

Civil War Letters

Dear List,

We have been given the golden opportunity to share some Civil War letters from Sergeant James Forrester Parrott of the 28th Consolidated Infantry to his wife, Mahala Bowman. Mr. Parrott was wounded in the lower leg at Franklin, Tennessee. This injury required the amputation of his lower leg. After the war, Mr. Parrott was murdered on his own property in 1868. He was buried at the Officer Cemetery in Overton County.

As a child James Parrott was crossing the Appalachian and Cumberland Mountains when he became sick with the measles. The father was already dead and the mother feared James would spread measles to the rest of his siblings. Therefore, the mother chose to leave James with a Miller with the promise of sending for the boy when the family was finally settled. The mother died the little boy was left to be raised by Mr. Miller.

Here is a letter sent from Sergeant James Parrott to his wife, Mahala Ann Bowman. The spelling was left in its original form to add authenticity to the document. Brackets have been added to help the reader get the meaning of the passage.

These letters were graciously shared with us through the generosity of:

Mrs. Dorris Parrett Wiliford
512 Cumberland Street
Medina, TN 38355
Doris337@cs.com

Please address all remarks and correspondence to her.

Letter #1

Aprile the 2, 1863

State of Georgia. Flويد County (Floyd) Sitty Rome (City of Rome)

Dear Wife I now seat my selfe to rite you another letter to let you know that I am well but not stout. I am weak yet but I can eat every hour in the day. If nothing happens to me I will be able to go to my command in another weak. I have had a hard time of sickness but thank God I am well now and when this letter comes to you I hope it will find you all well and doing well. I wnat to see you worse than any boddy on eart (earth). Now boddy (nobody) is now company for me. You and your little boys is on my mind continley. I pray to God that the time will soon come when I will get home to yo in peace. Hala ann I love you better than any boddy in this world. I want to see you and kiss your sweat (sweet) lips in token of my kind of love to you. I never node (knew) waht trubble was until I left home. We lived together 8 years lacking one day and a happy lief we lived. It melts my heart to think that such lover as us has to be parted in such a manner as we are. a many a tear I have shed since I left home. I ant you to pray for my return home soon and if we never meet again on earth I hope we will meet in heaven where parting will be no more, no wears (wars) nor sickness nor trubbles never come. Pray for my futer (future) welfeare (welfare). The prayers of the richus (rightous) _____ much.

Do the best you can till I get home. I dont now when I can get to come home they wont furlow no boddy but I am to come to see you if nothing happens sometime between this and fall, furlouw or not for it don't seme to me that I can stand it much longer witout seeing you and the boys. I thik this year is the last year of the wear (war). I think that we will have peace. People is geting tired of this wear on both sides as the coten famen (cotton famine) is grate in ingland (England) and france. so that France and England will recognise the south independence. I want you to watch the ofice (office) at Goodbears (Goodbars). I direct my letters to the Goodbears (Goodbars) but the male (mail) stops and Gillans (Gillilands) but Goodbears (Goodbars) gose there after his nusepapers and he will bring all letters to his house. I have rote you three letters since I have been in

gorgia and have not no ancer as yet. I received our letter that was dated the 24 of feb. it come to the rigiment and I rote to Jerry if any letter had come from you to send them to me and he sent that letter to me. I was glad to here from you to hear that you was all well. It was all the nuse that I have herd from you since I left home of quansience (consequence). I want you to rite to me every chance you have. I dont know where to tell you to send your letters till I go to the camps you cant answer this letter. Before I leave here I watch the ofise for answer from the last letter that I rote you. I rote for you to rite in hast (haste) but use every chance you have to send them by hand.

James Parrott to Hala Ann Parrott

Dear List,

Below you will find the conclusion of James Parrott's letter to his wife, Mahala Ann Bowman. This is the ending of last night's Letter #1.

At the time of this letter, the Confederate Army of Tennessee is sitting on a defensive posture on the Duck River in Middle Tennessee. Apparently, James had either been wounded or was recovering from illness. Rome, Geogia was a rear hospital area or the Confederate Army of Tennessee.

At this time Mahala Bowman Parrott was still protected by General Bragg's Army of Tennessee. By the first of July the Confederates were in retreat and all of Middle Tennessee was surrendered to the Union forces. After that point, it would be a deadly process for James to attempt to visit his wife in the Upper Cumberland area.

Aprile the 2, 1863

State of Gorgia (Georgia). Floid (Floyd) County Sitty Rome (City of Rome)

When you rite rite everything that you think will comfort me. Rite all about afairs sow I may know how you are geting along. If you are not out of money be saving of it. I want to send you some money the first chance if it would come to you safe. I would send you some money in this letter but I am ____ to resk it. I have a pretty (gift) for you and Lety, one a peace. I will send them to you the first chance. Mahala Ann I have you a find him (fine hymn) book. I will send it to you the first chance. The book cost two dollars. The other pretties are two silver timbles (thimbles) wareted (warrented) to be silver. The two cost me three dollars. Things is plenty here but at a high price. Shoes for wimmin (women), fine shoes, they ask \$20.00 apeair (a pair). Every thing is offel (awfuel) might hiher (higher) now. I will give you the prices of produse: sweat potatoes are five dollars a bushel, irish potatoes are fifteen dollars a bushel, pork is fifty sents a pound, just crape off bacon is one dollar and a quarter pur pound, lard the same, butter is a dollar and ahalf per pound, milk is forty cents a quart, beef is thirty cents a pound. I went to a house to buy a canteen full of milk and the lady told me that some families were starving everything was sow high that they could not buy it. Many a family is starving in the state of gorgia. Starvation is glaring us in the face. Everything is sow high I want you to rase (raise) everything you can. A big patsh (patch) of potatoes , of both kins (kinds) and be surten to save every pig you can for it will be a forchin (fortune) at fifty cents per pound. I want you to have your pigs spade in this month. The new moon. I want you to have the kinder sow spade and the Adkins sow spade and save the others and do all ou can to save all young pigs. If your cows is not going to give no milk you buy a cow to give you milk. I will send you the money the first chance to pay with. Trade to the best advantage dont you sell a pound of meat, dont paster (pasture) nothing but the hogs and mare and milk cows. Turn the stears and the calves and that heifer outside. Put one of them bells on Brandy and drive them to the top of the mounting (mountain). Brandy nose (knows) the range out there. You must be saving of your clover or it is all your chance this summer for pasture. But if nothing happens I aim to sow the big field in small grain to put all the pigs in it that you can save. I will leave it all with to do the best you can till I come. I want you to kiss my boys for me till I come home. Tell John and Thomas that there (their) pap wants to hug and kiss them both bad. I must come to a close. I

want to hug and kiss your sweat (sweet) lips and I feel (feel) confident that I will again. I remain your husband until death. I love you.

James Parrott to Hala Ann Parrott

Tonight the second letter from Sergeant James Parrott to his wife Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott appears.

James wrote this letter from inside Tennessee. Whatever ailment or wound he had seemed to have healed and he had been sent back to the front lines near the Duck River in Middle Tennessee. His 28th Infantry Regiment was getting ready for the coming Union invasion which they knew would appear as soon as the ground dried. The Confederate forces were trying to hold the rich farm lands of Middle Tennessee and the Union forces prepared to seize Chattanooga and drive the Rebels out of Tennessee for good. All furloughs were cancelled in view of the pending invasion. James missed his wife so much and there appeared little hope of their reunion any time soon. However, James was not about to desert. He would stay by his post and witness the heaviest fighting of the war at Liberty Gap, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge.

Letter #2

12th of April 1863

State of Tennessee

Dear wife:

I seat myself to rite you another letter to let you now that I am well as I ever was but I am not as stout. I got waid (weighed) yesterday and I wade one hunderd and fifty pounds. I got to my regiment this evening and I found the boys generally well and I hope that this letter will find you and the children and Lety all well and doing well. The most pleasure that I have saw was riding on the car (train). I want to see you worse than any boddy in the world. I though if I could of had you to fill the seat with me I would of give any mancion (mansion) but instid of you it was a south caroliner soldier. I have not nothing important to rite to you I have rote you four letters and have got two letters from you but I did not look for any ancer from you, only the third one, I rote to you to ancer the third one while I was in the sitty (city) of Rome. I stade four weeks their after I rote that letter. I watch the offis (office) close. I rote you a letter and directed it to Gillans (Gillilands) which is the Oakhill P.O. Watch the ofise and maybe you will get them. I want you to rite to me every chance you have if it is every weak and when you dont send them buy and sent them to Tulahoma (Tullahoma) to the 28th Rige (Regiment) company ____ Tenn volunteers. The last letter I wrote Mr. Goodbear (Goodbar) to take the letters to his house you could get them without going to Gillilan (Gilliland's) often. I have got three suits of close (clothes). I did not now that you would have the chance to send me any close. I drewed one pear of pants and one pear of drawers and a shirt. I have enuf (enough) of close (clothes) I think to do me plentiful this year. My shoes is nearly new yet. Pepple (people) here is in fine spirits they is no talk of fiting (fighting) soon here. All is quiet now as far as I now (know). I want to see to see you all sow bad that I can hardly keep from runing away they will not furlow any boddy. I dont want to run away it will be a disgrace beside a punishment of some kind but I intend to come home sometime between this and fall, furlow or not if I can get there. I dream of eating dinner with you and you had a good dinner. IT was ham and cabage and chicken and severell other things. If that could be sow it would be a great pleasuer to me. I long to see the time come when I can et the pleasure of coming home to stay If I could get one kiss from you it would be more pleasure to me than every thing here You must excuse my bad riting and all mistakes The boys is talking to me sow that I can hardly rite. All glad to see me. I have good friends every where I go, sow I must remain your true husband until death. Rite as soon as you get this and send it buy Jackson.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

Letter #3 found James Parrott sick again. He had left the Confederate main lines near Tullahoma and Shelbyville, Tennessee to a hospital at Tunnel Hill, Georgia. Sergeant was later transferred to another hospital at Catoosa Springs, Georgia. His was most likely suffering from dysentery or chronic diarrhea. This was the most common sickness during the entire war. Also, it was the most common cause of death.

The Confederates still hold a line along the Duck River in Middle Tennessee. They are supplied by a railroad from Chattanooga. The Union forces are supplied from Nashville and the Cumberland River. Should the Confederates lose Middle Tennessee they will have given up the best horse farms in the South. The Union forces aim to take Chattanooga and then seize Atlanta. This move would virtually cut the Confederacy in half and paralyze the transportation so vital to the Southern armies.

Letter #3 was not dated, but most likely came from the last two weeks in May 1863.

State of Georgia - Dear wife:

I now seat myself to rite you agin to let you now that I am well and harty but my wind is not good. I have a shortiness of breath. I way one hundred and 55 with my close (clothes) all on and a pear of socks in my pocket. I am as fat as you ever saw me. I have not got fat on a satisfide mind nor something good to eat. It is a good stomach. I hope when this letter reaches you it will find you and my little boys all well. I received your letters that was dated Apr the 22 I was glad to here from you but sorrow to here that my little boys were sick and that you was in so much truble and that you had worked sow hard. I dont want you to work so hard as to hert (hurt) yourself you must take good care of your self if you was to get sick and I was to here of it it would trubble me almost to death. I will settle with Billey when I come home. The low places in my fase (face) is filled out. If you could see me you would say that I was a round fase man. If I can I will get my likeness at Chattanooga as I go to my regiment and send it to you. I will tell you my dream the 14 night of May. I dream that little John was dead it seam sow plane that it truble me sow that I could not keep still and on the 15 day of May I received your letters that bear date Apr 22 I shuddered to read them but glad tidings that he was alive and on the mend. But I am uneasy yet about you all. You must rite to me as soon as you get this (turn the page over) I have rote to you time and agin and I have never got but 4 letters from you I have now thought that you have received all of my letters I rote you 4 in Rome and I got no ancer. I have rote you a letter sence I have come to Tunnihill the doctor has sent me about 8 miles off to a plase name the Catoosa Springs Horsepittle (Hospital). I am in ward number 3 with about 100 hundred others. This is as pretty a place as you ever saw. They is 50 springs here all of differant kines (kinds) of waughter (water). They are all close together they are not more than 100-150 yards apart. I do not expect to stay here more than 2 weeks more till I will go to my regiment. I am sepecting a letter from you every male. If you dont have the chance to send letters buy hand to me send them buy male (mail). Make them at Gillans (Gillilands) and you can get Mr. Good Bear (Goodbar) to take them. I expect he goes there once a week to get letters and papers I want to here from you once a month anyhow direct the anser to this to Shelveyville (Shelbyville) and be sure to put on the back of your letter to James Parrott Rites (Wright's) Brigade, 28 Regiment so that it will be sure to come if the male is all rite. If we leave Shelveyville the letter will fallow me. Rite to me if you have got my close (clothes) that I sent home and rite what all you got with them.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

The conclusion of the Letter #3 will be featured tonight.

Again, Letter #3 was not dated, but seems to have been written around the second half of May 1863.

State of Georgia - Dear wife:

I have nothing important to rite to you about the wear(war). I learn about ten minutes ago that the yankeys had Vicksburg surrounded. I don't now what will become of us. I expect that we will have to fight before long. Bragg is advancing, if they do not come out I believe that Bragg will attack them in there brestworks. If we do fite it will be offul (awful). Time I must come to a close. I must tell you about your kinfolks I have found your fathers one cousin he lives at Tunnillhill in Whitfeld County, Georgia. I stade with him some and he did not charge me anything. His name is Henry Bowman. He is doing well and the master worker. He is a black smith I will tell you _____ her dream I dreamp (dreamed) that I came home and you and Lety was spinning. Lety laft (laughed) and shuck hands with me and ask me in then. I went to you, syou shuck hands with me. I thought that I would hug and kiss you and you would not let me. I thought you both was so fat that you did not look natterile (natural). I cant rite haff anuf (half enough) now do the beset you can till I see you if ever the fear of battle has all left me. Le us trust in God for his kind blesing. I will close buy saying I remain Your tru husban until death. Lety I received your kind letter It pleased me much. Lety I wnat to see you I was glad to here that you was in good health part of my dream is so, in the way you way (weigh) 10060 (160).

After resting I will rite on this side. I want to now (know) if Calvin Bowman is in the survis (service). Rite hwo George Spek (Speck) and famley is and give my best respek to all of my friends. Hala Ann I have learn more sence I let home than I would in ten years there. We live in the worst country to make a living than any place. The people is hid bound Now (no) navigation there. I think if I ever get home in peace that I will sell my land and go where I can make a living easier than I can there. Would like to now (know) how ou are doing for salt. You must rase all the pigs you can they will be needed and will bear a good prise (price). I am glad that you get milk. I want you to rase all the chickens you can I want to sit by you and eat fride (fried) chicken and you may rase ges (geese) to, I have found out that they are good to eat. I have helped to eat a many a gander sence I saw you. Wheat crops look well here. I want you to rite how Nancy Holloway and Joseph is getting along farming. I want you to engage twenty bushel of wheat when it gets ripe get it off J. M. Goodbear (Goodbar) if he has it to sell I want to sow all the field that Nancy is tending. Look for a letter once a month. I will try to rite once a month. I love you and my sweet children. That not (knot) of love that is tide (tied) in my hart (heart) will ever dy (die). Good by.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott.

Tonight's letter is the shortest of the collection. James discussed the high cost of living the Confederacy was experiencing since the beginning of the war two years previously. Sam had not been at home for some length of time because he did not realize how difficult it had become to get salt or leather. As the war progressed, the Confederate forces experienced more and more difficulty in obtaining leather and salt.

This letter did not have an address. It is assumed that James is still at the hospital in Georgia. The Union invasion of Middle Tennessee was a mere two weeks away.

June 9, 1863

Mrs. Mahala Ann Parrott

I have the opportunity of riting you a few more lines. I am well today. I hope that you are two. I render you \$14 dollars in this letter. You must rite to me if you get it and rite soon. I would send you some money before now but I had no chance by telling it. I have spent rite smart. I have drawed 62 dollars in all. I spent it for something to eat and it was high. If you nead (need) more money than this rite to me and I will send you some more. I want you to lay in salt if you can and leather. Rite how your are doing for salt. I must close buy (by) saying I want to kiss you.

To M A Parrott
From James Parrott

Last night's Letter #4 had a mistake in it. I had written Sam and the name should have been James. I apologize for my mistake.

Letter #5 was written after James Parrott had returned to his 28th Infantry Regiment near Shelbyville, Tennessee. General Bragg is trying to instill discipline into his troops before the coming Union invasion. You will read tonight of an execution for desertion. General Braxton Bragg required all of the 28th Regiment watch the execution in order to leave a strong impression on the soldiers' minds. In less than two weeks the impending invasion would come. This time the Union troops had a surprise for the 28th Regiment. The repeating rifle would be used for the first time in a battle. The Southern troops would say the Yankees "had a gun they could load on Sunday and shoot all week."

Letter #5 also included the names of several men who served with James Parrott.

June 15, 1863

Dear Wife - I take the opportunity to drop you a few line to let you know how I am getting along. I am well and harty with the infection of a cold that I have taken. I got back to my ridgment (regiment). I truley (truly) hope that this will find you in good health and doing well. I want to see you and the children offul (awful) bad. I think of you every hour in the day and dream of you oftiner (more often) when I sleep. I have nothing very important to rit to you. Only a few nites ago we had a tolerable good camp meeting. 13 mourners and 1 profession (took place). I will tell you of a site that I saw the 12 day of this month. I saw a man shot to death with muskets. He was charged with desertion. The brigade was all ordered to the filld (field) where he was shot and then the prisoner was brought. They sung and prade (prayed) for him. He said that he was prepared to meet his God in peace. after they prade they then tuck (took) him and led him to a stake and tide (tied) him and 12 guns was discharged at him. 6 was loded (loaded) with ball and 6 with blank lods (loads). He would not let them blind his eyes. Jeneral (General) Rite (Marcus Wright) said that he never saw as gallant a fellow as he was. Jeneral Rite shed tears when he shuck (shook) hands with him after he had tide him. The man's name was Rite (Wright) who lived in Jackson County. He belonged to the 8th Tennessee Volunteers. Anuff (enough) of that. Hala Ann I sent you 15 dollars in money buy (by) Mr. Hampmiller and a letter. I trust you will get it. I have bin (been) working in the breast works today. We are bilding (building) breastworkds here. Our breastworkds is about 15 miles long. Some think that we will fite (fight) here and some thinks that we will not. I herd (heard) good preaching yesterday. We have tolerable plenty to each such as it is. My self and my mess went out yesterday and pick us a big mess of wile salid (wild salad) and it was not bad to take. I eat a big bate (helping) of it and today I eat a big mess of bread soop (soup). I am a good hand to make it and I can cook tolerable well but nearly every time I go to wipe the skilit out I burn my littler finger. I have just as good a mess as in the 28th Ridgment. I mess with Nathan Callahan, Thurstan Qualls, John Ford, M. T. Ray, Bailey Copeland, John Jackson, and Jerry Holloway. They all seem like brothers to me. We have mooved from below Shelvey (Shelbyville). We mooved about 5 miles north of Shelvey. Well you must rite to me soon and direct your letter down and see me. If I dont get to come home which I see no chance now if you cold make the rangements (arrangements) sow (so) you could leave home you cold come down and see me and get back in 10 or 12 days and 2 or 3 with you would be more satisfaction to me than everything that I have saw sence (since) I left home. Tell Nancy that Jerry is well. He is gone out in the country to buy some milk now. My mess is all well. Give my best remarks to all my friends and keep a reasonable portion to your self. I have nothing important to rite to you about the wear (war). You must rite every chance you have as you promise to do for I would like to read a letter from you every day. Rite all about our afares (affairs) how corn looks, potatoes, and wheat. I all ways love to read as kind letters as you send me that lets me now (know) that you are living a christian. I must bring my letter to a close by saying I love you and my children better than everything elce (else) in the world. You must

kiss the boys for me and hug the babey (baby). Bless his hart (heart) I want to kiss him. I now (know) that he is sweat (sweet) buy (by) his being sow (so) fit (or fat). No more - I remain your husband until death. Good by for this time.

Js Parrott to M A Parrott

Tonight's Letter #6 was written one week before the Union attack on the Duck River line. Unlike the Union Army, the Confederates are required to grow their own food. James wrote of having to sow wheat with the other men of his company.

The lack of money at home required a barter system. James told his wife, Mahala, how to settle old debts back home.

June the 18, 1863

Sate (State) of Tenn. Bedford County

Dear Wife: I have another oppertunity (opportunity) to send you another letter as I have promised to rite every chance I have I intend to do sow (so) and I believe you will two. The best nuse (news) I have to rite to you is that I am well and I do truley hope that this letter will find you and the children all well and doing as well as could be expected. I want to see you as bad as ever but it did not fall to my lot to get to come home this time as I had no wheat sode (sowed) I did not get to draw straws with the boys the detail was sow scattering only 5 men from our company but I hope that I will get a furlow before long if anything should happen that I should not get a furlow and I stay here you must come and see me if you can. I have drawed a short coat and I have send my coat home by John Hancock. He is to leave it at Mrs. Timler and I wrote you a letter and sent it at buy male (mail) that I put a paper of 5 needles in it. I want you to rite if you have got them are not. I want you to be contented and dont grave (grieve) for me. Grief don't stop this wear (war) nor does it cook you breakfast nor your supper. I feal (feel) confident that I will see you again. I want you to way (weigh) all my boys and tell me how much they way. I want you to have some of my ould (old) sows spade if they are not with pigs have the Adkins sow spade and the Kiner sow spade and the sow that I bought of Nancy and their big sow and there (their) 2 gilts will b enuff (be enough) to keep til I get home. I want you to save all the hogs you can. Rite to me how all the stock looks and how many hogs you have alive. Let nothing run in the clover but the hogs and mare. Let the cattle all run outside but your milk cow. You have now (no) harvus paster (harvest pasture) and your clover is all your chance for your hogs. I want to now (know) how your corn in holding out and your bacon and how you are making out for salt and rite who is your best neighbor. If anyboddy mistreats you I want to now (know) it. I want you to rite how our corn look and how much ground is lying out. If ould (old) Barney West can be got in to weark (work) I want the floor put in the ney (new) house. That house must be ficks (fixed) before winter if any probable chance. He owes me the puting (putting) in the sleepers and stocking my briar sythe (scythe) and the bilding (building) of my chimney. Tell him if he will put down the floor and stock the sythe that we will be evan (even). I must close buy saying I want to hug and kiss you my lovely wife and my sweat (sweet) baby and hug my big boys. Good buy for this time.

James Parrott

Tonight's Letter #7 was written after the fall of Atlanta on September 4, 1864. Both armies had fought almost non-stop for a total of four straight months on the road to Atlanta. James Parrott reflected on his good luck and the blessing of God in protecting him from harm. The tenor of Parrott's voice showed his war weariness.

Near Jones Borough, Ga. Cheatham Division, Wrights Brigade, 28 Tenn. Regiment

September 10, 1864

Dear Wife: I have the oppertunity (opportunity) of seating myself to rite (write) you another letter to let you now (know) that I am well and I hope that this letter will find you and my sweet little boys and Lety all well and I hope that this will find all the rest of my kinsmen and friends all well. I want to see you all so bad that I cant hardely (hardly) stand it. I hope and trust to God that the time is not far distant that I will get to come home and live in peace the remains of hour (our) days. May God spread (speed) the time. Dear companion I can say to you that I have been in all the battles since the battle of Muffles Barrow (Murfreessboro) and I was in the battle of Chickey Magey (Chickamauga) and at Resacker (Resaca) and at Darsville, New Hope Church, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, Stone Mountain and at Jones Borough (Jonesborough). I have bin in all those battles and through the blessing of God I have never bin tuched (touched) with a ball (bullet). I thank God for it. God has bin my sheal (shield) and I hope that he will be until I dy (die). What has bin the cause of him being my friend - I have ask him for his blesing (blessing). You rote (wrote) to me that you had prade (prayed) for me. I do believe that God has ancered (answered) your prayer for he has blest (blessed) me in everything and I request you to continyou (continue) to ask God for to extend his blesings toward us as a famley (family). If we shall never sea (see) each other again in this life I hope that we will meat (meet) in heaven where there is no ware (war) but peace forever.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

Tonight's Letter #7 Conclusion spoke of the problems the war had caused even for mailing a simple letter. By this time the South had realized they were losing the war. Fasting and prayer were turned to in the hours of need. James missed his wife and family so much and longed for the war to be over. He simply would not desert and be labeled a coward.

Near Jones Borough, Ga. Cheatham Division, Wrights Brigade, 28 Tenn. Regiment

September 10, 1864

Dear Wife: Tell John and Thomas to be good boys and mind there (their) mother till there (their) pap comes home and to learn to read and to spell. I want to see you all so bad that I cant hardely rite sow that you can read it. You must excuse all mistakes and bad riting. I want you to kiss Robert for me and tell him that is from pap. I want you to rite to me just as soon as you get this are (or) as soon as you can and rite to me about how you are getting along and all about how my friends is getting along and tell them to rite to me and give me all the satisfaction you can. Mahala Ann, I have rote you 2 letters before this one. I sent them buy the way of Ritchman (Richmond) buy (by) flag of truce. I am fixing to start in the morning through the lines with a flag of truce to exchange prisiners and I expect to send this letter threw the lines by some prisiner and get him to mail it. When you rite I want you to send me some united states stamps and when we get a communication open I want you to rite once a weak sow I can get them regular. I want to now if the mail route is open to Gillans (Gillilands) at the Oak Hill Post Office. I send my letters to Burkesville, Ky inear (in care) of Alen or Olen Gililan (Gilliland). Inquiry (Inquire) for letters every chance you have. I saw Elvin Moredock semetime back and he said that he was riting home. I want you to get Uncle Thomas Moredock to look for my letters and get them and them them to you. I aim to rite every chance I have as I can't get to see you. I hope to here from you. It would do me more good to here from you than anything elce as I cant get to see you. I oftimes think of that sweat babe that I kissed the morning I left home. God bless his hart. I want to kiss him today and you to. Hala Ann, I want you ot pray for me and tell all my Christian friends to remember in there prarers. Pray to God to give us peace and stop the sheding of blud (blood). Governor Brown of Ga. has set Thursday the 15 of Sept. for fasting, humiliation, and prayer. I hope it will prevail much. Dear wife I shuder to think of your trubles when your little children is a sleep you are awake. I am in this wear (war) I don't know when I can get out of it. You had rather have me a brave man than for me to be a coward. Wife you do not want

me to run resks (risks) of coming home and take (protection in the wild). I could rite a grate deal more but I am not allowed to so I must close buy saying I remain your husban until death. Good buy for this time. Lety I want you to rite to me and tell me who is your sweatheart.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

Tonight's Letter #8 was pretty much a repeat for the conclusion of Letter #7. U.S. postage stamps were much in demand by the Confederate soldiers at that time. It must be remembered that Middle Tennessee was then under Union occupation. The U.S. Mail was running again in that area. James further reflected upon his good luck and blessings from God. War weariness again crept into James' letter to his wife and children.

At that time both armies in Georgia were taking a much needed breather. General John Bell Hood had lost Atlanta, but was certain that Union General Sherman had traveled too far from his base of supplies at Nashville. General Hood planned on traveling northward to cut the railroad between Sherman's Atlanta-based army and the main supply depot at Nashville. This would have caused Sherman to retreat back to Nashville and give up Georgia and Middle Tennessee. Anyway, that was Hood's plan.

September the 11, 1864

Dear wife. I, this sabbath morning, seat myself to rite you one more letter to let you now that I miss the land of the living and well and hope that this will reach you and find you and my sweat (sweet) children all well and doing well. I want to see you all powerful bad. I want you to rite must as soon as you get this and give me all the satisfaction you can and send me some united states postage stamps for I want to rite to you often if the communication can be open. I have bin (been) in several hard battles but threw (through) the blessing of God I have never bin (been) touch with a ball (bullet). God has bin (been) my sheal (shield) and I hope he will be til I dey (die). You rote to me that you had prade (prayed) for me. I believe that God has ancered (answered) your prarer (prayer). I want you to still ask God for his blesing and tell all of my Christians friends to remember me in there (their) prayers. I am not allowed to rite much. You can rite to me all about your afars. (affairs). I have to close. Direct your letters to Chatham Division, Rits (Wrights) Brigade, 28 Tenn. Regt. Sow I remain your husban until death. Kiss Robert for me. Tell John and Thomas to be good boys till there (their) pap comes home. Good buy for this time.

James Parrott to Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

Tonight is the last installment of our Civil War letters. This letter should have been the first letter in the the time line of our collection. This letter was written just after the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee on December 31, 1862 and January 1, 1863. James took the opportunity to tell Mahala Ann Parrott he had survived the battle and missed the entire family. Already the Confederates were taking up defensive positions between Shelbyville and Tullahoma. This defensive line was called the Duck River Line. It would hold the Union forces in check until June 1864.

This letter was very difficult to read. The script was very light and almost impossible to read by ordinary means.

January 9, 1863

Bedford County, Tennessee

Dear wife: I want to use the opportunity to rite (write) to you to let you now (know) that I am well and I hope you and all are well. I got to my regiment on the second day after I left home. I found it on the battle field about three miles of Muffles Borow (Murfreesboro). We are now north of Shelvy Vill (Shelbyville) and Tullahoma. They (There) has been a terrible battle here. I want to see you so very bad but now (no) telling when I can. Do the best you can. If you have the opportunity rite (write) to me. Rite every chance you have. I dont no (know) when I can come home. Kiss for me my babies.....I remain your husban (husband) till death.

James Parrott

To: Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott

Conclusion to the story

James Parrott and his family migrated across the Cumberland Plateau when he was only a child. His father had died when James was only 2. James caught the measles during the migration. The widowed-mother decided to leave James with a Miller family in order to keep her other children safe from the terrible disease. Before the mother could return for James, she died. As a young boy, James was made an indentured servant to George M. Thompson. James lived with Thompson until he married Mahala Ann Bowman in Overton County in the 1850's.

The 1860 Tennessee Census showed:

Parrott, James, 3; Mahala A., 26; John C., 2; and Nancy Hill, 17. The family lived in Putnam County that year.

The family must have moved during the census. The 1860 Putnam County census also showed:

Parrott, James, 30; Haley, 2; John, 2; and Nancy Hill, 18.

James did not enter the Civil War early in the contest as so many of his neighbors did. Instead, he enlisted on November 27, 1862 at McMinnville in Company H of the 28th Tennessee Infantry. This was the place at which men could join safely from the Upper Cumberland and Cumberland Plateau regions. The army was only a few miles away at Murfreesboro at that time. Colonel Sidney Smith Stanton, a lawyer from Carthage, was the enlisting officer for James. Parrott agreed to enlist for a term of three years or the duration of the war. Throughout the war, James led a charmed life while the ranks of his regiment were whittled down. On November 30, 1864, James was in the front ranks in the attack upon Union positions at Franklin, Tennessee. James was shot in the lower right foot breaking the metatarsals. James was left at a Confederate hospital while the rest of the army went on to Nashville. After the Confederates were routed at Nashville, Union forces captured James around December 17, 1864. Parrott's foot was amputated by Union doctors on December 26, 1864 at Nashville. When he recovered sufficiently he was forward to the Louisville Prison on May 6, 1865 after the war. On June 16, 1865, James Parrott swore to the Oath of Allegiance and was paroled. He had a dark complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, and stood 5'10" tall. He claimed Cookeville for his residence.

After the war James and Mahala Ann farmed in the Rock Springs area of Overton County. James created his own wooden leg. James made it a habit of tying his wooden leg to the saddle of his horse as he rode. One day the horse came back to the house with his wooden leg attached to the saddle. The family found James dead from a gunshot wound. He was murdered on May 6, 1868. His family buried him in the nearby Officer Cemetery. Mahala never remarried. She died in 1908 and was buried beside her husband.


The murderer? Mahala's own brother disappeared the very same day and was never heard from again.

Thank all of you for your interest in these past few nights. I have enjoyed putting these pages together. I am a distant cousin of Mahala Ann Bowman Parrott. We both descend from Josiah Bowman of Overton County.

Thanks should be passed on to:

Mrs. Dorris Parrett Wilford <mailto:Doris337@cs.com>
512 Cumberland Street
Medina, TN 38355

 **Date:** 1863 to 1865

 **Place:** American Civil War