

Civil War Wife: The Letters of Harriet Jane Thompson

Part II

edited by **Glenda Riley**

This is the second of a two-part presentation of Jane Thompson's letters to her husband Major William G. Thompson of the Twentieth Iowa Volunteer Infantry. During William's absence from home, Jane traveled to Pennsylvania to stay for a time with his relatives in the towns of McCandless and Butler, then returned to Marion, Iowa.

McCandless, October 2nd, 1862

My own dear William,

I received your kind letters of the 23rd and 25th, and I was very glad to hear that you had got to a stopping place for a few days at any rate for I know you must be very tired. You are liking the place so well and seem to enjoy a soldier's life so much I do not know but there is some danger of your liking it so well you will not care anything about living with me any more. Do you think there is? But to be in earnest about it I think you are too true a husband for that but I am glad you are enjoying yourself but hope it is not in forming bad habits and I do not think it is.



Major Thompson

In one of your letters that I got last week I thought you spoke as though you were angry. You said for me not to be fretting that you would try and take care of yourself. I suppose it was in answer to what I said about your drinking. But I cannot help but feel uneasy for there are quite a number in the Regiment even from our place that does like liquor and I presume will have it and I know when you are at home you can most always take a drink along and I hope you are not angry at me at what I said. . . .

I received two papers from home [Iowa] yesterday but I got so angry reading the Democratic paper. I think that nasty bloat of a secessionist Bardwell is showing himself. He has a piece in it about Governor Kirkwood not doing as he ought to. He thinks he can say what he has a mind to now you are away. I will send them to you after Father gets them read and I wish you would write to the *Register*. . . . I never read a paper before in my life that I got so angry. I thought that the Democrats would have a good time while you are gone, but when you were at home they felt a little afraid of you.

You said you did not get any letter from me when you got

to Springfield. I think you must have got some shortly after for I wrote you just as often as I could get them to the office and that has been nearly every day. I would like to have you get one every day if you could for there is nothing in the office that I would rather get than a letter from you. I would like it exceedingly well if the original would come some day before long. I think you will certainly be up while the Regiment is at Springfield. Can you?

Lauretta got home from Washington a week ago yesterday and did not see John but she got a telegraphic dispatch from him day before yesterday to meet him in Harrisburg this morning and she started yesterday morning to meet him there. I almost envy her the pleasure she anticipates. It seems sometimes if I could see you if it was only for one day I would be satisfied but I guess it is fixed so that I never will take any more comfort with you. How many happy hours I have passed sitting beside you or doing anything that I thought would please you and now I can do nothing but think about you but that is a great comfort to me. But I can say one thing. There is not a Husband in the army that has been kinder to a wife than you have been to me. Do you think you will be ready to come home from the army in the Spring to stay or are you going to stay until the war closes? Please tell me in your next. . . . I think your march would not fatten you up any. I hope it will not make you sick. But I think I have written about as much as you will care about reading. Please write soon and often as you can for I like to get them. Remember your wife.

Jennie Thompson



McCandless, October 5th, 1852

My dear William,

I sent to the post office last night as I expected to get a letter from you but was sadly disappointed and went to bed thinking you were surely sick for the last one I had from you was written the 25th of last month. I think you must either be sick or else you must be on your way here and I hope it is the

latter. . . . I have not heard whether Laretta has got back from Harrisburg or not for they never think of writing up here. Solomon is feeling quite unwell. He has not been well for two or three weeks and last night he was taken vomiting and he feels quite weak this morning. Mother is about as usual. If Solomon feels better he is going to the cider press tomorrow and Martha Ann is going to make apple butter the first of the week.

This week if nothing happens I want to make a good many visits for I do want to start home to Iowa the last of this month if you will let me. This morning the wind blows like Fall. It whistles through the house and indeed it sounds very lonely to me. I think you must have forgotten me last week entirely but I hope I will get a letter soon or the original. . . . I think you might come here if John could come to Harrisburg to see his wife [Laretta] for they did not know what moment they might have an attack and you said there was no danger where you were for the present. But I would like very much to see you if you would like to come for God knows I would like to see you better than anyone else and I cannot help but imagine what a good visit I would have with you but I do not know as I will ever have the opportunity. Write soon.

H. J. Thompson



McCandless, October 13th, 1852

Dear Husband,

I thought I would write you a short letter this morning for fear you might think I was forgetting you but such is not the case. I would write you every day if I was near the office but as it is I will write as often as I can get them to the office. I have not had any word from you since last Tuesday and it is a long time to me. I feel very anxious to know if you have faced the enemy and what success. But if you have I hope you were victorious and escaped without injury. Do you think this war will be over by Spring? I asked you that once before but you do not answer any of my questions that I have in my letters.

Whether you think them not worth answering I do not know but I will not bother you any more with them. . . .

Mother is a great deal better. Since our visit up to Bear Creek she has been better. She went to Butler last week one day . . . and did not feel any the worse. I think if she would take a ride often she would soon gain strength. . . .

I saw in the *Register* that John Logan has a Company of Cavalry nearly full. It was thought they would be organized in a day or two. I would not think he would be a man that would stand it very well for he will have to have a barrel of lager beer along. But I do not know but what he can have it. I presume he can. . . . I wrote you that Loretta went to Harrisburg to see John. She went there then went with him to where the last battle was fought on the Potomac and went over part of the battleground. I have not seen her since she got home but your Father and Mother was down the next day after she got home. But I will close for fear I will weary your patience. I hope to hear from you soon telling me I may go home the last of this month or the first of next. Please write soon and often.

H. J. Thompson

P.S. I will send a sheet of paper and envelope for fear you have none.



McCandless, October 15th, 1862

My dear noble husband,

I received your very kind letter of the 6th and it received a very hearty welcome. It came last night and it had been a week since I had a word from you and it was a long week to me. It seemed more like a month. I have not had but two from you this month. One was written the first and the other one the 6th, but I suppose you were busy and could not find time. But do not stop writing one moment because you have no postage stamps for I will willingly pay the postage on your letters. I think you had a hard night march through the rain. I hope you did not get cold by getting so wet. I felt like giving the 20th Iowa Regiment three hearty cheers for their bravery and not

showing any fear of fighting the Rebels but more specially the Lieutenant Colonel (as I suppose you are) for his noble daring and bravery. I am glad you got along as well as you did but you seem to be disappointed because you did not see more of the Rebels but I think you will see enough of them at the rate you are going. I was very sorry to hear of your going to Arkansas for I think it is such a sickly state. . . . But I hope and pray you may keep your health and return to me in the Spring to stay with me. . . .

There is a great deal of sickness round here. You know William Christy. He buried his wife one week ago last Sunday and one of his girls that was grown up was buried the Tuesday following and there are six of them sick now. His wife had Typhoid fever and all the rest have the Dyptheria. Indeed I feel almost afraid to stay here sometimes. . . .

Mother is still getting better and I have given up seeing you this Fall but if you will come home in the Spring and stay I will be satisfied. I am still looking for an answer to my letter about my going home to Iowa and hope you will not ask me to stay longer than the last of this month or the first of next for I think I will be better contented in Iowa and if I could go to housekeeping I would feel better for I would have my work to think about and I would not have so much time to think about being left alone. Do not say again in one of your letters that you think you have got as much written as I will care about reading for you know better than that for I never would get tired reading one of your letters and indeed I read them over three and four times. Now dear William, write often and long letters. Take good care of yourself. You did not say as you had got your commission and so I will direct as before. Write soon and often and remember your loving wife,

Jennie



McCandless, October 17th, 1862

Dear William,

I am not in receipt of any letter from you but Solomon was going to Unionville this afternoon and I thought I would have

a letter ready for the office. . . . We got a Linn County [Iowa] *Register* out of the office. I am quite anxious to get the next paper to see how the Election went for I am afraid it will go Democratic for there has been so many Republicans gone to war and but very few Democrats. I would like to have seen them draft if it would have taken some of the Democrats. . . . I saw in the paper that a member of the 20th Iowa Regiment was writing to the *Davenport Gazette* speaks very highly of the officers of the 20th but more especially of you. Some said you were the most popular officer in the regiment and that you were an officer of fine intellect with a soldierly appearance and was with the boys always kind and full of life. I was very glad to hear such a remark as that about my husband but they could not well say anything else and tell the truth.

It seems that you are enjoying a soldier's life. Perhaps you enjoy yourself better than you do at home, but if you can be cheerful it is better for you and I have wished a great many times since you left that I could be but I cannot for it seems as though I was left all alone. No one cares for my feelings nearer than a Father and Mother. But I cannot help myself and I must put up with it. I never was worthy of such a kind husband and do not know as I ever will be enough to make home pleasant to you. I do not know as I ever will have the trial of making home cheerful and pleasant to you. I do not expect it.

Father has quite a severe attack of the pleurasy. He has not been up this morning but I am in hopes he will be better soon. Mother is still getting better. I think I will start for Iowa by the middle of next month. I cannot think of staying all winter. I had a letter from my Mother last night. She said she got a letter from you a week ago and had not answered it but would soon. . . . Logan's company was organized last Saturday. They thought it probable they would be sent up north among the Indians. . . . But I can think of nothing more to write. All join in sending love to you. Write soon and often as you can. Be a good boy.

Your wife, Jennie



McCandless, October 19th, 1862

Dear William,

I wrote you a letter yesterday but I felt lonely today and thought I would write to you. Solomon is going down to Unionville tomorrow and I had a chance of sending it to the office. . . . I went with Solomon to Unionville yesterday, went to Uncle Nathan's and staid until after the stage come in to see if there would be anything for me but got nothing. Aunt was up at John F. McCandless helping make apple butter. She came out to the buggy and inquired about you. She talks rather discouraging about the war. I hate to hear anyone talk as though the war would not be over very soon. I feel in hopes it will be over by Spring if not before. If it is not over by that time I hope you will come home then to stay but I suppose there is no use in talking about such a thing for you would not come and stay contented with me.

Father is not so well as he was yesterday. The pain in his breast is better but he is sick. There is so much sickness about here I feel afraid to hear anyone complain. The sickness is mostly Dyphtheria and Typhoid fever. I hope Father will not have either. Mother is still quite smart but feels very uneasy about Father and why should she not for he is a kind husband and Father.

I still hope you are well and getting along well. I do not think you will be up this Fall for you have to be moving all the time. You will not find time to come. I shall expect an answer to my letter this week in regard to my going home. If you feel disposed to answer the questions that are in it I will know what to do. I would like to start to Iowa next week to see if I will be any better contented. It is eight weeks today since we were at our home in Iowa together but it was a sad day to me. I do not know but it will be the last day we will ever spend together. Today hundreds of miles separates me from the dearest one to me on earth, one that always with his cheerful voice made home pleasant and without him gloomy and sad. No one could make up his absence. That dear one is my noble husband. May God protect you. . . . All join in sending love to you. If

you are in camp today or on the battlefield or marching please think of me as your loving wife,

Jennie Thompson



McCandless, October 23rd, 1862

My dearest William,

I received your kind letter of the 11th last night after I had sent one to the office. I was very glad indeed to hear of your continued health but I do not know how you escape getting cold for you are in the rain so much. I think if I had known the nights that you were so wet that I would not have slept very much. I was glad to hear you say that you would like to see me for sometimes I get to thinking that you perhaps enjoy a soldier's life so well that you do not think of me very often. But I am glad you do.

Father is no better. If anything he is not so well tonight. The doctor does not know hardly what to think about him. He says he thinks it very doubtful that he ever gets over it but we still feel in hopes that he may. We have had some one to sit up with him every night this week. . . . I never seen anyone fail so much in so short a time in my life. I think I never saw him so poor. It will be very apt to make Mother sick again. She had to go to bed last night before dark because she was feeling so weak. I am in hopes Father will be better in the morning. The doctor put a blister on his breast tonight when he was here. . . .

My nights are the pleasantest part of my time for I still dream of you every night and it is most always about your coming home and your being at home and I wish it was reality. You said you had not had a letter from me for so long. I think you will get a good many of them when you do get a mail for I have written quite often. I think a week is a good while to wait for a letter but if you feel as anxious about getting one as I do it must seem a long time to wait. But I will be writing every day or two while Father is sick so I will close for tonight. Oh, my dear William how I do wish you were here tonight and when I

get to thinking about you it seems as though I must start and come to see you. Write soon and often, and remember your,
 Jennie

P.S. I forgot to tell you they have been drafting here. There were three or four drafted out of Unionville but I cannot spell their names. One is the wagonmaker and one is the blacksmith. The people here are afraid there will be another draft before the war will close.



McCandless, October 26th, 1862

Dear William,

I did not write to you yesterday for I knew it would not leave until tomorrow and I thought I would wait until today. Father is no better. . . . We went to bed about eleven o'clock and one o'clock Mother called us all up and thought Father was a great deal worse. We got up and found him laying very stupid and did not speak only when spoken to. We were all up the rest of the night. The doctor came this morning and said he was no better or no worse but he was very low. . . . I am in hopes next time I write you I can tell you our dear Father is better. But we are doing all we can and if it is the Lord's will to take him from us we must not complain although we would part with a very near and dear friend and a kind Father.

It snowed nearly all last night and all the forenoon today so that the ground is covered with snow. But I am in hopes it will clear off and that we will have pleasant weather for I feel lowly enough when it is pleasant and when it is stormy and cloudy it seems as though I cannot contain myself. I hope you have received my letters before this. I hope you still have your continued health and get along well. You did not tell me if you had your commission yet or not. I hope you have and I wish you success in all your undertakings and I think you will be for you always have been. I have written everything I can think of. I will write you again tomorrow. Mother is as well as one could

expect under the circumstances. Write me soon and often. All join in sending love to you. . . .

Your loving wife,
H. J. Thompson



McCandless, November 2nd, 1862

Absent but ever remembered William,

I received your kind letter of the 20th last night and yours of the 15th tonight. It was mailed at Des Moines, Iowa. They both received a hearty welcome but I feel very uneasy for you did not say one word about your health. I hope you are not sick. Father is still getting better but does not sit up very much yet. Mother is not feeling very well tonight but I think she will be better when she gets a little rest. . . .

Oh, how I wish you were here tonight. When it comes Sunday night I miss you so much. I imagine I can hear you singing as you used to at home when you used to lie on our bed. If we were only there tonight. Do you ever wish that we were there again? I am afraid it will be some time before that time will come. My patriotism is nearly all exhausted. I am so lonely. It does not seem as though I could stand it to have you away all winter. But if you ever do come home please come with the intention of staying or else say that I may go with you. I cannot live this way for I cannot help feeling uneasy about you for you have to put up with so many hardships. It comes very hard to have one's dear and devoted husband so far from me and out in all kinds of weather. The longer you are gone the worse I feel about you. I know if this ever reaches you, you will say do not be so foolish for I have not forgotten what you said to me year ago last spring when the war first broke out, the night you made me believe you were going as first Lieutenant. It was a sad night to me. I felt so sorry that I had made you angry at me and I felt as though you thought if you had any other woman for a wife you would have been better satisfied for you remember you said Corbett could go to Congress the next Election because he was going to war but you could not for if you tried to do anything that I always

objected or interfered. Oh William, that was hard for me. To think that I was the means of keeping you from getting an office. I made up my mind this time when you said you were going not to say one word against it and it was hard work to do so and I have given my all to fight for our country and I am left all alone. But I hope you will come home in the spring to stay. . . .

I am going to start for Iowa one week from next Wednesday. You said for me to stay at your Father's here until you could send me money. I think you had better not send me any for it might get lost although I think I have got every one of yours. I can get money of Solomon to go home with for I cannot content myself any longer here. You may think it strange but I have been homesick nearly all the time since I came here and they have done all a person could do to make me enjoy myself but no one can do that while you are away. But I must close. Please write often. All join in sending love to you. Take good care of yourself and tell me in your next if you are well and if you have got any of my letters. God bless you.

Your wife, Jane



McCandless, November 9th, 1862

My own dear William,

Solomon went to Unionville last night and brought me two letters from you. I was very glad to get them and hear that you are well. It is too bad that you have to keep moving all the time for indeed I think you must be tired out. . . . I am afraid if I go home that you will feel hard towards me and I do not know how you can when I want to go home so bad. I was sorry to read in your letter that I must stay at Father's until you sent your money. I always like to do as you want me to but indeed, dear William, I cannot this time. Now do not be angry with me for doing as I am thinking of doing. You said you dreamed I came in and tucked the clothes up around you. I wish I could have that privilege. I never wanted to see any one so bad and especially you. . . . I dreamed the other night that you had come. I have dreamed that so often that I begin to think I will

never see you. That is an awful thought and it worries me a great deal. You wrote me in one of your letters that you thought the war might be at an end by Spring. I hope it may. But will you resign and come home then anyway if it is not over? Do please come. You have no idea how lonely I am without you for you have so much more to think about to draw your attention from me and a man does not feel uneasy all the time like a woman. . . .

I will write you again when I get at Marion [Iowa]. Now do not scold me for going. If you knew how I felt I know you would not. . . .

Your loving wife,
H. J. Thompson



Marion, Iowa, November 11th, 1862

My dear Husband,

You will see by the date of this letter that I am at Marion. I left Pennsylvania last Wednesday morning. I took the stage at your Father's and went to Butler. It was very much crowded and when we got to Butler there was some more got in. . . . We got into Pittsburgh about 8 o'clock and went to the Monongahela House. Had supper and slept a little while and at 1 o'clock in the morning went to the Depot. Got our tickets and our baggage checked and aboard the cars without any trouble. About 3 o'clock we were within 1 mile of Palestine and there was a freight train had run off the track and some of the broken cars still on the track. We were there on the track about six hours. Then as a matter of course we missed the connection the rest of the way through. We got into Chicago about 3 o'clock Friday morning when we should have been there at 8 o'clock the night before. We went to the Briggs house and had a nice room and breakfast and started at 9 the same morning for Clinton. We got there at six in the evening and had to stay there until 8 the next morning. We staid at the Iowa Central House and oh what feelings it gave me to go into that house. Our room was 14 and when I went along that hall and pass that room it seemed as though I must see you. When

I was in the parlor I kept listening every time I would hear anyone coming. I thought it must be those footsteps that I remember so well and that "dear familiar voice" although you were many miles away and I knew you would not be there. I could not help but think you were coming. I was very glad when it come time for us to start, to get away from that place. We got to the Rapids Saturday afternoon at ½ after 1 o'clock. . . .

I left Father gaining and Mother was very well.

Mr. Risker wants to get our cow. He says we have a meat bill there and he wants the cow. I wish you would tell me what to do. He says he will give \$13.00 for her. . . . Oh dear, I do wish you were at home. I have heard since I got home that you were marching back to Springfield and I am in hopes you can get a furlough and come home. I wish you would resign. This thing of living alone is awful. I wish this terrible war was over. Please excuse this bad writing for I am in a hurry to get this in before the mail closes. Will you come home in the Spring to stay? Write soon and often to your wife,

Jane



Marion, November 28th, 1862

My own dear Husband,

Last night I rec'd three of your very kind letters. They were very welcome messages but you did not say in one of them whether you was well or not. Now I want you to write that every time. . . . You need not be afraid to tell us about the sick in the 20th Regiment for we hear of so many being sick and of so many horses dying on your long marches. I do think it is too bad to keep you going so all the time, and before this time I suppose you have been ordered to Little Rock. Mrs. Elliott wanted when I wrote to you to ask you about Milton. They have not heard from him since last month and they feel very uneasy about him. Please write in your next where he is and if he is well. Mr. Neely got home from Pike's Peak last Monday and he wants to go into the army. Suppose you let him have your place and you come home.

You said you was going to try and come up New Year's. If you cannot come any other way come as a recruiting officer. . . . You told me when you enlisted that you could resign when you wanted to. Do you not want to? Could you if you did want to? If you can, do so by all means for this war will not be over very soon and we might as well live together while we do live. But I hope it will not be long. If I have to live like this way here all alone as you might say for I feel as though I was when you are away. Then the way I know you have to live, almost starved. Then such beds as you have to sleep on. I do not go to bed a single night but what I think about you and the first thing in morning and all day. I try to keep up courage but I cannot make it out very well. You said you felt uneasy because you could not send me money but do not worry yourself in the least about that. I will get along some way, for I shall not go anyplace and will not need anything. I shall not keep house this winter for I cannot live alone and I shall expect you to be here to live with me in the Spring if you live. I do not want you to disappoint me. Will you?

Mr. Belt and Susie Green was married day before yesterday and we had an invitation to the wedding (that is, Major Thompson and Lady). They sent a great many invitations to the Rapids but I have not heard of anyone going. I was up to Mr. Hartwell's Monday and he wanted me to tell you he would like to hear from you. He has written to you three times. It is snowing today and it gives me awful feelings for I do not know where you are or whether you have clothing enough to make you comfortable. I feel bad enough when it is pleasant. . . . Now William, let Mr. Neely have your place and you come home. Won't you? Please do. Mrs. Neely does not care whether her husband is at home or not and he is just the one to go for he will know that she does not care. We are all well and all join in sending love to you. Write soon and often and long letters and remember your true and loving wife,

H. J. Thompson



Marion, December 8th, 1862

My own dear Billy,

I have not had any letters from you since Friday. I would like to get one every day. . . . It is a beautiful day for winter. There had not been any snow yet of any account, but the roads are very smooth and nice as far as I can see. . . . This morning the rest of Logan's company left that have been home on furlough. Sam Granger has gone. Barney Rahn (is that spelled right? I mean that man that lives out toward the farm), Sam Kennedy, Dean Cheadle, Nat Chapman and a great many others have gone. This town is very well thinned out. Chapman buried his wife this Fall. N. B. Batterson has got word what was the matter with his Brother. He marched four days and four nights without anything to eat. He took a severe cold that settled on his lungs and had the quick Consumption.

I am so afraid you will get cold on your lungs for they are so easily affected. The least cold makes you cough. It worries me all the time but I hope not. Mrs. Sessions and Grandmother Sessions sent us word one day last week that they was coming down here to make a visit. They came Friday. I showed them your Photograph and they said just like everyone else, "Oh, he looks so care worn." I think it looks very much like you but you look as though you had some great trouble. But I do hope you have not. If you have and I can do anything to relieve you of that trouble let me know and I will do it cheerfully. My dream about you last night was that you came home and I was at our barn with Father helping do the chores and that you came up and you looked so poor and thin. I was going to write to you then I thought I would not write because you was here. But I could not see you after I saw you at the barn. I have dreamed so many times about your coming home sick but you would not let me come near you or do anything for you. But I rather think you would let me come near you if you was where I could. What do you think?

Mrs. Ristine called on me last Friday as she went to the "society" that they have here to work for the soldiers. I have not attended nor do I intend to. I will work for the soldiers cheerfully but I will do it at home for I do not believe in these

societies for they always end in a fuss and I do not want to be in. I have just finished my dinner. Mother and I. Father is drawing hay for Mr. Parker. She said she wished you was here to eat with us but no more so than I do but keep it all to myself. I do not sit down to the table at any time but what I think about you. Have you got so you can wear woolen shirts? You thought you could not wear them. I guess you do a great many things that you would not think you could do when you was at home. I saw in the *Principia* that the army down on the Potomac was not going into winter quarters. That is all the paper I get except the *Register* and that has not been out for two weeks. They are out of paper. I would like to take the *Lady's Book* again this year. What do you say? General Burnside I believe is going to keep McClellan's place. I got some new music when I was at Butler. One is "General Burnside's Victory March" and one is "General Corcoran Release March" and "Fredonia March" and an army song. I will play them all for you when you come home and see if you like them. Write soon and often and do not forget your wife,

H. J. Thompson



Marion, December 12th, 1862

My dear noble Husband,

As this is my day for writing I thought I would try and collect my thoughts together enough to write. . . . Night before last it was in the paper that the 20th Iowa had been in a hard battle. . . . I felt just as though you were wounded. Sure enough last night there was a dispatch came that Oscar Parker was dangerously wounded and Major Thompson and Milton Elliott slightly. Oh dear, what a shock it gave me for I do not know how bad you are hurt or where. Mr. Corbett is going to find out today. If Mr. Parker or Elliott are going down where you are if they come I am coming along. It seems as though every hour was a day since I heard of the battle. I have not closed my eyes to sleep and I can hardly control myself. I am in hopes I will hear more of the particulars today.

Dear William, do take care of yourself and not go into the

hospital if you can possibly avoid it for there you are apt to get disease and not be taken care of. I am so thankful that you was not killed but perhaps this wound will. How I do wish I was where I could take care of you. Did you think of me when you went into battle? If you can write I want you to write me all the particulars and if you cannot write tell someone else to and write just how you are. But I am in hopes that I can get a chance of coming down where you are. I suppose it would not be safe to come alone but if I hear you are dangerous I shall start to come to you if I should die on the road. But I hope to hear soon from your own hand that you are better. I tremble with fear until I hear. I do not know as you can read this for I am so nervous. I can hardly make a mark. But please excuse such awful writing. I hope I may be able to do better next time. . . . Please excuse such a short letter for I cannot write. God bless my dear and noble Husband. Write soon to your loving wife,

H. J. Thompson



Marion, December 16th, 1862

My dear William,

I have not received any letter yet from you since the battle. I hardly think it is time yet but I will expect one tomorrow night at the longest. We cannot hear anything by telegraph for the government has the use of the wires now. . . . But I hope to hear from your own dear hand before long all the particulars. Last Saturday I got a *Daily Davenport Gazette*. It was directed to Mrs. Major W. G. Thompson and was marked where it gave a full list of the wounded in that battle. I do not know who was so kind as to send it to me but it did not have your name in at all. But I saw it in the Chicago paper. I hope to hear that your wound was slight and that you are recovering from it. Dear William, how I wish I could bear the pain for you. . . .

There was a horse race at the Rapids a week or so ago. . . . One of the horses was from Tennessee and the other from

(well, I have forgotten.) Rensh went down and a great many others and he (Rensh) said the horse from Tennessee let the other one have the start a good distance and then come out ahead. There was a purse of \$700.00 I think. This is interesting, is it not? But I do not hardly know what to write. Billy, I have not got my likeness taken yet for I have a lameness between my shoulders ever since I got your letter to that effect and I am crooked over to one side so bad I thought I would wait until I got straightened then I will have one taken for you right away. . . .

The wind is blowing quite hard today and is cold. For the last four or five days it has been very warm. What little frost there was in the ground was all out and the air was very much like Spring. Now it makes the road very rough. Father has gone to the Rapids this morning with a load of wheat for Greene. One week from tomorrow is Christmas. Last year I did not think I would be so far from the dearest one I love in a year from that time. I hope and pray that before another year rolls around you may be spared to return to me and we may take comfort as we have before. Oh how many happy hours we have spent together. But whether we may ever be happy together again God only can tell. If you live do you think you will be home in February, do you? Do not disappoint me. I imagine I hear you say that your Jane is tight from the looks of the writing, I guess! But please excuse it for I am so crooked and my shoulders pain me so I cannot tell how it is written. But I hope I can do better next time. I suppose you have got those things I sent you by this time. Write soon and often.

From your wife,
Jane Thompson



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