

Fort. Heiman, Ky, May 25th 1863

Dear Sister Celestia

I received a letter from you nearly a month ago, but have neglected to answer, from the fact that I didn't feel as if I had anything to write. I am well however and this fact alone may be sufficient compensation for going to the Post Office if you still retain a Sisterly regard for me, - We are not doing much here at this Post at present, in fact this is rather a limited field for military operations, we keep out Scouts all the time for a distance of 30 or 40 miles around, and pick up a few stray Rebels once in a while, we have had as many as 35 here at one time and are continually receiving additions to our stock, and sending them to Columbus when we get more than we can keep here, we are doing a "right smart" at harboring Niggers here, they come in various styles sometimes on foot and alone and at others by dozens and perhaps all mounted on horses or mules which they have taken from "Massa," the Nigger is getting to be almost indispensable to our armies, they do all of our heavy work such as ditching and building fortifications, and there is but very few soldiers that make any objection to their coming in and doing the hard work for them, nor is this the only advantage to be gained by receiving and protecting them, for every Nigger we take out of the field ^{his place} has got to be supplied

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Date: May 25, 1863

Description: John O. Crummett letter about black soldiers, war

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the Rebellion must starve out as they don't have any
to much to eat now; One year ago I was opposed
to arming Niggers, and believed it to be unnecessary and
impracticable, and thought the Rebels would come to their
senses before it became necessary to strike the death
blow to their pet institution, but today I rejoice that
Old Abe had the good sense to proclaim freedom
to the slave as soon as he did, - if the war continues
one year longer I should not be at all surprised if it
became the order to destroy every particle of Rebel prop-
erty wherever our armies get a foothold, if it should
ever come to that, they can have no just cause of compla-
int as they had had sufficient warning, - At the commen-
cement of the war a Rebel's property was as free
from molestation as a loyal man's, and if a sol-
-dier was caught taking a Rail for firewood or
a chicken for a rarity, he was severely dealt
with and thought himself lucky if he got off
with a weeks confinement in the guard-house,
but there has been a gradual change going
on, so that if a man is known to be a full bloo-
-ded Rebel, his property is not considered as sac-
-red as it was, - I don't mention this to find
fault with the administration or the officers
in command of our armies, but to show that it
was intended to conduct the war on the most hon-
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it wouldnt work on such principles, and now when we want anything there is in the country we go and take it and give receipts to be paid at the end of the war if the holders can prove themselves to have always been loyal, so much for the way in which the war has been conducted, we should have been farther along no doubt if we had used every advantage we had in the start but we were all ignorant of what awaited us, and had to learn by experience the course to pursue, and if we had not had great success we still hope to come out all right in the end, I think we have sent off about one hundred contrabands down the river to Island No. 10, to be organized and mustered into the ^{colored} regiments there forming; and we have about a hundred now on hand here, and constantly receiving additions to our stock

You say that Martha wants me to write all about the nigger, and I believe I have said considerable about him, and will only add that they are the most intelligent portion of the inhabitants in the south, as far as my observation goes, and there is a great deal of fun in some of them which is some inducement for tolerating them in camp: I received that report that you sent and was very much pleased with it, I see that Abby & Martha are in good standing as teachers, and have just cause to feel proud of their reputation

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If you teach this summer hope you will succeed
and I have no doubt that you will, the only fear
that I have is that you will lack confidence in yourself
but you must put on a bold front, and recollect
that a certain amount of impudence is as good as
talent: Tell Jane I should like to see those pictures
of her babies when she gets ready to send them,

It seems by your letter that Wild and Crem, has
experienced a change of heart, I have no doubt that
Wild, has a singular way of expressing himself in
meeting as well as elsewhere, I would like to see the
old blacksmith & wife, as well as anybody I know of,
I sent Father a letter a few days ago with a
little money in it, I shall be able to send him
the most of my wages hereafter until I pay him
up what he is owing on my acct.

I am glad to hear that Father & Hollis get along
well together, I hope Hollis will do the best he can
as long as he stays at home, and when he is old
enough to leave, I hope some of us may be able
to help him some,

I have written all I have time to at present
and will close, Stir up the girls to write a little
oftener, and write yourself as often as you can,

Your Brother

J C Crummett,

to Celestia,

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