

Richard Baxter Foster Letters to his Wife

[All indentions are meant to reflect those found in the original letter.]

Brownsville Texas

Sunday June 4th 1865

Dear Lucy,

I have not written a good long letter to you for a week. It is a week ago today since we started from Brazos Santiago. We arrived at Brownsville Tuesday morning at 6 o'clock and have since been very busy fixing camp, doing guard and patrol duty [] the streets and getting things to rights generally. One reason that I have not written more to you has been that I have had so poor a chance to write. I have my desk but no tent and no house. I have a little shade and that is all. No protection from the wind which blows or from the dust which flies all the time. As soon as our stores which were left behind at Brazos arrive [] (which will be today or tomorrow I think) I will have a wall tent which will be a great addition to my comfort when writing. I do not object to [] & sleeping out doors. I am getting fat on it but it is not so pleasant to work with papers in the wind.

Another reason why I have not written is that I have been waiting for the mail. I understand that it came to Brazos nearly a week ago but it has not got here yet. I am anxious to hear from home. That is the only [] in which I regret our change from Brazos to Brownsville. This is a pleasant town now that it is tolerable clean and I do not think it will be unhealthy. The climate is pleasant. The City of [Matamoros] in Mexico is below us instead of being above and a rapid deep river carries all impurities away

[Page 2]

I suppose you will be watching my letters now for some sign when you can look for me home more than for any thing else and I will try to let you know all I do on the subject as fast as I learn.

To give my belief in our word it is my impression now that it will take me 3 months from this date to get home until about the 1st of September though I shall try hard to get [] one month sooner. I will explain what little I know about the chance to get out. I understand the government is reorganizing the army mustering out some regiments officers and all and the non-[effective] officers and men of other regiments, but that there other regiments that the govt wishes to keep in longer & consequently no effective officer in those regts will be obliged to have [] he wishes to. Govt wishes them all to remain. But those who desire to will undoubtedly be allowed to resign and their places will be filled by those who are willing to remain. These resignations will be accepted as fast as the [interests] of the service will admit. If a regt is not in the field and there are a sufficient number of officers to do the duty required and one wishes to offer a resignation it will be accepted immediately. But good efficient [regiments] will not be allowed to be broken up by too many of the officers resigning at at once. This regiment now is in the extreme front the furthest from Washington & the nearest the enemy if there is [] enemy

[Page 3]

the nearest Mexico at [] of any regt in the service. We have only 24 officers Field staff and Co all told of whom 3 are on leave of absence to visit their friends in the North and one is on detached service in N.O. leaving 20 in Texas. One was left in charge of camp at Brazos, three (an A A IIs. a Q. M. & an ADC) are on Genl Brown's staff. We have to furnish a Post Commander & his Adjutant & by the time you count out the [] Commander his Act Adj't the Q⁶M² the Surgeon & the Major who is [] on duty similar to that of Provost Marshal ~~you see that~~ though not called that, you see there is not one officer from Co. left. And in fact there is one Co. now without an officer with it and 2 or 3 more officers would be detached if they could be spared from the regt.

Under these circumstances if an officer who is well and able to do duty offers a resignation the Col. will endorse the [] of the great need of officers & that the service could at the present by his leaving and it would probably [] back disapproved. Perhaps our officer at a [] will be allowed to go. Adamson is going to try it first and I think he will succeed. There are two reasons why he has a better claim than I have. He has been in the service a year longer than I have and his health is not good. He does duty most of the time but he is running down. He only weighs 120 pounds and is naturally as heavy a man as I am. He got hurt in a scuffle 2 or []

[Page 4]

months ago and has never felt well since. He did not do duty for near a month afterward. He has not written his wife anything about not being well, but I never should keep any thing of that kind back from you.

Adamson will send his resignation to New Orleans by the next mail If it is favorably received he will hear [] it about the first of July and get home about the first of Aug.

If things are favorable to my doing so I may offer a resignation about the time Adamson gets to the regt & make application to go to New Orleans with it in which case when I had got it I could go straight home. You see that my calculations are to get [] with about the first of Aug [] the first of Sept. To do either of these I expect to have to go without getting paid again and to have to borrow money to get home with and then wait six months to settle up with govt. When every thing else is ready I don't think that ought to stop me though it would be very convenient if I could get the 4 months pay that will be due me the 30th day of June. It is doubtful how long I shall continue to get the letters you write but you must not stop writing till you hear positively that I am coming home. I don't really think we shall have a war with Mexico & if we do I should think they would enlist troops for that purpose & I don't think I should go though there might be circumstances that would produce me to do it. The Rio Grande is muddier than the Missouri.

Love to All

Baxter