

3-3-1863

**Letter from William McKinney to His Cousin Martha McKinney,  
March 3, 1863**

William M. McKinney

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Camp of 15<sup>th</sup> Regt. Inf. Colo. - 2<sup>d</sup> Brigade - 1<sup>st</sup> Division -  
21<sup>st</sup> Army Corps - Department of the Cumberland -  
near Murfreesboro - Tenn. - March 3<sup>d</sup> 1863

Dear Cousin Mattie -

Yours of 20<sup>th</sup> ult. containing the long  
looked for Photograph received this evening - I reply on sight.  
The "picture" pleases me much - looks very natural - just as I expected.  
am really pleased with it - though I will not refuse another one  
a letter one if you will send it. I am going to Nashville  
to morrow - if I can procure a pass - to look after some of  
my Company - who are there sick. Will try and get a  
few Photographs taken - and send you one. Have not  
received Aunt's and Emma's pictures yet - they were sent  
with a man belonging to the 35<sup>th</sup> Ohio - and that Regt. is  
at Nolensville - some 20 miles from here - and I trust  
has been cheated out of my pictures - I only hope they  
will wear his pockets out - so badly he will get tired  
carrying them and forward to me. I wrote you a  
short letter the other day - since which time nothing  
strange or startling has transpired - and of course  
I have no news to write now - wish I had for  
I am at a loss to know how to fill the sheet -

My usual will have to make up my letter by "rehashing"  
yours - and taking particular notice of your sarcastic and very  
"morning" sayings. Speaking of "Bachelor Cousins" reminds me of the  
fact - that I received a letter this evening - the same time I did yours -  
from a "gal" I had not heard from for nearly two years - and  
it was so nice tender and conciliatory - that were the "Bachelor"  
out of the service - do not think you could call him by that "ajis"  
little lang-hai-hai. How does that suit you, Cousin mine - would  
it not be real "ghummy" to hear of the nuptials of old bachelor  
Cousin and a fair young Miss of seventeen summers - hai hai  
and it may be. I tell you she is an angel - a perfect beauty -  
I have carried her "pictur" clear through the war - it has  
been my constant companion on marches and in  
fighting - was with me and next my heart at the battle  
of Stone River - it is the talisman that carries me safely  
through. You did not know it - was in my keeping when  
I was with you - I know you did not - or you would have  
been trying to get it - just as you did that one I brought  
up at home - do you remember hai-hai - how you tried  
in vain to save that one for our dear "old Comt Genl"  
but failed most signally hai-hai! Would you not be pleased  
to see the picture of my fair "Dulcinea" - no, no, you would not  
look at it if I should present it to you - would snuff it from  
you in contempt - But you may see her some day -  
will you hear her name - no I want tell it - to you hai-hai.



I am sorry I did not receive a Valentine - indeed I looked for one  
from you Sunday - We deal in nothing but "left-handed compliments"  
in the Army they grow spontaneously in this climate and  
country - does that kind suit you - if not I will try and  
change my "Tune" - for with all my accomplishments you  
know I am a Musician - and can sing or talk to any  
tune that suits the Genus best - ha' ha - I am a little nervous  
to night. Ha' ha' ha' wait - till you see me - you'll see how better by  
that time - you can "womans prove" me as much as you  
please - I'll be married by that time and need to such "brags"  
I'm much obliged to "me girls" for their small talk - tis the kind  
best suited to their tongues - slips off the easiest - "me girls"  
can use it - faster than "large talk" - can "spin" it out in small  
but lengthy threads. Besides it is more fitting the "mental  
Culicre" of "me girls" than "large talk". "ah!" for the special  
benefit of "your sex" - ha' ha' well spoken in your own defence -  
a good apology such for want of capacity to use "large talk".  
And your company was newly Ladies - a fine and very  
interesting assembly - no doubt - a vast amount of "weighty  
talk" and an matter of vast "importance" - Did I call you  
"mean" certainly if I did - I did not "mean" half  
I said - or said half I "mean" - which is it? I am a  
very plain spoken man - and say what I "mean" and  
"mean" what I say - only when I don't - I think I  
was fortunate in saying of you what was never said of you before.



"Lantern Hill" - Lanse - now that is is nice subject to write  
upon to a man in the "Lanthe Army" you might as  
well look for a deep of fresh water in the middle of  
the Ocean - as talk of Lanse in the Army - it is an entirely  
foreign subject - not know here - not convenient with this  
climate - but "Conscience" yes plenty of "Conscience" here  
most abundance of it - a surplus - we have plenty of that  
commodity here - but no use for any of it - in the  
Army - if we had in demand - what does a Soldier  
want with "Conscience" - I left - miss "to home" with that  
"gut" I wrote you about, Ah! that "evil spirit" - will be  
fine of them when I make you a visit - must be house  
be haunted though - the natives I mean those who are  
not "evil spirits" will have to flee for peace somewhere  
else. By, I am a good judge of "Car Time" will not  
have to be pushed out of the door more than six times  
before taking a hint - am not quite so dull of con-  
spicuous as you might suppose - just wait - and  
see if I do not make you a "Hemondian's" visit  
when the war is over. It will be one of the  
great occasions at old Camp M'Henry when the  
"distinguished" personage arrives. While R L is  
present - the war will soon be over - at least -  
within a twelvemonth - then look out for old  
broken down soldiers - weary and weary and "Wild"