

## William Merit Blackard Letter

August 12, 1864

Dear wife and children: Once more I seat myself to write you a few lines to let you know how we are getting along. I am in good health and have bin sence I wrote to you last, in fact I have not bin sick since I left home. I had a very bad cough and cold a time or two. It has been so long since I wrote to you that I hardly know to commens. The last letter I wrote to you I sent by (unreadable) I recon you got it. Well since I rote to you last, I have seen ups and downs. When we left winter quarters we had about six weeks of the hardest scouting that wee ever done. I recon Ive went day and knight for the most of the time, reading and scheming, bing with the memery. I woldnt a thought though that I could have stood half what I have stood but that is not the hard part, at last I have bin in two fights and that is the hard part at lest men say what they please about fighting but when they say they doo not feel bad on a battle field you may take it for granted that they was not in their propper place for when a man sees deth staring him in the face he must feel bad. When I go on a battle field the first thing I think about is my pore wife and children, if I am smashed to peaces what will com of you and my children. If I had no fammaly I wold not regret deth so much, but when I go to battle I give myself to the Lord and ask him to take care of me and I believe he has done it. I was in one place that it dose look like a man could not live for the cannon balls shells grape shot and Minnie balls was whtling and cutting the lumber and the dirt all around me and men falling but for some cause God spared me and many others. I have never bin so scared but what I had the presents of mind feelings Ive had. It is not like any other feeling ever com over me. I do not bost on my bravery but I think I have don my duty at lest the thoughts of my little boys prompts me to stnd post and I believe I am fitting for liberty, I never want it throwd up to my boys your father was a coward or your father deserted the Southern Army. When Susy and Martha has grown up and goes out I don want it said there coms Merit Blackards girls but he was a coward. I believe I will not keep the company those and other things causes me to stay away from you. Well this is the first time I have had a chance to send a letter since I came back from Texas after the fight at marks Mills, our ridgement with some others had to take charge of the prisoners, which was a long and tyersome jurney. We first marched to Shrevesport and then had to take them to Tyler Texas a distance of three hundred miles. The number was twelve hundred and thirty, which made the duty very heavy for about 400 men to guard. So I have went thru a great many hard ships rode my horse down pretty well, but he has recruited as good as ever. I do not mind all the hard ships or nothing else if I can have peace and get home a living and find you all living. We have bin in fine spirits all the time. We are getting tyrd wating here but there is a move on hand now, I think our ridgement is 15 miles southeast of Pine Bluffs. Wherever wee

have bin three weeks as pickit and recruiting every day, the balance of the cavalry has bin 15 miles below the bluffs on the river but is moving now. I don't know where they will go but I recon you will hear from them soon, perhaps we are camped the Byopareholony, a very sickly portion of the country. Tho wee have not had any very scary sickness in our ridgement yet. We have bin camped near the stream ever since wee came back from Texas, which was the first of June. Shelby is still on White River, the infetry is behind us some where, I recon we will all rally together again soon. I was not a camp liutenant McConnell started back and I should have written. I saw a letter than Jane sent to Toliver which gave me some satisfaction to hear that you are still living and had something in to eat. I can inform you that I have never received a scratch of a penn from you yet I think the time long. I want you to write if you have any chance, I recon you have not had a chance to maby you have written and it has never com to hand. I still hope to see you again but I can not tell when. I think when my 12 months is out if the army does not move there I will slip up there and see you and if you cant live there I will try to get you out. Tell Susan and Thomas that I have got a pretty gold pen a pease for them if they will be smart and the one that is the smartest will have chois. Tell balance of my children that I will get them something if they will be smart and they shall have something if I can possibil git anything. I want Puss and Martha to be sertain not to go to any of the fed balls and I don't want Thomas to go eather. Tell Toly to hug little Moly once more for me and write to me what she said.

Merit Blackard

Transcribed by John Ferrell Blackard 28 Oct 2000

Notes:

A copy of this letter was obtained from the Virginia/North Carolina Geneaological Society. The letter was type written and notated as "Letter sent by Mrs. Coy R. Holeman, Route 3, Box 490, Roxboro, NC 27573.

William Merit Blackard was born April 15, 1822 in Person County, North Carolina. He married Rachel Holmes Bell. They had 7 children: Susan E. born September 30, 1851 – Martha J. born August 4, 1853 – Thomas H. born June 5, 1852 – John Vincent born February 15, 1858 – William D. born March 30, 1856 – Toliver Goldstone born March 31, 1862 – and Mary Bell (Molly) born March 11, 1863. William Merit served in Gordon's Cavalry CSA. He was captured October 24, 1864 in Mound City, Kansas and transferred from Mound City to Gratiot Military Prison in St. Louis, Missouri. He was transferred from St. Louis to Alton, Illinois November 19, 1864 and to Rock Island, Illinois December 7, 1864. William Merit died of pneumonia at Rock Island January 11, 1865. He is buried in the Confederate Cemetery in Rock Island Grave Number 1767.