

3-12-1862

## Letter from William McKinney to His Cousin Martha McKinney, March 12, 1862

William M. McKinney

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Camp of 15<sup>th</sup> Ind Regt, 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Gen. Woods Division  
3 miles South Nashville March 13<sup>th</sup> 1862

My dear Cousin Mattie-

It does indeed seem  
strange that letters are so long in passing betw  
een us. I only received yours of 25<sup>th</sup> ult. was  
only received this morning. I have sent  
you four letters since the date of this last  
of yours, that I have just received. I mailed  
one to you yesterday morning, yet I will  
answer this last one, partly to keep even with  
you, partly to answer some of your past rem-  
arks, and partly because I love a little to tell  
you. And first to answer you, glad you are  
grinning over our my letters, did not however  
suppose I was writing such letters as would  
much increase the knowledge of the reader,  
unless the aforesaid reader was greatly mounting  
in that commodity, knowledge. You had better  
be somewhat careful of your remarks, since  
your correspondent is growing in "conceit"

Speaking of flattery to the girls, do they not expect it from us, "men beings": just as much as they expect to eat when they are hungry, that thing "flattery" is one of the principle ingredients to support their dear, delicate existences, but you may be an exception to the general rule, I will admit, you are an exception of a girl, indeed, I believe the real, true, genuine M<sup>rs</sup>—s are exceptions to the general race of mankind.

They are certainly, a very peculiar tribe, and on account of their peculiarities, fail, many times, to be fully appreciated by other people, who are so stupid as not to be able to detect and understand the peculiarities. If I should commit an error, by offering any unnecessary flattery to your Ladyship, you will excuse, since I have not been accustomed to speak or write much to one of your peculiar taste, fancy, peculiarities, subsocialities, in fine, my correspondence has not always been confined to a true M<sup>rs</sup>—s, and I am liable, at times, to forget just what their peculiarities are. I shall try and remember not to offer any more flattery to one, who so abhors it, entirely fails to appreciate it, though it may be given truthfully and from the best of motives, then adieu to flattery.

I think you will never forget that conversation  
of mine on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the evening, it seems to stay  
with you, and ever to be remembered. I do not  
know that I was in any particular trouble, only I felt  
that I had been grossly misrepresented by certain persons,  
and I wanted to bring matters right, but that I could  
do so much, for I am one of those persons, that am quite  
independent of others, enough at least, to take care of myself,  
let them talk as they please, but I perceived that your  
mind was considerably biased against me, and  
I wanted you to know something of the truth,  
but I said more perhaps, than I ought to, of  
matters and things, more than I ever said to  
any other being, for I am one of those, who keep  
their own secrets, and since you boast yourself  
good at keeping secrets, we will see how well  
that conversation stays by you. As to reading  
thoughts by the changes of the countenance, I think  
I know very well what you were resolving in your  
mind during your "brown study", quite as well  
as if you had told me. As to your "solving" the  
truth-telling enigma hereafter, perhaps you may,  
but it will doubtless be some time "hereafter".

You need not have written your former opinion  
of me, nor did you write the half you before thought.

I am quite aware that it was anything and everything  
but favorable to myself, and the term "rogue" does not  
half express, what you before thought, I ~~never~~ knew about  
your opinion, before I ever saw you, gathered it from  
your letters, and your Mother had about the same opinion.  
I say it with no unkind or ill feelings at all, but she,  
from the representations she had had of me, looked  
upon me as quite a young rascal and would do to watch.  
Now I know how and where all these things originated,  
but I care not a straw about them, only, that I do  
not wish my friends to be in an error regarding  
myself. This I have written in earnest, and be it only  
between us, as you can keep a secret. I hope you have  
been able to see John Stafford before this time,  
I wish I was acquainted with him, perhaps if we  
were once to meet, and know more of each other,  
our correspondence would be less constrained, I  
would write him more humorous letters, but  
I somehow or other got the impression, that  
he was a kind of an Old Quaker of a fellow, and  
I cannot get it out of my head. My old, familiar  
long-tried ever-to-be-remembered and ever-present friend  
"Samuel Hill," is still with me, and presume al-  
ways will be, I have known him for quite a  
number of years, and he still remains the  
same, and whenever I want to call on or  
invoke any one for assistance, he is always  
present, and answers all purposes, being a very  
crafty and convenient institution. He  
and "Dave"; the one invisible and the other  
very visible on account of his "deep color," are  
always present to answer calls.