

Lewis Summers from Amacetta L. Summers, November 23, 1863

Glenwood Nov 23rd [1863]¹

My Dear Child

Your father wrote you last Sunday & told you all the news about the Greenbrier fight², we had heard that Henry Daniel R___³ was killed, but that has been contradicted, we have not heard any further particulars = we are having a beautiful bright spring like day, after a week of rainy dismal weather, and as I sit with my window open I can distinctly hear the band of the cavalry, they are engaged in the awful duty of executing one of their members_ a drunken brawl commenced at Cat Dunbar's⁴ in which one of the Zouaves was killed, & the murderer this evening suffers the penalty of his crime_ Have you not heard me speak of Mrs. Gen Gaines⁵, how she used to deliver lectures on the "horrors of war"_ I can now understand what a fruitful theme she selected for her lectures -- the horrors we hear of now are perfectly heartsickening=_

¹ The year 1863 is confirmed by dated letters written by Lewis to his mother that refer to the contents of this letter.

² Droop Mountain in nearby Pocahontas County? November 6, 1863, Union troops, commanded by Gen. W. W. Averell, defeated Confederate forces under Gen. John Echols.

³ Henry David Ruffner? The 26th Virginia Cavalry 26th Cavalry Regiment was formed in December, 1864, by consolidating the 46th and 47th Battalions Virginia Cavalry. The unit served in W.L. Jackson's Brigade and was active in various conflicts in the Shenandoah Valley. It disbanded during the spring of 1865. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph K. Kesler and Major Henry D. Ruffner were in command.

⁴ Cat Dunbar's?

⁵ Mrs. General Gaines? Myra Clark Gaines

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Cat had notice to leave the place, which
she accordingly did, & I suppose can be
spared by every one except the Baines family,⁶ they
I supposed will now be forced to exert themselves
for their own support. Syd⁷ is with us duly
installed as a law student, & is progressing with
Blackstone⁸ & Roman history relieved by the violin
he has your violin strung up, he does not find it
as dull as he expected_ I am glad you have been
down to Parkersburg & have seen my particular friend
Mrs. Smith & ^{also} Mrs. Shrewsbury, the former I have always
had the greatest admiration for__ the young
lady with the whistling talent is something new
& remarkable, I should like to hear her. You
ask what you shall bring for Christmas. I
believe I would rather you would bring me a
few pounds of good macaroni [*sic*] & good
cheese than anything else_ how long ^{a vacation} do you
have__ Syd proposes that we all go to Cabell⁹ &
spend our Christmas__ you say you need shirts
Have you any particular directions to give about
them, I can get one of the Jones girls to come

⁶ Baines family

⁷ Syd is Amacetta's younger brother, William Sydney Laidley, & Lewis Summers' uncle. Sid was born in 1839 & Lewis in 1843 & their close relationship is revealed in other letters.

⁸ Blackstone refers to the four volumes of Commentaries on the Laws of England, written by William Blackstone and published in 1765-1770. First year law students were required to study these works as part of their curriculum.

⁹ Cabell County, Amacetta's & Syd's home county

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and make them, or had I better wait till

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you come home? I am surprised you
have not met with Mr. Boyd¹⁰__ We have
discontinued our Sunday school for the
winter__ the weather is becoming too bad to
go regularly__ Your father was at Putnam
Court all last week, only came home yesterday,
and will have to go back on Wednesday to attend
the sale of your Aunt Nancy's¹¹ property, which
takes place on friday [*sic*]__after that your father
will not anything more to do with the estate, your
cousin Edgar¹² will have to attend to it__
I have been making some apple butter, &
I always wish you had some.
Syd has written some to you__
I hope you are getting along well in your
studies _and keep well, & do not forget
that the first & great duty is to Love & Serve
God__ keep that always in mind__
May His Holy Spirit guide you, & keep you
safe from dangers of both Love & body, my
dear, my precious child__

¹⁰ Mr. Boyd is probably the Rev. John Boyd.

¹¹ Aunt Nancy is probably Judge George Summers' sister, Ann Summers Millan, who died on October 25, 1863.

¹² Lewis' cousin Edgar is Dr. Albert Edgar Summers, son of William Shaw & Sydney Lucy Summers Summers, Judge George Summers' sister. She married a cousin so her maiden & married names are the same.

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Your affectionate

Mother

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I hope you will answer Hallie's¹³ letter.

I shall always love her because she loved

Our dear dear George. Elisha Williams¹⁴

has come home says he wants to see me

he has a knife that George¹⁵ gave him the last

time he saw him__ I want to go up as soon

as I can I heard today that Clarence Jackson¹⁶

was wounded in the late battle__

Old Tom is as fat as he can be & is the

admiration of all, he is the largest cat I ever

saw__

¹³ Hallie

¹⁴ An Elisha H. Williams is listed in Co. G of the 22nd Virginia Infantry.

¹⁵ George is Lewis' younger brother, George Laidley Summers. He ran away to join the Confederate army & died of measles in army camp at Salem, Virginia. He was 15.

¹⁶ Per the 1860 census, Clarence Jackson's family lived to the west of the Summers' family. He was originally enlisted in Company H of the 22nd Virginia Infantry & was wounded in action at the Battle of Droop Mountain.