

# CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF CHARLES S. RANDALL

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The following are transcribed from the original letters of my great-grandfather, Charles S. Randall, to my great-grandmother, Margery Hurlbert Randall, while he was serving in the Civil War. I received them from my cousin, Charlotte Landon Shoemaker, of Canton, Pennsylvania, who obtained them from their current owner, Lola (Mrs. Edgar) Randall, also of Canton, Penna.

(Editor's note: Every effort has been made to transcribe all three of these letters as they were written. It seems quite clear that the loneliness, pressures of being at or near the front, and the general trauma of war show clearly through the actual contents of the letters).

Camp Judson April 5th 1865

Dr wife through the providence of god I yet retain my reason and am permitted to attempt to address you this morning finds me quite lame but able to be about with no important change I should have written one day before I came from picket tired thought would wate might get a letter from you did not receive any the latest was the 13th the wether is pleasent and warm makes me think of home more than while cold just at this time there is a drove of Cattle passing here to the front the roads are lined with soldiers going to join shermans army there was a lot passed monday while I was on picket which some of our boys saw they said they wer from bradford Co and Newill others this morning I saw a man from pennsylvania he came from Petersburg said he was from the 50 Eng but did not know about any of our boys there is a large army in this state about one hundred and Eighty thousand men there was a man came from there day before yesterday he said sherman drew 177 thousand rations pr day and troops still coming the acct given of the last battles looks favorable both Grant and sherman I still Reman here how long is more than I can tell my tent mate A Mr Smiley from franklin is sick with Diareaha has ben for some time and home sick two Coloss Newill is well I heard A E Dan was sent north to some hospital he will likely get his discharge for some unknown reason I felt very lonesome last knight I got to thinking of home and the anxiety you have manifested for my return together with the responsibility as a father and a husband desireing the well being of all yet deprived of your Co which alone would make me happy will try to submit to the demands of war trusting in the divine being for protection from the many temptations and evils of the present life and dangers to which I may be called to pass not forgetting you my Dr wife in my feble petitions to the throne of gods grace hoping you may lean upon his almighty arm submit to the many trials you may be called to pass discharging the duties of a wife and mother with christian fortitude hoping we shall soon meet to share Each others joys and sorrows never more to be seperated while life shall last is the desire of your unworthy Companion To the girls I would say take the counsil of your mother Rememebering you are in the slipey paths of youth you will see many things to charm you perchance after you may arrive at riper years you will look back upon the counsil you have received from your mother and exclaim how kind how just for a mother to counsil her children Remembering she is your best friend hope you my girls which I feel so proud of whose Co I delight to enjoy may not spurn at the counsil of your mother and Jany To my boys I hope you will remember to mind your mother and work what you can be kind to each other try to make each other happy

To mother Randall I still Remember my Dutyies to you as a son realizing the unserteinty of life and while opportunity presents I write a few lines to let you know that you are not forgotten by me I felt very uneasy this cold winter from all accounts the winter has ben very severe for fear you was uncomfort-

able I hope the time will soon come when I may be permitted to return to enjoy a short visit with you and get some dried berries and sweetcake should like to send you something but the distance is too great I should like to see you all try to make your self as happy as possible tell Sally she must not scold if things does not go quite right — and to Mother Hurlbert tell her she is still remembered by me one that raised a such a dutiful wife for me I shall feel indebted to would that her health was good so that she might enjoy life with her children much better tell Betsy not to worry about John Kelee from all I can learn he has got a good place better than this the time is fast drawing nigh when he will return to enjoy your Co And you my loving wife I hope you will try to cheer up not worry about me to destroy your Comfort and happiness I like to have you write just your feelings it does me good to learn just how you feel if there is any thing bothers you let me know that I may sympathize with you there is no one that knows my feelings as well as your self and there is no one that has the right to know if we have the right disclose to each other our feelings of love to drive from the minds the lonely hours we have to pass away do not think they will be calculated to render me more unhappy it will serve as a stimulant to me so that I can pass the time more pleasantly knowing that I have a Companion worthy of all my love one that I can confide in that will stick closer than a brother how I would like to shake the welcome hand that use to be extended to help in to the door at Canton but perhaps will have the privilege again I have often heard it said that after marriage after living a few years the love grew cold the feelings became indifferent toward Each other how is this I would not give one cent for such a companion tell all your troubles if you have any I wrote to you to send me some tobacco some time since have you sent it how do you get along for money have you got any and tell me if you want any I suppose the lambs begin to come forth by this time be careful to save them if there should be cold storms shut the sheep in the barn you asked me what time Nelly folded I have forgotten thing in June may be in May you Can tell a few days before she folds when her bag looks Spotted like drops of milk on the outside She will fold very soon in two or three days I guess I have written a plenty for this time hoping to get a letter from you soon will close remember Remember this is from your Ever true and loving husband Charles S Randall To Margery My True Wife good day Marg Tell the girls they must write I cant get time to write to them

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Camp Palmer Apr 18<sup>th</sup>

Much beloved wife this day find  
me here in this camp about as I  
have been we was moved to the  
camp one week ago today I have  
not received any letter from you  
since the one dated March 13 I  
feel in hopes I shall yet get one soon  
The weather is warm pleasant the  
disease is prevalent here that the  
President is killed which makes  
me feel very bad after so long a  
struggle with so much anxiety  
for national existence that he  
should be deprived of the privilege  
of seeing the end but so it is if the  
Johnsons Army of this state  
had not surrendered at the Fair  
account but he had better if he  
knows what is best for himself

I think the war will close soon  
if Sherman fights Johnson in  
this state it will not prolong the  
war but hope they will not fight  
you may know more news than  
I do I dream of seeing you very  
little while now I should like to see  
how you look are you poor I should  
like to hear from Vanness since  
the fight at Petersburg I have no  
news to tell you has Doty got the  
money on the bond I think we sh  
all not buy any cows this spring  
as I donot get pay you will have  
to get along with the farming the  
best you can but donot worry  
about me I shall do the best  
I can hoping to see you soon  
must close remain as ever  
your affectionate husband from

Chas S Randall To  
Mrs Wm Randall

Tell the Children I want to see  
them very much give my love to  
all This Saturday the 22d  
of Apr finds me well one of our  
men has just come from

the front he sees we are all going  
back with him to the Co they lay  
close by Goldsborough he says  
they are doing a little camp  
duty is all there is to be an  
armistice for 30 days to try to  
stop the war I hope the thing will  
close and we may be permitted  
to return home to see the loved  
ones I commenced writing this <sup>day</sup> ~~time~~  
but did not send it because I  
heard we were going to the front  
I feel as well as common hope  
you may be all well in good  
spirits you can direct to the  
Co and Regt as before

I got a letter from you  
today dated 26 of March is  
the last I have got from you  
My Dr wife believe me ever  
faithful and true remember  
ing me to him who has created  
all things we have got no hay  
yet good day from

R S Randall

To Maryery Randall  
write often

Camp Palmer Apr 19th /65

Much beloved wife this day finds me here in this camp about as I have ben we was moved to the camp one week ago today I have not Receivd any letter from you since the one dated March 13 I feel in hopes I shall get one soon The wether is warm plesant the News is prevelent here that the President is Killed which makes me feel very bad after so long a struggle with so much anxiety for national existence that he should be deprived of the priviledge of seeing the end but so it is if true Johnsons Army of this state had Not surrendered at the last account but he had better if he knows what is well for himself I think the war will close soon if Sherman fights Johnson in this state it will not prolong the war but hope they will not fight you may know more news than I do I dream of seeing you evry little while how I should like to see how you look are you poor I should like to hear from Vanness since the fight at petersburg I have no news to tell you has doty got the money on the bond I think we shall not buy any cows this spring as I do not get pay you will have to get along with the farming the best you can but do not worry about me I shall do the best I can hoping to see you soon must close Remain as ever your effectionate husband from Chas S Randall To Margery Randall Tell the children I want to see them very much give my love to all This Saturday the 22nd of Apr finds me well one of our men has just come from the front he ses we are all going back with him to the Co they lay close by Goldsborough he says they are doing a little Camp duty is all There is to be an armistice for 30 days to try to stop the war I hope the thing will close and we may permitted to return home to see the loved ones I comenced writing this Sunday but did not send it because I heard we wer going to the front I feel as well as comon hop you may be all well in good spirits you Can direct to the Co and Regt as before I got a letter from you to day dated 26 of March is the last I have got from you My Dr wife believe me ever faithful and true remembering me to him who has created all things we have got no pay yet good day from C S Randall To Margery Randall write often

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Camp Persimmon Apr 24<sup>th</sup>  
Dear wife This morning finds me  
as well as common just came in from  
guard sleepy and tired but as I was  
thinking of home decided to seat my  
self here on the bunk to tell you  
where this morning finds me well  
knowing your strong anxiety to hear  
I remain here in this camp about 4  
miles from Newbern think we shall  
move to our Co in a day or two 4 of  
our men was sent yesterday the  
battalion to go in a day or two I saw a  
man from the front this morning  
he said every thing was quiet no pick-  
ets to be done also talked with a Lieut-  
enant belonging to our Regt he said  
the fighting is over at least the reason  
we were ordered to report was they had  
our descriptive lists and we could  
not be mustered war have without

our rather could not be paid till  
they were present some think we  
will be mustered out in 30 days  
I doubt being mustered in that time  
if they come to a settlement we may  
get home by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July perhaps  
before god knows it hope so the  
sooner the better for me I suppose  
you are apprised of all the news  
relating to the end of the war know  
more than I do as I have no means  
of knowing only as I can pick others  
I sent for a paper today let us hope  
on for better news better times —  
the weather has been quite cold here  
for two days this place is quite  
unhealthy I think it will be more  
healthy at Goldsborough our Co  
is about one mile from that place  
in camp. Maryery I cannot describe  
to you my feelings of anxiety to see  
you more to tell you the many  
things I have in store for you

The society here or any where the  
army camps is officers and soldiers  
I have seen a few decent looking  
folks since I came here The Lieut  
wife is here in camp decent look-  
ing woman but the majority is  
hard looking I long for the time  
to come when I may be free from  
being ruled by military authority  
so that I can go where I think best  
I have not been as far from camp  
as elsewhere since I came here  
9 months of the time of my enlist-  
ment has passed away some part  
of that time I have had all I could  
do to keep my self in the right tr-  
ack of thought but thanks be to god  
that gave me the victory and spared  
me til the present moment and that  
circumstances are so that I can  
inform you of my health and pres-  
ent hopes of meeting you my de-  
ar wife. The next best thing to see you

cherish the fondest of my hopes  
you may know the feelings of  
gratitude I owe to him who does all  
things well I am conscious of the many  
dangers we have to pass while in this  
life even away from war but  
hope I may pass them all and  
finally meet you again at the  
old home in Union to shake the  
welcome hand is my heart  
felt desire. I shall have to tell  
you about business I wrote  
to Lewis about the bond tell  
daddy I should have sent him  
power of atty but I could not  
get it filled out you must  
excuse me for not writing sooner  
the season was I was waiting to  
get a letter from you

Good day I remain as ever  
your loving husband  
write as before Geo S Rindels  
to Legand Regt 70th Massy Rindels

the letter dated 26 of March was  
the latest I have received



Camp Parmer Apr 24th /65 Dear wife this morning finds me as well as comon just cam in from guard sleepy and tired but as I was thinking of home desided to seat my self here on the bunk to tell you where this morning finds me well knowing your strong anxiety to hear I remain here in this camp about 4 miles from Newbern think we shall move to our Co in a day or two 4 of our men was sent yesterday the ballence to go in a day or two I saw a man from the front this morning he said evry thing was quiet no picket to be done also talked with a Lieutenant belonging to our Regt he ses the fighting is over I learnd the reason we wer orderd to report was they have our descriptive lists and we could not be musterd for pay without them or rather could not be paid til they wer present some think we will be musterd out in 30 days I doubt being musterd in that time if they come to a settlement we may get home by the 4th of July perhaps before god knows I hope so the sooner the better for me I suppo you are apprised of all the news relating to the end of the war know more than I do, as I have no means of knowing only as I can pick others I sent for a paper today let us hope on for better news better times — the wether has ben quite cold here for two days this place is quite unhealthy I think it will be more healthy at Goldsborough our Co is about one mile from that place in camp Margery I cannot describe to you my feelings of anxiety to see one more to tell you the many things I have in store for you The society here or any whar the army camps is Nigers and soldiers I have seen a few decent Looking folks since I came here the Lieu wife is here in camp decent looking woman but the majority is hard looking I long for the time to come when I may be freed from being ruled by military authority so that I can go whare I think best I have not ben as far from Camp as Newbern since I came here 7 months of the time of my enlistment has passed away some part of that time I have had all I could do to keep my self in the right train of thought but thanks be to god that gave me the victory and spaird me til the present moment and that sercumstances are so that I can inform you of my health and present hopes of meeting you my Dr wife the one I promist to love and cherish the fondest of my hopes you may know the feelings of gratitude I ow to him who does all things well I am concious of the many dangers we have to pass while in this life even away from war but hope I may pass them all and finally meet you again at the Old home in union to shake the the welcome hand is my heart felt desire I shall have to tell you about business I wrote to lewis about the bond tell doty I should have sent him power of atty but I could not get it filled out you must Excuse me for not writing sooner the reason was I was wating to get a letter from you Good day I remain as ever your loving husband write as before to Co and Regt Chas S Randall To Margery Randall the letter dated 28 of March was the latest I have Receivd.