

CIVIL WAR LETTERS: UPDATE

John K. Ross, Jr.

This is an additional Civil War letter written by a cousin of the Sam House who wrote the letters that appeared in June 1990 issue of this *Journal*. These letters were donated to the Paducah Public Library by Mildred White and recently came to light.

One of the incidents in Sam House's letter [reported last year] has been confirmed in J.P. Young, *The Seventh Tennessee Cavalry (Confederate)*, p. 20. This tells of the raid on the Paducah picket line in which Private Ed Gallegher of Company C was killed and Privates Holmes and Fleming of Company A were wounded by "friendly fire" from their own troops.

We present here a letter from William M. Matthews (Company B of the 2nd Kentucky Regiment of the "Orphan Brigade" of the CSA) to his aunt, Sam House's mother. Sam wrote in one of his letters about Frank and Will joining the CSA Army. These may have been his cousins Frank and William Matthews.

Ed Parker Thompson, in *The History of the Orphan Brigade*, p. 560, states that W.M. Matthews of Lexington, Kentucky, was a Commissary Sergeant of Company B 2nd Kentucky Regiment. In 1862, he died of disease in Knoxville, Tennessee. Knoxville was the home of the House family.

Camp Boone
Sept 5th 1861

My dear Aunt,

I have intended to write to you for some time, but I did not know where a letter would reach you. I have thought useless to write.

I have been in camp here for two months, near Clarksville Tenn, in the brigade of Kentuckians, which you have doubtless heard of some time since, there is encamped here three Regiments of Kentuckys, and a finer set of men I never saw. They are all healthy and true Kentuckians.

I had several letters from home this week (trust?) they were all well. Father is very anxious to live in the Confederate States & I hope he will find a good opening very soon. Lex is very strong for Lincoln, and I think the war will open there very soon. I hope it will not be very long before Ky will join her fortunes with Jeff Davis.

I would like very much to come and see you all, but as I could not get a furlough for a longer time than a week my time would be occupied in going and coming - please let me know in what time it would require in going and coming.

Pa received a letter from Aunt Mary a few days before I left home, which was in June. She was well and in Philadelphia have you heard from her lately. I wish she was living in the South. I learned from her letter that Cousin Sam had joined the army at Memphis. If he is, please let me know where he is stationed, as I would like to write to him.

Have you heard of Uncle Frank lately. I will write to him in a few days, Bro Frank is now on his way to Memphis to join a Cavalry Company, if Sam is there

please let him know as soon as convenient. Frank will not know where to find him, write me some, with much love to all my cousins and Uncle House. I remain

Your Affectionate Nephew
Wm M. Matthews

P.S.

Direct your letters

Camp Boone near Clarksville in care of Capt Breckinridge 2 Ky Regt

Captain Robert J. Breckinridge commanded Company B of the 2nd Kentucky Regiment in September 1861. He was a cousin of the unsuccessful 1860 presidential candidate John C. Breckinridge. Robert J. Breckinridge soon left the 2nd Kentucky to serve in the Confederate Congress. William C. Davis in *The Orphan Brigade*, p. 14ff, gives the history of the 2nd Kentucky at Camp Boone.

