

This is a transcript of the last letter home written by W.H. Bagley. He was a private in Company A, 41st Tennessee Infantry. His unit was captured at Fort Donelson, sent to prison camp, exchanged at Vicksburg, Mississippi, in the fall of 1862, and then stationed in Mississippi and Louisiana. William H. Bagley was killed at the Battle of Raymond, Mississippi, on May 12, 1863.

Bagley had married Martha Ann Leftwich on July 27, 1848. She lived in Mulberry, Tennessee, and died on April 10, 1907. The Bagleys had five children—James (b. 1851), Mary (b. 1854), Finetta (b. 1858), Nannie (b. 1860), and Willie (b. 1862).

Port Hudson March the 26th 1863

Dear Martha,

I take my pen in hand to send you a few lines to let you know that I am well and hearty. My bites is getting well on my back if they don't no more come. I hope hen this comes to hand you are all well and doing well. I heard from Jimma the other day and he said he had taken a back set and he is very bad off. He is about thirty mile off and I am going to see him as quick as I get my papers signed and stay with him a few days. I want you to send this letter to Fathers and let them know that we have not much news to right to you only the Yankee gunboats are in site of us every day and they shel us every few days but I do not know whether we will have a big fite or not here.

I don't know when we will get away from this place but I am getting very tired of sitting here in Louisiana. I want to come to Tennessee very bad but I am afraid there ain't on chance to come soon. There ain't much talk of pease here but I hope and trust in the Lord it won't be long before we can have pease and come home.

I can't find anyone that will take my place so I am afraid it will be a bad chance for me to come home shortly but I want you to do the best you can and carry on the farm and make all you can and right to me how you and the children and your mother comes on and how the stock is doing and all the neighbors comes over. I want to hear from W. M. Bryant where he is and tell L.B. Leftwich to right me and I will answer to him for I want him to here from me.

I want you to right how the mares is doing and if John has plowed "Doctor" or not and how he does and if you have got Jimmas horse yet. If the Yanks get in there this year you had better get Jesse to trade him and rite to me if they take anything from you or not and if you cant right me by male get Jesse Brant to right every week or two for I want to here from you oftener than I do. I want to know how you come out with your fleece and spinning. I want you to give John a corn patch for his self to make some thing. I am mity proud of him and Jimma is doing so well, tell Jimma to be a good boy. Tell J.T. Bryant to rite often. Give my love to all enquiring friends and your mother and a double portion to yourself and etc cettera.

I must come to a close and so good by.

W.H. Bagley To M.A. Bagley