

**Lewis Summers from Amacetta L. Summers, April 1864**

set them out yet, it has been too wet  
with daily prayers for your souls  
welfare, & with a mother's tenderest  
love goodbye for this

time

Glenwood [April 1864]<sup>1</sup>

My Dear Child

I had to get Sidney<sup>2</sup> to  
write for me last week, I suppose he told you  
how busy I was in consequence of M<sup>rs</sup> Light's<sup>3</sup>  
absence and of M<sup>rs</sup> Watkins's<sup>4</sup> having to leave, I  
had all the work to do for a day or two, took  
a violent cold & laid myself up sick, M<sup>rs</sup> Light  
came home on Tuesday [*sic*] at noon, John Toothman<sup>5</sup>  
her nephew was very sick with the measles  
was what detained her, they were afraid it was  
smallpox\_\_ and now she is sick & I think  
she is taking the measles, M<sup>rs</sup> Walker has  
left, but I have Harriet Jones<sup>6</sup> helping me,  
I am glad to get her, I will hide my tooth  
brush, & combs\_\_ last Sunday week David

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<sup>1</sup> Date confirmed by William Sydney Laidley's letter to Lewis Summers dated April 10, 1865, in which he mentions the same two deaths Amacetta writes of in this letter.

<sup>2</sup> Syd is Amacetta's younger brother, William Sydney Laidley. He was Lewis Summers' uncle as well as a close friend. Syd was only four years older than Lewis.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Light is mentioned in several of Amacetta's letters but her first name isn't given. She is apparently the housekeeper.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Watkins?

<sup>5</sup> John Toothman, Mrs. Light's nephew

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Jones is mentioned in a few of Amacetta's letters. She appears to have been hired on several occasions as temporary domestic help in the household.

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Newton<sup>7</sup> was buried, he died very suddenly  
& yesterday John G Wright<sup>8</sup> died, he went  
to bed the night before in usual health  
waked up in the night violent  
palpitation of the heart & dizziness, soon

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became speechless, lingered on  
that way a few hours & died  
these things ought to teach us to be ready  
for in an hour we know not we too may  
be called without time allowed for  
thought\_\_ I am trying to live in a state of  
readiness for death\_\_ M<sup>r</sup> Jones<sup>9</sup> went down  
to the [place woods?] & says yesterday morning a  
Miss Roberts attempted to rise from her  
bed, fell back and died,\_ I feel like we  
are living in strange times, the small pox  
all around us, that seems to be a scrounge  
let loose, I hear of it every where, sudden  
deaths, robbing & stealing, men & women getting  
divorces & marrying others, everything seems  
to be in the greatest state of confusion\_  
the black mare from the Grove<sup>10</sup> has been  
taken, the cavalry in town are stealing

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<sup>7</sup> David Newton was the editor of a local newspaper, *The Kanawha Republican*.

<sup>8</sup> John G. Wright is listed on the 1860 census as a hotel-keeper in Kanawha County.

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Jones is probably the husband of the previously mentioned Harriet Jones.

<sup>10</sup> Walnut Grove is the Summers' family farm in Putnam County.

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every thing they can lay their hands on  
they attempted to get in your Aunt Sydneys<sup>11</sup>  
a few nights ago, they got in Cousin J  
Brown's<sup>12</sup> cellar & stole every can of fruit  
Lou<sup>13</sup> had\_\_ I would not write you such

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somber letters, but really I find it  
impossible to avoid it surrounded as  
I am with so much to call out such reflec  
-tions, I would like to run away from it  
all, to some place where the old quiet &  
safety exists.\_ I used to complain of monotony  
I do not have that to complain of now\_\_ the  
change is now continually from bad to worse  
I had expected to have gone to Cabell<sup>14</sup>  
this week but M<sup>rs</sup> Light's being sick pre-  
vents\_\_ my poor visit to Cabell seems  
to be doomed to disappointment, I bear  
all these things with patience, believing  
that every thing is ordered for the best\_

Did you see the notice of Emma Smith's  
marriage in the Gazette of last Thursday?  
she was married in Cincinnati

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<sup>11</sup> Aunt Sydney is Judge George Summers' sister, Sydney Lucy Summers Summers. She married a cousin, so her maiden & married names are the same.

<sup>12</sup> James H. Brown, a lawyer at the time of this letter, later a judge.

<sup>13</sup> Louisa M. Beuhring Brown, James H. Brown's wife.

<sup>14</sup> Cabell County was Amacetta's home county, where she born & where many members of her family lived in 1864.

**Lewis Summers from Amacetta L. Summers, April 1864**

we received your letters by M<sup>r</sup> Crouch<sup>15</sup> &  
also the one before that, I am sorry you  
did not join one of the societies, I have  
always been so anxious for you to speak  
I am certain you could soon overcome that  
diffidence, anyone who writes as well as

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well as [*sic*] you do can speak  
also, if you make the effort, & that  
is why you often feel lonely, you cut yourself  
off from that source of amusement, of  
meeting the boys\_\_\_ I received my usual  
birthday letter from your uncle Theo,<sup>16</sup> he  
wished to be remembered to you. I  
suppose Syd told you that Hallie<sup>17</sup> had  
been down, Virginia<sup>18</sup> & Nena<sup>19</sup> are at  
home now\_\_\_ I am quite anxious to go  
to town, I want to see M<sup>rs</sup> Arnold<sup>20</sup> who  
has arrived\_ she came without a pass  
Gen Crook<sup>21</sup> returned yesterday, I believe

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<sup>15</sup> Mr. Crouch is mentioned in several letters between Summers' family members. May have been employed on the Glenwood or Walnut Grove property.

<sup>16</sup> Amacetta's brother, Theodore Thaddeus Sobieski Laidley.

<sup>17</sup> Hallie Valentine? Or maybe Harriet Laidley?

<sup>18</sup> Virginia Holderby? Or Virginia Brown?

<sup>19</sup> Nena? Mary Rowena Laidley?

<sup>20</sup> Mrs. Arnold is Cinthia Noyes Arnold, wife of Enos Arnold who was Kanawha County Sheriff on the 1860 census. He enlisted in Co. H of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Infantry. Was in Salem, VA at the time of George Laidley Summers' death. His wife was apparently there as well & wrote to her sister, Ellen Noyes Rand, about George's death.

<sup>21</sup> General Crook is General George Crook, who was in command of the Kanawha Division at this time.

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he is not to be sent away, every one is  
ignorant of the movements on foot,  
none can be made whilst it continues  
to rain, the Superior Court commenced  
its session yesterday, I am afraid your  
Father will take cold in the damp Court  
house\_\_ I made the first boquet [*sic*] today  
heartsease, white violets, blue bells, cowslips, jonquills  
& hyacinths\_\_ my peach trees have come

*[letter continues at top of page 1]*