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Richard Baxter Foster Letter to his wife October 17 1865

Richard Baxter Foster

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Texas. En route to Ft. McIntosh
October 17. 1862

My Dearest,
If I can find time to drop
you a little line while on the road. I
suppose it will be more interesting to
you than to give a description afterwards.
So having camped a little earlier than
usual tonight & not having any thing
else to do at this moment. I do not
know how soon I may have, I have
settled down to write to you if I get a
chance. Lincoln University Archives

We have been a little 4 days
on the road from Ringgold Barracks
and have made a little over 50 miles.
I suppose we have about 75 miles
further to go. Our first day was from
Ringgold Barracks to Roma 14 miles.
I wrote to you from there: the next day
from Roma to Rancho Salomeño 10 miles: next
to Rancho El Lopenia 15 miles, to day
8 miles to a Rancho name unknown.

We find the road rough. The ground
is hard & dry - not good marching
for the men, but pretty - uneven. gullies
& bad for teams. One wagon broke yester-
day - another today.

We have a train of 33 wagons. 4
ambulances & Colonel Barrett's spring
wagon. The men are standing the
march first rate: they do not carry
their knapsacks & are all getting along

finely. The road is getting worse and we will be likely to be at least 6 days longer on the road.

Col Barlett is along but is not in immediate command of the Regiment, that devolves on Capt Parsons, who submits, tho. not willingly, to all Barlett's caprices & tyrannies. The latter gentleman is putting on more style than a genuine brigadier general would do if he had good sense. He rides his horse usually with 3 mounted orderlies trotting after him. He has a spring wagon along to ride in if he desires to, and although the spring wagon ~~has a~~ would furnish a good place to sleep he must have a tent besides & his cot. Most of the officers (tho better men than Barlett but not so high in rank) have neither tent nor wagon to sleep in. Considering that Barlett is just going to Ft McEntosh to return again immediately, all this flummery & fuss in a man who was never in but one battle & lost that by most miserable incompetency - is disgusting.

Col Barlett released St. Louis from arrest after one day. His putting him in arrest at all was an outrage of the most shameful character. Barlett has had a pique against St. Louis for a year and a half & the first day they were out of the reach of an immediate appeal he went out of his way to show his authority & power

by putting him in arrest without cause.

Barrett is running up a heavy account with the officers of this regiment that he will be called upon some day to settle in a way that will make his flesh quiver in every nerve. He does not profess any higher standard of ^{conduct} ~~character~~ than reputation & his true character as a heartless tyrant & selfish imbecile will be exposed when he most cares for reputation. & established on conclusive proof.

He has not a friend in the regiment. one or two officers will carry favor with him while he has favors to give, but they despise him & the rest hate him.

If he should die at any time so far from being a team chad. there would be a remorsal feeling of joy - tho. it might not be expressed throughout the regiment. I do not hesitate to say calmly & conscientiously that I am sorry he did not die last year when he was Sick.

This letter will go by his hands to Ringgold Barracks. I believe him to be just mean enough to open it & look to see if I say anything about him. If he does I hope he will get the full benefit of my opinion of him & perhaps learn something of the sentiment of the regiment towards him. I don't know him.

There has been a little shower since we camped tonight. & there are signs of more rain. We start to move out at 8 o'clock. We find no particular difference

in the country. Our road is all
the way through the chaparral.
A Rancho is usually found on the bank of
the river about once in 5 miles on the average.
I judge that the people live by their
cattle, which having a very wide range
get tolerably fat but not to compare
with cattle running loose in Lower
Nebraska. The cattle here are larger
better than the Texas cattle that
come north that I suppose are raised
in the northern part of Texas.

We make some purchases of milk
eggs &c at the ranches but usually they
have very little to sell except cattle & horses,
& the ponies are not cheap enough to pay for buying.
All the dwellers in this chaparral are
Mexicans. not a person has come up in
all these ranches who could speak our
language. The ranches poor as they are are
full. When we ~~camp~~ camped last night
I had 12 boys at one time about the size
of Tot & Dick teaching me Mahecamno Mexican.
I had a high time with them, some of them
had no shirt on only a pair of pants,
all of them bareheaded & barefooted. They are as
bright as new silver dollars, but their future
has no promise.

The vegetation of this country is peculiar.
I saw little here that grows anywhere else that
ever I was. The great characteristic growing
shrub & plant is thorns. I have written a
long letter & must go to bed. Good night
Daxton