



Richard W. Griffith

Address Me Hereafter at Leesburg **Letters of Brigadier General Richard Griffith**

with footnotes by Taylor Chamberlin

Prologue

Occasionally one gets a glimpse of Loudoun County during the period of "The War Between the States" through the eyes of residents or soldiers as revealed in discovered letters or diaries, but rarely through those of a general. What follows are complete transcripts of the letters written by Brigadier General Richard Griffith. As commander of the "Mississippi Brigade," consisting of the 13th, 17th, 18th and 21st Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Regiments, Griffith was encamped for the winter of 1861-2 in Loudoun. Most of his letters were written from Leesburg, where General Griffith had his headquarters, to his wife Sally (whom he sometimes called Sarah) and his children who were "back home" in Jackson, Mississippi.

Richard Griffith was born on January 11, 1814 in Germantown, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. After graduating from Ohio University in 1837, Griffith moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi where he became a teacher. When the war with Mexico began in 1846, he joined the 1st Mississippi Rifles, which was commanded by Col Jefferson Davis, the future president of the Confederacy. It was during this time that Lieutenant Griffith and Colonel Davis formed an affectionate and life long friendship. After the war Griffith served as a U.S. marshal, banker and for two terms as state treasurer.

After spending many years with the government overseas, Taylor Chamberlin returned to his native Loudoun to farm and start up an antique business. Following in the steps of his father, Edward M. Chamberlin, who was one of the founding members of the Loudoun County Historical Society, Taylor has developed an interest in local history and is the author of several books on the Civil War period.

The state of Mississippi seceded from the Union in early January 1861, and by mid-February, it had become one of the founding states of the Confederate States of America. On January 29, 1861, Griffith was named Adjutant General of the Army of Mississippi. Less than one month later, on February 27, 1861, Mississippi Governor John J. Pettus commissioned him a Brigadier General of that army.

Wanting a field command, Griffith resigned his adjutant generalship and accepted a commission as Colonel of the 12th Regiment of Mississippi Volunteer Infantry on May 16, 1861. This unit first moved to Union City, Tennessee and then, in July, came eastward to Northern Virginia, arriving too late for the First Battle of Manassas.

On November 2, 1861, Griffith was commissioned a Brigadier General of the Provisional Confederate States Army and, shortly afterwards, was ordered to Loudoun County where he assumed command of the 5th Brigade of the 1st Division, then under the overall commander in the area, Brigadier General Nathan C. "Shank" Evans. Not long afterwards, Brig. Gen. Daniel H. Hill, who became Griffith's superior during his stay in Loudoun, replaced Evans.

It was during this period that Griffith wrote the following letters to his wife Sarah, and his four children – Jefferson Davis Griffith, Benjamin Whitfield Griffith, Lucy Ann Griffith and Richard Griffith, Jr. In them he frequently mentions Cephas, his son by a previous marriage. Sarah Griffith was an honor graduate of the Judson Female Institute in Marion, Alabama, and became Griffith's third wife when she was 22 years old. At the time of their marriage, Griffith was the Mississippi State Treasurer. The family lived at the Griffith Plantation "Clearfield" which was located about three miles outside Jackson, Mississippi. Although the Union Army desolated the property in 1863, it was not "torched" the way many others were in that area. Through the letters, the reader learns not only about Griffith's daily activities, but also what it was like for a woman left behind to run a plantation by herself.

For the Griffiths the war was a trial and a tribulation but also something they supported wholeheartedly. Their separation was long and difficult, filled with disappointments over canceled leaves and planned visits and the everyday activities of children lived only on a page of

paper was difficult and, often, frustrating. But through it all, one senses a dedication between the two that is remarkable and stable. And, one hopes that the end will be a happy reunion for both.

The Griffith letters have been transcribed from the originals with the permission of the owner. The editor and members of the publication committee would like to thank the owner of the Griffith letters for generously granting his permission for the publication of these priceless treasures. It is truly remarkable that they not only survived the 135 years that have passed since they were first written, but that they have been returned to the very town in which they were originally penned.

Leesburg, Va. Dec. 7th, 1861

My dearest Wife:

The evening before my departure from Richmond to this place I wrote you whilst snowing fast. Next morning the ground was covered with snow some two or three inches deep, and very cold—traveled all day, with very cold feet, and arrived at Manassas after dark. No good public place for stopping, and made my arrangements for sleeping in the cars, and that without my supper, Most fortunately meeting the keeper of the Mississippi Depot a Capt. Armstrong from Tallahatchie County, Miss, who said he knew me, and that I had done him many favors in the Auditor's Office, without charge, years ago, for which he had ever felt obligations, and was glad of an opportunity to repay me somewhat; and in consequence myself and staff were handsomely and most hospitably entertained. Thus you see that people are generally grateful and apt to remember past favors, and that labor for which I refused to charge has not all been in vain. This place we reached, after a hard ride over rough roads, yesterday evening – my wagon and baggage came up this evening, and I will assume the duties of my command on Monday. Gen'l [Daniel H.] Hill of N. Carolina will take command of all the forces in this Loudoun County, and all the Mississippians alone have been assigned to my command. With this I am well satisfied. As yet I have not met Gen'l [Nathan G.] Evans, their former commander, but expect to do so in the morning. He leaves on Monday.

This afternoon I called on Mrs. [Julia] Harrison – your cousin—who has been here, or in the neighborhood of Major [Isham] Harrison [Jr., 13th Miss. Infantry]¹, ever since their arrival in Virginia. She sends her kindest love to you, and says you must come and winter here at Leesburg, as it is such a delightful place – the people so kind, so clever and hospitable. This is perhaps the richest and wealthiest county in Virginia. I can't speak of it from personal observation, as I have seen but little of this country. Soon however I will see the most of it, and can then give you my own views of the county and its citizens. At present we are stopping at the hotel of one who was born and raised in Warren County [Mississippi] and was one of my pupils in Vicksburg. He manifests great pride in having us at his house. I am just now being serenaded by the band of the 21st Miss. Regt. They discourse very sweet music & I must stop & pay them attention.

Well the music and speaking has ceased & I resume my writing. Upon my way here I received two of your letters dated 15th & 19th November. As I have rec'd others of later date I will not pay much attention to them further than to say they were read with much pleasure, and I thank you most heartily. It was my impression that I had told you before this the disease with which I was afflicted. In the first place I had severe derangement of the liver – much like jaundice. This was followed by a protracted derangement of the bowels, and then ensued a sub-acute inflammation of the stomach. Had I given up sooner, the diseases would doubtless have sooner yielded to treatment. But I am well and hearty now, & prepared for any hard service. My appetite is fully restored and able to take soldier's rations. In daily expectation of meeting the Yankees. I cannot wish myself at home now as I have done some time since.

Mrs. Barksdale² and Mrs. Jayne³ are also here, and I presume will remain. And now, dear wife, let me say in regard to your coming here you must do just as you please... Much as I wish to see you I cannot urge you to come. Should you prefer to do so, you must bring Jefferson along and an escort and attendant. Little George you can hardly leave behind, and oh! How I wish to see Lucy; and then what will become of Whitty – my darling boy. How I wish with you that this war were over and we all could return home once more to our friends and families. God only knows when it may end, and until then I may not see my home. A Brig-Gen'l cannot so easily leave his command. Others will obtain their furlough

1. H. Grady Howell, Jr.'s Griffith's, Barksdale's, Humphrey's Mississippi Brigade, Army of Northern Virginia: A Muster Listing (Carrollton, Miss.: Pioneer Pub. Co., 2004) was used to help identify soldiers mentioned in these letters.
2. Wife of Col William E. Barksdale, 13th Miss. Vol. Infantry Regiment.
3. Wife of Capt. Joseph McAfee Jayne, Co. A, 18th Miss. Vol. Infantry Regiment.

as soon as we go into winter quarters; but when that will be is uncertain; for as long as the enemy remain in the field, we are obliged to do the same thing. For myself, I pray for winter quarters or a general battle soon for our soldiers. But it is useless to be grieving over that which we cannot help, and if you wish to come here do so, without asking any one, except to obtain a permit to pass to this place. Brig. Gen'l Evans has his wife here, & that might justify me in having mine, but I am not fully persuaded that it is right and proper.

Dear wife, if Mr. Allen desires to join the army to serve our country and cause, throw no obstacles in his way. We don't want to raise any cotton next year, and what we have should be destroyed rather than fall into the hands of our enemies. All we want hereafter is subsistence for the soldiers until this cruel and unnatural war is terminated. Hence we can get along with a very ordinary overseer to raise grains & potatoes. Supplies for the army and the actual necessities of life are all we want until hostilities cease and peace is established.

The box of clothing and other things for me have not yet come to hand, and will not look for them until the middle of this month. They have been stopped doubtless by the interruption of transportation in east Tennessee. Neither have the 5 kegs of Pickles been heard of. I think they will all turn up ere long, & take us by surprise. Personal friends are on the watch for my valuable clothing. I wish they were here – especially the red flannel shirts and drawers, as my old ones are becoming too small, and are nearly worn out.

I hope and pray that Pa is well again and able to attend to his business matters once more. It is sad indeed he should be sick so long and so seriously, when you have so much to attend to. Oh, that I could be there and pay him some attention too. But surely Bro. George will devote himself to all Pa's wants and wishes as far as he is able, and by this time he should be well enough.

Everything you did, dear wife, in regard to my clothing is all right, and you must not censure yourself. I know you are incapable of doing any intentional wrong. Instead of blame, you and Col. Brown are both entitled to my warmest thanks, for all your endeavors to please and comfort me, more than I deserved.

Gladly would I assist, at your request, in obtaining for Mr. Kerney the position he desires in the Army. At present I know of no post suitable that he could possibly get. Applicants for such places are numerous, and preference is invariably given to those already in the army, which I think is proper and right.

Sorry I have not more space and time to write you more, but without any promise will endeavor to write you oftener. Address me hereafter at Leesburg, Va. Remember me kindly to all—home folks especially—not forgetting the children & blacks. May God ever bless you all my dearest wife. Yours

R. Griffith

Head Qrts., Miss. Brigade
Leesburg, Va. Dec: 17, 1861

My dearest wife:

Since I last wrote you — say ten days ago I have received two more of your very affectionate letters, one of the 30th ult. & the other of the 5th inst. — both being 10 days on their route. It is useless to say I thank you much, for I am sure you know I do. It was cheering to me to learn that Pa was with you and improving, and trust he will remain with you until his health is fully restored; and then his presence will be cheering and pleasant to you, and may prevent you from brooding over your sad thoughts & many troubles. Cheer up dear wife and don't give way to unpleasant feeling, & only think and believe that happy and peaceful times will come again after our hardships, toils and troubles are over. This war spirit can't continue always. The "sober second thoughts" of the down trodden, heavy taxed and oppressed people of the North must cause a reaction, and ere long compel peace measures to be adopted. As long as the enemy remains in the field under arms, we must be prepared to meet them, and propositions for peace must come from the other side; and honorable terms must be submitted or they cannot obtain a hearing. Would that this war could now cease!

Sorry to hear you have had so much sickness in the way of chills and fever, and regret that Dr. Buck feels it his duty to leave and join the 60 days army. His absence will subject you to trouble to supply his place, and that is a matter to be left entirely to your own discretion and judgment. I must say however to you, that I would not select Dr. Mitchell for a family physician. I hope my dear little Lucy is well again. Tell her for me she must keep well as Father wants to see her rosy and healthy when he returns home.

It occurs to me dear wife that you might avoid much of the trouble and labor of teaching by sending the boys to the Town school. The bad influence you dread from their association with vicious town boys I cannot anticipate. The moral and religious instruc-

tion and training they receive from you will enable them to shun all such vile companions—they will learn to resist all bad temptations, and may assist them in learning to do right by avoiding to do evil. Try it a while, and if it won't answer, take them away again. You must not tax yourself with so much labor, but take care of yourself and this I most seriously insist upon. You may overtax your energies, and thus bring on ill health, and its usual accompanying diseases.

Your being disappointed in sending the pen and tooth powder by Major Watts¹, proved no disappointment to me, as I am not in need of either at this time. I am much in need however of a new set of teeth in plate, but that I know you cannot furnish me. I will endeavor to make those I have hold together until I can get an opportunity to visit Jackson and my home once more.

Being without a watch to carry is a matter of great annoyance to me, and I must think it is the fault of Messrs. Patton & Bonfield. By Major Watts I returned to them a silver lever watch, which I had purchased of them, and requested they would return by him to me another of that kind keeping correct time. To this message I have received no response, and am sadly disappointed. Surely they could find chances to send one if they had the disposition to do so. Tell them I have no spirit or disposition to censure or complain, but that I would very much like to have a good plain patent lever silver watch for my own use, if they could send me one without any delay. As usual however I would prefer troubling my very good friend Col. Brown to select for me, and endeavor to procure one complete in all its parts. If P. & B. have not any such on hand, perhaps he might select one at Morey's. I am sadly in want of one.

This is indeed a beautiful country — rich and fertile in its productions, and its citizen planters and farmers generally wealthy—said to be the wealthiest & heaviest tax paying county in the state. What a pity such a land should be despoiled by the ravages of war. But such must be the fate of all border counties. Myself and staff are comfortably located indeed. We occupy a large and convenient house in Leesburg. The owner is a wealthy widow lady now on the Lincoln side. Her son is with us — on his plantation near here — and reputed to be loyal — claims the house as his own, and was exceedingly anxious for me to occupy it. He endeavors to avoid the sequestration of the premises evidently. My room and office is the neat parlor of the old lady, and furnished exactly to suit me, except a nice piano for

1. Maj. Nathaniel G. Watts, brigade quartermaster. For a list of General Griffith's staff officers, see Robert E. L. Krick's *Staff Officers in Grey: A Biographical Register of the Staff Officers from the Army of Northern Virginia* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N.C. Press, 2003).

which I have no use at all. The main building contains seven good rooms, two of them very large, and eight of us with five servants find ample space for offices & all.

The citizens are exceedingly kind and hospitable generally. Have been cordially invited to several tea or supper parties, said to be specially intended for Gen'l Hill and myself — of course to be shown and introduced. Invariably thus far I have furnished a written apology instead of myself for the occasions. The first one Gen. Hill attended, but none since. To night a Tableaux is given to which I was pressingly invited, but my whole staff was present for me, and I am left alone with the privilege of writing to my dear wife.

Some of the people in portions of this County are disloyal and are Tories to us, and act as spies for the enemy. Complaints were made to me by good citizens in the upper portion of this County near Harper's Ferry, that marauding parties of our enemies were in the habit of crossing over in the night and committing depredations in the way of stealing, plundering & burning. A few nights ago I sent up a detachment secretly after dark to catch them. Capt. [John] Sims of Wilkinson [Co. C, 21st Miss. Infantry] commanded my men. They were quite successful in this expedition. Encountering a thieving party of not less than fifteen, they captured six of them, and killed and drowned the balance. The six are now in jail here — two of them genuine Yankee soldiers, the other four Virginia Tories. We want to hang them all, and are now waiting orders from Gen'l [Pierre G. T.] Beauregard for that purpose. We had previously notified Gen'l [Charles P.] Stone of the Federal forces opposite here, that we would hang all such when caught, and wished him to inflict similar punishment on all marauding parties from our side caught by his men. How this may work remains to be seen.

Mrs. Barksdale & Mrs. [Julia] Harrison are still here. The former expects to remain all winter, but Cousin Julia contemplates starting for her home, day after to-morrow. The Loudoun Hotel, at which we board, is kept by a gentleman of Mississippi birth, and was formerly one of my school boys in Vicksburg. I am very kindly treated by him and his family. But dear wife I can't write you as I wish. My duties occupy nearly all my time from early morn till late at night. Much must be reserved to be told when I meet you again — a time I hope not far distant. At present all is still on our line. We are doing much work now in the way of making Field Fortifications and entrenchments. In one week we have done more in that way than had been done here in the preceding 3 months, and in one week more I think we will be very well fortified. There are no demonstrations on the part of the enemy to attack us: on the contrary they seem to be apprehensive of an attack from us. Their force is three or four times greater than ours, and we can only act on the

defensive. I have no fears of the result in the event they cross to this side. It is late dear & I must close. Will try to write you in a few days, again, and also to the little boys if I possibly can. Remember me kindly to all home folks, and kiss the children often for me & don't let them forget they have a father. God bless and protect you dear wife, is the very frequent prayer of your affect. husband.

R. Griffith.

[Postscript]: The gentlemen on my staff join in kind regards to you. Of fruits there are none in this section — abundance of every thing else. My health is very good, and can stand most any thing. R. G.

Hd. Qrs., 7th Brigade, 1st Corps, A [rmy] of P [otomac]
Leesburg, Va. Dec'r 24th, 1861

My dearest wife:

This being Christmas eve, and no probability of seeing you in the morning, you will allow me to give you and our sweet children the compliments of the season as customary — wishing you all a merry and joyous Christmas and a very happy New Year. How much of pleasure and happiness is lost to me in not being at home during these gay and happy holidays, when the children and negroes bless others with their smiling and happy faces! And then how much of good things I miss, usually enjoyed on such occasions! But no matter, our military family — pretty large by the way, being 12 in all — expect to have pound and sponge cake with egg & nog in the morning, and eat and drink to many returns of this usual happy season. At the same time the thought occurs, "do they miss me at home". Such thoughts however are but sad and should be banished. Since my last to you, dear wife, two more of your love messengers have been received. One of the 9th the other 12th inst., both in same mail; besides one from little Whitfield yesterday of the 14th, for all which my thanks are due. Assure little Whitty I am determined to write to him soon, as well as to Jeffy. They should both write frequently — Lucy as soon as she can.

You refer to the Brigade and myself being mutually pleased with our positions. That is certainly so if I am to believe all that officers and men say — thus far all works very smoothly. Gov. Whitfield did not exaggerate in his description of this beautiful region, and I have no fear now of the Yankees quartering in Loudoun during this winter. They are quiescent just now and have been since I wrote you last, except day before yesterday they

threw a few shell, and all fell short of us. The range is long & I counted 12 seconds from fire till the shell exploded. The Yankees opposite here will not attack us I think – they seem to fear we will attack them. This we are unable to do at present. We have done much in the way of fortifying, and feel decidedly stronger than when we arrived here – ere long we can bid them defiance. But little reliance can be given to common rumors and newspaper reports. Sorry Stewart is in such bad humor about my failing to write him – I will pay my respects to him soon and endeavor to change his feelings. He should remember that I can pay no attention to home matters now, and will not promise any until this difficulty is fully settled, as everything dear to me is enlisted in our just and righteous cause. Regret to hear of Mr. Woodruff's bad health, and hope he may still recover.

Tom will answer pretty well for overseer until opportunity is offered for the employment of one. Good negro is better than a bad white man. Give him a Christmas gift, and caution him to behave himself, if he wishes to live with us still and retain our good will and wishes. Thus far, dear, my duties as Brigadier have not been diminished from what they were as Colonel, and entire relief from duty I do not expect during my continuance in service. Often annoyance has prompted the wish to exchange situation for that of a private. The soldier that introduced himself to you in Jackson was Hal McGehee, almost our neighbor, and a remarkably clever young gentleman.¹ His companions in arms are looking for his return here in a short time. He is in the same Company with Sam Virden and others of our near friends. Very glad am I to hear you are making flannels for Cephas; and the new Morning gown to me will be truly acceptable. Until a recent date the weather here has been remarkably fine – sometimes quite cold. Night before last it commenced raining, accompanied with sleet, that in the morning was really beautiful – trees and bushes covered with ice and every branch pendant with little icicles, and larger ones dropping from the eaves of the houses, looking much like winter. Snow following this, and then a terribly strong, cold northern wind, bringing a severe freeze. This day is more moderate, and I fear in the morning we will have rain again – spoiling all Christmas spirit.

Do you get any morning Bitters now, dear, and nice Brandy toddies at noon and eve? Perhaps not – having nobody to make them. Speaking of Brandy reminds me that the gallon you sent me arrived at a most opportune moment – when Dr. Craft had ordered Brandy for me and none good was to be had in our section. How I thanked you for it. My red flannels are nearly worn out, but I am still daily looking for those you sent me. All in

1. Hal L. McGehee was a private and later corporal in Co. K, 18th Miss. Infantry. His companion, Sam Virden, does not appear on the company roster.

wash now and I am wearing two pairs heavy cotton drawers instead; and those fine, large and heavy undershirts you sent are most excellent, and I believe warmer than the red flannel. You may be sure I am very comfortably provided for and not suffering from the cold. That nice neck comfort you sent, and my Boots from Richmond are all I am essentially in need of at present. Whenever you are in want of money you must let me know – can send you at any time you desire it, and name the amount – providing it don't oversize my pile – say 3 or 4 hundred.

Report reached here yesterday that my old 12th Reg't had been ordered to this point in my Brigade – hope it may prove true – would like much to have it under my command again, & it would strengthen our force here greatly—a thing that is needed and highly desirable for the interest of the service. The possession of this county would be of vast benefit to the enemy, and equally important to us to retain it. The enemy has treble our force opposite this place, but he don't seem to be aware of the fact – evidently deceived as to our numbers, and in this blissful ignorance it is our policy to keep him. We are obliged to adopt many deceptive modes for deceiving & misleading, as about and around us there are numbers of disloyal and tory citizens. Last Friday Gen'l Stuart with a body of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery attacked the enemy in force at Drainesville, and was repulsed with a considerable loss – in fact Stuart was badly whipped and compelled to retire from the field leaving the enemy in possession. That night however he withdrew his forces also. No official report of the fight has been published.²

Well dear I am writing rapidly and at random – scarcely knowing what I have said or am going to say, with but little time. Last Sunday I attended the Episcopal Church and heard a most excellent sermon; the discourse being chiefly addressed to the young soldiers of the army, and for their especial benefit. He preaches again tomorrow, but I will be unable to hear him – having accepted an invitation to dine in the country, with a lot of old maids.

After tomorrow Furloughs will be granted to our Troops at the rate of one Field Officer, two Captains and five Lieutenants to each Regt., also ten non-commissioned and privates to each company. Of course applications are very numerous and exceedingly troublesome. In the order nothing was said about Generals being Furloughed. We have ordered our command here into Winter Quarters, and they are now engaged in making themselves as comfortable as possible for the cold weather, as winter has now fairly commenced.

2. Gen. James Ewell Brown ("Jeb") Stuart was involved in a "sharp fight" at Dranesville on December 20.

We have [not] commenced messing yet. Boarding is much cheaper, but messing is decidedly more pleasant, and we expect to begin it ere long, notwithstanding our very large family. Enclosed is a memorandum for Mr. Virden, which please send him promptly. For myself I would like to have 2 or 3 prs. very heavy, large coarse Woolen socks to wear over my shoes, as a protection against cold in riding about. I want also of a nice cloth buff colored military vest. Afraid Mr. Shaw cannot fit me – never has in a vest but once, long time ago. Perhaps you can get me the Material and trimmings and send me – satisfied I could get it neatly made here to suit my notion. Another thing I desire most is that of a new sett of teeth in heavy plate, as my old plate is literally worn out, but may hold together until I see Dr. Lemman. Such a thing you cannot send me.

Dear wife continue to let me hear from you frequently, & make the children write oftener – it will learn them much. Your friends here send their warm regards – remember me most kindly to my friends and kiss Lucy for me often. God bless and protect you all.

Your affectionate husband,

R. Griffith.

Head Quarters Seventh Brigade

1st Corps, Army of Potomac

Leesburg, Va. Dec. 29th, 1861

—My dear Wife:

According to my usual periods for writing, this is the last I can send you this year – being so near its close, and the new one rapidly approaching, I can but wish you a happy, happy New Year. May you have peace, happiness and prosperity, and be protected from all harm, danger, sickness and distress.

Yesterday I wrote to our little boy Whitty, and through him promised I would write you to day. Yours of the 16th inst. I rec'd on the 25th and considered it my Christmas treat and gift. Whitfield's letter was excellent for one so young, and I gave him full credit – encouraging him to write frequently. Tell Jeffy that I can't expect to find him falling behind his little brother in the art of letter writing. He must practice it often and thus acquire a habit and taste for correspondence, and I shall look for one from him semi-monthly, or at least monthly. Glad you sent Cephas the flannel under clothes, and hope wearing them

will prove beneficial to him. Should he not improve, however, as I before remarked, he had better return home on short furlough.

In regard to overseer I would be in no haste about employing another, not deeming it advisable to raise any more cotton than may be necessary to furnish seed for the following year – the balance plant in Corn, small grains, potatoes, vegetables &c. for feeding soldiers. For the present Tom can go on putting the place in good order – such as clearing up the grounds nicely, put the fencing in complete repair, fixing up out buildings, cleaning out the ponds, &c. &c. Mr. Allen will doubtless return by 1st February, and perhaps he would be the best to employ again under present circumstances – unless you have objections, and then don't employ him at any price whatever. Tom may be sufficient to raise and cultivate all the crops we want, although it might be much better to have a reliable white man on the place during these troublous and warlike times. Consult with Pa, and be governed by his advice and your own good discretion. Perhaps I may have an opportunity of visiting home during the winter for a short time: but if not, I shall hope for a visit from you, providing my brigade remains at this place or its neighborhood. At present I am not prepared to say any thing definitely about our operations for the winter. Much will depend on the movements of the enemy – if he remains in the field, we must do likewise, so as to be prepared to meet him at all points and at any time. We do not feel very secure here just now, but with another brigade of infantry, some 6 or 8 more pieces of Artillery – especially of Rifle, Parrot & Howitzer guns of long range, and some more cavalry, I think we could hold it against 20,000 of McClellan's best troops. But Genl. Beauregard cannot spare us any force at this time.

The sooner, dear wife, that Winny receives medical attention the better. In the absence of Dr. Buck you must select another. Perhaps Dr. Russell might relieve her – if no one else in Jackson can. Your proposal to set out more fruit trees the coming spring is a good idea and meets my hearty approval. Would like much to have the orchard renovated – trees well pruned and trimmed up. All dead trees removed and decayed limbs cut out carefully. The places of dead and dying trees supplied. All such work Tom, or some other that understood, should be engaged at very soon. The Pyracantha hedge could be an ornament as well as protection. You are certainly fortunate in having so many calves this early, and hope they will be an improvement upon our old stock. The eleven hogs if well fattened will furnish considerable meat; but where will you get the salt to cure the meat? Its price is salty.

Should you become short of meat, and unable to purchase except at most enormous and fabulous prices, you will have to commence on the old cows. But I trust you are not

suffering for provisions. Since my letter to you, I received that long looked for box of clothing you sent me the 11th of last month. Much did I fear it was lost altogether. To you dear wife I am indebted, beyond ability to pay, for your kindness. The coat and pantaloons fit me very well – the vest does not, but I can have that altered here to suit me. The charges by Shaw and Doherty are exceedingly extravagant, and if you have not paid them, do not, and let them wait for their money until I return to Jackson. The red flannel shirts and drawers came in the nick of time, and the neck comfort is valued beyond price. It is by far the best and prettiest I have seen here, and admired by all around me. Enclosed is a memorandum of what the box contained: and again accept my thanks. For the winter I am now abundantly and comfortably supplied, except as to shoes or boots. I am looking daily for some from Richmond. If you can find any nice buff cloth, please send me enough to trim the cuffs and collar of my new coat to suit my rank; also enough of the narrow gold lace for another stripe on each sleeve of the coat – regulations requiring 4 strips for a Brigadier: Shaw and Doherty can't fit me in a vest.

Well, dearest, the hour is late, candles very scarce, somewhat sleepy and tired, and having to ride out at 6 in the morning, I must come to a close. Had intended speaking of our choice Christmas dinner in the country with seven old maids – our very nice boarding house – my most comfortable quarters, office and bedroom, and many other things that I must postpone for another occasion. If I don't write enough pay me a visit, and then we can talk fully and freely. Give my love to all home folks, including the negroes, and kiss our sweet Lucy and little Georgy for me often. I want to see them. My staff join in respects. God bless you all dear wife, and may we meet ere long in peace is the prayer of your affectionate Husband, R. Griffith.

[Postscript] The enclosed ten dollar bill – Louisiana State Bank, No. 5404, Letter "E," Feby. 8th, 1861, is a New Year present for our little Georgy. Please acknowledge its receipt – it is as good as gold.

Hd. Qrs. 7th Brigade, 1st Corps, Army of Potomac

Leesburg, Va. January 3rd, 1862

My dear wife:

Waiting to reply to an anticipated letter from Jefferson, is my reason for not having written to you a day or two sooner. But disappointment in hearing from Jeffy, may be

ameliorated by another nice letter from Whitty. Two more of yours have reached me since my last to you – one of the 20th, the other 22nd & 26th ultimo; for both and each you have my hearty thanks – the last proved a New Year's gift, and most highly appreciated. It came by Mr. Oscar Stuart, with a silver watch from Patton & Barfield – the same old watch I had returned to them to exchange for another. This may be pleasant to them, but it certainly don't satisfy my wishes, & I will certainly take pleasure in returning it to them for good. This leads me to say further that I do not wish you to pay any of my bills or accounts to anybody at this time, as I expect to meet them all in person upon my return to Jackson.

Well dear enough of this. I now turn to your letters to note contents. Really it does seem strange that it should require 13 days for a letter to go from this point to Jackson. But we must remember there is no accounting for the irregularities of the mules (mails), or the vagaries and eccentricities of the females. When our nationality becomes permanently established, such things may be better regulated, and then I trust there will be no use of letters between you and me. To Mr. & Mrs. Anderson present my very kindest regards, and say that I hope they may have many a pleasant ride behind old Buck, and trust it will be my pleasure to accompany them some day. Although named after a bad man it is no fault of his, for he is a good horse – has served his master well & would his country also.

About the Tableaux, Ethiopian Minstrels, Christmas trees &c., I have seen full accounts in the Mississippian. They are all very humane and praise worthy objects. For the "poor soldier" too much cannot be done to relieve him from suffering and want. But this will apply to very few if any in this Brigade. The actual necessities of life they have in abundance – plenty to eat & plenty of clothing, and for the want of Hospital stores no complaint has been made. The sick receive every necessary attention, and are made comfortable. Many have died and more doubtless will. This is unavoidable and a natural consequence from a soldiers' ordinary life. In all armies more deaths ensue from sickness than from battles. Such ever has been and ever will be the result of a campaign.

I will be glad to receive Whitty's account of Christmas and his description of the Christmas Tree. Such writing will improve him, exercising his ingenuity and practicing his powers of description. Your proposed Christmas gift – the morning robe – will be cherished and prized, although not wanting the garment. Perhaps you would consent to its presentation to another higher in rank.

The press ere this has furnished you full details of the difficulty between England & the United States. Mr. Seward has promptly consented to the surrender of Mason and

Slidell upon the demand of Great Britain, but that power says that is not all she demands – the Stone blockade is another subject of controversy.¹ Hence the Yankee cup of humiliation and degradation is not yet filled, nor England & France yet fully satisfied. How this matter may terminate remains to be seen. I have been reading the New York Times of yesterday, received here this evening under our Flag of truce, and all is not yet satisfactorily adjusted. Evidently with a view to crush this rebellion the Lincolnites are prepared to submit to any demand Foreign powers make. What a shame, for a nation that was once proud and defiant! Their humiliation and degradation is not yet complete—they may I hope ere long reach the abyss of infamy & shame – characterized by bravado & braggadocio – destitute of true courage. It is almost sickening to think and write of such a dastard nation.

The proceedings of the Legislature, and other public news I get pretty regularly now from the Mississippian, and I presume I am indebted to you for that. The Bank Bill I read carefully, and trust the measure will prove a success – but I doubt it much. Favorable results have never attended Banking in Mississippi. Glad to learn that Needham Hatch's Company will soon be in an organized Regiment. What position does he occupy in the Com.? However crest fallen Col. Duncan may be, he has no one to blame but himself. Not professing to possess military education or training he could scarcely expect a Colonelcy at the start. Had he enlisted for the chance at the commencement of hostilities, ere this he might have ranked favorably at least. Of course experienced or educated military officers will be selected in preference for Field appointments.

It is to be hoped it will be our pleasure to congratulate the family of the chivalrous and lamented Burt upon the election of Major Hunt to the office of Aud'r of Pub. Accts. No man can fill it more worthily – none so beneficially for the dead soldier's wife & children. He is a true man, faithful and competent – in every way qualified for the position. Eminently moral and just – energetic & industrious, experienced in business and known

1. In November 1861 the Confederate Government dispatched James M. Mason and John Slidell to seek diplomatic recognition and aid from England and France. Shortly after leaving Cuba aboard the British mail steamer Trent, a U.S. warship stopped the vessel and demanded the surrender of the two Southern commissioners, who were subsequently imprisoned in Boston. Great Britain protested the action and threatened war with the U.S., before Secretary of State William H. Seward worked out a compromise that resulted in Mason and Slidell's release, without any admission of wrongdoing on the part of the American government.

The "Stone blockade" probably refers to the Union strategy of filling old whaling ships with stones and sinking them in shipping channels outside of Charleston, S.C., to seal off the harbor. The practice proved ineffective.

integrity, I only regret that our soldiers in the field are unable to give him a solid vote. When you see him, present my regards & best wishes for his success.

You speak dear of your moderate fall weather, absence of cold, blooming flowers, spring like sunshine & showers, vegetables &c., &c. Sorry we cant say the same of our country here. Everything around us now bears the impress of heavy winter. It is now snowing, and in the morning we may expect to see nature's white carpet clothing all things.

But our soldiers don't seem to regard the cold, or suffer from it. They have nearly all comfortable log huts for shelters, and they are made very warm and agreeable – and all within reach of the enemies' guns made bomb proof. Our earth works – forts and entrenchments are progressing gradually, and soon with some more longer range pieces we can bid him defiance, and even commence annoying him. Guns of heavy caliber and long range we are expecting very soon and when here we can commence our work on them in good earnest. As yet we have never responded to any of their shot or shell, wishing not to make an exhibition of our weakness. What I may happen to write to you concerning our little army here, is not for the public ear. Such things are strictly forbidden & prohibited under severe penalties.

Sorry indeed am I to hear that Lucy had a return of chills & fever. Do break them up, dear wife, and continue a tonic during the winter to prevent another return. Use Hostetter Bitters for one thing, it is a fine Tonic and good for dyspepsia—try it for yourself. Tell our sweet daughter that I intend writing her a letter before long. I want to send her money enough to purchase a New Year present in remembrance of her Father, but fear to do so until I hear from you whether the money has been rec'd I sent for our little Georgy.

Well, dear wife, I have nearly filled this sheet and not written half that I wished. It seems that I have no art for abbreviating. Lately I have written so frequently that my long letters may annoy you; if so, you will make due allowance for the times & circumstances. When can you pay me a visit in the event position of affairs will not allow me to return home? Should the enemy not advance by the middle of this month, an easy and idle time will remain for both armies during the balance of the winter. Such at least is my notion. Majors Watts & Hawken send their kindest regards. Remember me warmly to my friends. Kiss the children and continue to let me hear from you all frequently. May the brightest smiles of Heaven ever beam around & gladden your pathway through life, is the constant prayer of your affectionate and devoted husband

R. Griffith

Hd. Qrs. Leesburg, Va.

January 16th, 1862

My dear son Jeffn:

A few days ago I was made quite happy in receiving a letter from Mam, with one from you and Whitty each—and all dated 1st January – doubtless intended for a New Year's gift. Well it was the very best you could have sent, and I prized it very highly. I am glad, my son, you have commenced writing and hope you will continue it steadily, and write to me frequently. Being so far from home, you should know that I am anxious to hear from my dear children very often, and wish them all to learn to write letters as a part of their education. It is no small part of a child's schooling, and much attention should be paid to it. You will find too that the more you learn the fonder you may become of writing.

I join you in the wish that you had been here the day I took command of the Mississippi Troops at Leesburg. The sight was a beautiful one indeed, and attracted much attention from soldiers and citizens. The Battle Flags were very handsome indeed, and entirely different from the Confederate flag. Since then however we have a much finer parade of the Troops. On the last day of December – always a day for a general review, inspection and muster of Troops – my command was out in full force nearly, with the Cavalry companies, and I reviewed them all at one time, and in one field. How I wished you were all here then. All those looking on pronounced it a far better display than on the flag presentation. The troopers carried each a bright lance, with a small Confederate flag attached, and were much admired by all spectators, it presenting a very novel appearance. If Mam could well spare you, I would ask her to send you on to this place. You could be of much service to me, as well as to learn something of Military life. But I am unwilling to deprive Mam of your aid & society when I am absent from home, unless she is entirely willing to let you come.

You speak of the pretty Christmas tree you all went to see. No doubt it was charming to the little ones that drew the prizes, & I wish I could have enjoyed it with you. But I don't know when I can have the opportunity of going home. May be not until this war is over. You can tell Jim Gardener that I have not seen Dr. Hancock for a long time, and I don't know whether his old master was his brother or not. It seems to me you are slow in getting the cotton all out, but I can't see now what good it will do when it is all picked and gathered. We can keep it until the blockade is opened, which I think will happen before spring.

Well Jeffn. I believe I have noticed nearly everything you wrote about; and wish next time you would fill your letter full – tell me about all – your progress, &c. &c. I wish you to devote most of your time to studying and reading – give much attention to Mathematics and composition, and always take plenty of active exercise, and ever be obedient to what Mam says, & without grumbling, and then you will be cheerful and happy. Love your brothers and little sister, and they will return your affection. You are the eldest, and very naturally they will look to you for aid and protection, & your duty will be to give it whenever required. Much more my son I wished to write you, but have not time at present – will try and do so hereafter. Must write to Mam soon as I have not written to her for nearly a week. You must give Mam & Lucy my love & kiss them for me. Want to tell you all about the Army & our soldiers, Leesburg, the people and the country, but cannot do so now. If any words are used in this that you don't comprehend you must refer to your dictionary to understand; and keep it your companion when you read. Write to me often and I will endeavor to answer promptly. I will write to Whit soon and then to Lucy. Tell the negroes How'd'e.

Your affectionate father R. Griffith

[Postscript] The enclosed dollar bill is for you to make a present to any negro of ours you wish to give it. I have just read the life of Gen'l Havelock in India. Get it and read it. Gen'l Havelock was a great & good man – a character worthy of imitation.

We have plenty of snow and sleigh bells are jingling most merrily in town. Yesterday I had a pleasant sleigh ride with some ladies & officers who called for me.

Good night my dear son – ever be a good boy.

Head Quarters, Leesburg, Va.

Saturday, Jany. 18th 1862

My dear wife:

More than a week has passed, I think, since I last wrote you. Since then I have been the happy recipient of three welcome missives from you. The first of 2nd inst. With two from the little boys, the next of 6th by Hal. Mc Gehee, followed by another of 7th inst. by mail. Of course for these you are thanked much, and I hope you may find time to continue them thus frequently. When I am tired and annoyed by too many, you will find it out, but you

must not expect them from me quite so often. McGehee also brought me a bundle containing 2 prs. Red flannel drawers, 2 woolen neck comforts, and one pair heavy over socks. For these favors you will accept my acknowledgements, although I am somewhat overstocked now with comfortable clothing and other wearing gear. You may rest assured that I have no idea of giving the Yankees any surplus clothing I may have. In the event of a rapid move from this point in retreat – an event I don't anticipate – all that I can carry will be destroyed. But I don't apprehend the necessity for any such destruction of property. It doesn't occur to me that the Yankees will move in this direction during the winter. Indications at present would go to show that they fear an attack from us more than we do from them. They have doubled their pickets on the River and Canal – are throwing up breastworks, digging rifle pits and erecting field fortifications &c. showing evidently I think a preparation to receive an attack; and this we will perhaps do as soon as we receive reinforcements sufficient, and armaments enough to mount on our forts and field works – soon to be completed. This however must be a profound secret.

Give my love to Ma when you see her, and say that I am obliged for the comforts I have, as well as for the over socks I have not. The comforts are quite pretty and good; but I have seen no one equal to the one you knit and sent me. It is admired by all, and envied by many. It is by far the best I have seen in the Army, and there are many of them. The rough ("ruff") socks you sent, are just the kind I wanted. Drawers I have not tried, but presume they will fit. The first you sent are tight from the knee down, and the seams crease the calves of my legs. But that matters not – they are pleasant and warm. Some days ago a lady from the Point of Rocks sent me three nice pairs of soft socks, and 2 pairs of good mittens – all wool. Where are the woolen gloves you said Ma was knitting for me? And where that Buff material for a military vest I wrote you about? Also that elegant morning gown I heard talk of? But really dear I don't need any thing of the kind just now, and they had just as well be kept at home.

Well can I imagine how Whitty would be pleased with a letter from me – he being so small a boy, and that was a reason why I wrote to him before writing to Jeffy, not supposing he would think hard of it, he being larger and older. Don't let him think I had forgotten him, or would be capable of doing him injustice. He is a noble boy, and little dreams how much his Father esteems and loves him. Two days ago I mailed him a full letter, and hope he will be entirely satisfied. Often do I wish he were with me here. He could aid me very often and the schooling in the Army might prove serviceable to him – while I know full well that an army is not the best school for cultivation of morals. Constantly under my

notice, the result would be different. I join you in the wish that I were present to enjoy the hog killing times – spare ribs, tenderloin, back bones and nice sausages. Here we get but little of those things. Yesterday & today we had them for the first time at our boarding house. Glad to learn you have succeeded in raising fine celery, & hope to enjoy that with you hereafter.

I would not be in haste, dear, about employing an overseer for this year. Such as you describe as presenting themselves for employment are not worth having – would not feed & clothe them for their labor. I am inclined to think Pa is right in his opinion about the cotton and the sooner it can be sold the better, provided you can get about 10 cts. Per lb., for as soon as the blockade is raised, the price of cotton must go down immediately. Sell if you possibly can at ten cents. I cannot think now, that the blockade will be maintained 3 months longer, as it has proved entirely insufficient, and England knows it well – she will not suffer it much longer, and her fleets are ready for operation.

The weather here seems at times almost as variable as in our state. For a week past however the ground has been covered with snow, and sleighing has been all the go with the young people of Leesburg, and most richly enjoyed by our soldiers. For several days sleigh bells were constantly jingling in our ears, and their merry sound ever excites pleasing and joyous thoughts – a reminder of youthful times many years ago. Among others I had a delightful sleigh ride with some very pretty young girls, and officers of the Cavalry Corps, with whom it seems I am somewhat of a favorite. Returning they all called at my room, and cheerfully participated in a glass of homemade Scuppernong Wine, but I had no cake for them. The ladies appeared delighted with the idea of walking under a Confederate flag into the quarters of a Brigadier General. Fortunate indeed am I in being treated most kindly by all the ladies I meet, but I am unable always to accept their invitations to parties and sociable teas. Mrs. Barksdale & her children have left our boarding house, and we all regret it very much – she being such a pleasant and agreeable lady. Mrs. Edwards our hostess & Mrs. B's negro girl quarreled – said to be the cause.

Some time ago, dear wife, I advised you that I had subscriptions for the "Richmond Times semi-weekly Inquirer" to be sent you – thinking you would like to read it, an official paper. Do you get it regularly? At the same time – about 1 Dec. last – the subscription money was paid, and 1st No. should have reached you about the 10th Dec. You will please let me know whether you have received the paper.

Well dear I have written a longer letter than I intended, but have not said half that I wished. We are now busily engaged in re-enlisting our volunteers for the War. The work

is progressing but slowly, and I much fear that many will return home at the expiration of their present enlistment, not to return. Through deaths, discharges and furloughs our Army is very gradually melting away. Yet I can but hope better results will follow. Good by dear wife, and give my love as usual. Tell Whitty I will write him again soon. Can Lucy read any writing? May God in his mercy bless and preserve you all.

Your affect. husband R. Griffith

Hd. Qrs. 7th Brigade, 1st Corps, Army Potomac
Leesburg, Va. Jan'y 21st, 1862

My darling wife:

My last letter to you had scarcely been mailed, when much to my delight, yours of 10th inst. was placed in my hands, acknowledging the receipt of the \$10.00 for little Georgy's new year's gift. Happy indeed was I to learn that all at home were well once more, and sincerely do I hope you may thus continue – and that health, happiness and prosperity may constantly attend you until we meet again. But when that may be I am unable to say at present. While the enemy threatens our front, and there remains a reasonable prospect or hope for him to advance, I will not leave my post except to meet him. For the past week the weather has been moderate and wet, & the ground in consequence becoming quite soft. Should similar weather continue much longer, the roads will become impassable for Artillery and heavy wagon trains, and render active field operations for troops utterly impracticable. Then I may seize upon the auspicious moment and run home, if to remain there only a few days. After much beseeching I have yielded to the wishes of my Adj. Gen'l and consented to recommend him for a Furlough of 30 days. During his absence I can't think of leaving, as much confusion would ensue in the official business of my department – having no other competent to supply his place. Gen. Hill with assistance of Col. Barksdale could readily fill my post, but my Aid is not qualified to step into the shoes of my Adjutant. To undertake the qualifying of another is just what I don't feel disposed to do just now. The preparing of one was a huge task, and required several months training, and to attempt to teach another, who is not a very apt scholar, would be a Herculean labor, and too much for one year's campaign. When Capt. Inge¹ returns from his furlough, I may then be able to leave, which will be most likely towards the latter part of February, provid-

1. Capt. William M. Inge (later promoted to major) was Griffith's assistant adjutant general.

ing the opposing armies continue as they now are. Should I not get the privilege of a short leave, you will be informed of it, and then I shall certainly insist upon a visit from you. Ere this I should have persuaded you to visit Leesburg, but I knew full well of the troubles and difficulties attending such a trip at this season of the year – encumbered with children and baggage, over broken & interrupted rail roads. It would be hazardous in the extreme, unless accompanied by some one that could attend to all your wants & wishes to render you comfortable. Such trips had better be postponed to a more favorable season. You may rest assured I will come home on a visit if I can possibly leave my post in security. This however I intend keeping to myself.

As yet, dear wife, those wished for reinforcements have not been furnished. I much fear they will be looked for in vain. Gen'l Beauregard cannot spare them without weakening his lines. He has sent us some ordnance which is of material importance, and we have the promise of some more. But we need an increase of infantry, as well as of Cavalry and Artillery. Our ranks are being gradually thinned, and no recruits coming to supply the vacancies. Spring may find our troops going home—their present term of enlistment having expired – and without re-enlistment or new troops, the field must be abandoned to the enemy, and Virginia will be lost to us, and with the loss of Virginia all is gone and the "rebellion crushed." The prospect to me just now seems gloomy indeed, but I look for a bright and cheerful dawn. The women of our country will be its hope and salvation. They must not permit the men to remain at home while we have an invading and heartless foe on our borders. Let them point the finger of scorn at every able bodied man who refuses or fails to meet his country's call. Duty demands his service and he is a base recreant who declines to respond favorably.

Glad to learn Dr. Buck has returned home, for I shall feel much better satisfied with his medical attendance in our family; at same time intending no disparagement to the other Doctors of Jackson. By the papers I see that our Governor has recalled the 60 day militia, or Supernumeraries. I suppose they will be turned into a Home Guard again – filling a place that could be much better occupied by our heroic and patriotic women – the support of the army – God bless them – following the war worn soldier with their tears, their blessings, and their prayers – encouraging and cheering him in his manly duty. Excuse me, dear wife, for writing so much on these matters. My heart is in it.

I thank you for re-fitting the orchard – it was much needed. It seems to me that Tom is sufficiently intelligent to cut out the dead limbs and twigs, and shorten in the too much extended branches. Perhaps he is the best chance under the circumstances – with

Jim Brown or Jim Gardener to assist. Mr. Allen may have returned by this time, and may be profitably employed again at home. But I would much rather see him in the ranks as a soldier. By the way, in riding along the brigade line I saw Mr. Tripp – he has not called to see me. I also saw Mr. Pat. O'Conner² – my old gardener – in the ranks, and many others I might name whom you have known – old & young. Do you know one Jas. D. Green,³ son of Thomas K. Green? He is in the ranks here and has applied to me for some position that would relieve him. If it is the one I think, I don't like the stock. Such applications are very numerous, pressing, and very annoying often. The old linen baby coat was understood by me at first sight, & my remark was simply intended to plague you. It has been very useful. It is to be regretted that I did not write you sooner in regard to my account with Shaw & Doherty. The amount of the bill seems very large but it may be all correct, except as to the extravagant prices. When I return will look into it more carefully. It may be well enough however that it is settled. Would prefer not to be in debt any where.

The approach of the Yankees to Jackson, [Miss.], from Ship Island, [Miss.], need not be apprehended. The route is not a practicable one. But I am glad to hear you say they would not find you there to receive them. In that event – the valiant Home Guard will be called into requisition, and can render themselves useful, and no doubt would. Yankee threats amount to but little. For the last three months or more, they have been threatening to annihilate our army on the Potomac, but they have scarcely moved from their entrenchments & dare not. They were to move forward on the 15th inst., but postponed it to the 25th, and after that I presume it will be prolonged indefinitely. We wish they would come – are prepared to give them a warm reception. Your arrangements for supply of meat &c. for the year is a most excellent one, and meets my full approbation. Pay Pa the full market price for pork as his proposition is exceedingly generous. The meat you have, and arranged for, with plenty of molasses and cornmeal will amply feed the negroes. And then the potatoes.

How happy it makes me, dear wife, to know that I am loved and thought of by my children as well as by yourself. In this I am favored and blessed as in other relations of life. Tell Whitfield not to be impatient, that his Father will write to him again soon, as well as to Jefferson. To my dear Lucy I must also write something, whether she can read it or nil. Tomorrow or next day I shall look for another from you. I have written much in this sheet, and said but little – what you don't wish to read, consider as blank, and save yourself

2. A Pvt. Patrick O'Conner served in Co. D, 21st Miss. Infantry. Another private with the same name appears on the roster of Co. H.
3. Pvt. James D. Green served in Co. D, 21st Miss. Infantry.

the trouble, as I do frequently with these in which I feel no interest from seeing the name subscribed. I am indebted to a Mr. J.D. Weil for sending me the Mississippian. Should you meet him, return him my thanks. It's late at night and snowing – ground covered again. Remember me kindly to all, and kiss the babies. My military family all well. Have not written half that I wanted to say. May God bless you all and shield you from harm and danger is the fervent prayer of

Your affectionate husband R. Griffith.

[Postscript]

The enclosed dollar is for any negro you may see proper to give it – unless such has already received one. I will send Whitty one to give away, and also Lucy. Kiss Lucy often for me.

Hd. Qrs., 7th Brigade, 1st Corps, A. of P.

Leesburg, Va. Jan'y 26th, 1862

Sunday night 10 o'clock

My dear wife:

Hurriedly this will be written as tomorrow I intend paying a visit to Gen'l [Thomas J. ("Stonewall")] Jackson at Winchester, and wish to start by 4 o'clock in the morning, with a view of returning tomorrow night – distance from here 40 miles. On the 21st inst. I wrote to you, but have received nothing from you since the 19th inst., and that was dated the 10th. This is unusual for you and it is to be feared there may be something wrong. It is to be hoped however that the delay is caused simply by the irregularity of the mails. For two days past we have received no mail here, and hence no letters or papers. The reason is not known here. This is the first instance, I believe, during my absence from home, of my writing to you without having one of yours before me to respond to. Hope it won't occur again.

Well dear since my last nothing has taken place at this point worthy of naming, and we have no news to communicate – except that we remain in "status quo". Troops are generally healthy, and I am growing fat – astonished at my own weight, drawing 188 pounds. A further increase would be detrimental on account of my evening apparel, and a burden to my little horses. Never have I enjoyed better health than at this time, and sincerely hope you may be able to say the same of home folks. This morning attended

the Episcopal Church and heard an excellent sermon from Mr. [W. W.] Williams the pastor – text Joshua C. 24. V. 15 in part. We admire him much because he talks well – is a very clever gentleman – a most true and loyal citizen as well as patriotic, and always addresses his discourses chiefly to our young soldiers, in whose welfare he seems particularly interested. There is no Baptist Church here – the Presbyterian is a remarkably dry one in the preaching line, and the Methodist South we use for a Hospital, which they kindly tendered.

The reverses to our Army, at Mill River in Tennessee under Gen'ls [George B.] Crittenden & [Felix] Zollicoffer you have heard. It was a sad blow, and I am unable to account for it. Disasters may teach us lessons that may prove profitable, and which should have been learned before this without encountering such misfortunes. The death of Zollicoffer is much to be lamented – a brave and gallant man, but I fear imprudent and rash. Crittenden was a notorious drunkard – had been twice suspended from the old Army for drunkenness, and the probability is he was not in a condition to lead and direct a force properly. Many such repulses we cannot afford; besides the moral effect on our troops might be disastrous in the extreme.

Two days ago I wrote to Whitfield, but perhaps his letter has not yet left the post office here. In it I promised to write soon a little letter for Lucy. Tell her I may do so in a few days—in the mean time I shall expect to get about two from you, both by same mail – they are due. Cold weather, snows, rains, sleets, hail and sunshine alternate here each week. This has been a bright day but extremely cold, and I dread my ride tomorrow in facing a keen and piercing west wind. But with our good horses we can soon make the trip; and bundled up well with warm clothing, we cannot suffer much. Majors Watts and Hawken, with my aid and two couriers, will accompany me. My military family are all well. Major Hawken looks for his wife here about the 4th proximo.

For the past two days we have been on the alert for the Yankees, but they have not made their appearance according to their own promise. They evidently contemplate something, and I fear to leave here at present; and I will not think of asking a furlough while they threaten to advance. Hence I can't say when you may look for me to come home, I trust however by the 1st of March. You must excuse very great haste, dear wife, and I may do better next time. Kiss the children for their Father, and remember me kindly to all the home folks. Your affectionate husband R. Griffith

Head Qtrs. Leesburg Va.

Febr'y 3rd, 1862

My dear wife:

On the eve of my trip to Winchester, one week ago, I wrote you a hurried letter. Starting early the following morning we reached Winchester by 2 P.M. Paid my respects to Gen'l Jackson and spent some time with him very agreeably. He is a complete gentleman, noble soldier, and an accomplished officer. Leaving there at 5 P.M. we returned, arriving at my Hd. Qrs. after midnight the same day; thus riding nearly 80 miles in about 20 hours – a feat not accomplished here before except once by a courier, who was 24 hours in riding the same. We crossed the Blue Ridge covered with snow and ice, also the Shenandoah and a part of the beautiful valley of Virginia. All were tired and sore upon reaching home, and some came near giving out, and wanted to stay over night by the way. My horse was not fatigued, and the next day I felt as fresh as before starting. Not so however with all the others, who complained for several days; and I fear they will not be very anxious to accompany me on another such trip again soon.

Your affectionate letter of the 19th ulto. greeted me upon my return; since which I have had one from Cephas, and your kind favor of the 24th ulto.; for all which I return my sincere thanks. To Cephas I responded day before yesterday, and was glad of the opportunity for doing so. How much I would like to see him, but greatly fear I will not have the chance to go home before the term of his Furlough expires. However I will make an effort to do so, and trust the fates may favor my application with success.

You say that Bro. The. and Sister Annie have returned. Give them my love, and tell sister I hope she will remain until I return home, as I wish to see her very much, and will take pleasure in paying her attention about Jackson. Sorry to hear that she seems sad or dejected. What can be the cause? When in Richmond I met with Major Blewitt of Columbus and from him heard a bit of gossip in reference to her family that may be unpleasant to sister Annie, if true, and may be the cause of disagreeable thoughts and feelings, even to sadness. Perhaps you have heard it from other sources. 'Twas this, that her Father had married a woman – perhaps a Yankee school mistress – against the wishes of his family. After living together but a short time, they separated, she charging him with impotency and instituted a suit in court for alimony. Of the truth of this I know nothing positively – Major Blewitt is my author.

Dr. Croft has returned, but the little box to which you referred has not come to hand – perhaps not sent by him, as through him I received a bottle of nice “cocktails” sent me from Jackson by Mr. Henry Miller, the Bowman House Bar Keeper.

It is surprising to me that Pa should be so frequently and so continuously sick. Surely there is danger of his disease becoming chronic and incurable. He should use every exertion for the restoration of his health, and spare no pains or money. It occurs to me that traveling might prove beneficial. Health, to him as well as to his family, is a matter of the first importance. Maybe he permits business affairs to annoy his mind, together with these troublous times. These things should not affect him. Let him throw all such cares aside and leave home and travel about the country. His sons should at once take all care from him – attend to his business and interests, and relieve him from all care, trouble and anxiety of mind at once.

Tell my darling little Lucy not to be too anxious about my coming home – that Father will be home some time – ere long perhaps. When I apply for a permit you will be advised, but I desire that it should not be known to others. This privilege I could get at any time by applying to Col. Davis,¹ but am unwilling to trouble him; and I can't think of leaving while there is any prospect of the enemy attacking our lines. The roads are now becoming utterly impassable for heavy trains of wagons or artillery, and they will not advance at this time without either. Beauregard has left us, and I regret it much. The change may result to our advantage. Gen'l [Joseph E.] Johnston is equally able and competent, if not his superior.

This morning by day light snow commenced falling and has continued till now 11 P.M. This evening it was six inches deep, and that on a soft and muddy bed; and the sleighing is not good in consequence. I fear the snow will be a very deep one, and our hauling in wagons exceedingly difficult & troublesome. Major Hawken looks for his wife here tomorrow, but you must not think of coming at the present time. Quite a number of the officers have their wives here now, but it is no good place for them. Major [Isham] Harrison has just returned, but without Cousin Julia; & Col. [Winfield Scott] Featherston [17th Miss. Inf.] & Col. [Thomas M.] Griffin [18th Miss. Inf.] have both returned without their wives.

Well, my dear wife, it is quite late and I must cease without having written half that I wished; and you must pardon great haste as I have much writing constantly to do. Remember me most kindly to all, and more especially to our dear Ma – so dear to you and me. Kiss my sweet Lucy & little Georgy for me, and tell the boys they must write me oftener. Ere this I had confidently expected another letter from Jefferson. The enclosed

1. Probably a reference to President Jefferson Davis, who held this rank in the Mexican War.

Confederate dollar is for some one of our Confederate negroes. May God ever protect and bless you all is the daily prayer of

Your affectionate husband R. Griffith.

Hd. Qrs., 7th Brig., 5th Div., 1st Corps, A. of P.

Leesburg Va. Feb'y. 12th, 1862

My dear Wife:

Week ago today your letter of 27th ult. came to hand; since then I have not penned you a line, and must admit my negligence, and liability to censure from you as well as from myself. However during this interval we were four days without a mail, and could neither send or receive communications or news, except by courier. Some days ago I wrote to my dear little Lucy a very simple letter, but presume it failed to start promptly on account of interruptions in the mails. Two days ago the old mails all came to hand, bringing a budget of news for every body here, and to me two more of your very acceptable letters – along with one enclosed from Cephas at Pensacola – one each from Jeffy & Lucy, for all which you have my renewed, heartfelt thanks. One of yours was dated 13 January, with endorsement on back of the envelope as follows; “This letter was dropped without postage. I did not notice it myself, until looking over the letters retained for postage, and discovered one addressed to Gen. Griffith. I regret its delay – would have sent it on if noticed. Yours truly C.R.D. – Pm.” Hence you see the cause of delay in this one, and accounts for my complaint of not receiving one that I thought to be due. You will also perceive your indebtedness of ten cents to Major Dickson, for postage due on said letter. He is not to blame in this matter; on the contrary I owe him thanks for forwarding it at his own expense. Your last one I received is of 30th ultimo, and in the morning I shall expect one of an early date in February.

Thursday night 13th inst. At this point I was interrupted most unceremoniously by report from the picket office that a signal light had been seen on our side which was answered by a rocket from the other side of the Potomac. All around me were considerably excited, when I could see no cause for alarm or uneasiness. However to quiet all fears I sent couriers to each of the Regiments with orders to be on the alert and ready to move at a moment's notice. This occupied some time; and I had not got the last courier off, when a Cavalry Company with a band of music on horseback, paraded in front of my quarters

prepared for a complimentary serenade. After discoursing sweet music until I suppose they were tired, loudly they called for me, and of course my appearance was made at the door. After returning them simply thanks for the honor and compliment, they cheered most heartily, wheeled and disappeared, much to my comfort and satisfaction. Their appearance under the clear bright moonbeams was really beautiful – all in full uniform, with their glittering lances in rest, and gleaming sabers – and little confederate flags fluttering in the night breeze. Well dear after all this at 1 o'clock I retired to my pleasant cot & slept soundly till early morn. This day passed quietly with us. In the forenoon I rode to the river and visited out picket posts & stations. Found all vigilant and quiet on our side, but the Yankees were exultant and jubilant – firing guns and rejoicing – I suppose over their recent triumphs and our disasters and reverses. This was to have been expected, and therefore not surprising. Late intelligence is not calculated to flatter our vanity – our losses have been serious. Though not discouraging by any means, neither are they gratifying. Still I can but hope that beneficial results will follow. If these successes of the enemy do not arouse and stimulate our people to renewed exertions and determination to beat back this insolent foe, then indeed all is lost. I am proud to say it is having a happy effect on the troops here. Yesterday one company of the 17th Regiment was mustered in, another today, and tomorrow there will be another – all for the war, furlough or no furlough. God grant this spirit may spread as a contagion through all our troops!

My dear wife, there is so much I wish to write you about that I scarcely know where to commence or leave off, and in consequence will close this letter in short meters. Was invited out to a family tea party this evening and compelled to attend – much to my annoyance. During my absence Gov. Brown of Miss.¹ called at my quarters before my return, and I was sorely disappointed in not meeting him. I may have that pleasure in the morning by calling on him, which will interfere with my arrangements, as my usual habit now is to ride in the morning from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and attend to office duties from 2 to 6 P.M. Often however my habits are necessarily interrupted. In yours of 13th ult. you speak of my watch, gown, overseer's hire &c. &c. The watch affair is all right – the gown has not come to hand. In regard to employment exercise your best discretion, & all will be right so far as I am concerned – giving wages as may be customary now.

Briefly dear wife I notice your letter of 27th. The lady near the Point of Rocks has proven troublesome to regain her son who is now a prisoner with the enemy, and I was compelled to censure her for holding communication with the enemy without authority

1. Albert G. Brown was governor of Mississippi, 1844-8.

– hence I suppose her feelings are not as kind as they have been with me.² I am unwilling to take Jefferson from you without your free consent. I know he must be “some company” to you, and of course “some protection”. An unexpected pleasant surprise is always the most agreeable, & of course your Uncle Ben's must have been exceedingly so. My respects to him. In regard to our cotton I have only to say dispose of when and for what you may think advisable. My impression is the sooner the better, as it might have to be destroyed to prevent falling into the hands of the Lincolnistes. Burn and destroy every thing we have rather than one iota should be of service to our foes or be seized by them. Never, never shall aught of mine prove a benefit to them with my consent & affirmation – would sooner sacrifice all I ever have had, or ever expect to have. Such is my fixed and firm determination forever.

And now dear wife to your most agreeable and inspiring letter of the 30th ultimo. Would that such patriotic sentiments could animate our entire population – cause a rising and upheaving of our people such as to strike terror and dismay among our foes, bitter, implacable and relentless as they appear. My uneasiness for want of additional forces is being dissipated. I cannot think our people will now remain supinely and inert at home, when matters of such vast importance demand their services elsewhere. Proud do I feel, dear wife, of you for the expressions you have given to your opinions in reference to all to come to the rescue, & you must excuse for having read your remark to many of my friends among the troops. I could fill a sheet in response to such sentiments, but want of time and space forbid it now. So well do they accord with my own, they are cheering & refreshing. It remains for the women to drive the unwilling men to war.

Lucy's letter (through her mam) was very pleasant, and you must tell her to receive my letter as an answer to hers. Writing to such little folks is a serious task, although quite pleasing. To Jefferson I will respond at the earliest favorable moment. His last is an excellent letter and very gratifying to me. Was it all his own composition and spelling? If so, his improvement is quite manifest, and deserving of much praise. Gen. Hill is my senior in rank and commands the Confederate forces at Leesburg. My command is entirely of all

2. The reference is to Mrs. Sarah Dawson, a widow who owned a farm (Springdale) opposite Point of Rocks. In August 1861 her son Arthur and other members of the Loudoun Cavalry were captured at Potomac Furnace. At this point in the war mechanisms for prisoner exchange had not been formalized, forcing Mrs. Dawson to negotiate with both Confederate and Federal authorities for her son's release. Griffith is referring to a written agreement that she obtained from Col. John W. Geary, the Union commander at Point of Rocks, to exchange Arthur Dawson for one of his men (Gen. John Geary Scrapbook, National Archives). See also Griffith's letter of January 18th for another probable reference to Mrs. Dawson.

Mississippians only in this county. Our operations are entirely harmonious and concordant, whilst I am subject to his orders. To me my position is a very agreeable one.

The hour is late, my loving wife, and I must cease writing. Tomorrow I will expect another letter from you - sorry I can't return the favor as frequently. You will excuse great haste. Remember me most kindly to all, and daily kiss the babies for me. Take great care of yourself dear wife & may God bless you all. Your affectionate husband,

R. Griffith.

Head Qrs., Leesburg, Va.

February 21st, 1862

My Dear Wife:

Scarcely do I know what to write or where to commence - events follow each other so rapidly, and with such fearful results, in these stirring and troublesome times. The day following my last to you - one week ago - I received yours of the 2nd inst., with little Whitfield's letter of the 31st ultimo. Since then we were four days without arrival or departure of mail, or perhaps I might have written to you sooner. Then came your two good letters of the 6th and 8th with one from Cephas of 6th also. For all these many favors I plead my indebtedness to you. Whitty can only expect a reply when I have leisure; to Cephas my attention will be given as early as practicable. It is gratifying to know that Mr. Allen has returned and resumed his former occupation on the place, but I think his stay will be of short duration, as it ought to be; as now every able bodied young man is needed in the service of our country - crops or no crops - business or no business. Sending the children to school as you have done, meets my hearty approval, as it relieves you from a very onerous task. The terms named may prove very necessary; for in the present juncture of affairs we know not how long we can remain in any one place.

You can say to Tom that your report of his management is altogether satisfactory to me, for which I will endeavor to reward him. It may be that he will have to take the entire control of things, for which he is best qualified of any of our negroes, and a little encouragement may prove beneficial and stimulate him to renewed exertions, providing it does not elevate him too much in his own estimation, and exalt him above his condition. If any planting is done in the Orchard it seems to me best that it should be put in sweet potatoes. In the event, dear, that you should be compelled, or wish, to leave your home ignore all

trouble about this year's crops, for it might be useless to raise, and then the old worn out soil could have some rest. Perhaps it might be politic to destroy the entire cotton crop of the South. I mean last year's - and then probably England & France would be brought sensibly to view the condition of affairs. For now I would truly rejoice to see every lint of cotton on hand consumed by the torch. Such a bonfire would astonish the world and relieve our country. To this necessity we may be driven - the sooner I think the better. Then will Yankeedom and Foreign Nations learn that we have determined to be freed from the shackles of Northern despotism, and a people resolved can sacrifice property in the cause of justice and liberty.

Here I was interrupted again by company remaining late after midnight. Thus daily about one half my time is absorbed in listening to and answering a thousand and one questions - off times very trying to the patience, but has to be endured & is expected.

My remarks, dear wife, in regard to there being sometimes an interval of a week in the reception of your letters here were not intended as a complaint against you, or to intimate that you failed to write for that length of time; for I know you have regularly written two or three to my one, for which you have my thousand thanks. The failure of their regular arrival is owing to the interruption so frequent in the mails between Richmond and this point - the cars often failing to connect at the Manassas Junction. To me it is very gratifying to hear you speak so favorably of Cephas, and I must hope that he will ever prove himself a manly man. In due time we may expect to receive a new commission, and perhaps his rank may be advanced a grade. A letter from his Captain & Colonel, as to his competency, efficiency, drill, &c., might prove of service to him.

It seems, my dear wife, that you may be correct in your supposition that when the 1st of March arrives I may not be able to go home. Certainly at present I can fix no definite period when it will be judicious for me to ask for furlough. Under existing circumstances I dread to leave my command for a single day. How much I wish you and the children were now here. While in some respects it might increase my anxiety, your company would add greatly to my comfort, satisfaction and happiness. But then the trip would be so tiresome, so laborious, so fatiguing and annoying to you that I fear to invite and encourage you to come. Unless you could be under the charge of some careful and vigilant & attentive known friend I would hesitate to recommend you undertake the journey. Many of the officers have their wives and families here at Leesburg, and apparently spend their time very pleasantly. Come if you can.

You speak of the unpleasant weather and bad roads in Mississippi. I don't suppose, dear, it is all comparable with what we have here in Virginia. Since the 1st of January I don't think we have had half a dozen bright sun shiny or pleasant days. In many places, off the pike, the roads are utterly impassable for anything like heavy loads, or trains of wagons and Artillery. For instance the other day in taking a heavy piece of ordnance to Fort Evans, across some soft ground, it required sixteen horses – that piece was a heavy and long 24 pd. rifle gun. Experimenting with it yesterday it threw 2 1/2 miles with precision and care. The Yankees I don't suppose are aware of the number or caliber of the Artillery we now have in position; but they will learn that fact when they approach to attack us.

Enclosed, dear wife, you will find a dft. on Citizen's Bank, N.O. No. 982, dated Feb. 3rd, 1862 for Four hundred Dollars, which I have endorsed payable to your order. For this I gave \$402.00 and perhaps you may be able to dispose of it for same amount. You will make such disposition of the dft. as you may prefer. If you have no use for the money you can either deposit with our Bank or loan it to Pa, as he may need it more than we. If you have any coin preserve it as a great treasure. Should we be compelled to leave our country, it would be indispensable. But away with such thoughts – the idea of final subjugation does not and shall not be entertained. Your unconquerable spirit excites my admiration. Would that it was universal in the South among the women, for it would soon spread to every man. "Conquered never" ought to be the common sentiment, and handed down from sire to son as a rich heritage. As you say, they may drive us from "one end of the Confederacy to the other, but to be conquered never."

Dear wife, I would write you much on this subject, but time is not allowed me, and for your benefit it is unnecessary. When we meet we can converse freely and fully. It is not always best to write too much, as sometimes letters are intercepted or lost, and I know you fully appreciate my sentiments and thoughts. Here we are getting along now very happily. The troops are re-enlisting to meet expectations – officers and men have been furloughed for the purpose of recruiting at home, and ere long we expect to see our forces here stronger than they have ever been. Even now in ready hearing of the enemy's cannon and small arms, we are defiantly and with impatience awaiting their threatened attack.

As in the commencement of this, dear wife, I told you I scarcely knew what to write, in the same manner I must close and bid you a fine good night, with the prospect of receiving another kind letter from you in the morning. As usual I must ask you to kiss our darlings for me, and remember me kindly to all my friends, particularly to Stewart, Brown and Kid.

Hoping that we soon meet together in love and affection, and that Heaven may smile upon and bless us all is the earnest prayer of your affectionate husband.

R. Griffith.

Hd. Qtrs. 7th Brigade, 2nd Division—In the field
Near Culpepper Va. Mch. 14th 1862

My dear Wife:

Once more the opportunity is given me of hastily scribbling you a few lines, & sending them safely. Mr. Dickson & Mr. Weill are here expecting to leave in the morning, and Mrs. Hawken will return with them. Yesterday afternoon we reached this place after a wearisome and fatiguing march of seven days – selecting the best road and longest route. We evacuated Leesburg on Friday morning the 7th inst, full in view of the enemy, carrying with us all our Army stores, Cannon, Ammunition, Wagons and Baggage, and leaving nothing but our empty forts for the enemy, which they feared to occupy for a day after our departure. We made a most successful retrograde movement in the face of three times our force, and they dared not attack us, while hovering on our rear and flanks – we losing no property. This is more than can be said of the rest of the Potomac Army. No credit is claimed by me as Genl. Hill was in command, but I may say the Mississippians performed their duty fully and faithfully. Our march though was a tiresome one with heavy trains, mostly over Turnpike roads, blistering the feet of the men, and breaking down many being badly shod. Our troops merit praise for the martial manner of conduct on the march, and elicited the admiration of all on the route. Wish I had time to furnish you a faithful description of our daily progress through alternate rich and poor sections.

Before leaving Leesburg, dear wife, I received your kind letter of 17th Febr., since which I have heard nothing from you until I met Mr. Dickson; and I could not expect

1. On February 26 Federal forces under Col. John W. Geary began crossing into Loudoun County at Harpers Ferry. In addition to his 28th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, Geary's command included Kanp's Light Artillery and a battalion of 1st Michigan Cavalry. Three days later Colonel Geary established his headquarters at Lovettsville, located in the pre-dominantly Unionist northern section of the county. Over the next several days skirmishes took place between the Federals and the Confederate force in Leesburg, as the latter completed plans to evacuate. The Northern troops entered the county seat unopposed at dawn on March 8. The fortifications that Hill and Griffith had labored three months to complete were never used.

anything from you, as our mails were necessarily suspended for the time being, and I am unable to say when they will be resumed — certainly not before the army has taken up a new line of defense, and established a new base of operations. Where these will be I am not authorized to say at present. We will probably move from here tomorrow or next day, and you may expect to hear from me again shortly. During the march my engagements allowed me no chances of writing, and now I have but little, as Genl. Hill is too unwell to remain in the field, and I am charged with the sole command.

My dear wife you will pardon my brevity just now, and expect more from me ere long. I shall confidently look for letters from you by the next mail we receive. Oh how much I wish to see you! but this pleasure is denied me. When that fondly anticipated joy is to be realized remains for the future to disclose. Remember me, dear, to our lovely children, and may a kind heaven protect and defend us all, and soon bring us together again in peace & happiness is the heartfelt prayer of your husband R.G.

Near Rapidan Station, Va.

Hd. Qrs. 7th Brigade—Division, A. of P.

In the Field, Mch. 21st, 1862

My dear wife:

Once more the privilege is allowed me of scribbling a few lines hastily on the march, surrounded by numerous troops and in the midst of official engagements, and the Richmond Howitzers, a part of my command, serenading me with beautiful and enlivening songs — this in the rain. Well such is camp life — hardships blended with pleasures. To day, dear wife, I was made happy again with some of your dear letters — the first since I left Leesburg, more than two weeks ago. This was no fault of yours for I am sure you have regularly written. But the derangement of the mails was a necessary consequence of our retrograde movement. This day week ago I wrote you from Culpepper C.H. where my command remained several days. We reached this camping ground yesterday, after a most tedious, tiresome and annoying march through rain and mud — pitching our tents in very wet ground. For more than a week past I have been compelled to take command of a division. This was more than I had bargained for when I entered the service, not deeming myself at that time qualified for more than the command of my regiment. This division command however can be but temporary, as Gen. Hill is nearly well again, and I trust will

be able to take the field once more in a few days and relieve me — a Brigade being as much as I am willing to undertake. Glad to hear you received the draft for \$400.00 as I much feared it would miscarry and fail to reach you. Some time before I sent you that I had written to my good friend Stewart a long letter and enclosed a draft for \$103.00 for my credit. That he should have received before you got mine of the 21st February. The draft was one of our own house on the Merchants Bank New Orleans. If he has not received it I will write him again & explain, so that the check may not be improperly paid by the bank.

I am now pleased, dear wife, that [you] did not accept my invitation to visit Leesburg. However in a subsequent letter, anticipating our retiring from the Potomac, I had directed [you] not to come beyond Charlottesville: but now it is questionable whether you could come through at all. Happy as I would be to meet you I cannot advise you to come on at present, and much fear that all intercourse may be interrupted ere long. However I still hope for the best, and am not at all discouraged by our late disastrous reverses. Much and hard fighting has to be done, and a great deal of the best blood of our country shed ere our independence is achieved. As to the final result of this contest no doubt should be harbored in any southern mind although our children may have to aid in its accomplishment.

Your patriotic spirit, dear wife, animates and cheers me in this struggle, and you may rest assured that my command will do its whole duty. Tell Ma she must throw aside her desponding sadness and urge her sons on to the field of battle. This is no time for any hearty man to be lagging behind. Our all is enlisted and our motto should be nothing but Victory or death. You may live to mourn my loss — never my disgrace — an unstained heritage I hope to leave my family. But enough of this for the present. From Cephas I have had two letters recently while on the march. From his reports to me he is evidently very unpleasantly situated, but he writes with a manly spirit in the service of his country, and I will soon have him relieved from his disagreeable position.

How long we may remain here I cannot now say, and don't think it is fully determined yet as to whether the Rapidan and Rappahannock will be line of defense. For the past two weeks I have been living in a tent, but tomorrow will quarter in a house that I have today had engaged. You may address me till further advised "Orange C.H. Va."

This I send by my A.A. Genl., Major Inge, to whom I have granted absence for 30 days. My turn may come after while. Excuse brevity & great haste. Write me often as you can. You may expect to hear from me occasionally. Give my love to all, & may God in his mercy protect and bring us together.

Your affec. husband R. Griffith

Head Quarters 7th Brigade

Near Rapid Ann Va.

April 2nd 1862

My dear Wife:

About ten days ago I wrote you a letter by my Adj. Genl, Major Inge, to be mailed to you from Corinth, Miss. Since then no favorable chance has been offered of sending you another until the present by Mr. R.E. Dickey, returning home discharged on certificate of disability. Our mails for the past few weeks have been extremely irregular and wholly uncertain, and cannot be relied upon. During this interval three of your precious favors have blessed me, namely of the 3rd, 11th and 17th March, received on the 22nd, 23rd, & 29th March respectively, the first named covering an excellent one from my dear son Jeffy. You can scarcely imagine, dear wife, how refreshing these things are to one cooped up from morning till night, annoyed with the details of a large command. But I will not disturb you with any troubles of mine, for doubtless you [have] plenty of your own at home – with the cares surrounding you. Glad to learn that Mr. Allen has enlisted for the war, and that you have employed an old man in his stead – one I hope that is too old for military service and necessarily exempt, for I would not willingly have one capable of bearing arms. Our country now wants the aid of every man or boy capable of handling guns, and he who refuses or declines to step forward to enlist should be regarded as an enemy to the south, and a friend to the North.

Well, as often the case, just here I am interrupted by some good company, and of course I must suspend writing.

Wednesday morning, 3 April. Dear wife, rising very early this morning to finish this before the departure of Mr. Dickey. I was suddenly informed by Courier with orders that I must leave with my Brigade, as early as possible, for Richmond. Whence after that I am not advised – perhaps to go to the Peninsula, perhaps to Mississippi. In either event you will soon learn it. Whilst thus on the wing, you cannot expect to hear from me except by chance; and I may seldom hear from you for the same cause. I can not tell you now where to direct your letters for me, but for the present to Richmond, care of the President.

You will pardon very great haste, my dear wife, as I have ordered every thing in readiness to move by 8 A.M. – having also just ridden 6 miles in the saddle, and the hour

1. Pvt. Robert E. Dickey, Co. K, 18th Miss. Infantry.

for our leaving rapidly approaching. With regret I part with Genl. Hill this morning, he remaining. Of this my troops are glad – I am not, for he is a true soldier, a Christian and a patriot.

Good by my loving wife – let me hear from you often. Give my fondest love to our dear children & kiss them for me. Remember me kindly to my friends. Will try and write you soon again – perhaps from Richmond. God ever bless you all is the continued prayer of your affect. Husband R Griffith.

Clearfield, June 12th/62

My dear Husband

A day or two since the commission sent by you to Cephas came here after being forwarded from Corinth. To secure a safe transportation of it to him I went into Jackson and saw Mr. W L Brown, our old friend, who said he would send it by some trusty person. I heard on yesterday from Cephas, he was well.

It has now been five weeks my dear husband since I have received a line from you, my uneasiness of course is great but I hope still to hear from you some time, if you were an inferior officer or a private I would almost despair but surely any misfortune to a Brigadier general would be reported in the papers, I know not where you are and must continue to trouble the President with forwarding my letters to you, I cannot cease writing it would break my heart, to feel that I could not speak to you is an emotion that I pray may never pierce my heart.

Pa staid with me last night. He has been much troubled about the schools at Clinton there is a great desire with some persons to take the houses for hospitals and by that means break up the schools. Gen Beauregard exempted the fine chapel and Gen. Love exempted the female school house, but still there are some enemies of the schools untiring in their efforts to take the buildings. Pa is willing to give them up after all other available buildings are filled, but that does not satisfy them.

A young man has just called to deliver a letter from Cephas, he has again been sick but is better, a day's march gave him fever, was obliged to stop at Oakalona from which place he wrote. Says his knap sack and clothes were all burned on leaving Corinth – lost his shoes regrets that most of anything as no more can be had. I will endeavor to send him some. I have given him money and clothes and shoes when ever I was aware of his needing them.

Am going to Jackson this morning to search for shoes for him and send immediately. The children are all in good health also the negros. Just now the weather is very dry, and soon the crops will be suffering for rain unless we have a season.

I heard yesterday that the government stores were being removed from Jackson, to what point I could not learn, I fear we will soon be in the enemies lines.

Do let me hear from you my dear Husband, if possible, may a kind providence watch over you and bring us together in peace and happiness.

Your loving wife

S.A.E. Griffith.

Please send me your likeness in full uniform, I wrote some time since in regard to it, I wish it very much

Epilogue

On March 7th, 1862, the Confederate Army evacuated the Leesburg area and began its retrograde movement to the Virginia Peninsula where in late May Griffith's Mississippi Brigade became one of six brigades in Major General John B. Magruder's division. The brigade saw its first heavy combat in what history now calls the Seven Days Campaign, fought just to the east of Richmond, Virginia.

Here on June 29, 1862, as General Griffith was deploying his brigade along the railroad in an area known as Wild Cat Bottom, located in front of the railroad section house at Savage Station, he was mortally wounded by a Union shell fragment. Taken from this battlefield to a private home in Richmond, located near the Confederate White House, Griffith was visited by his old commander and friend Confederate President Jefferson Davis before his death late that evening. A state funeral was held in his honor on July 7 in Jackson, Mississippi.

He was survived by his wife, Sarah, and their four children Jefferson Davis Griffith, Benjamin Whitfield Griffith, Lucy Ann Griffith and Richard Griffith, Jr.

In 1865, Sarah married Henry F. Baley. She died on October 8, 1902.

Potomac Shore Survivor *The Story of Peacher's Mill and the Man Who Built It*

by Craig H. Trout

Standing silently alone on its watch, the ruins of an ancient flour-mill steadfastly guard the Loudoun shores of the Potomac. This stoic stone structure, erected in 1824 near the northern footing of Short Hill Mountain, has fascinated hikers and intrigued students of Loudoun County history for decades. While the legends and lore surrounding these silent stone walls have been previously sketched in various newspaper articles and local historical files, the true history of the site has remained elusive. On a corner block of red sandstone, mixed in among the surrounding yellow-brown stones of the walls still standing, are crudely chiseled the initials of a now forgotten boatman, millwright, and entrepreneur; "J.P.", and therein lies the story.¹

Historical Context of Peacher's Mill Site

Peacher's Mill was located at what later became the junction of the "River Road" from Harpers Ferry, completed in 1832, and the earlier

Craig H. Trout is an avid student of early Loudoun County History, and has done extensive original research on early mills and other industries from the time of the formation of Loudoun County until the late 1800's. Craig's 4th great grandfather, Paul TRAUT, was a cordwainer who first settled in the Lovettsville-Taylorstown area in 1769. Craig has two lovely daughters, Heather and Tara.

1. The builder and first operator of the mill was John Peacher, and his Loudoun milling enterprise was known as Peacher's Mill throughout its first fifteen years of operation. After its sale in 1839, the mill was commonly referred to as the River Mill, Wever's Mill, Weverton Merchant Mill and Loudoun Mill, before going out of business at about the close of the Civil War. This was John Peacher's third and final milling operation.

Am going to Jackson this morning to search for shoes for him and send immediately. The children are all in good health also the negros. Just now the weather is very dry, and soon the crops will be suffering for rain unless we have a season.

I heard yesterday that the government stores were being removed from Jackson, to what point I could not learn, I fear we will soon be in the enemies lines.

Do let me hear from you my dear Husband, if possible, may a kind providence watch over you and bring us together in peace and happiness.

Your loving wife

S.A.E. Griffith.

Please send me your likeness in full uniform, I wrote some time since in regard to it, I wish it very much

Epilogue

On March 7th, 1862, the Confederate Army evacuated the Leesburg area and began its retrograde movement to the Virginia Peninsula where in late May Griffith's Mississippi Brigade became one of six brigades in Major General John B. Magruder's division. The brigade saw its first heavy combat in what history now calls the Seven Days Campaign, fought just to the east of Richmond, Virginia.

Here on June 29, 1862, as General Griffith was deploying his brigade along the railroad in an area known as Wild Cat Bottom, located in front of the railroad section house at Savage Station, he was mortally wounded by a Union shell fragment. Taken from this battlefield to a private home in Richmond, located near the Confederate White House, Griffith was visited by his old commander and friend Confederate President Jefferson Davis before his death late that evening. A state funeral was held in his honor on July 7 in Jackson, Mississippi.

He was survived by his wife, Sarah, and their four children Jefferson Davis Griffith, Benjamin Whitfield Griffith, Lucy Ann Griffith and Richard Griffith, Jr.

In 1865, Sarah married Henry F. Baley. She died on October 8, 1902.

Potomac Shore Survivor *The Story of Peacher's Mill and the Man Who Built It*

by Craig H. Trout

Standing silently alone on its watch, the ruins of an ancient flour-mill steadfastly guard the Loudoun shores of the Potomac. This stoic stone structure, erected in 1824 near the northern footing of Short Hill Mountain, has fascinated hikers and intrigued students of Loudoun County history for decades. While the legends and lore surrounding these silent stone walls have been previously sketched in various newspaper articles and local historical files, the true history of the site has remained elusive. On a corner block of red sandstone, mixed in among the surrounding yellow-brown stones of the walls still standing, are crudely chiseled the initials of a now forgotten boatman, millwright, and entrepreneur; "J.P.", and therein lies the story.¹

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