

The following pages contain different letters. Please choose one to read for your audition.

Marie Perkins Letter

Charlottesville Oct 8 1852

Dear Husband I write you a letter to let you know of my distress

My master has sold Albert to a trader on Monday court day and myself and other child is for sale also and I want you to let [me] hear from you soon before next court if you can I don't know when I don't want you to wait till Christmas I want you to tel Dr. Hamilton your master if either will buy me they can attend to it know and then I can go afterwards.

I don't want a trader to get me they asked me if I had got any person to buy me and I told them no they told me to the court house too they never put me up. A man buy the name of brady bought albert and is gone I don't know where they say he lives in Scottsville my things is in several places some is in stanton and if I would be sold I don't know what will become of them I don't expect to meet with the luck to get that way till I am quite heart sick nothing more I am and ever will be your kind wife

Marie Perkins

Abream Scriven to Dinah Jones,

September 19, 1858

My Dear wife,

I take pleasure of writing you these few with much regret to inform you that I am sold to a man by the name of Peterson atreader and Stays in new Orleans. I am here yet But I expect to go before long but when I get there I will write and let you know where I am. My Dear I want to Send you some things but I donot know who to send them by but I will thry to get them to you and my children. Give my love to my father and mother and tell them good Bye for me, and if we Shall not meet in this world I hope we meet in heaven. My Dear wife for you and my children cannot Express the griffe I feel to be parted from you all.

I remain your truly husband until death

Abream Scriven.

Anthony Chase letter

August 8th, 1827

Sir

I know that you will be astonished and surprised when you become acquainted with the unexpected course that I am now about to take, a step that I never had the most distant idea of taking, but what can a man do who has his hands bound and his feet fettered? He will certainly try to get them loosened by fair and honorable means and if not so he will certainly get them loosened in any way that he may think the most advisable. I hope Sir that you will not think that I had any fault to find of you or your family no Sir I have none and I could have lived with you all the days of my life if my conditions could have been in any way bettered which I intreated with my mistress to do but it was all in vain She would not consent to any thing that would meliorate my condition in any shape or measure So I shall go to sea in the first vessel that may offer an opportunity and as soon as I can accumulate a sum of money sufficient I will Remit it to my mistress to prove to her and to [the] world that I don't mean to be dishonest but wish to pay her every cent that I think my services is worth I have served her 11 years faithfully and think it hard that I offered \$5.00 what I was valued at 4 years ago and also to pay 4 per cent until the whole sum was paid which I believe I could have done in 2 years and a half or 3 years at any rate but now as I have to Runaway like a criminal I will pay her when I can...Though I am truly sorry that I must leave you in this situation that I do, but I will Recommend to you as a Servant Samuel Brown that I think a good & honest man and one that is acquainted well with his business but you can Refer to Mrs Snyder who is well acquainted with him and has lived in the house with him. as my mistress is not in Town I [have] taken the Last months wages to defray my expenses but that money and the five dollars that you lent me the day before I left you I shall certainly Return before I ship for the sea. I don't suppose that I shall ever be forgiven for this act but I hope to find forgiveness in that world that is to come. I don't take this step merely because I wish to be free but because I want to do justice to myself and to others and also to procure a living for a family a thing that my mistress would not let me do though I humbly Requested her to let me do so

Before I was married I was Promised my freedom then after finding this Peace of writing which you will find inclosed I was then confident that I was free at Mr Williams Death, and so I married. . . I must now beg your forgiveness and at the same time pray to God for your health and happiness as well as that of your family

I am Sir your most Obedient Servt &c

Anthony Chase

Phebe letter

Edenton NC Sept 13 1835

My dear daughter I have for some time hope of seeing you once more in this world, but now that hope is entirely gone forever. I expect to start next month for Alabama, on the Mississippi river. Perhaps before you get this letter I may be on my way. As I have no opportunity of sending it now I shall leave it with Emily to send.

My dear daughter Amy, if we never meet in this world, I hope we shall meet in heaven where we shall part no more. Although we are absent in body, we can be present in spirit. Then let us pay for each other, and try to hold out faithful to the end.

My master, Me Tom Brownrigg, starts the middle of next month, with all the people, except your sister Mary, she is and not able to travel. She has five children. Master Richard and family and the Doctor will go on in the spring and Mary will come with then. Your father and myself came down to see our grand children, brother Simon and all our friends for the last time. I found your children ust recovered from the measles. They all send their love to you. We shall try to sen you a letter when we get settled in Alabama. Betsey send her love to you- she expects to fo with the Doctor in the spring. Your father, brothers and sisters, join mein a great deal of love to you and my dear ittle grand children. Kiss them for their old fran mother.

Farewell, my dear child. I hope he Lord will bless you and your children, and enable you to raise them and be comfortable in life, happy in death, and may we all meet around Father's throne in heaven, never no more to part. Farewell, my dear child.

From your affectionate Mother,

Phebe Brownrigg.

Virginia Boyd to R.C. Ballard, May 6, 1853 - Houston, TX

To [Warrenton]

I am at present in the city [sic] of Houston in a Negro traders yard, for sale, by your orders. I was present at the Post Office when Doctor Ewing took your letter out through mistake and red it a loud, not knowing I was the person the letter alluded to. I hope that if I have ever done or said any thing that has offended you that you will for give me, for I have suffered enough Cince in mind to repay all that I have ever done, to anyone, you wrote for them to sell me in thrity days, do you think after all that has transpired between me & the old man, (I don't call names) that its treating me well to send me off among strangers in my situation to be sold without even my having an opportunity of choosing for my self; its hard indeed and what is still harder for the father of my children to sell his own offspring Yes his own flesh & blood. My God is it possible that any free born American would brand his character with such a stigma as that, but I hope before this he will relent & see his error for I still beleave that he is possest of more honer than that. I no too that you have influence and can assist me in some measure from out of this dilemma and if you will God will be sure to reward you, you have a family of children & no how to sympathize with others in distress....

Is it possible that such a change could ever come over the spirit of any living man as to sell his child that is his image. I dont wish to return to harras or protest his peace of mind & shall never try [to] get back if I am dealt with fairly....

I have written to the Old Man in such a way that the letter cant fail to fall in his hands and none others I use every precaution to prevent others from knowing or suspecting any thing I have my letters written & folded put into envelope & get it directed by those that dont know the Contents of it for I shall not seek ever to let any thing be exposed, unless I am forced from bad treatment &c

Virginia Boyd

John Boston Letter

Upton Hill [Va.] January th 12 1862

My Dear Wife it is with grate joy I take this time to let you know Whare I am i am now in Safety in the 14th Regiment of Brooklyn this Day i can Adress you thank god as a free man I had a little truble in giting away But as the lord led the Children of Isrel to the land of Canon So he led me to a land Whare fredom Will rain in spite Of earth and hell Dear you must make your Self content i am free from al the Slavers Lash and as you have chose the Wise plan Of Serving the lord i hope you Will pray Much and i Will try by the help of god To Serv him With all my hart I am With a very nice man and have All that hart Can Wish But My Dear I Cant express my grate desire that i Have to See you i trust the time Will Come When We Shal meet again And if We dont met on earth We Will Meet in heven Whare Jesas ranes Dear Elizabeth tell Mrs Own[ees] That i trust that She Will Continue Her kindness to you and that god Will Bless her on earth and Save her In grate eternity My Acomplements To Mrs Owens and her Children may They Prosper through life I never Shall forgit her kindness to me Dear Wife i must Close rest yourself Contented i am free i Want you to rite To me Soon as you Can Without Delay Direct your letter to the 14th Reigment New york State malitia Uptons Hill Virginea In Care of M^r Cranford Comary Write my Dear Soon As you C Your Affectionate Husban Kiss Daniel For me

John Boston

Give my love to Father and Mother

Miss Fanny Letter

Spring Hill, Dec. 28th 1862
My Dear Husband,

I would be mighty glad to see you and I wish you would write back here and let me know how you are getting on. I am doing tolerable well and have enjoyed very good health since you left. I haven't forgot you nor I never will forget you as long as the world stands, even if you forget me. My love is just as great as it was the first night I married you, and I hope it will be so with you. My heart and love is pinned to your breast, and I hope yours is to mine. If I never see you again, I hope to meet you in Heaven. There is not time night or day but what I am studying about you. I haven't had a letter from you in some time. I am very anxious to hear from you. I heard once that you were sick but I heard afterwards that you had got well. I hope your health will be good hereafter. Master gave us three days Christmas. I wish you could have been here to enjoy it with me for I did not enjoy myself much because you were not here. I went up to Miss Ock's to a candy stew last Friday night, I wish you could have been here to have gone with me. I know I would have enjoyed myself so much better. Mother, Father, Grandmama, Brothers & Sisters say Howdy and they hope you will do well. Be sure to answer this soon for I am always glad to hear from you. I hope it will not be long before you can come home.

Your Loving Wife
Fanny

Dayton, Ohio,

August 7, 1865

To My Old Master, Colonel P.H. Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee

Sir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy, - the folks call her Mrs. Anderson, - and the children - Milly, Jane, and Grundy - go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve - and die, if it come to that - than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me. From your old servant,

Jourdon Anderson

Vilet Lester letter to Miss Patsey Patterson
August 29th 1857

Georgia Bullock Co August 29th 1857

My Loving Miss Patsy

I hav long bin wishing to imbrace this presant and pleasant opertunity of unfolding my Seans and fealings Since I was constrained to leav my Long Loved home and friends which I cannot never gave my Self the Least promis of returning to. I am well and this is Injoying good hlth and has ever Since I Left Randolph. whend I left Randolf I went to Rockingham and Stad there five weaks and then I left there and went to Richmon virgina to be Sold and I Stade there three days and was bought by a man by the name of Groover and braught to Georgia and he kept me about Nine months and he being a trader Sold me to a man by the name of Rimes and he Sold me to a man by the name of Lester and he has owned me four years and Says that he will keep me til death Siperates us without Some of my old north Caroliner friends wants to buy me again. my Dear Mistress I cannot tell my fealings nor how bad I wish to See youand old Boss and Mss Rahol and Mother. I do not [k]now which I want to See the worst Miss Rahol or mother I have thaugh[t] that I wanted to See mother but never befour did I [k]no[w] what it was to want to See a parent and could not. I wish you to gave my love to old Boss Miss Rahol and bailum and gave my manafold love to mother brothers and sister and pleas to tell them to Right to me So I may here from them if I cannot See them and also I wish you to right to me and Right me all the nuse. I do want to now whether old Boss is Still Living or now and all the rest of them and I want to [k]now whether balium is maried or no. I wish to [k]now what has Ever become of my Presus little girl. I left her in goldsborough with Mr. Walker and I have not herd from her Since and Walker Said that he was going to Carry her to Rockingham and gave her to his Sister and I want to [k]no[w] whether he did or no as I do wish to See her very mutch and Boss Says he wishes to [k]now whether he will Sell her or now and the least that can buy her and that he wishes a answer as Soon as he can get one as I wis himto buy her an my Boss being a man of Reason and fealing wishes to grant my trubled breast that mutch gratification and wishes to [k]now whether he will Sell her now. So I must come to a close by Escribing my Self you long loved and well wishing play mate as a Servant until death

Vilet Lester

of Georgia

to Miss Patsey Padison

of North Caroliner

My Bosses Name is James B Lester and if you Should think a nuff of me to right me which I do beg the faver of you as a Sevant direct your letter to Millray Bullock County Georgia. Pleas to right me So fare you well in love.