

**CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF
JAMES W. CLEMENTS**

Age, 31 years. Enlisted September 6, 1862, at Chautauqua, to serve three years; mustered in as private, Co. E, 154th New York Volunteer Infantry, September 24, 1862; captured in action, May 2, 1863, at Chancellorsville, Virginia; paroled, May 14, 1863, at City Point, Virginia; mustered out with company, June 11, 1865, near Bladensburg, Maryland.

*From the originals in the collection of his great-granddaughter,
Judith Wachholz, 1120 West Division Street, River Falls, WI 54022.*

Oct the 3 1862

My dear wife i am well and injoying my self first rate tell hate Eldrich [Pvt. Eldridge Belden of Co. E] is well last night wee staid on Camp Seward three miles from washington we dont now when we leave but i think not in some time there is about 70 000 Camped in sight we staid in Baltimore one day, i have seen the Capitol it is midling warm here, the rebles are triing to settle they say ten come in yesterday under the flag of truce, our Camp is on reables lees farm it is pleasant we can look down on the citty we got our guns at elmira, we was their most all day kiss the children for me no more at presan yours truly

Amand Clements

write as soon as you get this and let me know how you get along

direct your leter two washington in Care of Captain [Joseph B.] Fay 154 Regt

i will write another soon and more

Fairfax Mondy Nov th 3 1862

My Dear wife i sat down to write you a few lines and let you know that i am well yesterday was a great day of excitement hear solgers and wagons wer passing from 9 [a.m. until] about 3 gest as thick as they could it did not Seam much like Sunday hear i should like to had you hear and seen them it was more Sight than to See the fair our regiment went with them they expect to have a great Batle about 20 miles from hear last night i could hear the canon hear the rebles are at thour fair gap i and Elder [Eldridge Belden] and twenty two more wer left behind to guard commasaries stores and we donot know when we shal go if they keep on fiting we shal not see any of it we are living in a house in the village up stairs the best place i have seen since i come to vergina we have plenty to eat but difrent from home we have good bred hard tack beaf pork coffe Shugar molasses beans rice, they have all left and seems a little lonesome, that Stamp on hats leter Elder made a mistake mandd send me two dollars in your next leter i think i shal get my pay this month but i may not if i do i shal send you som home i will send you some as soon as i get it we drewed some flour to day and we are a going to have some buisket for Supper we got five days rations and we shal stay whare we bea till that is gon you must not expect very long leters for i write so often if you have not got the mony handy never mind it for i think i may get some before you can send it So good by

Amandy Clements

James W Clements

I will writ another in a week or ten days I received your leter of the 26 and have got all you wrote

I have not stood on guard mutch only three or four times since i been hear

Fairfax court house No th 4 [1862]

my Dear wife i received your leter of the 28 and was glad to hear that you are all well i am well and feel the best i have since i left home wee have got our tent fixt up comfertable wee have got a fire place in it i think wee shal move once more before we go in winter quarters i think we shal move towards washington we are under general seigle [Major General Franz Sigel] first division and fourth reserve i got the mony you sent me it come very handy for i had got out of tobacco but i could have got along and i was sorry you sent it for i am afraid you will need it but i shal get my pay soon and send you some i do not know what to think of sam and dobins but i woul not take it back yet i think i shal bea at home by the first of April you have to see what he can doe with them i am sory dobins disapointed you about the wood but get some one to chop some and i will pay them when i get home if they do not keep it and i get home in the spring i think i can pay for the whole their i no more going to put in on this fall so use what you get to make your self comfertble tell sam you donot want the land and you had rather he would kep it i have seen the presidents message and i think it prity good i think the south will except it and it will bea settled they are geting sick of the war they are deserting a good many of them they say they are coming in to our army evry day i do not think their will bea mutch more fiting done the weather is very pleasant and warm it freases a very litle nights i think of you this cold weather but wee shal know how to enjoy our selves beter when i get home than wee did before you must do about things at home as you think best take good care of your health and the children dinner is ready and i can not think of any thing more to write tell the children their pa is well and they must bea good girls tell netie and haty they must try and learn all they can so to read for their pa when he gets home

yours truly A Clements

from your husban J W Clements

Verginna No th 8 Saturday

my Dear wife we stoped to day and i thought i would write a few lines to let you know that i am well Elder [Eldridge Belden] is in the tent with me he is well we are about six miles from warington [Warrenton] i do not know how long we shal stay hear we are about 60 miles from washington our Regment is keep for reserve i do not think we shal see any fighting very soon there has been a litle skirmishing at Warington a few days ago and our men drove them back we can hear the cannon amost evry day we live first rate now we can go out and kill hogs Catle sheep and tak hany aples we can go in the chambers and take aples and in the sellers and get potatoes or i the house and get any thing we can find they keep slaves amost all of them we had a little snow yesterday but it has Cleard of a gain to day it is very pleasant wether here the roads are dry and nice we heard that york State went Democrat and they most all think it will close the war sooner they are fighting on the other side of the blue ridge from us Elder wants hat to write as often as she can and i want you to doe the same i think i shal bea at home betwen now and spring and i can tell you about things beter than i can write them tell the children their pa is well and would like to see them very mutch Elde want you to tell hank to write and let him know how he gets a long moving and what he thinks about Seymore [Horatio Seymour]

this is for you and hat both if we shoul write two we could not tell you any more

Harit

Amandy

Thursday Fairfax Court House No the 27 [1862]

My dear wife it beaing thanksgiving i thought i would write you a few lines to let you know how i am a get along i and Elder [Eldridge Belden] have had the ganders a litle but have got most over them and feel prety well now there is a good many got the ganders i should like to bea their to day with you and the children and eat chicken pie with you but i am in hopes of being their betwen now and spring it is a very pleasant day hear and i am enjoying myself as well as can bea expected away from you and the children wee are not

[Some pages are missing]

if you see walt you may dunn him if you are a mind to

Fredricksburg friday Jan the 9 1863

My Dear wife i thought i would try my hand at writing a few lines to let you know that i am well and hoping that you and the children are well it is still times hear now there is nothing going on our regiment is about three miles from fredricksburg i can still see the rebles smoke on the other side of the river they have a balloon two miles from us that i can see go up every day i do not think there will bea any more fighting done hear very soon i got your leter that you wrote out to Els but i have not got the one yet that you wrote before that you sent the mony in but i think i will come yet i am geting along first rate now i think i shal have some to send to you in the next leter you wrote that Ed had let the old mare get very poor and that she had lost her coalt i am very sorry about her loosing her coalt and you can keep her up home if you think best but it will make more chores for you to do if you do keep her at home turn her out pleasant days if you can tak good care of litle sorrel for i want to break her next winter, our regiment is agrowing smaller every day ther is a good many sick and left and some fifteen or twenty deserted and there is lots of them say they are going home as soon as they get their pay our officers dont appear to car wheather wee drill or not but the way things are runing i think it will play out before a great while the solgers are geting sick of it all of them still i like it prety well wee have got a good shanty with a fire place in it and it is pleasant wether hear i wrote a leter to hank the tell hat that Elder [Eldridge Belden] left hear the 5 of this month i donot know whare he has gon to but i think he will get his discharge if not a furlow and get home he was geting beter when he left hear i think he will feel prety well when he gets whare he can sleep of from the ground for he keep taking cold here, i think i shal get home by the first of may yet the climate appears to agree with me first rate hear and i dont know but i shal buy me a farm hear yet tell ben i got his leter and i will write him one before long tak good care of your health and the childrens for that is the main part for as long as i think you are well i donot worry mutch a bout you for i [know] you can get along prety well so i will end by giving my love to you all James Clements to his wife Amandy Clements

if you see our folk tell them i have wrote them three letters and one to Ed

Sunday Feb the 1, 1863 Fredricksburg Va

My Dear wife i received the leter last night that you and hat wrote and was glad to hear that you wer all well hat wrote that she wanted me to send the leters to Elder [Eldridge Belden] but i heard yesterday that he had got his discharge [Belden was discharged for disability January 25, 1863] so i will send them back home tell Elder that i have done considerble martching since he left wee all went out about two weeks ago on another of Burnsidexpeditions and wee all got stuck in the mud the solgers all have a good deal of fun about Burnsidexpeditions getting stuck in the mud the whole army of the potomac is a geting demoralized they dont care much what they do their was about fifty left the third excelsor [72nd New York, or 3rd Regiment, Excelsior Brigade, which had several Chautauqua County companies] about two weeks ago and they all say they are a going home in the spring they donot pay us up as they agreed to they payed us up to the first of November and that leaves thre months pay behind i got twenty thre Dollars and ninety cents and i will send you twelve i owed two dollars and i payed George Swetland [corporal, Co. E] one dollar for elder and you must keep it so as [you do] not get out but if you do write to me and i will send you some wee may get some more the first of march i donot have to spend much mony now Liel [probably Pvt. Elial W. Skinner of Co. E] wrote to ann morts women to send him some dride fruit and i told him to tell ann to tell you to send me a litle in the same box but donot send much for wee may have to move and it is hard to cary i am well as ever wee are at the same camp that wee was when i last wrote i was out on picket one week ago to day and two morrow and one of the rebes come amost acrost the river and throwed a plug of tobacco acrost and wee all took a chew they appear friendly and appear to bea first rate fellows and about the womin i have not seen any i have most forgotten how a women looks you may think i am taking up for the rebs but i dont think wee have very good management on our side they donot seam to care wheather we whip or not it is warm and pleasant hear write as soon as you get this tell the children their pa has not forgot them if you can mak any traid with [line obscured by fold] land and tell _____ dobins i donot ow him any potatoes he got his potatoes of Jim Cowell the same winter that i traided with him

i have let on a litle about this war but it may come out all right yet but they will have to do beter or give it up prety soon So no more at presant from James W Clements to Amandy Clements i never have got that two Dollars

Sunday Feb the 8 1863

Camp near Stafford Courthouse

My dear Amandy i sat my Self down to write you a few lines to let you know what i am doing i am well and wee have moved back about twelve miles towards washington wee have been buisy two days building up our houses or i should have writing before i got two leters from you last night and was glad to hear that you was all well i would like to bea thare with you and do the chores and build fires but i think i shal bea thare to spend the fourth i wrote a leter last Sunday and put twelve dollars in it and thought i should send it right off but Jinkings [First Lieutenant Isaac T. Jenkins of Co. E] was going home and i thought i would wait and send it with him he thinks of starting tomorow i got my pay one week ago yesterday up to the first of November they ow me over three months pay now you wrote Elder [Eldridge Belden] had got home i am glad of it

Tell Sam if he will pay the intrest and hen want the land that you will let him and pay of from the bond and mortgage if hen will pay thirty Dollars down or let you have that note of hats and pay 30 the rest in payments the same as they are now if they do make hen and nancy give a bond i donot think there will bea any more fighting done in verginna they have cald for seventy five thousand from hear to go to Tenessee i do not know what Regments will have to go i will send that stamp back it wont pass hear and i have got mony enough now i cannot think of any thing more at presant so god by kiss the children for me

Amandy Clements

James W Clements

write as often as you can for it dos me a greate deal of good

Martch Sunday the 1 1863

Camp near Stafford

dear Amandy i received your leter Friday night and was glad to hear that you wer all well i am well wee have had prety cold weather the fore part of last week the snow was about a foot deep but went off i about two days and it has bin warm and rainy the rest of the time i do not have mutch to do only bring wood so i can live comfortble wee have got a good shanty wee was musterd yesterday for pay and i think wee shal get som prety soon, i and bill osterhout [Private William J. Osterhout, Co. E] went over to the 74 pensylvany Regt last fryday and had our fortunes told he told me i would get home by the first of may all right he said this war would be ended by the first of may or with in a few days of it he told me that i had no trouble and that i was going home and was a going to get a good chance to work and was a going to make mony he said wee would stay hear about three weeks and then wee would move a little ways and stay thare till wee went home he has told a good many their fortunes and hit them gest right he has told every move and hit it right every time i think i shal be at home by the first of June if no sooner he told me i would get a leter that night or the next and i got it that night tell Elder [Eldridge Belden] Jenkins [First Lieutenant Isaac T. Jenkins] is sick with the fever but is beter this morning tell him that clifford [Private George Clifford, Co. E] and mcbride [Private Devillo D. McBride, Co. E] is well there is not much news hear at presant, about that likeness i will get one took as soone as i can there is no chance now so you have yourse took and send it to me and i will get a chance before long and have mine took, as soon as i get my pay i will send you some more mony, i cannot think of any thing more at presant i haint much of a hand to write but when i get home i will tell you the whole tell the children their pa wants to see them i would like to send them some presant but cant find nothing hear [So] good by for this time from your husband

James W. Clements
to Amandy Clements

Martch th 10 1862

Camp near Stafford

My dear Amanda i received your leter of the 28 last fryday and was glad to hear that you was all well i have bin a litle down at the heel for two or three days with a cold but have got about well again it is a snowing hear to day. i got that dryde fruit the first day of this month and it goes first rate and that peper was worth every thing for wee cannot get any hear that is good for any thing you wrote that your legs have been sore write to me if they have got well or not i have some hopes that i shal be thare with you in about two months i hear that they are geting skart there about the draft but i do not think they will ever draft it is done to skair the south they are talking that the 154 was mustered in to the united states service for nine months men there was one man went to our cornel [Colonel Patrick Henry Jones] to get his discharge and he told him their was no use for wee would all go in about two months tell Elder [Eldridge Belden] that Clifford [George Clifford] said he thanked him very mutch for that stuff he sent him, amanda i would like to be thare with you very mutch and help you do the chores but i cannot quite yet but hope i shal see you before long and get along as well as you can Lute has finly got a daughter i cannot think of any more to wright now so good by amanda tell the children their pa wants to see them so i will make alma a picture and quit

[He includes a drawing of a soldier, full length standing.]

Monday March th 16, 1863

Camp neat Stafford courthouse

My dear wife it is with pleasure that i try to write you a few lines to let you know that i am well and hoping that you and the children are well we are on the same old camp yet but think wee shal move in a week or ten days the talk is that wee are going back towards washington but what wee shal do then i do not know i do not know yet whether wee are nine months men or not it is left to the subpreme court but wee was numberd with them and if wee get our rights wee shal be, this month has been the worst weather wee have this winter here but we do not have much to do and i have got a good shanty with a fire place in it so i live comfortble, womin i cannot think of mutch to write you can beat me all holler writing if wee move i shal have something new to write this is so short a leter i am most a shamed to send it i have got out of stamps and it is imposible to get them hear but they all send leters with out so good by ofr this time

this from your husband

J W Clements

to his Wife Amanda Clements

April th 1, 1863

Camp near Stafford court house

My Dear wife i received your leter with yours and alma likeness in last Saturday and they looked very natural only alma has fated up a good deal and it done me a good deal of good but it would do me more good to see the originals, i will send mine to you as soon as I can get i took i am well and hope you and the children are well for that is the main thing, wee have not moved yet it has bin very muddy hear they have bin talking about pay a good while but i donot know as they will pay us any more if they do i wish they would fetch it along they ow me five months pay to day the papers say the rebs are leaving Richmond i have not heard for sertin yet wheather wee are nine months men or not but they all think wee be our cornel [Patrick H. Jones] has bin gon about two weeks he is off seeing about geting us back to washington and others things i see in the paper the other day that there was twelve thousand nine months men that their times would be out this spring from the state of Newyork i have a good deal of hopes that i will get home this spring tell Elder [Eldridge Belden] i am a going to write to him soon, i shal have to give it for this time for i cannot think of any more to write So good by once more

Amanda Clements

James W Clements

Sunday May the 17 1863

Camp Anapolis Parole

my Dear wife it has bin a long time since i have heard from you or wrote to you but it is the first chance i have had when i left the old camp they would not let any letters pass from the army i am well and have bin all the time and hope you and the children have bin the same you likly have heard of the batle i was in it a Saturday the 3 of may and was taken prisner the next morning so i have bin to Richmon and parold and got back to parold camp anapolis i donon know any thing about the rest of the regiment only what is a long with me there is twenty one of them along of my company and over one hudred of the Regiment tell elder [Eldridge Belden] mc Bride [Devilleo McBride] and Clifford [George Clifford] went down to Richmond with me i have not got any pay yet if you get out of mony sell any thing you can i do not [know] what will be done yet for i have not bin hear more than an our i have got to hurry for the mail is agoing out i will write another in a day or two and write all i can think of and all the perticklers write as son as you get this so good by for this time

Jas W Clements

to his wife A Clements

direct your letters camp Parole Anapolis mayerland

Sunday May th 24 1863

New convalessent camp near Alaxandra

my Dear wife it is with mutch pleasure that i sit down to write you a few lines to let you know that i am well i am very ancious to hear from you for it has bin a great while since i have heard from home we have a very nice place here now i will try to write a litle of my traveles, wee started from our old camp near Stafford the 13 of April and went up to keleys ford and staid their a bout two weeks and then crossed the river and made another martch for the Rappadan crossed that then went from thare to Chancellorsville got thare the 30 of April staid thair till Saturday May the 2 and about five oclock old Jackson made his apperance and we wer orderd to fall in so we formed in to line of batle and we had it pretty hot for about half a our and was obliged to fall back to the woods and thare we got scaterd so thare was but six of my company with me and it had got to be about dark and we had to stay in the woods till morning and when we got out of the woods in the morning the rebs was all around us so we had to give our selves up the rebs took us from thair to guinna station it is about 26 miles and we staid thair four days then they started us for Richmon but before we started thair we had a six tousand more with us so we was not alone we was thre days going to richman we had to go a foot we staid thair four days then we went down to sity point and our bots was thair for us and we got aboard and went to annapolis staid thair five days then got on the boat and come to alaxandra whare i am now tell Elder [Eldridge Belden] that McBride [Deville McBride] and Clifford [George Clifford] is with me, i should like to be thar with you but cannot tell when it will be but live in hopes it will not be very long i want to see the children very mutch i have not heard from the regment since i was taken prisner so i do not know who was kiled or who was not so good by for this time from your husband

J W Clements

to Amanda Clements

i do not know wheather you [line obscured by fold]

Direct your leters convalessent camp near Alaxandra Va put the Regment on on corner in small figures 154 Regt NYSV

Camp neare Alexandria

Tuesday June, the, 16 1863

my dear Amandy i once more take my pen to write a few lines to let you know that i am well i received your leter to day of the 7 and was very glad to [hear] that you was all well i think we shal move from here to morow i do not know whar to but i think anapolis they all think we wont be exchanged till September i do not think i can get a furlow but there is a felow working for the whol of us 154 i got six months pay to day and i am a going to send ten dollars in this leter and you use it for that you want most and i will send fifty more in the next one if i cannot get home i have a litle hopes of seeing you and the children for it would do me a great deal of good i should have sent more mony but i was afraid to for their has some bin lost, i think you had beter not write till you hear from me you must excuse me for this short leter for i want to put it in the offic to night and it is geting late so good by

my dear wife Amandy Clements

James Clements

Saturday August the 1 1863

my Dear wife i thought i would try to write you another leter i wrote to you last Sunday but am afraid you did not get it i am well and tough as ever i left dunkirk the next day after i left home and went from their to new york and from their to washington i staid in new york two days and then i staid in washington three days and went from their to fort eathenalen and am their now, there is a lot hear now to be distributed a round to their regtments it will take some time before they get around to them all i may be hear two weeks and i many not three days but i do not care we live first rate i have had to work one half day since i have bin hear we have not bin exchanged yet, i am geting anchious to hear from you and the children i want you to writ wheather they have drafted yet or not and if they have who write how you get a long and if mc bride [Devilleo McBride] has started to come back have him pay you that two dollars i cannot think of any thing more at preasant so good by my dear wife and children

Amandy Clements

James W Clements

Direct your leter
James W Clements
fort Eathenalen
Washington DC

September the 9 63

Camp parole Alaxandria

My Dear wife it is with pleasure that i try to write you a few lines to let you know that i am well and hoping you and the children are well and geting along well i arived at parole camp yesterday the boys are well hear yet that i left hear, capt fay [Captain Joseph B. Fay] and all of our officers are at Ritchmond i have not had a leter from home in two weeks i want you to write as soon as you get this and write all the particklars all that is drafted and that has to come every thing is about as it was when i left hear, our regt is at Alaxandria now doing provost duty their is not but a few left in it i think wee shal get our pay before long the 112 [112th New York Volunteer Infantry] has gon to Charleston
i am glad you got your haying don as well as you did, i cannot think of any more to write this time now write as soon as you get this for i want to hear from home bad
dirct your leters, parole camp near Alaxandria Va 154 regt Nysv

Amandy Clements

J W Clements

Sunday the 9 August [1863]

Fort Eathenalen

My Dear Amandy it is with mutch pleasure that i try to write to you and the children once more, i am well and hope when you read this you will be enjoing the same blessing i have not heard from home since i left but am looking for a leter every day now i think i shal go to parole camp this week, we are not exchanged yet and i dont think we ever shal be it is warm weather here now but i get along very well for i lay in the shade the most of the time i would like to be thair and do the haying and i might jest as well stayed as not i am doing no good heare there is nothing new here and i cannot think of any thing more to write this time so good by

J W Clements

to A Clements

Sunday Aug. the 23 63

Fort Eathenalen

My Dear wife i received your leter to day and was glad to hear that you wer all well, i am well i am glad the haying is done you wrote the draft had gon off and that Edd was drafted but he can get out of it if he is a mind to, and tell him to work for it, you wrote that Jim Fuller was drafted tell him and the others boys that comes to join our regtment i do not know as it would do me any good but i may be exchanged yet but donot think it will be very soon the north and the south has got into trouble about paroling prisners on acount of some that the rebs parold on the batle feild at Gettysburg and our men hold was not lawful and the rebs hold to the parole i donot think the war will last longer than this fall tell edd to get out of it and not come for he can as well as not,

I am at the same place yet and may be two weeks yet and may not be two days but i had as leave be hear as any whares i have work a litle here, write as soon as you know who of the boys comes tell them i said they had beter come than to pay the three hundred dolars for i am in hopes i shal not have to stay another winter and if i do not i can get along well enough i cannot think of any thing more to write this time so good by fore this time

James W Clements

to Amandy Clements

Monday Sept the 21 63

Camp parole Va

my Dear wife i thought i would try my hand at writing a few lines to you to let you know that i am well and hoping when you read this you and the children are well and enjoying your Selves well, there is some talk that we are a going to be exchang soon but i cannot tell yet how it will be but i had as leaves be as not, i have not got any leter from home yet but am looking for one every day Mc Bride [Devilleo McBride] got hear last night he appears to feel well, i have heard that Art Ross is drafted and that mis Ross says that She hopes that every union womin will have to be hung up to two trees feet upwards with their legs spread apart and left their till the flies blow their cu you can guess what, but i hope not for i have some intrest in one of them i made you a ring yesterday it is not of mutch worth but it will let you know that i think of you some times our regment is at Alaxandria doing guard duty their having easy times of it now there is nothing new hear so no more this time, i will write you another as soon as i get one from home so good by for this time

Amanda Clements

J W Clements

Sept the 23, 63

Camp parole Va

My Dear wife i received your leter of the 15 yesterday and was mighty glad to hear from home for it had bin most four weeks since i had a leter from home i have writen once a week all of the time, you wrote that some told you that i had found another womin but that is not so for i have got one good enough for me now, you wrote that our folks had sold their place and that you would like to have them come and stay with you it would suit me first rate i will write to them to day that they had beter do it if they think they could be contented to live up their i will tell you about cloths i have got a new suit through out i drew an overcoat yesterday and a bout our living we have good now we have tomatoes once a week i can draw all the clothes i am a mind to i donot know as you can read my writing for i have bean writing with a pencil lately, there is one thing that i liked to have forgotten that is i donot think it hardly fair for you to be prying into my sparking affairs and i not their to defend my self but never mind i will be their one of thes days and i guess it will be all right, i donot know but you will think that i am geting ancious a bout writing for i one day before yesterday their was talk that they was a going to pay us but i donot know when it will and if you get out of mony sell something for i donot want you to suffer for when i get back i can tak care of you some way no more this time

J W C

to his wife AC