

Walter, John, and Ed Caldwell,
Jacksonville, Ala.

"Camp Alabama"

Near Richmond Va.

July 9th 1861.

My dear little children:

I have tried several
times since I have been in camp to nerve my
self up to the task of writing to you; but every
time my heart has grown so full that I felt
I could not stand it, and even now the
recollection of home, your mother, and you, fills
my heart and eyes so full I can scarcely write
intelligently. Your father, my dear boys, has been
torn suddenly from you to defend the soil which

gave him and you birth, at a time too when you
perhaps most needed his care and instruction.
But it is right and we should not complain. -
Without a good government and good laws, life
would be no pleasure to you and it would be a
shame in your father not to do all in his power
to secure to you a good country and good laws.

You are at an age now when your characters
are forming. If I were with you, I could
do much perhaps in assisting to mould your
Tell mother when she addresses her letters, to address them according

to the enclosed address,

characters for usefulness in life. But, children, though you have no father with you, you have a kind, intelligent, pious mother, such a mother

as but few boys can boast of. I say this in no

idle compliment to your dear mother. Your father has seen much of the world and knows female character well enough to assert with perfect confidence, that never did any boys have a mother whose amiable disposition and pious example was more worthy of emulation than yours. All that I am now doing or expect to do in the Army is to secure for you and your mother that happiness which can alone be found in a free and independent government. If I should fail in my effort and fall in the attempt, you will have, in after years, the proud satisfaction of knowing, that your father did his whole duty; and you must look

to your mother for that counsel and advice which I might give, if I were only with you. Don't be like many boys conclude that your mother don't know or don't consult your best interests. Remember she gave you birth - she has watched with a true

mothers care and affection over your early infancy -

and her heart is still full of anxious care for your

welfare and happiness. Obey her therefore in all things - love each other and let each try to do every thing that would make each other happy. I want you now while you are young to study, try to become wise boys that you may grow up to be wise men. Avoid the company of bad boys. Read your bibles, attend church, and at night when you say your little prayers remember your father who is far, far away.

I want your Mother to start you to school

and it is my greatest ambition that my boys may stand head of their classes - always have better lessons than other boys - but this can't be done without hard study. In your association with boys never descend to anything low or mean. Never deceive any one - never lie or cheat or swindle in any thing - never take or

claim what does not belong to you. The best way to get along with your teacher is always to obey his orders, try to please him in every thing - it will always profit you.

There are many other things I might say to you but I intend to write again before long

I am sitting now in my tent upon the ground
writing upon my knee. It is between 12 and three
O'clock at night. I have just come off from
duty as Officer of the day - this requires that I should
be up nearly all night at least once every ten

days. I felt that I could not be satisfied
without writing you, my dear children, at least
one letter from Richmond before I left for
more northern Virginia.

Although I have not written to you before
and notwithstanding we are separated many

hundreds of miles, yet there is scarcely an hour

in the day that I do not think of your mother
and you my dear children. I trust in God
that I may soon be enabled to see you and talk
to you in person: But should we never meet
again, remember that you are southerners, and be

ready and willing, as you grow up, to devote all

your time, talent and energies to the defense

of southern soil against the vindictive attacks
of our northern enemies.

In conclusion, my boys, I want you to
remember that you have a little sister. I want each
of you to love her above every thing else in the world
except your Mother and your Maker. Do every
thing in your power to make her amiable - don't
cross her - bless her dear little soul I want her to
grow in the image of her mother.

Kiss mother for me - Tell her I have grown selfish and
don't love any body except her own dear self and you children
write to me soon and often, your affectionate father C.