

*Transcription of the Letters of David Mathews  
to Rebecca (Waldrum) Mathews*

*February 1-September 1, 1863*

*with commentary*

# THE CIVIL WAR IN 1863

David Mathews served in the 34th Alabama Infantry Regiment and apparently not in the 32nd as initially thought. The 34th was part of General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. David was drafted (conscripted) and began his service at Camp Watts near Notasulga, Alabama. From there he went to Bragg's army.

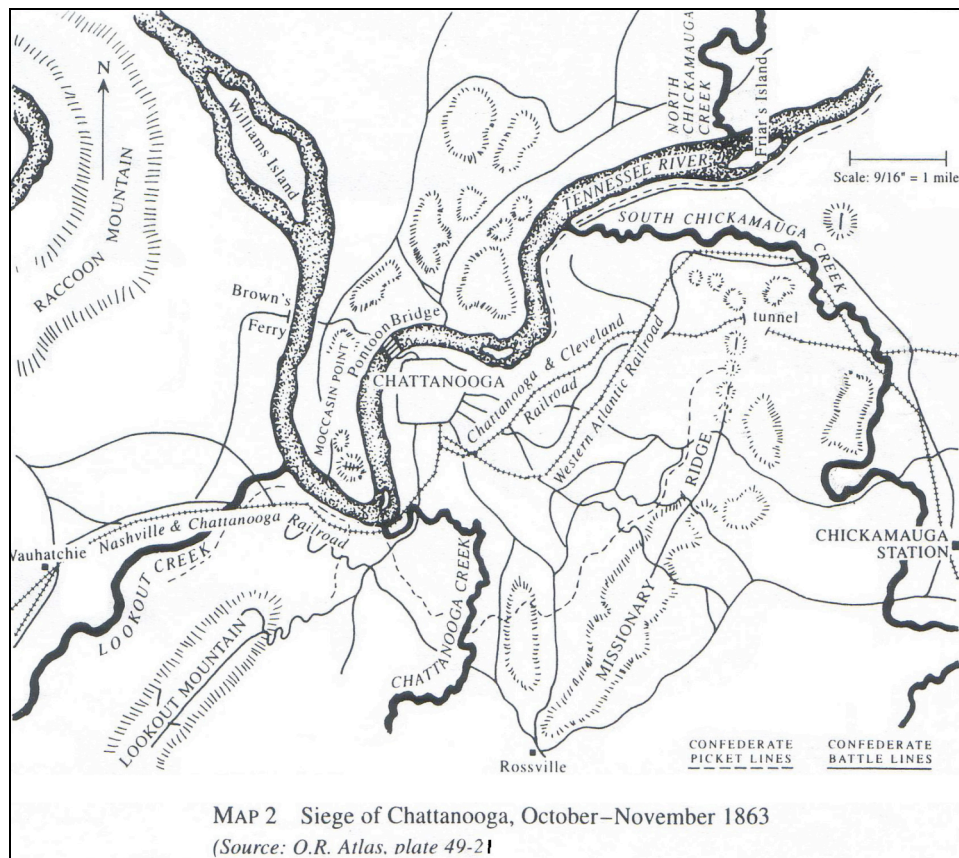
The year 1863 marked a downturn for the fortunes of the Confederacy. On July 4, Ulysses S. Grant had taken Vicksburg, which had protected the Mississippi. Later that year, the Union Army began moving through Tennessee on its march to Atlanta and the sea, dividing the Confederacy on the east as well as the west. Bragg's army was deployed in Tennessee along the Duck River (where Shelbyville is located) until driven back beyond Chattanooga after losing a battle in June at Tullahoma.

Bragg counterattacked to regain Chattanooga on September 10 and won a victory at Chickamauga Creek on September 20, which gave him control of Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain. The Southern army was high above the city, located on the south bank of the Tennessee River. The 34th may have been involved in this counterattack because David's last letter is dated September 1. His regiment was assigned to General Arthur M. Manigault's Brigade, along with the Alabama 24th and 28th regiments.

Between November 23 and 25, the Union Army, led by Generals Grant and Sherman, drove Bragg from the Tennessee mountains; what was left of his decimated group retreated into Georgia. Many of Clarke County's soldiers were in these battles. David refers to the Dickinson Guards in his letter. His cousin, Daniel McLeod, was captain of the Guards, which became Company F, 24th Alabama Infantry Regiment. The 24th included twins Delaney D. and Lorenzo Bumpers and their cousin, Nathaniel J. Bumpers. (Delaney and Lorenzo's younger brother, Robert Jackson Bumpers, served in Company B, Lewis Battalion, Alabama Calvary. Known as "Roach," Robert Jackson was the grandfather of Emma Lee Bumpers Mathews.) The 24th lost a small hill, Orchard Knob, on November 23, and the Union took possession of Lookout Mountain the next day. (Nathaniel and Delaney were later captured and sent to Camp Chase outside Columbus, Ohio, where both died in 1864.) The 24th then retreated to Missionary Ridge, where it joined the 34th.

On November 25, 1863, David and the 34th Regiment moved from the Manigault's left flank to support General Zachariah C. Deas' all Alabama Brigade on Polk's Spur near the center of Missionary Ridge. Although on high ground, the Confederate troops were not placed in the correct strategic location on the slopes and received conflicting orders from their officers. A hard charge up the center of Missionary Ridge by Union General George Thomas overran the Confederate lines, resulting in a number of men killed, wounded, or captured; among those captured was David Mathews. Family legend has it that David's brother, Joe (or Josiah), was captured at the same time.





David's letters are as interesting for what is not in them as what is. Unlike many letters from the front, he does not tell his family about the details of war, perhaps because he doesn't want to add to his wife and mother's anxieties or to scare his children. He was transferred to Bragg's army just before it lost a decisive battle, when the Confederate line that stretched from Shelbyville to Tullahoma, Tennessee, was driven back on June 24 (shortly after David's letter of June 20). The only battle he mentions is a victory in far away Winchester, Virginia, also in June, where Union General Milroy surrendered 2,500 troops. He says nothing about the defeat at Gettysburg or Vicksburg, although both were surely the subject of daily conversations in his regiment. And there do not appear to be any letters written about the battle before the loss at Missionary Ridge.

Despite his pledge to do his duty, David advises his wife to make sales while her Confederate money is still good, a clear indication that he doubts the South will win, an outcome that dims throughout 1863.

Most of the correspondence focuses on the prospects for peace and a return to the family farm. David writes almost exclusively to find out how family and relatives are doing—especially his children, who he admonishes to behave and continue their education. He attempts to manage the farming at a distance, going into detail about crops and finances. He is steadfast in his commitments as a son, husband, and father, and it is clear that his ultimate hope is in God's benevolence.

# Cast of Characters

## ***Family***

Dear Wife: *Rebecca (Waldrum) Mathews*, “Becky,” 1821-1901 [see photograph]

Mother: *Lucy (Martin) Mathews*, 1805-1879

Dear Children:

Ellen, *Eleanor Elizabeth*, age 15

Ceily, *Celia Ann*, age 13

Jim, *James Waldrum*, age 11

Mollie, *Mary Avaline*, age 9

*Rebecca Adaline*, age 7

Alice, *Sophrina Alice*, age 4

Little Henry, *David Henry*, age 2

*Marion Jackson*, age 1

Brother Joe, *Josiah Mathews Jr.*, 1835-1905

Elijah, *Elijah Mathews*, brother, 1841-1930

Brother John, *John Mathews*, 1846-1921 [see photograph]

Sister Nancy, *Nancy Ann Celia (Mathews) Hicks*, 1830-1892

Anderson, *Josiah Anderson Hicks*, 1849-1871, nephew, son of Nancy

James Green, James Jefferson Green, husband of Emaline “Emily” Eleanor Mathews, David’s sister, 1834-1904

First Cousin Giles, *Giles Chapman*, 1806-1869, son of Elijah Chapman and Elizabeth Martin [Lucy (Martin) Mathews’ sister]

Stephen Chapman, *Stephen P. Chapman*, son of Giles and Achsha (Pugh) Chapman

Old Mother Waldrum, probably Rebecca Marks, second wife of James William Waldrum, who died in 1854

Aunt Betsy, possibly *Caroline Elizabeth (Waldrum) Jones*, Rebecca’s stepsister

## ***Clarke Countians***

Charles Bradley

Jack Dewitt

Dave Ford

Tom Ford

George Ford [The Fords were from Hebron]

34th Alabama:

L. Hall

Floyd Herrin

S. McClure

David White

Other Soldiers:

Ornel Holly

Cot Porter

***Others***

Andy \_\_\_\_\_, tanner, unidentified

Mr. Burge, possibly H. W. Burge

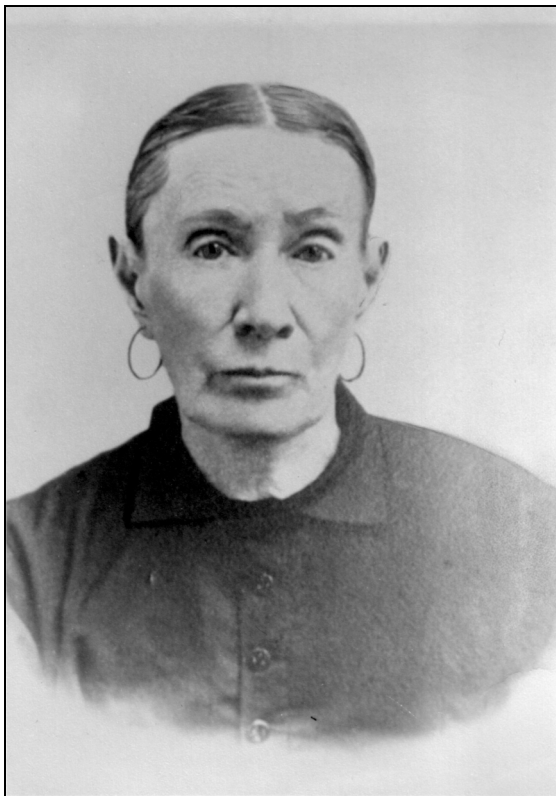
Henry, unidentified

Hollingsworth, owner from whom David and Rebecca bought the farm on Highway 48

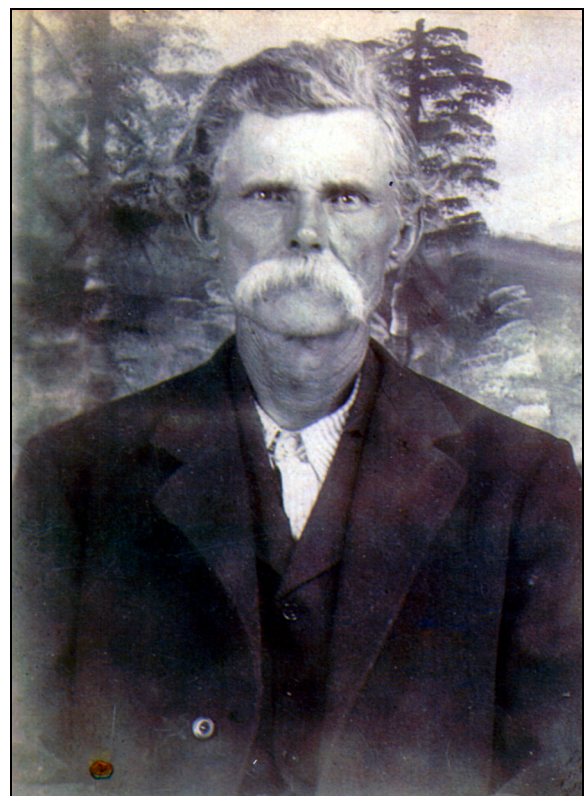
Nealey/Nelley, probably a slave

Nerva, probably a slave

William, unidentified



*Rebecca (Waldrum) Mathews*



*John Mathews*



*Dear Becky,*

*The Civil War correspondence of David  
Mathews to Rebecca Waldrum Mathews.*

*1863*

*👁 on computer disk 👁*



Feb the 1<sup>st</sup> 1863

Alo Macon Co Camp wats. Co K  
as now Raining I Get David White  
who lives near Choctaw corner to do my  
riting it is through the mersis of  
god I am bless with good health  
and I hope you all is bless with  
the same I am in a mess with five of  
our Clark County boyes there nam  
es I Hall S McClure floid Shearon  
+ S<sup>r</sup> White + my self. we get plenty  
to Eat and a house to stay in and  
dont have to stand gard in the ra  
in we are doing well considering  
Don wife I rote to you too weeks a go  
to day I am anxious to hear from  
you I fear you did ~~not~~ get my  
firs letter so I send this I want yo  
to anser this as son as it come to hand  
I want you to not fail riting ever  
week + I have had a reexamanation  
and the sergon said nearsitedness is  
no caus for dis charge but I have a  
hope when I am sent to the armer I  
will have a nother examanation if you  
all think <sup>best</sup> under the Circumstandis that



Brother John would take my  
place I would put melody in  
his place to work for mother and  
I would be all the help I could.  
and I would give him nerva in  
case I did not have to take his pla  
se there is a talk of calling from  
16 to 60 for State Servis I mean I'll  
have to take his place in the molish  
but in case i am not call off in  
Servis I'll give him the coat.

Mother I No one chile is as near  
as a mother as Brother John is Bless:  
with superor sight and best calcolated  
for military servis and I beeing the  
oldest and more calcolated to render  
more benafit to our destatute fameles  
and I leaving a grate charge I want  
you all to think and act as you think  
best & in case he should come go before  
the guge of the probate cort and prove his age  
and have the county Seal put on it and  
he mus bring it with him least he be  
taken up by incoaling offers thinking  
he being just 18 years of age I want you to give  
me a anser what your mind is on this



Subject So I may make some arrangements hear & give you some instructions &c Well Rebecca I wish you could see us on dress pierraid it is Butiful in deed there are some fine ladies comes out nearly ever evening to see dress pierraid I drilled yesterday and I was ple as with it well Dear Children I wis you could be here a while to see the cares run by it would pleas you Dear Children learn you books and try to improve your minds be good to your mother Remember your Creator in the dages of your youth for god loves little children and you mus love him Remember me Dear wife & relations & friend I remember me in your prayers and I will remember you all Dear Rebeckah this is wendnesday morning the 14<sup>th</sup> I am still well the reason I wated a few dages I was wating for an ansee from the first I sent to you and a mother cause there was a report that they would be a call for volenteers to go <sup>to</sup> there



polard

I intended to volunteer to go there  
but it proved all false as that would  
throw me so much nearer home well  
I have made a draw since I come to  
camp wats I have drew a boat I  
sold my coat and pants for \$12 as they  
was too small I have no. less of  
intrust to rite but if you have  
enny rite it as soon as you  
get this I think you better not  
plant Enny thing in the Pry  
patch but your potatoes &c

Dear wife I mus come to a close  
I hope this safe to hand and find  
you all well remember me in your  
prayers be papul to your creator  
keep the prise in view go on to  
seek your lord and try to be prep  
ard to meet him in peas may god  
love you all So I close rite  
often

David Mathews  
To Rebecca Mathews



February 1, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Feb. the 1<sup>st</sup> 1863

Ala [.] Macon Co [.] camp [Camp] wats. [Watts] co[.] K  
as [As] now raining I Get [get] David White who lives near Choctaw [Choctaw] corner [Corner]  
to do my riting [writing.] it [It] is through the mersis [mercy] of god [God] I am bless [blessed]  
with good health and I hope you all is [are] bless [blessed] with the same. I am in a mess with  
five of our Clark [Clarke] County boyes [boys.] there [Their] names is [are] L [.] Hall [.] s[.]  
mcclure [McClure,] floid [Floyd] Hearon [Herrin] & D[.] white [White] and my self. we [We]  
get plenty to eat and a house to stay in and don't have to stand gard [guard] in the rain[.] we  
[We] are doing well considering[.]

Dea [Dear] wife I rote [wrote] to you too [two] weks [weeks] ago to day [today.] I am  
anxious to hear from you. I fear you did not get my firs [first] letter so I send this [.] I want yo  
[you] to anser [answer] this as son [soon] as it come [comes] to hand. I want you to not fail riting  
[writing] ever [every] week. I have had a reexamanation [re-examination] and the sergon  
[surgeon] said nearsitedness [nearsightedness] is no cause for discharge but I have a hope when I  
am sent to the army I will have a nother [another] examanation [examination.] if [If] you all  
think best under the sircumstanceis [circumstances] that Brother John would take my plase  
[place.] I would put neley [Nealey? Nelly?] in his plase [place] to work for mother and I would  
bee [be] all the help I could and I would give him nerva [Nerva] in case I did not have to take his  
plase [place.] There is a talk of calling from 16 to 60 for State Servis [Service.] I mean Il [I'll]  
have to take his plase [place] in the molisa [militia] but in case I [I] am not call [called] off in  
Servis [Service] Il [I'll] give him the coalt [colt.]

mother [Mother,] I no [know] one chile [child] is as near as a nother [another.] as [As]  
Brother John is Bless [blessed] with superor [superior] sight and more calcolated [calculated?] to  
render for military servis [service] and I being the oldest and more calcolated [calculated] to  
render more benefit to our destatute [destitute] fameles [families] and I leaving a grate [great]  
charge I want you all to think and act as you think best & in case he should come go before the  
guge [judge] of the probate cort [court] and prove his age and have the county seal put on it. And  
[And] he must bring it with him least he bee [be] taken up by inroaling [enrolling] offers  
thinking he being past 18 years of age. I want you to give me a [an] anser [answer] what your  
mind is on this subject so I may make some rangements [arrangements] hear [here] & give you  
some instructtions [instructions] &c. [etc.]

[Paragraph indention added by transcriber] Wel [Well] Rebecca I wish you could see us  
on dress perraid [parade]. it [It] is butiful [beautiful] in deed [indeed]. there [There] are some fine

ladyes [ladies] [who] comes [come] out nearly ever [every] evening to see dress peraid [parade.]  
I drilled yisterday [yesterday] and I was pleas [pleased] with it well.

[Paragraph indention added by transcriber] dear [Dear] children I wish you could bee [be]  
here a while to see the cares [cows? cars?] run by[.] it [It] would pleas [please] you. Dear  
children learn you [your] books and try to improve your minds. bee [Be] good to your mother[.]  
remember [Remember] your creator in the dayes [days] of your youth for god [God] loves little  
children and you must love him. Remember [Remember] me Dear wife & relations & frends  
[friends] & remember me in your prayers and I will remember you all.

[Paragraph indention added by transcriber] Dear Rebeckah [Rebecca] this is wendnday  
[Wednesday] morning the 4<sup>th</sup>[.] I am still well[.] the [The] reason I wated [waited] a few dayes  
[days] I was wating [waiting] for an anser [answer] from the first I sent to you and a nother  
[another] cause [because] they [there] was a report that they would bee [be] a call for vollenteers  
[volunteers] to go to polard [Polard.]

[Paragraph indention added by transcriber] I entended [intended] to volenteer [volunteer]  
to go there but it proved all falce [false] as that would threw [throw] me so much nearer home[.]  
well [Well] I have made a draw since I come [came] to camp [Camp] wats [Watts.] I have drew  
[drawn] a soot [suit.] I sold my coat and pants for \$12 as they was [were] too small. I have no  
ness [news] of intrust [interest] to rite [write] but if you have enny [any,] rite [write] it as soon as  
you get this[.] I think you better not plant enny thing [anything] in the Ry [Ry? Berry?] patch but  
your potatoes & c [corn? cabbage? cotton?]

[Paragraph indention added by transcriber] Dear wife I mus [must] come to a close[.] I  
hope this safe to hand and finds you all well[.] remember [Remember] me in your prayers[.] bee  
[Be] faful [faithful] to your creator[.] keep [Keep] the prise [prize] in vew [view.] go [Go] on to  
seek your lord [Lord] and try to bee [be] preparad [prepared] to meet him in peas [peace.] may  
[May] god [God] love you all[.] So I close[.] rte[Write] often[.]

David Mathews

To Rebeckah [Rebecca] mathews [Mathews]



Dear Pa

Dear Father 1863  
Feb the 10<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear wife I take the opportunity of writing  
you a few lines to answer yours which come to  
hand the 10<sup>th</sup> I am proud to hear you  
all was well and the mare had a fine colt  
I had got on easy about home untill I  
received your letter I advise you to press  
forward and do the best you can you did  
not tell me wheather you got that thread  
from henery or not nor wheather they are  
eney young calves or lambs or not  
you wrote to me to no how long I expected  
to stay here I dont no they say there  
will be a good portion of the men here  
sent off the last of this week or the first  
of next I think there is a chance yet  
~~here~~ for a discharge from what our luten-  
ent tells me + c I dont need eney  
thing you can get to me they say  
we will be sent to Brags army Tenn-  
assee I have no news of importance  
I hear a gratedeal that would be encourag-  
ing if it could be credited and if you  
have eney rite it I want to no what  
Giles thinks concerning peas this spring  
it is thought by some that pas will come by  
next so sure



Tell me in your next letter what  
the concrisps are doing and wheather Jack  
Dewitt + Dave ford + Gorge ford is at home  
or not. Dear children press forward your  
swiftness in bisness and tend to your  
books every oportuntiy and try  
to improve your riting if you  
have no paper practice on the slate  
you dont no the good it don me to  
resieve the few lines from Sealey as  
I could reced ever word of it I am proud  
to hear that you have your logs so  
near cut up I would like to no how you  
make out for fire wood and you have  
forgoten tell mother that I have not  
forgoten here and give my love to  
all my inquiring friends and reserve  
a portion your selves So I must  
Close for this time as the mail will  
start in a few minuts may god  
Bless us all as a famely and save  
us in his kingdom direct your letter  
after this to Co H so good by for  
this time rite soon + c your true  
husband untill death

David Matthews



February 11, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Dear wife[,] I take the opportunity [opportunity] of riting [writing] you a few lines to anser [answer] yours which came to hand the 10<sup>th</sup>[.] Eye [I] am proud to hear you all was [were] well and the mare had a fine colt[.] I had got oneasey [uneasy] about home untell [until] I received your letter[.] I advise you to press forward and do the best you can[.] you [You] did not tell me wheather [whether] you got that thread from henerry [Henry?] or not nor wheather [whether] they [there] are eny [any] yong [young] calves or lambs or not[.] you [You] rote [wrote] to me to no [know] how long I espected [expected] to stay heare [here.] Eye [I] don't no [know.] they [They] say they [there] will bee [be] a good portion of the men heare [here] sent off the last of this week or the first of next. I think there is a chance yet for a discharge from what our lutanent [lieutenant] tells me & c [etc?] I don't need every thing you can get to me[.] they [They] say we will bee [be] sent to Brags [Braggs'] arney [army] [of] tennasee [Tennessee.]

[Paragraph indention by transcriber] I have no news of importance[.] I hear a grate [great] deal that would be incouraging [encouraging] if it could be credited and if you have eney [any,] rite [write] it[.] I want to no [know] what giles [Giles] [transcriber's note: Giles Chapman] thinks conserning [concerning] peas [peace] this spring[.] it [It] is thought by some that peas [peace] will come by next June[.] tell [Tell] me in your next letter what the concrips [conscripts] are doing and wheather [whether] Jack Dewitt & Dave ford [Ford] & Gorge [George] ford [Ford] is [are] at home or not[.]

[Paragraph indention by transcriber] Dear children[,] press forward your & nelley in bisness [business] and tend to your books every [every] oportunity [opportunity] and try to improve your riting [writing.] if [If] you have no paper[,] practice on the slate[.] you [You] don't no [know] the good it don [does] me to reseive [receive] the few lines from Sealey [Ceily] as I could reed [read] ever [every] word of it[.] I am proud to hear that you have your logs so near [nearly] cut up[.] I would like to know how you make out fo [for] fire wood and you bare footed[.] tell [Tell] mother [Mother] I have not forgotten here [her] and give my love to all my inquiring friends and reserve a portion your selves[.] So I must close for this time as the mail will start in a few minuts [minutes.] may [May] god [God] bless us all as a family [family] and save us in his kingdom[.] direct [Direct] your letter after this to co [Company] H [.] So good by [Bye] fore [for] this time[.] rite [Write] soon & c [etc?] your [Your] true husband untell [until] death[.]

David Mathews



Feb the 15<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear wife I again take the opportunity  
of writing to you to let you know where  
I am going I'll leave here Monday  
night on the train to go to Tullahoma  
Tennessee. They was here a General  
and a Lieutenant General from the  
34<sup>th</sup> Ala for 1500 men we had the  
choir to volunteer or be drafted and  
I concluded there was no chance for a  
Exemption here and they people  
tells me there will be a chance for a  
discharge in the army & so if I have  
to be kept from my dear family and  
friends let me go where I can send  
my country some good to be kept  
here to cut wood and dig up stumps  
and grubs for camp. wats dont cost  
me for it dont do my family or  
country Envy good & I hope they will  
be a chance for a discharge when I  
go to the army Dear family press  
forward in all things is good but  
for sake all evil and learn the path  
of duty and walk there in and dont  
forget to pray for me and all poor Soldiers



and pray for peace and love may  
abound to our nations it is my heart  
desire and pray to god that peace may  
speedely come and we all may be  
granted the happy privilage of  
returning to our love ones again  
and live untill we dye with them  
god grant this request and if it is  
his will for me to dye from home oh may  
we meet in that bles world to part  
no more where there are no wars nor trou-  
ble nor grief but Joy un speakable  
and full of glory for ever and ever  
Dear children I admonish you to be obed-  
ent to your mother I want you all to  
go to meetin when you can and when you  
pray remember me &c I want you when  
you plant corn plant it in the water  
furrough and drill it all as I think it  
will give you a better chance only hav-  
ing one plow & another I have not  
forgotton you tho I have not rote to  
you I want you to see and hear my  
letters read when I rite I embrace  
you all I crave your prayers  
so I must come to a close for this  
time so I remain your true husband D Mathews



February 15, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Dear wife[,] I again take the oportunity [opportunity] of riting [writing] to you to let you no [know] where I am goin [going.] Il [I'll] leave hear [here] Monday night on the traines [trains] to get to tulahoma [Tullahoma,] tennasee [Tennessee.] they [There] was hear [here] a kernel [colonel] and a Lieutenant [lieutenant] kernel [colonel] from the 34<sup>th</sup> Ala[.] for 150 men[.] we [We] had the chois [choice] to vollunteer [volunteer] or bee [be] drafted and I concluded they [there] was no chance for a [an] examanation [examination] hear [here] and they [the] people tells [tell] me they [there] will bee [be] a chance for a discharge in the army [army.] So if I have to bee [be] kep [kept] from my dear famely [family] and friends[,] let me go where I can serve my contry [country.] Some good to bee [be] kept hear [here] to kut [cut] wood and dig up stumps and grubs for camp [Camp] wats [Watts.] don't [Doesn't] suit me for it don't [doesn't] do my famely [family] or contry [country] enny [any] good so I hope they [there] will bee [be] a chance for a dis charge [discharge] when I go to the army [army.]

[Indention added by transcriber] Dear famely [family,] press fourward [forward] in all things is good but for sake [forsake] all evel [evil] and learn the path of duty and walk there in[therein.] and [And] don't forget to pray for me and all poor solgers [soldiers.] and pray for peas [peace] and love may abound to our nations[.] it [It] is my hart [heart's] desire and prare [prayer] to god [God] that peas [peace] may speedily [speedily] come and we all may bee [be] granted the happy privalligg [privilege] of returning to our love [loved] ones again and live untell [until] we dy [die] with them[.] god [God] grant this request and if it is his will for me to dy [die] from hom [home,] oh may we meet in that bles [blessed] worle [world] to part no mor [more,] where they [there] are no wars nor troble [trouble] nor greaf [grief] but joy unspeakabl [unspeakable] and full of glory for ever and ever[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] Dear children[,] I admonish you to bee[be] obedent [obedient] to your mother[.] I want you all to go to meetin [meeting] when you can and when you pray[,] remember me &c [and others.] I want you when you plant corn[,] plant it in the water furough [furrow?] and drill it all as I think it will give you a better chance only having one plow[.] & [And] mother [Mother,] I have not forgotton [forgotten] you tho I have not rote [wrote – written] to you[.] I want you to see and hear my letters red [read] and when I rite [write] I imbrase [embrace] you all [.] I crave your prayers[.] So I mus [must] come to a close for this time[.] so [So] I remain your true husband[.]

D Mathews



Camp Near Shelbyville Tenn Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 63  
Dear Rebecca

I Landed safely with my Regiment  
34<sup>th</sup> Ala Yesterday evening to day I went and paid  
my friends in the 34<sup>th</sup> Ala a visit. I saw all  
Boys found them in moderate health. The Boys  
all seem to be in fine spirits considering the  
hard time my health is very good at this  
time I have stood it better so far than I expected  
I have nothing of importance to write you  
as regards war matter some think we will  
have a battle here soon but I doubt it for we  
have had nothing but rain snow and  
sleet for some length of time and roads  
are in bad condition for traveling so I cant  
think we will do much fighting until  
they dry off. Tell mother that I have not  
seen Brother Joe his <sup>agent</sup> at Enid some 20  
miles from this place. Stephen Chapman told  
me he saw him as he came on here he was  
at the Hospital but was up and about  
I talked <sup>with</sup> my Lieutenant this morning about  
my eyesight being deficient and he told me  
that they would not put me on guard duty  
in consequence of that I have under some



Examination since I left Home as regards  
my Eyesight the Drs ask me few questions  
regarding my Health was all they done  
I do not regret Living Camp Wats for I was doing <sup>not</sup>  
any thing there but Digging up Stumps and  
Policing the quarters I think of you and my  
Affairs at Home but I am in good spirits  
and Health and never will I Dispare.  
In Conclusion you I have might often and  
all the news. I recd your Letter to  
Shelbyville Tenns Company a 34<sup>th</sup> Ala  
Regiment And Remember my Last  
Advice to you. My kindest regards to  
you and the children David Mathews  
To Rebecca Mathews  
at Home

February 20, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Camp near Shelbyville, Tenn[.] Feb[.] 20<sup>th</sup> 63 [1863]

Dear Rebeca [Rebecca.]

I landed safely with my regiment 34<sup>th</sup> Ala[.] yester [yesterday] evening. To day [Today] I went and paid my frends [friends] in the 24<sup>th</sup> Ala[.] a visit. I saw all boys[.] found them in moderate health[.] the [The] boys all seem to be in fine spirits considering the hard times. my [My] health is very good at this time[.] I have stood it better so far than I expected[.] I have knothing [nothing] of importance to write you[.] As regards war matter[.] some think we will have a battle here soon[.] But I doubt it for we have had knothing [nothing] but rain[.] snow[.] and sleet for some length of time and roads are [in] a bad condition for travling [traveling.] So I can't think we will do much fighting untill [until] thing [things] dry off[.]

[Indention added by transcriber]tell [Tell] mother [Mother] that I have not seen Brother Joe[.] his [His] regiment [is] at Tulohoma [Tullahoma] some 20 miles from this place[.] Stephen Chapman told me he saw him as he came on here[.] he [He] was at the hospital but was up and about[.] I talked with my Liutenant [lieutenant] this morning about my eyesight being deficient and he told me that they would not put me on guard duty in consequence of that[.] I have undergone no examination since I left home[.] As regards my eyesight[.] the Drs [doctors] ask me few questions regarding my health was all they done [did]. I do not regret lieving [leaving] Camp Wats [Watts] for I was not doing any thing there but diging [digging] up stumps and policeing [policing] the quarters[.] I think of you and my affairs at home but I am in good spirits and health and never will I despair[.] In conclusion you please wright [write] often and all the news[.] Directt [Direct] your letters to Shelbyville[.] Tenn Company A, 34<sup>th</sup> Ala[.] Regiment[.] And remember my last advice to you[.] My kindest regards to you and the children[.]

David Mathews

To Rebecca Mathews

At Home



March the 27<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear wife I one more abail my self  
to anser yours which come to hand to  
day I was proud to get a letter from him  
and all was well this leaves me well  
as comon and I am proud to say to  
you that I heard preacher to day  
for the first I heard since I left  
home this day was pointed by piers  
adent Davis to fast and pray I am  
glad to hear our stock is doing  
well I am sorry the mares eyes  
fail but they mus score the lime  
to her and make her do her duty  
you rote to no how many letters  
I have receivd this is th third one  
dated the 15<sup>th</sup> and I have sent of  
sixth this makes Dear wife you need  
not give your self eney uneasiness  
about my doing eney thing that  
would bee a dis grace to me or  
my famely il try to do my duty  
in Every respect so help me god



Son

I saw a good many of the D. Men  
yards to day they are generally well  
Except cot parties he was sent to  
the hospital to day with pneumonia  
ey ornel holler is complaining  
with his head but I hope nothing  
serious you said in your  
other letter you wanted my like  
ness I no of no chance of have  
ing it taken & I hear it talked  
in camps there is a order for  
stopping all preparation of gun  
boats and a armistis on foot I  
dont no the certainty of it but  
I hope it is so and peas may  
grow out of it and I may re  
turn home and then you can  
see my true like ness face  
to face is my dayley prayers  
also I am proud to hear that  
our babies is doing well & in  
a prospered conditon as they are

Dear children be of good  
Cheer be obedient to your kind  
mother and honor your creator  
in the dayes of your youth &c  
in your next letter let me  
no how your corn holds out  
if you can get money from  
every money from Envy of  
your nabors and salt is cheap  
lay in for a mother year so  
I close for this time as I want  
to rite some to mother I  
still remain your true and  
affection ate husband I Matthew

Dear mother I will say some  
thing to you in ansie to yours  
I still are trying to do the  
best I can for my self and  
contry tho it is but little  
I never received your letter  
conserning John & takin my  
please



it makes no Difference.  
they are no chance for a Sub  
stitute hear now & when you  
rite give all the news you can con  
cerning Court affares and Geneser  
news concerning peas &c.

Dear Mother My Desire is to  
be at home and peas and freedom  
to our contry I am glad to hear  
you all are getting a long as  
well as you are Remember  
me in your prayers &c  
~~give my love and respects to~~  
all inquiring friends and rela  
tions So I must close for  
this time and still remain  
your true son untill  
death

David Mathews

March the 27, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Dear wife[,] I onc [once] more avail my self [myself] to anser [answer] yours which came to hand to day [today.] I was proud to get a letter from home and all was well[,] this [This] leaves me well as comon [common?] and I am proud to say to you that I heard preachen [preaching] to day [today] for the first I heard sence [since] I lef [left] home[,] this [This] day was pointed by presadent [President] Davis to fast and pray[.] I am glad to hear our stock is doing well[.] I am sorry the mares [mare's] eyes fail [failed] but they mus [must] score the line to her and make her do her duty[.] you [You] rote [wrote] to me how maney [many] letters I have reseived [received.] this [This] is th [the] third one dated the 15<sup>th</sup> and I have sent of [off] sixth [six] this makes[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] Dear wife you need not give your self [yourself] eney [any] uneasiness about my doing eney thing [anything] that would bee [be] a disgrase [disgrace] to me or my famely [family.] il [I'll] try to do my duty in every respect so help me god [God.] I saw a good maney [many] of the Dickenson gards [Dickinson Guards] to day [today.] they [They] are generly [generally] well except [except] cot [Cot] porter [Porter.] he [He] was sent to the hospittle [hospital] to day [today] with pneumoney [pneumonia.] ornel [Ornel] holley [Holley or Holly] is copplaining [complaining] with his head but I hope nothing searious [serious.] you [You] said in your other letter you wanted my likenes [likeness.] I no [know] of no chance of having [having] it taken &c [etc.] I hear it talked in camps thare [there] is a [an] order for stoping [stopping] all prifilation [proifiration] of gun boats and a [an] armnistis [armstice] on foot[.] I don't no [know] the sertinty [certainty] of it but I hope it is so and peas [peace] may grow out of it and I may return home and then you can see my true likeness face to face is [are] my dayley [daily] prayers[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] also [Also] I am proud to hear that our babyes [babies] is [are] doing well & ar [are] in a [as] prosperess [prosperous] condition as they are[.] Dear children[,] bee [be] of good chear [cheer.] bee [Be] obedient to your kind mother and honor your creator in the dayes [days] of your yoth [youth.] in [In] your next letter let me no [know] how your corn holds out[.] if [If] you can get money from eny [any] money from eney [any] of your nabors [neighbors] and salt is cheap[,] lay in for a nother [another] year[.] so [So] I close for this time as I want to rite [write] some to mother [Mother.] I still remain your true and affectionate husband D[.] Mathews

[Indention added by transcriber] Dear mother [Mother,] I will say something to you in anser [answer] to yours[.] I still are [am] trying to do the best I can for my self [myself] and contry [country] tho it is but little[.]

I never reseived [received] your letter conserning [concerning] John's takin [taking] my plase [place.] it [It] makes no differenc [difference.] they [There] are [is] no chance for a substtute [substitute] hear [here] now &c [etc.] when [When] you rite [write,] give all the ness [news] you can conserning [concerning] cort [court] affares [affairs] and generel [general] news conserning [concerning] peas [peace] &c [etc.] Dear mother [Mother,] my desire is to bee [be] at home and peas [peace] and fredom [freedom] to our contry [country.] I am glad to hear you all are getting a long [along] as well as you are [.] remember [Remember] me in your prayers &c [etc.] give [Give] my love and respects to all inquiring friends and relations[.] So I mus [must] close for this time and still remain your true son untell [until] death[.]

David Mathews



Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> 1863  
Camp near Shelbyville

My Dear Wife

I take this opportunity to disp  
you a few lines. I received your  
kind letter on the 21<sup>st</sup> I was glad  
to hear that you were all well  
and getting along so well with  
your work. I was sorry to hear  
of Mother's & William's illness.  
I received a letter from him  
says that he was well his  
letter was dated on the 20<sup>th</sup>  
You asked in your letter how  
I get my washing done I some  
times hire it done and some  
times I do it my self. Don  
seem to be uneasy about my  
clothes you need not be for I  
drow as much as I want



You asked me in your last  
letter what to do about sell-  
ing Mary you say that you  
can get \$25 dollars for her my  
advise is to sell her for that  
if you cant get any more.  
Give \$2000 dollars to Cousin Liza  
to pay to Mr Burge to pay on  
the Walmsworth note as I  
think this amount will take up  
my note. You must also take  
up my note with aunt Belah  
and pass the balance as you  
think best. You asked me to  
let you know how the business  
of the company was, it is very  
good at present also the Dick-  
erson guards. Write soon to your  
loving Husband

J. Mathews.

P.S. I am well and nearly at present

Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

May 28, 1863

Camp near Shelbyville

My Dear Wife

I take this oportunity [opportunity] to drop you a few lines. I received your kind letter on the 21<sup>st</sup>. I was glad to hear that you were all well and getting along so well with your work. I was sorry to hear of Mothers & Williams illnes [illness]. I received a letter I \_\_\_\_ he says that he was well[.] His letter was dated on the 20<sup>th</sup>. You asked in your letter how I get my washing done & some times I hire it done & some times I do it my self. You seem to be uneasy about my clothes you need not be for I draw as many as I want. You asked me in your last letter what to do about selling Neroy[.] you [You] say that you can get \$225 for her[.] my [My] advice is to sell her for that if you can't get any more. Give \$80 to cousin Giles to pay to Mr. Burge to pay on the Holingsworth [Hollingsworth?] note as I think this account will take my note. You must also take up my note with aunt [Aunt] Betsy and rase [raise] the ballance [balance] as you think best. You asked me to let you know how the health of the company was. It [It] is very good at present also the Dickinson guards. Write soon to your loving Husband[.]

D. Mathews

P.S. I am well and hearty at present[.]



Shelbyville Tenn June 20<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Wife:

I received your kind favor yesterday, bearing date the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. I was quite happy to hear from you, and was even as well as you stated you were, and that you and mother were getting along so well with your farms, and would have been glad to have had a word from Sister Nancy. I think you sold your colt remarkably well, and you done right in applying the money as you did, and what money you have left use it as you need it, and as you think best. Please let me know in your next letter how your stock is getting along, as I hear the hogs in Clark are dying considerably, and am anxious to hear from yours. I hear glorious news from the army and on the Mississippi and in Virginia.



The Confederates took Milray whole  
army at Winchester Virginia, consist-  
ing of 9000 prisoners besides a large  
number of horses, Wagons, military  
stores &c. with the loss of only 100 men.  
at Port Hudson and <sup>then</sup> charged them batteries 21 times, and  
repulsed every time, and finally put  
them to flight. I also hear they are  
holding peace conventions in several  
of the northern States, and that is a  
thing I think we should all pray  
for. I see no more prospect of a  
fight here, than I did when I first  
came to Sum. Tell Becky, I am a  
little wearied this evening as I have  
been washing to day, I am going  
out in the country to morrow and  
I thought I ought to have a clean  
shirt. I ~~would~~ <sup>am</sup> be very glad to hear  
you have so many beans and  
would be glad to have some of  
them, but I had a fine mess

of bean soup for breakfast  
this morning. We draw plenty  
of meat and corn bread, but you  
know I am fond of good things  
such as pies, cakes, and flour  
doings, and that is what has  
gone with my money the reason  
I have not sent you some  
before now. Mary you stated  
in your letter, that you had recd  
letters from Josiah and Elijah  
but you did not give the date of  
their letters. Tell Elizabeth I think  
you done very well in selling your  
land. Tell Becky, dont give up the  
the leather you wrote to me about  
you or mother one of ~~your~~ go and  
see Cousin Giles get him to see  
Ando, and tell him how the thing  
is. you have 4 hides and mother  
three, the contract ~~was~~ is as follows  
he was to tan it, without dressing



for one dollar a side, and there was  
two calf skins which he was to tan  
for one dollar each, so you will owe  
him just six dollars. Tell children  
and Nelly? I think you have dis-  
charged your duty fully, in getting  
along so well with your crop con-  
sidering the backsets you had in  
the spring. I live in hopes to return  
home soon, and if it pleases my  
God for me to do so I will reward  
you for it to the best of my ability,  
if I should not return. I know  
full well that God will reward  
you for all such acts, of duty and  
obedience, I will close by requesting  
you all to pray for me, and for my  
prosperity through this world of trouble.  
I hope this may find you all well  
and living as God directs you,  
is my prayer, I am well.

Your affectionate husband  
D. Mathew

June 20, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Shelbyville[,] Tenn[,] June 20<sup>th</sup>[,] 1863

Dear Wife[:]

I received your kind favor yesterday bearing date the 11<sup>th</sup> msh [?]. I was quite happy to hear from you and was even as well as you stated you were, and that you and Mother were getting along so well with your farms, and would have been glad to have had a word from Sister Nancy. I think you sold your calf remarkably well, and you done [did] right in applying the money as you did[,] and [And] what money you have left[,] use it as you need it, and as you think best. Please let me know in your next letter how you [your] stock is getting along, as I hear the hogs in Clark [Clarke County] are dying considerably, and am anxious to hear from yours[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] I hear glorious news from the army on the Mississippi and in Virginia[.] The Confederates taken [have taken] Milroy wholes [whole] army at Winchester[,] Virginia consisting of 9000 prisoners besides a large number of horses, wagons, military stores &c. [etc.] with the loss of only 100 men at Port Hudson and charged there [their] batteries 21 times and repulsed [repulsed] them every time, and finally put them to flight. I also hear they are holding peace conventions in several of the northern States, and that is a thing I think we should all pray for. I see no more prospect of a fight here, than I did when I first came to Tenn[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] Well Becky, I am a little wearied [wearied] this evening as I have been washing to day [today.] I am going out in the country tomorrow and I thought I ought to have a clean shirt. I am be verry [very] glad to hear you have so many beans and would be glad to have some of them. But I had a fine mess of bean soup for breakfast this morning. We draw plenty of meat and corn bread, but you know I am fond of good things such as pies, cakes, and flour doings, and that is what has gone with my money[,] the reason I have not sent you some before now.

[Indention added by transcriber] Mary[,] you stated in your letter that you had recd [received a] letter from Josiah and Elijah but you did not give the date of their letters.

[Indention added by transcriber] Well Elizabeth[,] I think you done [did] verry [very] well in selling your land. Well Becky[,] don't [don't] give up the the [omit second "the"] leather you wrote to me about[,] you [You] or Mother[,] one of you go and see Cousin Giles[,] get [Get] him to see Ande [Andy], and tell him how the thing is. you [You] have 4 hides and Mother three, the contract is as follows[:] he was to tan it, without dressing for one dollar a side, and there was [were] two calf skins which he was to tan for one dollar each, so you will owe him just six dollars.

June 20, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews  
page 2

[Indention added by transcriber] Well children and Nelly [?] I think you have discharged your duty fully in getting along so well with your crop considering the backsets you had in the spring. I live in hopes to return home soon and if it pleases my God for me to do so I will reward you for it to the best of my ability. If I should not return, I know full well that God will reward you for all such acts of duty and obedience. I will close by requesting you all to pray for me, and for my prosperity through this world of trouble. I hope this may find you all well and living as God directs you is my prayer. I am well.

Your affectionate husband[,]  
D. Mathews



Lumpkin Hospital 1863  
Rome Geo July 19

My dear wife

I embrace the  
present opportunity of writ-  
ing to you informing you  
of my health whereabouts  
etc, I received a letter from  
you some three weeks ago  
& should have answered at  
an earlier date only that  
I was taken sick on our  
boat from Yemassee also that  
I was completely broke down  
in consequence of which I  
was ~~completely~~ sent to  
the Hospital here where I  
have ever since I am glad  
to inform you however  
that my health is improv-  
ing & hope I will be able

to return to my command in  
a short time. The weather  
is quite warm & we have  
wretched lime stone water  
to drink here with that ex-  
ception we would feel fairly  
well here, I saw James Brown  
just 3 weeks ago to day  
he was in the enjoyment  
of good health when I  
saw him I have no means  
of importance to commu-  
nicate to you from him  
please write to me at your  
earliest convenience.

Direct to me To Lumpkin  
Hospital Ward (No 3) Rome  
Geo)

Your affectionate  
Husband

L<sup>d</sup> Matthews

To Rebecca Matthews



July 19, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Lumpkins Hospital 1863

Rome[,] Geo [GA] July 19

My dear wife[,]

I embrace the present opportunity of writing to you & informing you of my health[,] where a bouts [whereabouts] &c [etc.] I received a letter from you some three weeks ago. I should have answered it an earlier date only that I was taken sick on our rout [route] from Tenn[,] also [Also] that I was completely broke [broken] down in consequence of which I was sent to the Hospital here where I have been ever since[.] I am glad to inform you however that my health is improving & hope I will be able to return to my command in a short time[.] The weather is quite warm & we have wretched lime stone water to drink here[.] With that if—  
\_\_\_\_\_ we would fare fairly well here, I saw James Green just 3 weeks ago to day [today.] he [He] was in the enjoyment of good health when I saw him[.] I have no news of importunce [importance] to communicate to you from here[.] please [ Please] write to me at your earliest convenience[.]

Direct to me To Lumpkin Hospital[,] Ward 1 no 3) [or Ward (no 3)] Rome[,] Geo [ GA]

Your affectionate

Husband

D[,] Mathews

To Rebecca Mathews

Dover N. H. Rome Ga Aug the 10<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Wife I avail my self  
of the opportunity of writing  
you a few lines in answer to  
reports which come to hand  
this morning which gave me  
quite satis faction to hear  
you were all well and doing  
well and that you have a  
pleasant life in and a good  
prospect for something for  
a rather year &c this leaves  
me well as to health and  
a pain that has settled  
my hip which bothers me  
in so much I am sorry to  
hear of old mother Waldrons  
death but i am glad she was  
willing to depart this life  
I wish you to state in your  
next letter if you were at  
the bearing and tell mother  
not to Grieve her self.



for God will bring all things  
together for good to them that  
love and serve him all will  
bee right in the end & to those  
wh do his will &c I say to you  
i have bin well tended to in  
my sickness and i got a plenty  
to eat hear &c you write as thou  
gh you were purty flush with  
money and as I have none  
i beg of you to send me  
\$15 inclosed in a letter as  
my shoes is the wores of  
ware and i have to buy or have  
them mended and i have to  
have tobacco &c as i am from my  
command and cant draw i request  
you to nit me a pare of socks and a  
pare of gloves nit the rist long as you  
no my coat sleeves is short i have plenty  
close i did not loos enny thing  
but one blanket they will bee some  
person in there that you can send by



I want you to rite in your  
next letter how your oats turn  
out and i want you to save  
seven or eight bushels for seed  
to sow on the Allen feel and  
i am sorry to hear he is  
dead and i want to no how  
the drafts turned out Tell me  
all you can who were drafted  
and i want to no if Charles  
bradly had to go or not &c  
you wanted to no if i wanted  
every debt paid i could not  
think of Envy when i wrote  
last you no i ow Tom D  
and D Ford i want them  
paid while Confederate  
money is good and let  
me no if you have every  
school or not and if the  
children are goin Envy of  
them and if you have got your



leather from and or not  
I am sorry to hear little  
Henry was on the  
pancy list but I hope  
it is nothing more than  
cotton teeth please write  
soon and let me hear  
again from you all Tell  
Sister Nancy I have not  
forgotten her either Tell  
Anderson to be a good  
boy to Homer and obey his  
dear mother well Dear  
children I am proud to  
hear that you are blessed  
with seasons of rain and  
your faithful labors are  
blessed and you have a good  
prospect for plenty a mother  
fear not Be faithful to your  
Savior God and keep the prize  
in view and if I reach these mar-  
tians there I may be with you J. Mathe



Aug. 10, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Rome[,] Ga[,] Aug[,] the 10<sup>th</sup>[,] 1863

Dear wife [Wife,] I avail my self [myself] of the oportunity [opportunity] of writing to you a few lines in anser [answer] to \_\_\_\_\_ [yours] which come [came] to hand this morning which gave me grate [great] Sattisfaction [satisfaction] to hear you were all well and doing well and that you have a plenty to live on and a good prospect for some thing [something] for a nother [another] year &c [etc.] this [This] leaves me well as to health[,] onl [only] a pain that has settle [settled] in my hip which bothers me in \_\_\_\_\_ [\_\_\_\_\_ I am sorry] to hear of old mother Waldrums [Waldrum's] death but I am glad she was so willing to depart this life[.] I wis [wish] you to state in your next letter if you were at the berring [burial] and tell mother [Mother] not to greave [grieve] her self [herself] for God will bring all things together for good to them that love and serve him[.] all [All] will bee [be] right in the end to those who do his will &c [etc.] I say to you I have bin [been] well tended to in my sickness and i [I] get a plenty to eat hear [here] &c [etc.] you [You] rite [write] as though you were purty [pretty] flush with money and as I have none i [I] beg of you to send me \$15 incloseed [enclosed] in a letter as my shoes is [are] the wors [worst] of ware [wear] and i [I] have to by [buy] or have them mended and i [I] have to have tobacco &c [etc.] as i [I] am from my command and cant [can't] draw[.] i [I] request you to nit [knit] me a pare [pair] of socks and a pare [pair] of gloves[.] nit [Knit] the rist long as you no [know] my coat sleavs [sleeves] is [are] short[.] i [I] have plenty close [clothes.] I [I] did not loos [lose] enny thing [anything] but one blankit [blanket.] they [There] will bee [be] some person in there that you can send by[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] i [I] want you to rite [write] in your next letter how your oats tern [turn] out and i [I] want you to save seven or eight bushels for seed to sow on the Alen [Allen] feel [field.] and [And] I am sorry to hear he is dead and i [I] want to no [know] how the drafts ternd [turned] out[.] tell [Tell] me all you can who were drafted[.] and [And] i [I] want to no [know] if Charles bradly [Bradley] had to go or not &c [etc.] you [You] wanted to no [know] if i [I] wanted eney [any] debts paid[.] i [I] could not think of enny [any.] When i [I] rote [wrote] last you no [know] i [I] ow [owe] tom [Tom] and D[.] ford [Ford.] i [I] want them paid while Confederate money is good and let me no [know] if you have eney school or not and if the children are goin [going,] enny [any] of them[,] and if you have got your leather from ande [Andy] or not[.]

[Indention added by transcriber] I am sorry to hear little henery [Henry] was on the puney [puny] list but I hope it is nothin [nothing] more than cuttin [cutting] teeth[.] pleas [Please] rite [write] soon and let me hear a gain [again] from you all[.] tell [Tell] Sister nancy [Nancy] i [I] have not forgotten her either[.] tell [Tell] Anderson to bee [be] a good boy[,] to honor and obay [obey] his dear mother[.]

Aug. 10, 1863 Transcription of Letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Page 2

[Indention added by transcriber] Well Dear children[.] i [I] am proud to hear that you are blessed with seasons of rain and your faithful labors are blessed and you have a good prosspect [prospect] for plenty a nother [another] year &c [etc.] Bee [Be] faithful to your Saivor [Savior] god [God] and keep the prise [prize] in view and if I [I] reach those mastions [mansions] there i [I ] may bee [be] with you[.]

D. Mathews



Rome Ga ~~Sept~~ the 1<sup>st</sup> 1862

Dear wife i once more seat my  
Self to rite to you in answer to  
yours dated the 20. and come to hand  
The 26 of August this leaves me in  
tolerable health i am out two miles  
from home at what is call Convalescent  
camps the reason i did not rite  
sooner was i thought likely  
you recieived one from me when  
your last was eared to the office  
and i have bin waiting for anser  
so i ~~wait~~ will rite for fear you  
are uneasy about me i give  
out on the retreat and send  
i come hear i had. Desperate  
dixeer &c and i do hope this  
safe to you and find you  
and family well and con-  
ation and friends & nabor &c  
i am glad to hear you have  
a good prospect for a plenty



for corn for a nother year  
Dear wife if the yankees was to  
get in to your settelment it  
will bee best to treat them  
genttelmonly as i hear it is  
best for the woman where they  
go those that treat them well  
fares well and those that treat  
them bad fares bad give  
mother and nancy the same  
advice as i think it best  
for helpless woman and  
children write soon and give  
the news so i mus close  
for this time so i remain  
your true husband unto  
all death &c

David Mathews



Transcription of letter from David Mathews to Rebecca Mathews

Rome[,] Ga. Sept. the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863

Dear wife

i [I ] once more seat myself to rite [write] to you in anser [answer] to yours dated the 20 and come [came] to hand the 26 of August this leaves me in \_\_\_\_\_ health. i [I] am out two miles from rome [Rome] at what is call [called] convalescence camps. the [The] reason i [I] did not rite [write] sooner was i [I] thought likely you received one from me when your last was cared [carried] to the office and i [I] have bin [been] waiting of an anser [answer]. So i [I] will rite [write] for fear you are oneasey [uneasy] about me. i [I] give [gave] out on the retreat and sence [since] i [I] come [came] hear [here] i [I] had a desprate [desperate] direer [diarrhea] &c [etc] and i [I] do hope this [arrives] safe to you and find [finds] you and family well and conneation [connections] and frends [friends] & nabors [neighbors] &c [etc]. i [I] am glad to hear you have a good prospect for a plenty corn for a nother [another] year. Dear wife if the Yankees was [were] to get in to your settelment [settlement] it will bee [be] best to treat them genttelmonly [gentlemanly] as i [I] hear it is best for the woman where they \_\_\_\_\_ those that treat them well fares [fare] well and those that threat them bad fares [fare] bad. give [Give] mother [Mother] and nancy [Nancy] the same advice as i [I] think it best for helpless woman [women] and children. Rite [Write] soon and give me the news[.] so i [I] mus [must] clos [close] for this time so i [I] remain your true husband untill [until] death[.]

David Mathews



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL  
1 ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL  
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61299-5000

September 1, 2002

SOSRI-CF (870-5e)

Ms. Linda W. Brinkley  
4510 6<sup>th</sup> Street Court  
East Moline, Illinois 61244

Dear Ms. Brinkley;

I was able to find an entry for David Mathews in the *Exchange Roster*, one of the record books of the Rock Island Prison Barracks:

Number	608
Name	David Mathews
Rank	Sergeant
Regiment	34 Alabama Infantry
Company	A
Where Captured	Missionary Ridge
When Captured	November 25, 1863
Remarks	Released October 24, 1864

In some cases, there were several prisoners who had the same or similar names. This does not appear to be the case with David Mathews, however. Although this information does not parallel the information you gave to us concerning David Mathews, there is only one entry concerning an individual by that name.

If the staff and volunteers of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum can be of further assistance, please contact us. Our telephone number is (309) 782-5021. Our fax number is (309) 782-3598. Our mailing address is SOSRI-CF Museum, 1 Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island IL 61299-5000.

Sincerely,

Kris Gayman Leinicke  
Director  
Rock Island Arsenal Museum

Enclosures