

6-4-1865

## Richard Baxter Foster Letter to his wife June 4 1865

Richard Baxter Foster

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Brownsville Texas.

Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup> 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, cleaning the streets and getting things & 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 here (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 lying & 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 respect in which I regret our change from Brazos to Brownsville. This is a pleasant <sup>town</sup> now that it is tolerably 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.



I suppose you will be watching  
my letters now for some sign when you can  
look for one home now 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 one word it is  
my impression now that it will take me  
3 months from this date to get home until  
about the 1<sup>st</sup> of September though I shall  
try hard to get round 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 are other regiments that the govt  
wishes to keep in longer & consequently non ef-  
fective officers in those regts will be obliged to  
leave unless 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  
once. This regiment now is in the extreme  
front. The farthest from Washington & the  
nearest the enemy if there is any enemy



the meanest Messiahs at any rate 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 A.O. leaving 20 in Tex.  
One was left in charge of camp at Brazos, three  
(an A.A.S., a 2<sup>d</sup> M. & an ADC) are on Indian Prairie  
staff. We have to furnish a Post Commander  
& his Adjutant. & by the time you count out  
the regimental Commander his Act Adj't the  
2<sup>d</sup> M., the Surgeon & the Major who is detached  
on duty similar to that of Provost Marshal  
~~you see that~~ though not called that, you  
see there is not one officer per 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

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Under these circumstances if an officer who  
is well and able to do duty offers a resignation  
the Col. will endorse the facts of the great need  
of officers & that the service <sup>would</sup> at the present  
be ~~by his being~~ and it would probably come  
back disapproved. Perhaps one officer at  
a time 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 3



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

Adamsen will send his resignation to  
New Orleans by the next mail. If it is favor-  
ably received he will hear from 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 Adam-  
sen gets to the dept & 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 home  
either about the first of Aug. or the first  
of Sept. To do either of them 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 everything 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 30<sup>th</sup> day of June.  
It is doubtful how long I shall continue to get the letter  
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  
Mexicos. & 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  
induce me to do it. The Rio Grande is muddier than the Missouri.

Love to all  
Paxton