We will learn them a lesson that they wont [sic] soon forget. Probably they have learned one from us already. It is the impression of the officers here that we are going to be left here. I wish we would for I am getting tired of marching. The weather here is very wet and muddy [sic]. It rains [sic] almost evry[sic] day and night. We dont [sic] move around much but are quietly settled down in the mud. Matt Blair recieved [sic] your letter a few days ago. I dont [sic] know whether he has answered it or not. That is not for me to know. Well Lydia, what do you think of the conscript law? I dont [sic] think much of it. Some portions of it I like very well. As for consolidating old regiments I am not in for, but I am in for takeing [sic] a furlough home. You stated in your letter that you wished to recover the body of Charley. I will do all in my power to aid you in getting it. I saw the major this evening and tomorrow he is going to send a request to Gen. Rosencranse [sic] to see if he will grant him the liberty of sending him home. It shall be done if it can be done at all. Their will be nothing left undone that can be done. If send him we will have to send to Nashville to get a coffin for him, which will be some time yet. Glorious news. The pay master is here and he is paying the brigade now. We are looking for the green backs with an anxious eye. They are going to pay us 4 months but their [sic] is six months due. J.P. Lahman is answering a letter which he recieved [sic] from your Father. As news is scarce I will close hoping [sic] to hear from you soon. Give my respects to your folks, and especially to yourself. No more. From your ever true friend.

Henry

P.S. I guess the reason why you did not get my other letter was because I directed it to Dixon.

Camp near Murfreesboro Tenn.
March 15th /63

Esteemed Friend

I hope you will excuse me for writing to you the second time. J.P. Lahman recieved [sic] a letter today from your Father. He will answer it soon. Tomorrow if the weather will permit we are going out to take the body of Charlie up and send it home. So you need not give yourself any uneasyness [sic] about him for he will come through if the rebels dont [sic] get possession of the railroad. Lieut. Wagner of Mt. Morris is going to bring

him through. We have a zinc coffin for him. The weather here for the past few days has been very fine and warm but I dont [sic] think it will remain so long. The works here on the fortifications are progressing slowly, but will eventuly [sic] be finished if the rebels will hold on a little longer. I think Vicksburg must fall and then they are gone up certain, dont [sic] you think they are? They will try and get possession of Kentucky if they can. They had better not come up this way. If they do they will meet with a warm reception. Did you recieve [sic] those pictures I send by Doc. Hewitt? Our preacher gave us a very good sermon this afternoon. His text was, The hour has come. I cant [sic] tell you where you will find it but I presume it is in the Bible somewhere. I will come down and find it for you when I come home. Last Monday we recieved [sic] a box of provision from home. It made us think of the loved ones at home and that they have not forgot us entirely. Long may they live. If the weather will keep dry you may expect to hear of a grand move down here and then woe to the rebels. Give my respects to your Father, Mother, & Brother & yourself also. Please answer soon. No more from your true friend.

Henry

Camp Murfreesboro, Tenn.

March 19th/63

Esteemed Friend

I received your welcome letter this P.M. and was glad to hear from you and also to hear that the Mat Blair and I went out last Monday morning and took him up and had in placed in a zinc case and had it started the same day. I wrote a letter yesterday to your Father stateing [sic] the price. I will mention it in here for fear the letter will not reach him. The price of the zinc case was forty dollars and the express charges from here to Dixon will be thirty dollars which will make seventy, and if Lieut. Wagner can get him through with less money he will go it and if there is any money left it will be given to your father. It will be sent in the care of W. T. House of Dixon. Tell your father that he will dispose of the money as followes [sic]. Ten dollars to be paid to Bob Boyds father in Grand Detour, fifteen dollars of Mat. Blairs he is to keep untill [sic] further orders, and the remainder to be paid to D.D. Lahman, J. P. Lahman's brother. He resides in Franklin. Tell him to take his own time to pay it as we are not in a hurry and tell him also that we are a thousand times obliged to him for those stamps. J.P. Lahman has answered his letters. I don't [sic] hardly know what to write. News is not very plenty here. This morning I was down and had my picture taken and a homely looking thing it is. I wish to exchange mineatures [sic] with you if you have no objections. I am sure I have none. Please let me know by the next letter. Give my respects to your folks and to yourself especially [sic]. With these few lines I will close hoping [sic] to hear from you

soon. When you write direct to Johnsons Division in place of Sills. No more. Write soon.
From your true friend.

Henry

Murfreesboro, Tenn [sic] April 8th/63

Esteemed Friend

It is with a great degree of pleasure this evening that I take my seat to answer your kind and ever welcome letter. I was glad to hear that Charlies body arrived safe at home. I recieved [sic] your Fathers letter this afternoon and Lahman recieved [sic] one also from him. The weather here is very fine but the nights are cool. J.B. Emmert has the mumps. He has been sick for three weeks but today he was able to be up. Last night I was over to help serenade Gen. McCook, it being the aniversary [sic] of the battle of Shiloh. I remember it well. Next week we are going to give old Rosy a call. We are still at work on the fortifications. Some of them are finished and have the guns mounted. Some of them are 64 pounders. They would make good pop guns. While I am writeing [sic] the boys of Co. C. & H. have a cottilion [sic] party in the street and as I cant [sic] dance I thought I would write which you know is the best of the two. I am under the impression that the rebellion will soon be crushed out as in other words starved out. I think about 4 months will finish it. The rebs are on half rations down here in this corner and have been for some time. Mat Blair has not been on duty for some time. He sprained his shoulder. How he done it I dont [sic] know. I find out that the conscript act dont [sic] keep the people from getting married. I hope they will conscript evry [sic] one that gets married. Dont [sic] you? Well the dance is ended and evry [sic] thing is quiet again. We have one of the prettiest camp(s) in the army. It is planted full of cedar trees and the streets are laid out regular and are kept clean. We amuse ourselves mornings and evenings by playing ball and marbles which you know is a very healthy exercise. There is a game of ball that can be played which is not very healthy, musket and cannon ball for instance. As news is scarce here, I will close hopeing [sic] to hear from you soon. From your ever true friend.

Henry

Camp Drake, Tenn. May 6th/63

Esteemed Friend

Your kind and ever welcome letter of the 8th of April was duly recieved [sic] this p.m. and I make hast to answer it. The weather here for the past few weeks has been extreemly [sic] warm but last night it made a great change. Today I have to wear any over coat. It has been misting all day. I would rather it was missed entirely. We are still at work on

the fortifications yet. I think we have a summers job of it. You asked me what I thought of the war. Well I will tell you. To use a camp phrase, I think the war is nearly played out. The news from Hookers army are rather encouraging. But I am afraid he will have some hard fighting to do before he can reach Richmond. We are getting them cornered up all over the south. It will be some time before they take this place. Matt Blair is very bad off. He has lost the use of his right arm [the rest of the letter is missing].

Partial Undated Letter

folks were all well. Which is more than I can say. The weather here is very dry and warm. If you was down here you would think we had southern climate. Warm weather in Ill. is not to be compared with it. The boys in the company are all well with a few exceptions of the cold. Old Rosey is pushing the works on the fortifications with a little more vigor than here to fore. He is fearful of the rebs pitching in here some morning. I am looking for it myself. Now Lydie, you would not like to see any one hung by the heels till they are dead, dead, dead. Would you? I believe I should. I would like to see evry [sic] copperhead in the north shot at and not mised [sic]. If ever I am spared to return home I will knock down or shoot the first man that talks secesh to me. I suppose you have heard of the death of David Sietz of the 75th. He had the measles and died in the hospital in Murfreesboro. I am happy to inform you that the bodie [sic] of your brother was shiped [sic] from here to Nashville last Monday and will remain there with the undertaker untill [sic] the arrival there of Lieut. Wagner. He will leave here next Monday.