

3-30-1865

Richard Baxter Foster Letter to his wife March 30, 1865

Richard Baxter Foster

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I can do well in Missouri. I think I can see the day not very far off that we will live together in comfortable circumstances and look back on all our long hard struggles as the freed slaves already look back on their former state of bondage. At the same time I expect to continue in the work that I am now engaged in (for the elevation of the down trodden negro) as long as I live. The war is breaking up the ice laying the foundations all the work is to be done hereafter. I do not think I shall ever get out of that work.

I think about 25 colored men of this regiment. & Capt. Meade. & Adamson. Charlie Bonnell & my self will settle together in Missouri. Put up a mill & school house.

I am sorry for your headaches and low spirits. Dear love how gladly would I share these sufferings with you, as I share the cause & will share the consequences if it were possible. It appears that mother has been sick & the children with colds.

You hear that Sid is going to Mary Miss Ashton. I sincerely hope it is so. I esteem her as a modest sensible worthy young lady. I should rejoice to see Sid united with her. I don't suppose I am likely to meet Charley Webster. Still it is possible. I shall watch for a chance. I hope to hear in some of your letters something about Gary. Father thinks I will stay in the army five years? I think not. Still if I could resign & stay with you next winter I don't know but I would do it again next spring if it was needed.

Dearest love bless you and the dear children is the prayer of

Peper

WINDSOR

Brazos Santiago Texas
March 30. 1865

Dearest Lucy,

I am off for the day again today and will take time that I can spare from my duties to write to you. If I wrote as often as I think about you I should do nothing else, and better was my disappointment last night to wake from my dream and find that it was a dream and that you was not by my side.

All day yesterday the wind blew from furiously and this morning great sand drifts like snow drifts in the north are piled up before every door. This morning did not make it really cold but still it was chilly enough this morning to make a little fire agreeable. It is now quite dry down here. That is we have had no rain for a good while. The air is damp enough every morning (except when the north wind blows) from the exhalation from the sea, but it gets dry in the desert of Sahara in the afternoon. The weather is also getting so as to feel quite hot some days.

We ought to have another mail by this time & I get some more letters. For want of that I have been reading your February letters over again & find some points in them that I have not answered or noticed.

You say that Walter would go to Tabor for mail if he knew the way. I want he should know the way not only to Tabor but in every other direction and for more than 12 miles. When I was Walter's age I never had been 12 miles from home. It has been a great damage to me that I did not learn to act for myself and to think for myself and depend upon myself when I was a boy.

Practically I think the damage was greater than all the good I got from the books I read. Walter ought to be able now to start and come to me in Texas if it was necessary. He ought to be able to go to Sidney & buy goods. I want him to learn this summer to go to different places by himself. There will be plenty of occasions that he will need to know how to travel & take care of himself. He must learn it immediately.

You ask me what is the pay of Major. It has been about 130\$ per month. I don't know whether Congress raised officers pay or not. I have heard they raised the compensation of rations from 30 cts to 50 cts & took off the tax, but I have not seen it in any paper. If they have that will make the pay of Major about 140\$ & Major about 180\$ a month. There are two things that I want to do and I am afraid I can't do both. I want to get the rank of Major and I want to come home to you before the 1st day of October.

I am afraid I can't do either. The degree of my desire for the two things however is very different, and I want to go home the most. It is impossible to tell now whether I can do it or not but I think the chance of doing it so soon as I want to is poor. I will have been in the service 3 years on the 17th day of September. I will have a better chance to resign after that than before. But after that if I am here I would not have time to get home so soon as I would like to. Now I am going to scold you a little. You say

in one of your letters that you don't know that but I would get along better without you if you should not live. I won't scold you but little for I don't suppose you think so. It was a little wicked to say that. It would be mighty wicked for you to think it. In another letter you say you could not live without me. Do you suppose I could live any better without you? If one of us should die this year or next, I suppose the survivor would live as long as possible and do as well as possible for the children. But it would be a terrible ^{loss} to either of us to be the survivor of such an event. I don't want it to occur. I don't want you to have it to bear.

Charlie & Orwin had bad luck with their feet. I hope they are both about again. You say you have filled the album and have photographs enough for another. I will get you another one sometime but do not know when. You want to know if I inquired about the child in Sidney. I did and they had not come. I ought to have mentioned it. I hope you have left "Lonely Island" before the time for some other place. I feel in great trouble about where you will live this summer. I am afraid Abbott will refuse to take 40\$ for his land house. I hope father has sold the Salt Creek claim & bought or hired a house in Texas for you & mother to stay in this summer & has gone or is going to Missouri to buy a place. I think Roswell will send you some help and I think you will need it. And I hope to be able to pay him back with interest at some future time. I feel quite confident now that when I get out of the service