

Florence, KY
April 8. 1863

My dear Jane

Since I wrote you last I was over to Cincinnati once, for the purpose of seeing our paymaster, who I learned had arrived there on his way home after paying off our regiment. I found him and learned that my Captain had drawn my pay for me, and I will not get it till I catch up with the regiment. Johnny did not write to us, or if he did the letter did not come, but he had reached there for I saw his signature to his pay roll.

Last night we received orders to start by daylight this morning. Getting ready to start always makes a bustle, no matter how much preparation may have been made previously. We packed up and went to bed early. The Quartermaster left it to my choice to go with the wagon train or by railroad. I chose to go by the turnpike as the weather is pleasant and the roads good. He furnished me with a horse and new M'Clellan saddle, and I expect a fine ride with a good view of the interior of Kentucky. This stopping at Hotels etc has given me the idea that I am no more a soldier, but a traveller. Nothing is left to remind me of the soldier but their blue clothes. I bought a felt hat in Covington and put my cap away.

Morning came and the train began to form about six o'clock. It consists of about one hundred and twenty wagons and forty ambulances with a guard of two hundred men. My horse is for all the world like the little one I had of John Haworth, and acts a good deal like him to. He is so used to being waked up with spurs that when he finds that his rider has none he takes his time. It was a charming morning. The road is macadamized, and as good as the old Frankford was. So many horses made a great dust in town and as my horse was so lazy and slow I resolved to take the start of the train and let them catch up to me. So about seven o'clock this morning you might have seen "a solitary horseman" wending his way around the hills of the Lexington Pike. The scenery was delightful. The country is very hilly, quite eclipsing poor abused Butler Co. and as the road wound around these hills I had a fine view of Cincinnati in the distance with the Ohio rolling between it and the quiet little city I had just left. There was nothing striking to the view in the fields or improvements for the first mile, but I soon came in sight of the white tents and gleaming bayonets of the troops who guard Cincin. on the high grounds known as Camp Mitchell. Here Extensive Earthworks and rifle pits have been thrown up and the woods cut down. These woods were commenced last summer when the rebels made an approach on Cincin. Just beyond are the blackened walls of the residences of the loyal men of the neighborhood. Their houses were burned by the rebels then. I did not think they had got so near to Cincin.

They are still strengthening the works and mounting more guns so that it will not be likely the rebels will ever get so near again. The mile posts on this pike are iron plates like headboards in a graveyard and the directions painted on them. Two miles and a half and I came to a toll gate. It looked quite natural, just like any other toll gate and the gate keeper true to his instincts as soon as he hears my horses feet rushes out for his toll. I told him to charge it to Uncle Sam, which was satisfactory to him and I went on. I saw very few people on the road, and only one nigger. This appears strange for a slave state. I met a drove of mules. This is where those animals are raised in great numbers. The buildings improve as I go on. There are some houses along this road as fine as those at Wriggins neighborhood in the Frankford road, and the grounds surrounding them are laid out beautifully. A good deal of their gardens are devoted to the cultivation of the grape. I arrived at Florence nine miles and will stop here till the train comes up. I got my dinner at the hotel, and have taken a walk through the village. It is a pretty little place with two churches, three hotels and all the other appurtenances of a country town. At one side of it is a very prettily laid out fair ground where the county fairs are held.

I came back to the hotel and found a man who has just arrived in a buggy who says he passed the wagon train at the first toll gate. They are halted - for dinner I suppose. I have had my horse put up and fed, and will probably have to wait here till tomorrow, for as they are still six miles and half back they will hardly reach here tonight, and even if they do they will go no farther.

So commences my first days travels in Kentucky. How nice it is to get paid for travelling, boarder, furnished with a horse, and accompanied by an escort if I want it. Who wouldn't be a soldier? There are many things to be seen worth seeing in this State. This is the land of the Kentucky Giant of Dan. Boone, of Silent Bill and Henry Clay. Clay's residence and resting place lies on our route and I will try hard to pay a visit to Ashland. The Mammoth Cave also is in the bounds of this state, but rather out of my way on the present trip, but I may get a sight of it yet before I leave: anyhow I am much nearer it now than I was the time Dr. Leake was going out with me to see it. Just now some of our men have come up on horseback at which I am not sorry as my short acquaintance here has discovered a feeling of success among it inhabitants. The whole train will be this far to night.

I am only a few miles from Cynthiana. I wish I had time to go to see River and his distillery. I inquired about him, but the folks here don't know him. Probably he has "bust" and gone before now. This is the Eighth of April. I am getting old dear - thirty seven to day. How old will I be when I see you again? The years

go quickly now. In a few days you too will have passed another birthday, but I will not forget it though I may not be with you to congratulate you.

The men crowd in and I am obliged to stop writing just as I was getting in the right humor for it.

Will write again as soon as an opportunity occurs.

Yours affectionately

William