

Letter From Hayes, John T. written Tuesday, September 15th, 1863

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Soldier: Hayes, John T.
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[exact day in September unclear]

Dear Companion,

I write you a few lines to let you know that I am well at this time and hope this will find you and my sweet baby well though I fear to hear from you for when they're is any of you sick, you wait until they get well before you write to me. It has been some time since I heard from you. I think there is something the matter.

I will only give you a short history of this place. I have been out around some and I find there is hundreds of people around here that has been driven from their homes and they live in all kinds of huts, tents and some say in wagons but I have not seen any living that way yet but I have seen the Government Commissary crowded all day nearly drawing provisions. Some say there is five thousand and five hundred draws rations here. You may guess they are a poor class of people. When I was around and seen how they live and how they have been treated I was thankful to God that you and all my friends lived in a land of peace, a land of plenty and had plenty. It cheers me to think if I can't be with you, you have a good home and friends to live with and friends that will I hope if I should never get home will take good care of you and my sweet boy. God Bless him and you and all the rest.

I wrote to you last week that I was going to be baptized for fear you don't get that I will tell you that I was last Tuesday I think with six others. I shall not attempt to tell you my feelings on that. I never witnessed such I shall not as much as I want to say for fear of (it would be useless of me to try to) your feelings too much, I will tell you for I think you will love to hear that a wicked sinner like me had turned to God to prepare for heaven and etenal life. I am determined by the grace of God, let others do as they will, to strive to make heaven my home and when absent from you and friends it cheers me to think of heaven and if we should not meet on earth we will meet in heaven where we will part no more. We have a Brother and Sister and many kindreds going before. Let us Sisters and Brothers prepare to meet them and then have and oh Mother you will meet me there and oh Father kindand good to me what joy it would give me that better land. Oh time but waft to me the Glad News that my Father is prepared to meet his God and son in heaven. This is my prayer and that God will Give me the glorious privilege of returning to you all people. God Bless and save you all in his kingdom of eternal rest where we hail each other.

Just before meeting broke th citizens around whilst we was singing and bade us farewell. The meeting was in the Court House and it was crowded full and there was some citizens and twelve soldiers joined our Christian association and the congregation was deeply affected by hearing a powerful sermon from our chaplain.

I have hardly room to write anything that I don't thing of just write and tell me and I will write you anything you told me you would try to meet in heaven. I believe you will. Do tell the rest to write and all of them that feels like making home in Heaven to tell me so happy would be to hear that you all were Christians. Give joy. Let me meet heven's great joy. Oh prepare to meet my God and all will be well. I am to wait until I find out where we are going before I send if I can and tell you. Goodbye. John T. Hayes