

CIVIL WAR LETTERS
OF
SAMUEL R. WILLIAMS
AND
MARTHA JAMES

Transcribed from the originals in the collection of

Jack Finch

by

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Introduction

These letters chronicle the Civil War romance of Samuel R. Williams and Martha James, young members of the Welsh community centered in Freedom, Cattaraugus County, New York. The first several letters were written before Samuel enlisted on August 30, 1862 at Freedom, to serve three years. He was 21 years of age; five feet, ten inches tall, with a light complexion, blue eyes and dark hair. By occupation he was a farmer. Samuel was mustered in as a private of Company F, 154th New York Volunteers, on September 24, 1862, and was present with the regiment until he was captured at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863. As his letters record, he was a prisoner of war for two months and twenty-two days--most of that time spent on Belle Island in the James River at Richmond--and was paroled and arrived at Annapolis, Maryland in September 1863. By early 1864 he was back home on a furlough. Samuel R. Williams died of chronic diarrhea at Freedom on February 21, 1864. He is reportedly buried at Fish (now Crystal) Lake in Freedom.

Samuel was one of five Williams brothers--sons of William J. and Jane (Jones) Williams--who served in the Union army. The older brothers, including David (born 1824), William (1833), and Samuel (1837) were born in Herkimer County, New York. The birthplace of brother Isaac (1839) is unknown; younger brother Simeon (1844) was born in Oneida County, New York. David Williams enlisted in 1861 and served in Company E, 2nd New York Artillery; he was discharged in November 1864. William Williams enlisted August 26, 1862 at Freedom and was mustered in as private, Company F, 154th New York on September 25, 1862; he entered the hospital at Brooks Station, Virginia on April 13, 1863, and was absent from the regiment for the rest of the war. Isaac Williams enlisted August 8, 1862, and served in Company G, 136th New York; like Samuel, he was captured at Gettysburg, imprisoned at Belle Island and paroled to Annapolis, where he died of disease and was buried. Simeon Williams enlisted November 25, 1861 in Company G, 78th New York, and was discharged for disability in September 1863.

Martha James had a brother who served in the army, mentioned as are Sam's brothers in their correspondence. David James enlisted in September 1861 at the age of 18 in the 64th New York and was killed at the Battle of Chancellorsville and buried on the field.

**Index to members of the 154th New York
mentioned in the letters of
Samuel R. Williams and Martha James**

Cheney, Harrison: 10/12/62 [MJ]; 10/27/62: 6/8/63.

Davis, William M.: 6/8/63.

James, William P.: 12/7/62; 1/13/63; 2/11/63: 3/6/63 [MJ]; 3/16/63; 6/8/63.

Jones, Lewis L.: 5/9/63; 5/16/63.

Jones, Thomas T.: 5/9/63; 5/16/63; 10/12/63; 10/16/63.

Jones, William E.: 9/23/63; 10/12/63; 10/16/63.

Mearns, John: 6/8/63.

Morgan, Benjamin D.: 5/9/63; 5/16/63.

Williams, David J.: 5/9/63; 6/8/63.

Williams, William: 12/1/62 [MJ]?

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Dear frind Martha

Once more I take the plisure to write a few lines to yuor to inform you that i am well and hapy and i hope that you ar the same yure letter came to hand the 28 of last month and i was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you ar well we herd from David about tow weeks ago he was well at that time he is at Richmond then Simeon is at a little town named Washington he has had his pay the 24 of July i had a letter from bridely about tow weeks ago she was well at that time she is quite lonsome this summer she thinks she will come home next fall

i wold be happy to see you look in the Chees house the 4 of July i wold invite you in and help make the Chees

i wold like to see you very well now but i can not cam now but i will com after haying and harvsting if nothing happens more then i now of now and i hope that we will have good time i can not tell what day i will com thar for i do not kow how soon we will get the work don

you wanted to kow if i could not get som one that wold suit me better then you no Martha i can not ther is no one that i love as i love you

i hope that i will hear from you son agan so good by frind Martha

yours truly

Samuel Williams

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

March 15th 1862

I take mi pen in hand to write a few lines to you wich i hope will com to hand finding you well and in good helth

I wold like to come and see you but i can not com now but i hope i can come for long. i ask you if you will com and take a wride with me next forth July pleas write as soon as you get this letter and giv me an anser to this if you pleas

yours truly

Samuel R. Williams

Address Samuel R. Williams
China
wyoming Co. N.Y.

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

April the 30, 1862

Dear frind Martha E. James

your letter came to hand the 26 of April and i was happy to get a letter from you i wold of rote to you long a go if i new where you was staing. meney and meny a time i thought of you since we bin working to John Williams is. i wold like to cum and see you but i can not com at present. if helth will alow me and the wether will be favribl i will com their som where from the first of July to the forth of July i think i will Come ther the 2 of July

i wish you to tell me in your next letter the rode to com ther for i do not no the way ther and tell me the man is name that yor going to work for. i ment to hav a Chance to talk with you that day that i was to Mr. Harises bee but i did not get a chance to talk with you

i am goig to stay at home this summer i am well and in good helth at present, and thank god for his kindness to me

this is all this time pleas write as son as you get this letter

yours truly

Samuel R. Williams
to Martha E. James

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

May the 25th 1862

Dear frind Martha

with plasuer i take this opertunity to write a few lines to you which i hope will find you well and happy. your letter came to hand the 21 of May and i was happy to hear from you and finding that you was well

i wold be very glad is this war was over with and see my brothers home one more and i hope that they will not be cald to war again

i hope that you will forgiv me for changing mi mind to come thar the 2 of July insed of the forth of July. i will com thar the 2 of July if nothing hapans that i do not no of now and i shal stop to your fathers hous and i hope that we will have good times

one of my brothers is to Washington his name is Simeon and David is to Allexandria VA. they ar well but i supose it is rather hard on tham som of the time

i thaught of inlisting last fall in the army but i think it is better in Cattaraugus then it is in the army

i wish you worked som wher near by so we cold see ech other little oftner but one thing is good letters can go from one to another i think that you can sent another letter so that it will com hear befor the 2 of July this is all this time

yours truly

Samuel Williams

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

July 9th 1862

Dear frind Martha

once more I take the plasure to write to you to let you now that i am well and hapy and i hope that you ar the same i got hom about tow O Clock that day i com from thar and i came home safe i saw Bill Williams that day i came home and he wanted to know whare i had bin i did not tell him whare i had bin but he thought that i had bin to see you he told me that he woid plague you the next tim he wold see you

if you see him i hope you will tell me what he will have to say to you about it he told me that Richerd Rees was going to ask you to take a ride with him som time this somer what do you think of it Martha

Bill Williams wanted to know if i was marred or not he thoght that we was marred

but i told him that was not so

but Martha perhaps it will take place som time if we liv what do you say abouted it Martha will you consent for it to be so if we liv it may be that you wold like to know how i spend mi forth of July i was home and made the Chees and the folks all went off how did you spend your forth. i did not get mi likness taken that day i came home for the men was not ther so i can not send it in this letter i wold like to have your likness very much

if nothing hapans i think i will com thar next september if i liv and be well and we will go and see partredge bridge if you will go

do you know the way thar and how meney miles thar is from thar to partridge Bridge if you do will you let me know in your next letter

this is all this time i think so good by this time agane
from your frind

Samuel Williams

write soon soon if you pleas

[rubbed out, but still legible] do not be offended abouted any thing that i hav rote in this letter Dear Martha

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford Sep 6th 1862.

Dear Friend,

once more have I taken the pleasure of writing to you to let you know that I am well and I hope that these few lines will find you the same.

I was glad to hear from you the last time and to hear that you was well and that your Brothers was well. it has been three weeks since I had a letter from David he was well then and talked of going back to the Regiment in a few days and that is the last that we heard of him but I hope that we will get a letter before long.

they talk of drafting in this town in a few days. are they going to draft in your town and are you afraid that you will have to go it seems hard to have folks go that do not want to go but I suppose that evry thing is for the best.

I hope that Breget will come back this fall she must feel lonesome while her husband is in the army. I heard that Mary Johns was Married but I do not know for certain whether it is so or not if you know I wish you would write and let me know

when do you think of coming out here again I should like to know so that I would not be gone for I go off visting some days but if you cant tell me what day you can come if you will come some saterday night and stay Sunday with us for I go home evry sunday but perhaps you think that would be wickit and may be it would so you see that you can do as you are might to I have no news to tell you so I must close my letter by saing that I hope you will write soon. good by from your Friend,

Martha

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

sep 16th 1862

Dear frind and beloved Martha

once more i take the plasure of writing a few lines to you hoping that you ar well and happy i am now to Jamestown it is quite lonsom hear now but i think that it will be better before long how do you feal after that ride Martha i hope that we will have the privlige of riding out after this war is over with i hope that you will not get discourigd Marth and leav me but i hope you will be trew and we may see good times after this and i will keep my word

Dar Martha i am in som hury so good by this time again pleas write very soon i will try to write more next time

yure frind

Samuel Williams

adress S. R. Williams
James Town Chautauqua Co NY

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford Sep 18 1862

Dearest Samuel

your letter has just come to hand and I will sit up to night and answer it it is after 9 o clock. well I am very glad to hear from you this time and I hope that you will like it better by and by I feel first rate after my ride and I should like another ride with a Soldier they all plague me about you and they say that we was Married that day I dont say anny thing for I just as leav they would think that as anny thing. I think of you often and wonder what you are doing I have all the courage in the world that you will come home all right and I hope that you wont have to stay 3 years neather I hope that you will keep up good sprite for I think that the Lord is on our side when we are doing good and I wish that we could say the Lords will be done and feel willing to bear every thing as it comes Samuel I will remain true to you if you will to me this is all for this time so good bye from your true Martha write soon Samuel

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Oct the 3 1862

Dear frind and beloved Martha

i take this plasure to write to you to let you know that i am well and in good helth and i hope that you ar the same and to the Lord be the thanks for his kindness to me we started from James Town last mondy and ar now in veginia 5 miles from Washington it is quite a plesant plase hear the Rebels ar 10 or 15 miles from hear

i have no nuse to write this time mi love to you Dear Martha so good by this agan

yurs truly

Samuel Williams

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford Oct 12th, 1862

Dear Samuel,

I received your letter this morning and was very glad to hear from you and that you was well. I did not know that you had left Jamestown untill I got your letter but I wonder why you did not write to me but when I got the letter I was surprised to know that you was in Washington but the Lord can take care of you there as well as though you was in Arcade and I can think of you as often for distance cannot distroy true friendship no never. did you get that letter that I sent to Jamestown is all of the Welsh boys in the same Company and are you in the same Regiment that Chiney is in do you feel lonesome any well I do if you dont but I keep up good spirit and hope for the best and I hope that you will have good health and as good times as can be expected I had a letter from brother David he was well he is in Harpers ferry George Williams was wounded in his arm they expected to march evry day do you hear from David and your other brothers I hope that they are all well. you had a long ride in the cars how did you enjoy yourself how I should like to come into your tent and see you and talk with you about old times well I cant do that but I can talk with you through the pen and ink and papar I am thankful for that for it seems so good to get a letter from a Dear friend it is Sunday night but I cant go to meeting and I think of how many Sunday nights we went to the flast to meeting for you used to go there nights after all home thankful we ought to be that our Heavnly Father can hear and answer the secrate prayer where ever we are I have no news this time so I will close my letter for it is bed time I hope that you will write again soon so good by for this time Samuel from your true friend

Martha

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Oct 27, 1862

Dear frind and Beloved martha

i take this opetunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that you ar the same

and to the Lord be the thanks for all his blesings to me and in him i trust for evry thing for he is the god of all blesings and is redy to helpe all that will ask for helpe in the write way

we ar in the same Regt. as Captin Cheney is but not in his Compney the Welch Boys ar all well exeptin one Lewis Jones he has got the mumps Rather bad but i think he will get well soon

i got that letter that you rote to me when i was to Jamstown

your letter come to hand the 25 of October and was hapy to hear from you and i think often of the old time we have hade i fell som losom hear now but i hope thare is beter time a coming

i had a letter from David since i bin hear he is well he is at forte Bennet my other bothers war all well when i herd from them last

excuse me for my short letter this time for i must close it now by saing that i hope you will get it

pleas write soon and write all the news

yours truly

S. R. Williams

i will try to write more next time

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford Nov. 2, 1862.

Dear Samuel,

I received your letter last night and was very glad to hear from you once more and that you was well and all of your Brothers. I am well and quite happy and I think that I ought to be so as long as you are well and my brother David is well and dont have to fight and I can have letters from you often. I feel thankful to God for his kindness to me. I am so glad to hear from you and I thank you verry much for writting to me so often I have had three letters from you since you went Washington, and I will try and do the same to you.

I did think of going to Canada with Susan Williams but I think that I will wait untill after the War is over and peace riegn over our Country and I hope that my freinds will come home all well and that we may see good times yet. they talk of drafting verry strong the tenth of this month and the men are scart most to death I think that they will this time anny way So I am glad that you enlisted when you did. I hope that you will get over being lonsome how do you look in soldiers Cloths. I should like to see you with your new suit on I look at your likness often and that little locket that you gave I think every thing of it and I hope that you will see me wear it after this keep up good Courage, and trust in him who is able to save the soul and body. I have not been in Freedom yet but I think of going before long I have no news to tell you this time we are all well to day John has been sick but he is well now my pen is poor I shall get a new one before the next time so good by Samuel for this time write soon.

from your true Martha

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James, on stationery with poem, "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and color vignette of woman, "Published for the Union Soldiers by James D. Gay, Philadelphia, Pa. Printed by Chas. Magnus, N.Y."]

Nov 12th 1862

Dear frind Martha

i take the plasure of writing a few lines to let you know that i am well and i hope that you ar the same your letter came to hand last knight and i was very happy to hear from you and to hear that you ar well i feel very thankfull for my helth for that is a grate thing for a soldier that is so far from home and i hope that i will have strength to be a good soldier for him that dide and sufered for us i do not feel so lonsom as i did i wold hate to be drafted if i was to home i had a letter from home a few days a go ther all well i herd that there is 16 to be drafted in freedom i shal send my picture to you if i can get it taken i do not kow of eney place where they take picture but i will try and find out whare they take them i look rather ruf now for i have not shaved since i ben hear i look at your likness very often it is rather a hard place to keepe eney thing hear but i think that i can keep your likness eney way i was happy to hear in your letter that yu ar not going to Canada that yu ar going to wait until this war is over with and i hope that will not be long i have not hurd but one surmen since i bin hear there is grate meney temtations hear to be had but i hope that i ma have strength to liv for him from how all blesings flo

evry thing is hy hear butter is 40 sents a pound Ches 25 and so on evry thing is very Dear we ar now near thoroughfar gap all the welch Boys ar well

if there is eney thing Martha that you want to know from hear you can let me know in yure letter if you go to freedom let me know the nuse from thare i will close my letter now my love to you Dear martha from youre tru frind Samuel R. Williams let me know in yure letter if you get this song write soon i hope you will get this letter

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford, December 1st 1862

Dear Samuel,

I received your letter dated the 12 on the 21 of this month and I was very glad to hear that you was well perhaps that you wonder why I did not write before but I know that you will freely forgive me when I tell you that I have been very sick since I wrote to you last. I have had the Diptheria but thank the Lord I am better to day and I hope that I shall get well in a few days. I am very glad that you are not as lonesome as you have been I hope that you will like it pretty well while you stay and I hope that wont be long I suppose that you are in Burnside's Army and are marching on to meet the Rebels. well all that I can say is that God will help the wright so keep up good courage for evry thing is for the best

that song I like it first rate it made me laugh and cry but I hope you dont feel as bad as that song sais dont let the tears blind your eyes for we poor girls are not worthy of your tears. I would like to get your likness first rate if you can but if you cant I will feel satisfide with the one that I have got.

Susan has got back from Cannada but I have not seen her yet how does Bill get along do you think that he writes to Susan or not how do you keep your letters if you cant keep them you can send them back to me I mean those that you get from me for they say that it is a bad sign to burn them. David sends all of his letters home. I have often thought of the many temtations that is around you evry day but I hope that you will have grace enough to overcome all temtations

you say that you have not heard but one sermon well that is rather bad but you have got your bible and you can read Christ's sermon on the mountain and that is the best sermon that I ever heard. I have not got through working for Mr Rice yet but I had to come home when I was sick but I think that I shal go back in a few days. they plague me often about you well I dont care for that does the boys plague you any has any of them see my likeness yet. if I was a bird how quick I would fly down South to see you and all of our brave Soldiers boys I think of them evry day yes I think of thee when all is still I must close my letter by saying that I hope the Lord will bless you I am tired for I do not feel strong yet so good by Samuel for this time from your friend Martha

[on the last page, in Samuel's hand:] i Will send som of the letters back to you i have no place to keep them if i shold March

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Vir Fairfax Dec the 7, 1862

Dear frind Martha

i take this oportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and and to let you know that yure kind letter came to hand to day and i was glad to hear from you but i was sorry to hear that you was sick but i am hapy that you ar better i hope you will soon recover and i feel very thankful to the Lord for his grate blesings to me and that my helth is so good and i hope it will continue so as long as i will be in the Armeiy

i have got all the letters that you rote to me i thought som of burning them but i did not like to do so for i thought they mint be som hurt in it but i did not hear of that sine before you tole me

i think that i will send som of them back to you before long there is grate deal of talking hear now that this war will close by next spring i dont know whether it will be so or not but i hope it will be so

i found a letter the other day that susen had rote to Bill James she rote that Eve Morgen and Hannah was well and she rote to that she wold send him a quilt and a pillow if he could tell her how she can send them she told him that she want going to war her her new dress untell he will com back

i think that he writs to her i am happy that i hear from you so often i thouht you was sick or somthing a mater that i did not hear from you this last time

it is rather cold hear to day there is som snow on the ground to day we ar under Sygel we ar the grand resurve I think that we will not do much marcing this winter i wold like to see very well but i supose that i cant yet a spell

it is som cold and i hve but little nuse to write to you this time so i must close my letter from yure tru frind

Samuel Williams

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford Dec. 20th, 1862.

Dear friend Samuel

I received your last letter in due time and was verry glad to hear that you was well as I am at presant but I feel rather bad to night some of our boys was killed in that last battle that was in the same Company with our David and I do not know whether he is killed or not I hope not poor boys. I read in the paper the other day that Sigel was marching towards Fredrighsburg. if it is so perhaps that you can see David if he is alive he is in Co D, 64 Reg. be sure and try to see him if he is there but I am so afraid that he is dead. do you think that they are going to fight any more in that place I wish that they would settle up and let our Dear boys come home. but perhaps that it is but the works of men to have war. dont you wish that some girl thought enough of you to send you a bed quilt and a pillow. I hope that she will have good luck to send them and ware the new dress when he gets back, for a wedding dress. how I should like to see you in your camp do you have enough to eat and do you keep warm I think of you often I hope that the war will come to an end before long so keep up good spirit I am thankful that your health has been so good

I have no news this time but I wish you a merry Cristmas and a happy new years. you must excuse my poor writing write as soon as you can. so good by from one that remains true as ever I will try and write more next time

M. James

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James, on C. Magnus stationery with woman on seaside cliff under flag emblazoned "For the Union" and state seal of Maine, in gold ink.]

Fredrigsburg Jan the 13, 1863

Dear frind Martha

i take this opertunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that yure letter came to hand the 6 of this month and i was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you ar well i am well and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to me

i have no ink nor i can not get eney so i have to to take a led pinsel

i have bin very busey now for a week bylding a bunk so we have got it now so that we sleep warm in it i think that we will stop hear this winter i dont think that they will be another fight hear but yet i dont know i get plenty to eat hear yet i hope that they will not fight much more for it is hard to think of so meny men kild for nothing i forgot to ansar one thing that you asked me in yure other letter that is if they plagued me or not about you thar is not but tow of the Boys seen yure likness they do not say much to me about it do they plague you much thar now what do they have to say I wonder if Susan will invite us to the weding so that we can see that new dress. she pears to be very reddy to send a quilt and a pilo it isent them that is so redy is alwase the best i think that you wold send a quilt and a pilo to a soldier as quick as she will if we wuld ask you to do so i have seen David number times since i have bin hear he looks tuf and helthy he was hear new years and took diner with us i showed him yure likness he sed that it looked natral he camps about half a mile from hear

when i want a quilt and a pilo i will send and tell you of it and i think you will be so reddy to send them to me as Susan is to send them to bill James it has bin very fine wether hear yet thare is no sow hear yet i have no more nuse to write to you this time so i will close my letter by saying good by this time

from yure tru frind

Samuel R. Williams

i did not send this letter off as soon as i thought of so i will send you a Ring made of a beef bone i dont know whether it is to larg or not it is rater ruf but it is as good as i could make i wold like to see you this morning very well but it is must to far to cum this morning but perhaps it wont be so long so good by this morning from yure tru frind

Samuel R. Williams

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Near Acqua Crick feb the 11 1863

Dear beloved Martha

i take this presant oportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that these few lines will find you the same i have not hade a letter from you since i rote before and it is some time since i rote before and it may be that you did not get that letter and i though i wold write to you to day but it may be that i will get a letter the next mail we moved from Fredricburg last thursday and came hear last Saturday we ar about tow mile from Staford Cort House

i dont know how long we will stay hear i hope that we will stay hear until spring aneyway for i dont like to be mooving from one place to another all the time and i have got up a good bunk and a fire place in it this is the thurd bunk that i have put up since new years they ment to have a fight to Fredricburg agan but it com rain and it got so muddy that they could not get the artilrey and the Ponton Bridges along so they had to give it up for the present i dont know whether they will try it agan or not

i saw David yure brother week ago last sunday he was well he looks tuf and helthy

how i wold like to see you today Martha the boys plagued me a good deal about you latly i dont know how they found out that we cept compney but i dont mind what they say

Bill James did not say nothing about me or you for i think he was a fraid that i wold say something about that letter i found i guess that susan has not send a quilt nor a pillow yet to him

this is all this time pleas write soon and write all the news

from yure treu love

Samuel R. Williams

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Camp near Staford
Feb the 25 1863

Dear beloved Martha

I take this present oportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that those few lines will find you the same and thank the Lord for his grate kindness to me

i have not resived a letter from you this grate while but i expect a letter day after day from you i have not give up yet that i will not get a letter from you for i belive that you will keep yure promic i think that the letters stoped on the way or sumthing has hapent

i hope i will get a letter from you soon and find out if somthing has hapent or not i hope not

i have seen simeon my brother he is well and tuf i got a letter from David mi Brother a few days ago he was well he is at Fort Benett near Washington i have not seen David yure Brother since we left Fredricburg

the Boys hear is all well at presant i have no nuse to write to you this time

i wold like to see you very well how happy i wold be if i cold com and stay with you tow or three ours

but the onley thing we can do is to keep up curage and keep yur promise and we may pehaps meet agan in Alegany i got my likness taken to day and i will send it to you in this letter

i have no more to write this time my love to you and best respect

yurs truly

Samuel R. Williams

pleas write soon and write all the nuse so good by this time

Frank was - Boston

Vol. 2, p. 15, 17

I am received affection

I take this present opportunity

to write you some lines to you to

let you know that I am well

and hope that these few lines

will find you the same and thank

the Lord for his great bounty

to me

I have not received a letter from

you this week while I wait expect

a letter every day from you

I have not got up yet this week

and get a letter from you

per a letter that you write

be your friend I think that

the letters I send on the way on

something has happened

I hope I will get a letter from

you soon and find out your meaning

at Washington March 6 1863

Dear daughter

I have received 2 letters and a note from

from you in which you say that you do not get

any of my letters I have sent you 2 letters

that you have not had I get very sorry

that I am afraid that some of the boxes

have been out and keep them out of

good what you say I am glad to hear

of your welfare and I am glad that

you have confidence in me that I will keep

my promise and I am glad that

you may depend on that there is not time

to say that you do not get from keeping

company with me that is if you like to

go with another girl and leave me as I should

do not take any more any but not till I am

well I am writing to you I am well I get

that my and it is the same I am well I get

from case I will get and I am well I get

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford, March 6th 1863

Dear Samuel,

I have received 2 letters and a Valantine from you in wich you say that you do not get any of my letters I have sent you 2 letters that you have not had I feel very sorry for it I am afraid that some of the boys takes them out and keep them as I cant guess what comes of them for I have answered all of your letters. but I am glad that you have confidence in me that I will keep my promise yes Samuel I will do that you may depend on that. there is but two things that can seperet me from keeping compney with you, that is if you like to go with another girl and leave me or shold death take one of us awy but not till then will I stop writing to you. Samuel I got that ring and it fits my finger first rat you are pretty good hand to guess the sice of my finger I thank you very much for it. I got your valentine I thought that you looked very naturel in that little tent writing on that little table I wish that I could look over your shoulder and see you when you are writing I hope that I shal after this war is over. well you cant guess what I have got at the table before me that I have to stop writting often and look at that it is your likeness from the Army I got it last night and was very glad to see it but I am a shame to tell you that could not believe that it was you untill I read your letter. you have changed so much, since you went away you look better than you did the last time that I see you if you keep on growing better looking untill you come home you will be so hansome that you wont look at me well if you dont Dick Rees will mabe. I am so thankful that you are well and so fishy you look real healthy and I hope that the Lord will bless and spare your life to come back and see me agaian I am well and happy I wish that you would tell me what you had in your hand when you had your likeness taken. when are you going to send for that bed quilt and pillow I guess that I will be ready to send them when you get ready to ask me for them I think that when Bill James and Susan gets Married you and I will have invitation to see that new dress worn Joel Morgan was Married last week to a girl here in Rushford. I supose that you have heard of all the deaths in Freedom it has been quite sickly here they had the smallpox three died of it the rest are getting better our folks are all well I had a letter from David yesterday he is well he wrote to me about eating dinner with you he said that you done the koocking and it was first rate I should like to come in just then when you was togather eating beef stake and crackers. I am glad that your brothers are well. I am going to send this letter in Mr David W. letter and see if you will get it for I am sory that you dont get my letters. This is all for this time write as soon as you get this and let me know if you got it or not so good by Samuel from your true

Martha E James
Rushford Allegeny

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams, postscript to March 6, 1863 letter]

March 8th I did not send this when I intended I was over to Freedom to day and saw Susan she was well I told her that I got your likeness and I asked her if she had Bills likeness she said no and seemed to feel bad she haint got one I should think that he would send her one I have no news this time so good night Dear write soon

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Camp Near Staford
March the 12 1863

Dear Frind Martha

i take this opertunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that you ar the same and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to us i Just com home from picket i bin on picket three days at once i expected a letter from you hear when i came back but not one to be had but i hope that i will get one in a few days i dont know hardley what to think that i dont get a letter from you

i am afraid that you have got angrey to me or somthing has hapant to you i dont know what to think of it pleas and write soon and let me know what is the mater i think som time that you ar sick or that i have rote somthing that has displeased you or somthing yet i cant think what can be the mater perhaps that the letters has stopt or somthing the mater

i supose that you have not lost the address for fear that you have lost the address i will giv you the address

Samuel R. Williams
Washington, D.C.
Comp. F, 154 Regt.
N.Y.S.V.

i have no nuse to write to you this time but pleas and write soon pleas and write soon soon and write all the nuse this is all this time i will expect a letter from you soon so good By this time my best love to you yurs that remanes treu

Samuel R. Williams
To
Martha E. James

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Camp Near Staford
March the 16 1863

Dear beloved Martha

i take this presant opertunity with plasur to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that those few lines will find you the same and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to us

yure kind letter came to hand last knight and i was very happy to hear from you and that you ar well and all is wright i was afraid that you war sick or somthing was the mater but them tow letters you send before this i did not git i dont know what has become of them it may be that they will come yet the one i got is the one that you send in David Williams is letter

i dont think that eney of the Boys has taken eney of the letters for i hav bin hear most all the time when the male came in so i think thay have stopt on the rode somwhare

Dear Martha my promic that i promiced you when i came from home to write to you i shal keep as long as i can write and my hart will be with you and i hope that we may see each other after this war and hav a good time after this war you sed in yure letter perhaps that i wold not look at you when this war is over if i live to com home and if you live o know not so for thair is no one that i love as i love you

and as you told me thair is not but tow thing that will stop me from keeping compney with you that is deth or you stop writing to me

and i trust that you will keep yure word and i think you ar true to what you promic and that you will keep yure word that quilt and pilo that you sed that you sed you wold send when i wanted them i thank you for your kindness but i am afraid that a quilt and a pilo wold be more bother hear then good for i cold not carey them on a march you wanted to know what i had in my hand when i had my likness taken it was a sword

i guess when Bill James and susan get mared that we will have the chance to go to the weding but i think it will not be very soon he plagues me some times about you but i can stop his talk by saying somthing about susan to him he will stop write of the Boys tryes to plague me about you but i dont car what they say i wold think that Bill wold send his likness to susan but i think he is tow faced man and decful felo

how i wold like to see you a while to day if i cold fly i wold com and see you i must stop this time by saying good by Dear Martha this time write soon

yurs that remins true

Samuel Williams
to Martha James

[Martha James to Samuel R. Williams]

Rushford March 28 1863

Dear Samuel,

I received your last letter in due time and was glad to hear from you once more and that you was well. I was very glad that you got my letter that I sent in D Williams letter. I got a letter from you dated the 12, in which you had no letters from me I felt very sorry that you had to go so long without hearing from me for I should feel bad if I could not hear from you in so long a time but I hope that you will get my letters after this I think that I made a mistake in the Regiment. I should like to know what makes the Boys plague you so much about me well evry body is plaguing me about you but I dont care for that for I think that it is our busness and not any body elses. I am verry glad that you are well and I hope that you are happy for I think that we shal meet againe after this war is over with. I think of you evry day and I wonder what you are doing it seems that have had no fighting yet I wish you never have to but we will trust in the Lord for He is evry where presant and is able to save us in the battle as well as at home he is kind to me and has been all through my life and mean to serve and praise him all the days of my life and when I die I hope to find a home in heaven. I have no news to tell you this time only that I am going to work near home this summer I am going to take charge of Making Cheese I supose that you wont have to milk nor make cheese neither this year. Well you may rest yourself for you may have to do it againe this is all so good by and may God bless you Samuel

from your true friend

Martha James

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

May the 9, 1863
Camp Near Staford

Dear Frind Martha

[The heading above was written in ink and postdates the first portion of the letter, which is written in pencil at Kelly's Ford, Virginia.] i take this presant opertunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that these few lines will find you the same and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to me we have mooved from the old camp about 30 mile we ar know near Celey Ford near the Rappahannock River we hant had no male since we have bin hear nore cant send eney out we have bin hear tow weks i dont know when i can send this out nor when i will get eney letters so you see it makes it rather bad i dont know how long we will stay hear we ar hear gurdng the Ford.

[The letter resumes in ink.]

May the 9, 1863

Dear frind Martha

i did not have a chance to send a letter out since we left this camp i got yure letter when we was at Celey ford and i was glad to hear from you that you ar well but i was sory that i cold not send eney out

we went acros the Rahappohamick River and marched about 20 miles the other side of the River and thir we had a fight the Rebs came to the rear of us before we knew it hardley and they drove us back through som woods and thair we hild yur ground the fight comenced las saturday about 5 o clock in the evning and we fought until after dark but Sunday morning earley the fight comeced agan and they fagh until about noon and then it stopt i suppose that we was most to much for them

we stede thir a day or tow and then we hade to come back across the river on the acont that we hade not forse enough to Fredricburg i suppose we did not whip them nor they us but they was more of them kild a good deal i think then of us

it was an afful fight eneway we took good meney Reb presners Sunday the most of them was drunk that is the reson they figt so bold because they ar drunk

Martha you wanted to know if i was going to fetch a black Lady home with me i think not for i have nothing to do with them nor i dont like the looks of them thay dont never come into the camp

i think that warm suger wold go good know

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James, May 9, 1863, continued]

we have not seen nor hard of Bin Morgen since the fight nor of Lewis Jones David Williams was wonded in the sholder rater bad Thomas Jones was wonded in the hand it seams very lonsom hear know the Boys ar missing so this is all this time so good by this time my love to you Dear martha

from yure true frind

Samuel Williams

i feel very lonsom to day for the Boys ar mising it may be that we will be on a moove soon agan and then i cant send a letter out But keep up good curredge and look for better time

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Camp Near Staford
May the 16, 1863

Dear frind Martha

i take this presant opertunity to write a few lines to you hoping that they will find you well as they leav me at the presant time and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to us that he has spard yor lives until this day

i have no nuse to write to you i have spare time so i though i wold write to you and i expect a letter from before long from you we ar in the old camp know Near Staford i dont know how long we shal stay hear but not long i think mi Brother Isaac has got well Simeon mi Brother got wonded in the hand but not bad we have not hurd a word of Bingmen Morgan nor Lewis Jones nor of Thomas Jones i think they ar gone to Richmond

i supose that you have sean the acount of the battle before this time it was a hard one thare was grate meney lives lost thier

i think of you often how i wold like to see you little did i think this time last spring that i wold be down hear this summer i have no more nuse to write this time

it seams lonsum hear for thare is so meney of the Boys mising

my love to you Dear martha the Lord be with us i hope to gide and to protect us and have Crist for yor gide

from yure true frind

Samuel R. Williams

To Martha E. James
how i love

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Camp Near Staford

June 8, 1863

Dear Frind Martha

i take this oportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and hoping that thase few lines will find you the same

we ar in camp Near Staford yet i dont see much sine of yor leaving hear soon but yet cant tell

William Davis has gone to Hospitel i think he has got the feever but he is better then he has bin i hope he will soon get well John Murns has dide he hade his limb taken off he hade a hard time of it. David Williams is dowing well

Simeon mi Brother has gone home on 30 dayes furlo his hand is doing well

i have no nuse of eney importans to write but i have time plenty so i though i wold write a few lines Susan sent a nise pocket hankercheef and a coller to Bill James she sent them by Captin Cheeney he was home on a furlo thir was a paper part around them and it was ritten on it Persented to William James by Susan William

she use to take her letters to Arcade to male them so no one wold find out about her writing to Bill but she shod her self when she sent that Presant

we had a good time with Bill about Susan sending him the coler and the hankercheef

i wold like to get a furlo so i cold come and see you for it is so long a time since we have seen each other

thir is no furloes given to no one know i think if i cold get a furlo that i wold com home the marid men have the first chance to get Furloes but i am in hopes and think that we ma see each other agan on the land of the living we will trust in the Lord he is able to hold is up in evry place if we pray and feel yor wants he has don wonderfull things before know and he is the same yesterday to day and forever

i dont know of eney thing more to write at presant so i will close mi letter by saing good by this time from one that loves you and yure true Frind

Samuel R. Williams

my wish is that the Lord will bles you and be with you

Samuel R. W

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

June the 23 1863

Dear Frind and beloved Martha

i take this oportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope that thase few lines will find you the same

i have not hade a letter from you in quite a while i think some of the letters ar lost but i hope i will get one in a few days

we started from staford June the 12 about 2 o clock in the after noone we marched to hartwood church, 12 miles and stopt over knight the next morning we started agan and marced to hathlick station 22 miles and stopt over knight the next morning we started agan tierd and feet som sore and marched to Sentervill about 25 miles we stopt thir tow days and orderd to march agan and we marced about 20 miles and then camped and hear we stay yet i dont know how long we will stay hear

i got som milk and corn bread for Breckvast thir was a very nise yong lady thir i stade and talk a while with her she talked like a Lady and act like a Lady

June the 26 1863

Dear frind Martha

i take the pleasure to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and i hope thase few lines will find you the same

we started from goose crick the 24 of June and came to the Potomack and thare stade over knight the next morning we crost the Potomack and came about 25 miles in one day this morning June 26 we ar campang by a little town name Jefersen i must close my letter for we ar going to march i wold like to write more we ar 12 miles from Harperes ferey my love to you Dear frind i dont know when i can write to you agan for cant send them out excuse my poor writing for i was in a hurey i send my best respect to you and best love from yure true frind write soon

S. R. W

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Annapolis Sept the 23, 1863

Dear Frind Martha

it is so long a time since i rote to you perhaps you think that i am dead but thank the Lord that i am alive but i am not very well i am in the Hosptal at Annapolis i came hear to day i was to the Hosp. to Richmond three weeks i was taken prisner at gattisburg fight the first day of July and was a prisner tow month and 22 days

i have seen rather hard times i am happy to say that i am free once more Isaac my Brother is thir yet and William Jones

i am so tired out i can not write but a little this time i think i will get well soon my love to you Dear beloved Martha i am ancous to hear from you this is all this time my love to you Dear Martha write soon from yure frind and treu frind

S. R. Williams

Address yure letter
Samuel R. Williams
Unted Stats gen. Hosptal
Anapolis MD.

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

U.S. Gen. Hosp.
Annapolis, sept the 28, 1863

Dear Frind Martha

i take my pen in hand once more to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am getting sum better and to the Lord be the thank it and to him be the thank that i have got in the land of the free i rote a few lines to you last week for feer you dont get that i thought i wold try and write a few lines to you to day i can not write but a little you wold like to know what we got to eat in the morning we got about Five ounces of bread and about one ounce of beef and the same amount of bread at knight and a pint sup that is yor dalay food tow meals a day they took your Blankets and napsacks and harversacks and canteens and munney away from us you see thair princepel and how mean thay ar i hope that Isaac will get away from Bell Island soon Isaac is helth was good when i came away

it is a hard place in Richmond to the Hospt. get to eat their Bread and beef and little sup hard place for a sick man

i hope i never will be a prisner agan for i have seen enough of it how i wold like to come home know to be taken care of but i think i will soon get well thair is a woman that came hear most evry day that don me a grate deal of good she wold fetch me somthing good to eat i see the womin is better to us then men

i must close my letter know you must excuse me for my short letters my love to you dear Martha i like to see you but i am happy to write to you once more this is all this time from yure true frind

Samuel R. Williams

Address yure letter
Samuel R. Williams
U.S. General Hospital
Annapolis MD.

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

U.S. Genral Hospt.
Oct the 12, 1863

Dear Frind Martha

i take this presant opertunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that i am ganing sloley yure letter came to hand last week and i was very happy to hear that you ar well

and to the Lord be the thanks for his grate kindness to me that i am ganing agan for i was rather low last week

i got up yesterday and drest for the first time to day i bin out to the door i feel rather week but i hope i shal get along know

you must not expect a long letter from me to day for i dont feel very stout and i know you will excuse my short letter i have not hurd from nor seen Isaac since i left Bell island i supose he and William Jones must be to richmond yet if they be i hope that thay ar well and i hope thay will soon get away from thair i get good care hear as can be expected i have not much nuse to write i have not heard from the Regt. since i bin hear Thomas Jones is hear in the Hospt. he is not very well i is quite a plasant place hear right side of the salt watter well i think i will close mi letter know so to pout it in the office before knight my love to you Dear Frind Martha and i hope that Lord will bless us and help us to live as his children

this is short from yure trew frind

S. R. Williams

write soon

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

U.S. Genral Hospt. Oct 16, 1863

Dear Frind Martha

once more do i take mi pen in hand to write a few lines to you to let you know that yure letter came to hand yesterday i was happy to hear that you ar well

i dont seem to gain much i feel very week and i have no appetite hardley to eat i cant eat but very little

i am so i can go out and wook around a little but i gane very slow but i hope that my appetite will come good so that i will gane strenght

i wold like if i cold come home so to have better care taken of it is not bad hear yet it is not like home

but it is a hard matter to get a furlo to go home if i could some way get a furlo to come home i wold give a good deal to get one so to have a better chance to get well

but the onley way is to hope for the best and trust in the Lord he has bin good to me so far and he is able to help me agan he is the one to trust in whether in sickness or in helth i hope i may have help to live to be one of his children

i have no grate nuse to write to you Thomas Jones is going to have his discharge so he told me i hope he will thair is no sign of Isaac nor William Jones coming yet i feel very sorey for them for it is a hard place for them

you wanted to know if we hade huts to go in on Bell island som of us hade tents to go in and som hade to stay out in the rain and storm some hade blankets to sleep on and some hade to lay on the bair ground i and Isaac lade out on the ground about tow week and then we got a tent to go in and an old tent clouth to lay on with nothing over us you wanted to know if William Jones has left Mag Higinis i think not i am most sure he has not or hade not before he was taken prisner for i know he use to write to her and he use to get letters from her

we had midling good beds to lay on in the hospital in Richmond yet it was very lousey thair and durtey they gave us nothing when we came away that they hade taken from us all we got when we came from thair was little peese of bread Oh how i wold like to come home and see you but i supose thair is no chance know so the onley way is to hope for the best that i may some day come home

so i will know close my letter in hoping that the Lord will guide us through all temtations and in the end we may be saved and to glorefy him for ever more this is my wish

my love to you Dear Martha thase few lines from yure true frind

Samuel R. Williams

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

Jan 8/64

My Dear Martha

I take this present opportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know how I am getting along. I am gaining a very little. I am not much stronger than when you was here. The Doct is here now he says that I am considerable better than when he was here last. I think that I shall get well right along now and so you need not get at all Discouraged for there is a strong arm supporting us all=====

I can write no more just now please write as soon as convenient. I should like to see you very much write soon. this is all

I am yours for ever

very truly

Samuel

[Samuel R. Williams to Martha James]

China NY Feb 1/64

Dear Friend Martha

I take this present opportunity to write a few lines to you hoping that you are well-- I am not much better then when I last wrote to you I am not able to sit up eney I am very weeak dont gain much in strength I hope i will gain faster now then i have---- I hope you will excuse me for not writing sooner for we have ben very buisey I have no more to write at presant and so I will close by asking you to prey for me and obliging you to write as soon as convenient----
this is all at presant from yours

very Truley

Samuel

[Jane A. Williams to Martha James]

China Wyoming Co. NY Apr/64

Dear Friend Martha

I have the privelage of writing to you a few lines hopping they will find you well as they leave me at presant I recd. your very kind letter some time ago we wer very glad to hear that you are well-- In your letter you asked a bout the boys I can hardly tell you its all most to much here it is all, on the 22nd of March Isaac was Paroled to Annapolis he was very Sick we recd. several from him he was failing and the 22nd of April he died yeas Martha he is gone to a far better plase he has gone to whare there is no more ware he will endure no more more hardships we havent learned the particulers yet for it was only to day that we first herd of it I think the onley thing we ought to wish for now is to be prepared when we are called and we shal see those deare ones that are gone be fore us what a happy meating it will be

you enquired of Simeon he is well but very far a way he is at Steavenson Ala he is staying at a Fort the other boys we hear from quite often and are all well Bridy was here weak be fore last She is well She is gone to work to a Chease factory near Warsaw well Martha I will write no more this time we would all like to have you come to see us as soon as you can father and Mother would like very much for you and your folks to come out and see us the reason that father and mother didnt com there was father has been very sick for a long time he is ent very well yet but much better then he has been

well I must draw to a close I do wish we could see you but I hope you will write as often as you can we all send our best respects to you and folks and hope to see you soon this is all from your

very unworthy Friend

Jane A. Williams