

July 17, 1964  
4 Courtney Road  
Sedgely Farms  
Wilmington, Delaware 19807

Civil War Times Illustrated  
Box 1861, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Attn: Robert H. Fowler, Editor & General Manager

Dear Sir:-

Enclosed is a copy of a letter written July 13, 1963. <sup>[sic]</sup> It describes events before, during, and after the Gettysburg battle.

The letter writer at age 11 came from Aberdeen, Scotland to the U. S. in 1832 with his parents, Joseph and Margaret Farquhar. They settled in Easton, Pa., where Joseph was a stone mason. During the war, the period of their later years, the parents lived with their lone offspring, John, who had become a Presbyterian minister in Lower Chanceford, York County, Pa.

John graduated from Lafayette College in 1841, taught a while, graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1846, married Sarah Wilson, and went to his first and only charge in the Chanceford church. He was stricken in the pulpit and died several weeks later on Sept. 18, 1866. Both parents died that year also.

A strong Union man in the Civil War, John Farquhar prayed for the success of Union Arms, and was rescued from assault for it, attempted by Copperheads among his listeners close to the Maryland line.

He was a man of scholarly and artistic tastes - an eloquent, able and sincere expounder of Calvinistic theology - a lover of Dickens and the poets with Burns at the head - an artist with a fine-pointed lead pencil - a hobbyist in raising fruits, preserving collections of snakes, butterflies and beetles, and in the then new science of photography. He was sporting enough, out of an attenuated salary, and in spite of Scottish thrift and Calvinistic inhibitions, to pay ten dollars to hear Jenny Lind.

He designed and colored mourning decorations for the church on the assassination of Lincoln. His sermon on that occasion, delivered in June 1865, printed by request of his congregation, embodies an appraisal of the martyred president remarkably in accord with that of history.



John Farquhar's wife, Sarah Wilson, was 43 when her husband died. She had five children to care for, the oldest, Thomas McKean, in college at Lafayette. Convinced, like her husband, of the righteousness of the Union cause, her devotion to Lincoln knew no bounds. She and her husband heard the Gettysburg address. "I stood at the corner of the platform and Mr. Lincoln was no farther from me than across this room."

The story of how this letter of my great grandfather's came to me, goes like this.

Sometime between July 3 and 13, 1863, John Farquhar visited the battlefield at Gettysburg. On July 13, 1863 he wrote the letter to his Massachusetts cousin, name of Bartlett.

In 1897 the recipient's daughter, Jean Bartlett, mentioned in the last paragraph, gave the original to my great uncle, John Wilson Farquhar, one of the five children of John, the letter-writer. (John Wilson, the youngest of three sons and two daughters, was only five when his father died. The "recollections" on his parents given earlier herein were largely impressions received from his Mother, Sarah Wilson, who died in 1906 at the age of 83. He passed them on to my children, John Franklin, his great grandnewpew, and Janet Elizabeth, his great grand-niece, by letter in 1938 when they were babes.)

On 26 August, 1897, John Wilson Farquhar sent a copy of his Father's letter given him by Jean Bartlett, to his brother, the oldest of the five children, Thomas McKean Farquhar (my grandfather), Superintendent of Schools, Bethlehem, Pa. Thomas McKean was the "Tommy" who hid the horse Billy from the Confederates. He was 14 at the time. August 26 was Thomas McKean's wedding anniversary - a prophetic date in the Farquhar clan. One of Thomas McKean's three sons (he had three daughters too), my Father, Edward Franklin, also married on that date in 1909. His son, my brother, Franklin Frederick, died at 18 years of infantile paralysis on that date in 1931.

On 24 February, 1933, one of Thomas McKean's three daughters, my aunt, Sarah Wilson Farquhar, name sake and granddaughter of letter writer's wife, made a copy of John Wilson Farquhar's copy, of John Farquhar's letter. On 5 April, 1964, she sent it to me, her newpew.

This 31-year old copy is yellow, aged, and torn, so I made another and herewith enclose it as per first paragraph. The letter, of course, is doubly interesting to me. I don't know whether my great grandfather was an Abolitionist by force of arms, but he seemed to



have had definite and strong ideas on the right of the Union cause, Copperheads in general, and Confederate imposts. He gave credit to those who showed courage in resisting the invasion, to those with compassion and aid for the wounded, Union and Confederate, and to those who helped the refugees, white and colored. His bent and taste for the English language make vivid descriptions of events that took place 101 years ago.

Yours truly,

Bruce Straub Farquhar



Copied February 24, 1933 by Sarah W. Farquhar, granddaughter of the writer of the following letter which was written to Jean Bartlett's parents. This is copied from a copy made by John W. Farquhar, son of the writer, of the following letter on August 26, 1897.

Note accompanying copy by J.W.F.

Dear Tom: (oldest brother of John W. Farquhar, son of writer)

Jennie Bartlett brought this to light. I made several copies and thought you might like to have one.

Signed J.W.F.

New York

Aug. 26, 1897 (wedding anniversary of Thomas and Eliza Farquhar)

Chanceford Manse,  
Lower Chanceford, York Co., Pa.  
July 13, 1863

Dear Cousin:

When your kind letter arrived I had just returned from the battlefield of Gettysburg, whither I had gone to look after Sallie's brother and his son, as well as to satisfy a rather strong curiosity and also to do a little good. Our relations belonged to the 153d P.V. and the Eleventh Army Corps, and although their regiment suffered terribly, bringing unhurt out of the field only about 200 out of 600 who entered, I found that they had escaped and had left with the army in pursuit of Lee. I would have answered your letter at once, but for a press of congregational business which had accumulated during my short absence.

In York County we have passed through a big scare. It is just one month to-day since we heard, at a funeral, of Lee's advance into Maryland with 90,000 men. The same day Sallie and I visited Wrightsville, and the next York, and found the people in both places in great excitement. Just two weeks yesterday the rebels entered York some 8,000 strong, the place having been meanly and pusillaniously surrendered by its Copperhead Chief Burgess the night before, before even a demand, and when to do the vile thing the Committee of Safety (?) had to go out of town some nine miles and rouse General Gordon out of his bed! ! ! To add to the disgrace and folly of the whole affair, after the surrender the "dear old flag" was flying to the breeze in the square, apparently for no other purpose than permitting the rebels to pull it down and trample it in the dust when they took possession of the town. The conduct of the Copperheads was infamous all through. Of the rebel impost you have heard, and I need not speak. We may all have to pay for it, for the town copperheads rule the county, their slaves must do as they bid. At Wrightsville more pluck was shown, our men



retired after a smart brush and set fire to the long bridge you may remember crossing. We saw the light and knew at once the cause. In the meantime we spent a Sabbath in a way very unusual to old fashioned Presbyterians. Services in the churches were hurried through or suspended altogether! meetings held, and patrols or rather pickets appointed and a company raised which may be even now in conflict with the enemy in Maryland. In the evening rumors reached us that in one direction the enemy were within 2-1/2 miles, and in another 6 miles, and that at the latter place our pickets had been fired on. Though these reports proved untrue, and by some were suspected to be so at the time, they added to the alarm. Horses which had not been hid were now consigned to the bush (Tommy had concealed Billy in the morning, I don't know where) and all we could do was to quietly wait "secesh". To find the treasures of the York County Barons he would have had to spade as much as he ever did at his entrenchments.

Some four or five hundred of our own soldiers who had been driven from Hanover added to the confusion of the night by a stampede through the country that lay between them and the river, and their seizure of food, horses, wagons of whatever could help them on their way. But little sympathy is felt for many of the farmers whose horses the rebels stole. Most of them are peace democrats - copperheads as far as they know, which is not very far - members of the society which was to protect them from Jeff Davis when his army "went through". Poor dupes! Their signs were disregarded, their professions of friendship turned against them by the rebels pretending that they would be glad to help them now that they had an opportunity, and their certificates of membership in "dat society" recommended as only useful for the most ignominious purposes.

I really doubt whether the rebels intended to cross the Susquehanna. If they did, they certainly took the wrong course. They might have found places in abundance, but the re-crossing perhaps presented itself as not so feasible. The cannonading at the battle of Gettysbrug was heard distinctly here distant some 45 miles in a direct line, especially on Thursday evening. I brought with me a good many relics from the field, and some imperishable impressions, among other things an abhorrence greatly intensified (before I thought that hardly possible) of the whole accursed conspiracy against the right of the world, that has sacrificed on its infernal altar so many thousands of our brethern.

I forgot to tell you that the poor darkies were in great trepidation. We did what we could to soothe them and assure them of safety. Let me tell you of a noble instance of womanhood. It took place in York - for even York has many noble people. While copperheads were exulting at the sight of fleeing negroes, one of our ladies observed an aged colored woman with two children painfully and fearfully struggling along. Her carriage, new, satin-lined, luxuriously cushioned,



perhaps costliest in the place for she is the rich wife of a rich merchant, had just been brought out to be sent to Columbia for safety. She ordered her coachman to take up the black refugees and give them a speedy and comfortable conveyance across the Susquehanna.

The rebs had negro servants many of whom escaped. Two from Louisiana passed a group of us in York on their way East. They were richer when they left us. This was before the fight.

When at Gettysburg, I visited the hospital of the 11th Army Corps about two miles from town. Its sights were awful, but deeply instructive. Interspersed among our brave boys, lying side by side in loving companionship, the most convincing proof I ever saw that a fellow feeling makes us kind, were many wounded rebels. Most of them seemed grateful for their treatment, and I judge many of them also for their wound that kept them here. Among the inconveniences of an extemporized hospital, open tents, suffering greatly from their wound, an almost universal cheerfulness prevailed. Their pride was that they had whipped Lee, and their most pressing desires were softbread and butter and clean shirts. A few whom my companion and I supplied seemed in the seventh heaven of happiness - nor did they seem ungrateful for the kind providence that had preserved them from death in that fearful battle.

But I have wearied you with my stuff. Father and mother are well. Father is quite feeble, though he stirs about a good deal. He is much bent and his movements are slow. I do not think he could stand a journey to Massachusetts. We are all obliged to you for your kind offer, but the danger is now past. We think certainly, if Meade gains another victory, which God in his mercy grant. Should danger come, perhaps we might seek shelter, somewhere - yet we all feel like sticking to our posts. Many of our western friends and relatives are now on the field, and many of the young men of my congregation, and some old ones too, are in the six and three months' service, while others are waiting willingly for the draft. Where is David? I hope well and safe returned. I trust Jean's husband is also safe. Give our united love to the whole family. I hope "when the cruel war is over" we may interchange visits, and see each other in the flesh - and above all do I hope that through the faith in the Blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we may be able to see each other in the far better land which he has purchased for his people beyond the grave.

Yours affectionately,

John Farquhar