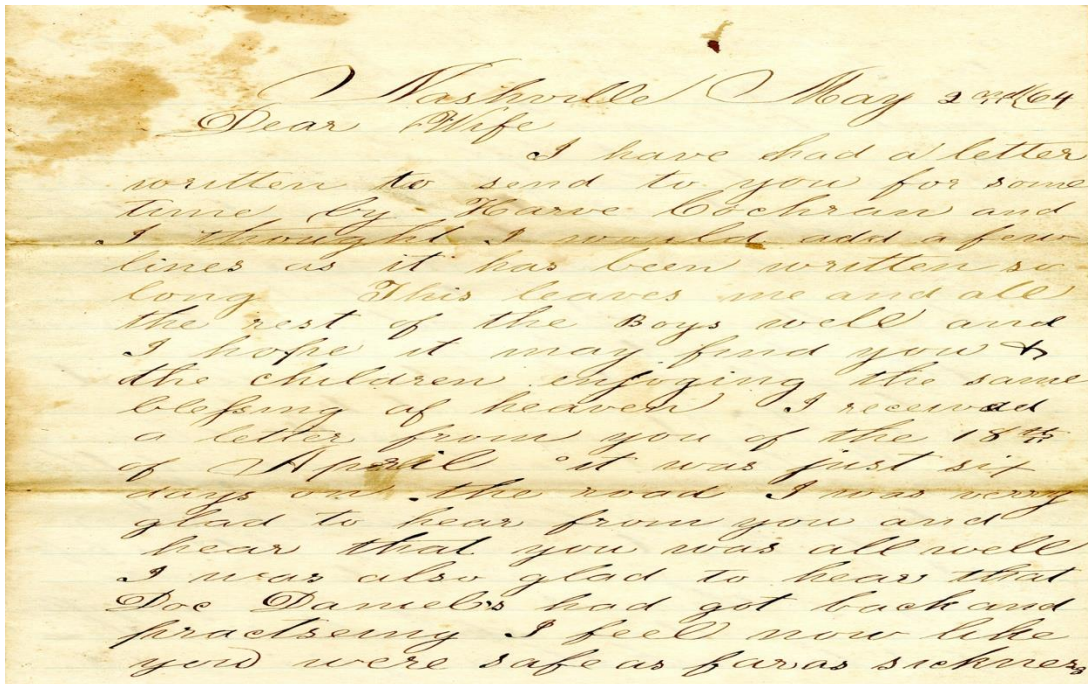


Henry M. Misemer's Letter to his wife Martha J. Misemer

May 2nd 1864

Manuscript: HL_MSS_21-07_02-Folder40



Nashville May 2nd 1864
Dear Wife
I have had a letter
written to send to you for some
time by George Cochran and
I thought I would add a few
lines as it has been written so
long. This leaves me and all
the rest of the boys well and
I hope it may find you &
the children enjoying the same
blessing of heaven. I received
a letter from you of the 15th
of April it was just six
days on the road I was very
glad to hear from you and
hear that you was all well
I was also glad to hear that
Doc Daniels had got back and
practising I feel now like
you were safe as far as sickness

First page of the letter.
See Appendix for full size images of each page.

Transcribed by Braulio Fonseca

For English 618: Research Methods in English

Instructor: Dr. Brian Gastle

December 7th 2022

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 1. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 2. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 3. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials

INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENT

This manuscript is a letter written from Henry M. Misemer to his wife, Martha J. Misemer. The letter is dated May 2nd, 1864, one year before the *Sultana Disaster*. Researchers indicate that 1,195 of the 2,200 passengers and crew died including Henry Misemer, 200 later died from burns sustained during the incident, making the *Sultana* incident the deadliest maritime disaster in U.S. history.

In this letter Henry is in good spirits and appears to have not yet been engaged in any battles. His correspondence with Martha is general, and he is acknowledging a debt that they have accrued. As the letter continues, the tone becomes much more somber as Henry appears to regret the way he treated Martha before he left as he apologizes in the letter and promises to make amends upon his return.

Henry also reveals that Martha is pregnant and recommends a name for the baby once it is born, which Martha does fulfill, naming the daughter Laura Caroline, which was Henry's request. Henry briefly mentions members of his brigade to Martha as he speaks of three soldiers' promotion in rank, Clint Norvel, Jacob P. Brient, and Derrick Anderson.

Cpl. Henry Marshall Misemer (1832-1865) was the son of Heinrich Misemer and Susannah Biebel (or Bible). His first marriage was to Margaret Jane Brown on January 25, 1855, and the couple had a daughter, Mary Elizabeth "Lizzy" Misemer. Margaret Jane died on August 31, 1857, and Misemer married Martha Jane Bogart on February 2, 1859; she had three brothers, Solomon (Sol), Levi (Lee), and Charles Harrison Bogart.

At his death, Misemer left four young children with Martha Jane: Mary Elizabeth, from his previous marriage, as well as Charles Franklin, Margaret Ellen, and Laura Caroline. During the Civil War Misemer served in Company F, 3rd Regiment, East Tennessee Cavalry, USA, along with Martha's brothers.

Henry was captured by Nathan Bedford Forrest's troops on September 25, 1864, and paroled from the Cahaba, Mississippi, prison. Misemer, along with Levi Bogart and Charles Bogart, died in 1865 in the explosion of the USS *Sultana*.

Misemer's widow Martha, who according to the donor later filed for a widow's pension, remarried a Dr. Daniels, on February 28, 1872. Dr. Daniels is revealed to be Joe Daniels, the family doctor that Henry speaks of in this letter to Martha.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The manuscript itself is written on aged parchment paper that has become a discolored tan with blotches of stains and possible water damage. The ink that the letter was written in has gotten lighter and faded over time, but there are times that the ink is a fresh black, which leads me to believe that someone has seen these letters prior to me and tried to edit the document slightly. The paper has been folded twice, leaving two distinct folded lines on the page. These creases have not affected the readability of the text itself.

The letter itself is divided up between four actual physical pages and I will designate the change in those pages in the transcription which you will see centered in the page, i.e. [MS Page1] and [MS Page 2] etc.

This transcription is a diplomatic edition, meaning the text has been transcribed as closely to the original document as possible. This means any spelling errors, grammatical issues, or syntactical issues were preserved. Henry Misemer's penmanship is fairly easy to read, but here are some features of Henry's handwriting to take note:

- He does not dot his (i)s throughout the transcription.
- The letter (P) often appears as a (Pr), predominantly when used in upper case.
- Henry uses a form of ampersand, but it is not a traditional one. Henry's version appears like a (h) with a loop hanging off the back side.
- When a word comes to the end of the page and does not have the space to completely be written in, Henry begins the next line with a dash mark and continues the spelling from there.
- Henry does not use punctuation and his sentences except for the very occasional comma and his sentences end and begin immediately after the other without a period to designate the change. In the transcription I tried to give a little more space between sentences to show that a new sentence had started.
- The line breaks have been preserved as shown in the manuscript.
- Some lines in this transcription look longer than others, but on the manuscript, they are aligned. The reason they appear longer in the transcription is because Henry wrote in additional text above the actual sentence line.

The digital photos found in this transcription were taken from Western Carolina University's Hunter Library from Digital and Special Collections. (See Appendix)

TRANSCRIPTION

[MS page 1]

Nashville May 2nd 64¹

Dear Wife

I have had a letter
written to send to you for some
Time by Harve Cochran² and
I thought I would add a few
Lines as it has been written so
long This leaves me and all
the rest of the Boys well and
I hope it may find you &³
the children enjoying⁴ the same
bleSsing⁵ of⁶ heaven I received⁷

¹ On the page there is a line under the 2nd and there are two lines drawn underneath. Next to the 2nd there is a line drawn separating it from a 64.

² Harvey Cochran, Enlistment date: 1, April, 1863, 3rd Cavalry, Muster Company F, Imprisoned 25 Sep, 1864 at Sulphur Branch Trestle, Alabama, exchanged 27, Apr, 1865 via Steamer "Sultana", Memphis, Tennessee, Killed in explosion. (Ancestry library).

³ The ampersand that is written on the page is not a true depiction; it is an attempt at it and appears more like a combination of an H and an X.

⁴ The Y in this word looks like a G.

⁵ The first S in this word is capitalized mid word.

⁶ It appears on the page as (af).

⁷ The word received appears as if he misspelled it and tried to correct it. You can still see the (a) that was originally put down.

a letter from you of the 18th⁸
of April o⁹ it was just six
days on the road I was verry
glad to hear from you and
hear that you was all well
I was also glad to hear that
Joe Daniels¹⁰ had got back and
Practising I feel now like
You were safe as far as sickness¹¹

[MS Page 2]

is concerned Martha¹² you wanted
to know how much I owed
John Kinser¹³ for threshing I
cant tell you how much I told
you when I left home an
I haven't thought of it since tell

⁸ The 18th is written as an 18 with what looks like an equation to the right that has two lines with a line through it on top of two more lines that look like 11.

⁹ There is a small "o" right before the word "it," which could possibly be the dot for the I, but is significantly separated to be noted.

¹⁰ This appears to be the family Doctor, but further information or confirmation remains unknown.

¹¹ There are little squiggles coming down from the last (s) in the word.

¹² Martha J. Misemer, Maiden Name: Martha J. Bogart, Married Henry M. Misemer on 2/9/1859, Married by Rev. Thomas R. Bradshaw. (Ancestry.com)

¹³ Information Unkown.

you wrote about it , what I told
you then was True and if you
remember what it was make
him come up to it I have
forgotten all about my buisnes
since I left home and have
thought of the future almost
entirely , you must try to remem
-ber . about my unsettled business

Martha I dont know whether
I have answered all the ques –
-tions you have asked me or
not I got so many letters before
I had any chance to answer
any of them I may have forgotten
some questions asked in them
if I have ask them again and

[MS Page 3]

will answer them for I have
no secrets to keep¹⁴ from you
, no my Dear I know I have done
many things that are wrong

¹⁴ The second letter “e” is inserted above the word to form “keep.”

and have not treated you as
I ought to have done But if
you could ¹⁵ see my hart¹⁶ and
know how I feel you would
forgive me. I know you perhaps
don't think that I have mistreated
you But I feel that I am unw-
-orthy of such a wife as you
but I hope that I will soon
get home to make amends
Martha I know I have studied
out a name for dollie¹⁷ I want
you to call her Laura
Caroline if you like the name
Or if you have no objections
I would rather, ¹⁸ ,her named
Martha , Caroline I want
You to take you choice between
The names and tell me in yours next

¹⁵ The word "the" has been smudged out.

¹⁶ The letter "e" has been inserted above the word in between the ("h" and the "a."

¹⁷ Dollie refers to his wife Martha's unborn child which she would go on to name, Laura C. Misemer, Laura Caroline Misemer, this was the wish of Henry. She was born Year: 1870; Census Place: District 7, Monroe, Tennessee; Roll: M593_1550; Page: 62B, Had a son (William Frank MacFee), successful surgeon. (Ancestry.com)

¹⁸ The word "have" is written above and in between "rather" and "her."

[MS Page 4]

There has ben some
Changes in our company
Since my last Jacob P
Brient¹⁹ is promoted to
Captain of our company
A B Derrick²⁰ ²¹ our first
Lieutenant and Clint
Norvel²² second Sargent
Mr Elisha Brient²³ has
gone back to Cincinatti
to buy more goods
I have ben vaxenated
three times without effect
and have concluded , ²⁴quit

[MS Page 4]

¹⁹Capt. Jacob P. Brient, Imprisoned 25, Sep, 1864 at Sulphur Branch Trestle, Alabama. (Ancestry.com)

²⁰Derrick C, Alfred, 1st Lieutenant, 3rd Regiment, Tennessee Cavalry, Company B,F. (www.nps.gov/civilwar).

²¹ It appears that there is a capital "Is" written but it has been inked deep and almost scratched out.

²² Clinton L, Norvell, Union, 3rd Cavalry Tennessee, Company B,F, 2nd Lieutenant, Survived. (Ancestry.com).

²³ There is no record of a rank of 2nd Sergeant but there was a rank of "Private," Elisha Bryant, 3rd Regiment, Tennessee Cavalry, Company G, Enlisted 11 August, 1863, Muster Out Date 3 August, 1865. Survived. (Ancestry.com)

²⁴ The word "to" is written in, above the word quit.

trying the small pox²⁵ has

Stopped in our regiment²⁶

We have turned over all our horses

to send them to the front

write soon as you get this

and write often I remain

your affectionate husband H, M, Misemer²⁷

²⁵ Likely “pox” but the writing on the page is hard to decipher and the (x) in the word does not appear to be an (x) - it is merely illegible.

²⁶ Originally an “e” instead of the letter “i” “in regiment” but corrected in darker ink.

²⁷ Henry M. Misemer, Corporal, Co. F, 3rd Reg., Tenn. Cav. Vols, died: 4/27/1865, Reported POW: 9/24/1864. (Sultana Museum; <https://sultana-7f06a.web.app/>)

Appendix

Nashville May 2nd 1864
Dear Wife
I have had a letter
written to send to you for some
time by Harve Cochran and
I thought I would add a few
lines as it has been written so
long. This leaves me and all
the rest of the Boys well and
I hope it may find you &
the children enjoying the same
blessing of heaven. I received
a letter from you of the 18th
of April it was just six
days on the road I was very
glad to hear from you and
hear that you was all well
I was also glad to hear that
Doc Daniels had got back and
practising I feel now like
you were safe as far as sickness

Image above is MS Page 1 of original manuscript.

is concerned Martha you wanted
to know how much I owed
John Reinsers for threshing I
cant tell you how much I told
you when I left home and
I havent thought of it since tell
you wrote about it, what I told
you then was true and if you
remember what it was make
him come up to it I have
forgotten all about my business
since I left home and have
thought of the future almost
entirely, you must try to remem-
ber about my unsettled business
Martha I dont know whether
I have answered all the ques-
-tions you have asked me or
not I got so many letters before
I had any chance to answer
any of them I may have forgotten
some questions ~~as~~ asked in them
if I have ask them again and I

Image above is MS Page 2 of original manuscript.

will answer them for I have
no secrets to keep from you
, no my Dear I know I have done
many things that are wrong
and have not treated you as
I ought to have done But if
you could ~~the~~ see my heart and
know how I feel you would
forgive me I know, you perhaps
dont think that I have mistreated
you But I feel that I am un-
-orthy of such a wife as you
But I hope that I will soon
get home to make amends
Martha I now have studied
out a name for dollie I want
you to call her Laura
Caroline if you like the name
or if you have no objections
I would rather ^{have} her named
Martha, Caroline I want
you to take your choice between
the names and tell me in your next

Image above is MS Page 3 of original manuscript.

There has been some
changes in our company
since my last Jacob P
Brient is promoted to
Captain of our company
A B Derrick is our first
Lieutenant and Clint
Norvel second Lieut
Mr Elisha Brient has
gone back to Cincinnati
to buy more goods
I have been vaccinated
three times without effect
and have concluded, quit
trying, the small pox has
stopped in our regiment
We have turned over all our horses
to send them to the front
write soon as you get this
and write often I remain
Your affectionate husband H. M. Mosemer

Image above is MS Page 4 of the original manuscript.

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Ancestry provided most of the information used to find family names, dates, places of residence, and other information.

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“Battle Unit Details: Union Tennessee Volunteers, 3rd Regiment, Tennessee Cavalry.” *NPS*, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=UTN0003RC>.

This webpage provides an overview of the major movements and engagements of the 3rd Regiment of the Tennessee Cavalry, of which Sol and Marsh Bogart were members. This is how I discovered what occurred on September 25, 1864 that led to Sol Bogart’s capture and subsequent imprisonment.

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TN STATE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES RECORDS OF MISEMER LETTERS
https://tnsla.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/search/asset/20140/0

“Sulphur Creek Trestle.” *American Battlefield Trust*, American Battlefield Trust,
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/sulphur-creek-trestle>.

This is the webpage I used to learn more about the battle Sol was captured during. The American Battlefield Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of battlefields of the American Civil War, among other important American wars.

The Sultana Disaster Museum, *The Sultana Association*.
<https://www.sultanadisastermuseum.com>