

## **Primary Source**

## **Letter #2 (White Confederate Soldier):**

Fredericksburg Sunday morning Nov. 30 /62

My dear & devoted Mat [his wife] I was made unexpressibly glad yesterday by grasping once more then hand of Mrs. Crockett & was delighted when she said to me that she had a letter from you for me. She came to our camp just as we were about to leave to go on picket consequently I had chance to ask her but a few questions and contented myself by reading your welcome letter which afforded me great pleasure though somewhat mingled with grief [two words faded] & glad to hear that you & [a line faded -then he reveals what gave him "grief":] but more than all that you were in dread of a [slave] insurrection [inspired by the Emancipation Proclamation] and that out of all of the letters that I have written you of not one of them have reached you. It is indeed mortifying to write and learn afterward your letters never reached their destination. I have started you four letters since the battle of Sharpsburg all of which would of afforded you much great satisfaction had they of reach you. The first one I wrote was in response to your first letter which I received on my march to Maryland. It is useless for me to attempt to describe the satisfaction that letter afforded me Dear Bro. A received one at the same time making the second one for him We both answered them but saw no chance of getting them down until after that memo[r]able battle of Sharpsburg. Oh Mat it almost makes shudder to think of it how will the 17th of Sept. 17 '62 live in the memory of the 32 Va reg & its friends Oh: It was an awful day imagine my feelings if you can when I saw my comrades & friends falling all around me from the death dealing shot & shell of the enemy and knew not how soon it would be my fate. Thanks be to a kind Providence I came out unhurt but narrowly escaped. A ball passed through my blanket between my body and right arm. I shot my gun unitll I could hardlyh get a carage down her. Finally they gave way & ran hotly persued by our Brigade the 32nd leading the charge until pursuite was dangerous. They were said to be three to our one. But I am wandering from what I started to write about. After the battle I wrote you antoher letter & put them both in one envelope & enclosed that in another with a note I directed it to E. Montgomery requesting him to send it down the first chance. I also wrote Cousin Marshall a letter enclosed with the one Bro A. had written & sent that by E. M with the same request but [a long account of how the letters got lost ...]

Dear Mat you ask me to try and get a substitute & if I cant do that try and get a pass to come to Mothers in the Chrismas I am sorry to tell you to do either is utterly imposible Dearest I know you do not want to see me any worse than I do you for your are the joy and pride of my live It is you and little O that makes life Dear to me now. Dear Mat I must tell you I am in a hard place and know not what to do. When I think of my sufferings both in mind and body which are indescribable and how much my services are needed home I am temted to try and get there I see no probability of getting there if I remain in the service. The war is likely to last for years yet and I cannot reasonably expect to survive it. Besides this you are threated with an insurrection [slave uprising inspired by the Emancipation Proclamation] and how better can I die than defending my family & fireside to do this I came in the War and now that you are threated I consider it is my Christian duty to come to your rescue & protection Dear Mat you know that I love my country but I love my family better. My darling wife I have a great deal to write but have not time nor space. T. Charles is waiting for me to write him a few lines I am now on picket duty in this city the enemy is in full sight and speaking distance and we expect them to shell the city every day and a general engagement to take place I read your letter to Old Abe and think it very well done but don't think



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it would do any good provided I had any means of sending it to him. Give my love to all and many the good Lord soon bring us to meet again in the flesh is my humble prayer & heart's desire. Your affectionate husband. J.F. W.

John French White Papers, Confederate Military Manuscripts, Series A, Reel 42, owned by the Virginia Historical Society

John F. White was a Sergeant in the 32 Virginia Infantry

Source: http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/25048

Oredericks burg sand ag morning estor, 50 /65 My dear & devoted Mat. I was made inexpesibly glad yesterday The grasping once more the rand of how the dewas wind most die tige tied to the war with your that which mad a detter from you for me to came to our school fact as are were about to your to go on the Red Consequently I had Chance to with her but a fine questions and Contented myself by reading your of men than abelesing titles, which is a de her o the same with great the with great The total and entry to the second of the sec parties por desistant proposed do wiring part while Jack in for the find of is that more than all that you were in the west on server of un insurrection. And that out and the second the second of have reached your It is the state of the work to write and furn afterwards your tellers much tracked their des traling. I have - I as ed your pour letters with the thatthe It I has be burg. all I who we have to be afforded with you and me great dating when had they ely track son the first one I was in alexant to your just the which I received on my the arch to Mary land. It is xescless for me

to allempt to discribe the Salisfaction that letter afforded me Dear Bro, of neceived one at the Same lime making the second one for this The both ans wered them that saw no Chance of agoling them down untill after that miernoble at attle of sharks bing on Mat it almost make Echader to trink of it. long will The 17 hof dept/63 tive fin the memory of the 52 da tres & its free do This it was an awful day amagine may fur ing But you Can when I saw my Come ade & friends falling all around me from the death dealing 3 Shot & Shell of The enemy and Knew not hoso Soon it would be my fated thanks the to a dind & Providence I Came out unhand that harrowly seafed a wall passed though my wanter ? televen my body and night arm. I shot my s gun untill I could hardly get a cartage down her Cenally they gave way I took van chotly purent by our Brigade the 52 leading The Charge untill persuit no as dangerous. They were said to the I Three to one one . But I am wandering from What started to forite about after the battle I wrote & you another letter & put then both in one conting & denelved that in another with a mote & discoted it its & C. Mount sinery requesting his to whend it down The & first Chame Jales wrote Consinch, a short the enclosed then The one Bor at had writer & dent That the E.M. with the same request tout

Chefore I dent tom Hunt- Calk of going down home & I gave them to thim with a pocker Bible Book begreath to Endora & big him to try and get Seem down the said he would I told him if he saw no Chance of home to send them bell, in R She that dina cont more wood that she sont them down I also Councid hom Hunt 20 dollars which the vaid he give you soon as he saw you. I can't tell what the done with the Bible Mrs D. Says Consin Michas him gotten et. Soon after I sout Them I learned & Could get a letter home through Edward Phillips I det down and wrote you another and in a few days I Decision your letter of the 51 of August I salt down gain and wrote you a long letter of vix pages giving you all the new and answered all you ask me in the letter. I am very doing that none of them never reach you. I have received 5 totters from you encluding the one by Mrs. C. if you have writen any others they Chave not Come to thand, dear allat tell Cousin M. & Vister I greatly symulthize with Their that they seem deares to me than ever tell them to try and bear their applications & live themble Christian and meet their loved ones where Separations well them mon. Lell Consin M. I burged also of the test I could under the Cercomstances and that I Save all the had of importance about this I have his money a \$192,00 a lock of his hair and a button of this Coal Which will bring

Thome to this should it wer trong good fortien To get there, offear Mast you ask me to by and get a substitute de if I can't ale that lay and get a pass to come to Mathews in the Chrismas I am sorry to till you to do either is utterly imposible Dearest-I know you to not want to see me any world Thank I do you for you are the Joy and pride of my how 3 It is you and little O, that makes life dear to me 3 nows Dear Mas-I must-tell you I am in a chard place sand throw not what to do when I think of my hoppings & both in mind and body which are indiscribable and how much so my dervices are needed chome I am tented to try and 3 remain in the Service the was is thing there if I assisted to survive the was is thing to last for a survive to the was in the last for the survive of the it. Thesides this you are threated with an insurriction Land how better lan I die Than defending may gaming defisition to do This I came in The war and non I that man are threated I consider int is my christian to your reseme & protection dear Mar I you know that I love my country but I love my family better. My darling were I thave a great deal to write but the have not time nor space I Charles is avaiting for me to with him a few bises I am now on price duty in This City The enemy is There to shell The city every Day & a general engagenta is large well Jone Sult don't think it do a do a sury good from think I do away good from the many the good four ding us to them five my low to all and many the good Soon being us to them five my low to all and humble prayer & their good Soon being us to meet again in the flesh is my humble prayer & their dising your affectional Husband I, of go.