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A Letter to "Dear Brother" Albertus? from Ben Van Raalte

Ben Van Raalte

Clarence Jalving

Nella Kennedy

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Camp near Jericho, June 21st, 1863

A letter to "Dear Brother" Albertus? from Ben Van Raalte. Ben is living on a farm in the Confederate area which is 700 acres. The farmer owns 20 Negroes and 40 horses.

Original in the Archives of the Netherlands Museum.

Translated by Clarence Jalving.

transcription
+ revision

Camp near Jericho, June 21st 1863

Dear Brother [Albertus??]

It is a great pleasure that I can write you a letter. I am in good health. We are living like gentlemen these days—living at the homes of farmers and there we have the best that the country can produce. Our horses are just as well off. We feed them from the big pile, and when the food is gone we move on to the next. The horses are fat and wild like deer [? *harten* – archaic form]. Three English boys hurt themselves quite badly but are recovering. So you can see we enjoy ourselves a lot and [lead] a good life. Cherries are ripe right now and we have been eating them for three weeks already. People treat us fine but they are as secess [Secessionist] as they come. The farmer at whose house we are staying has 700 acres of land, 20 negroes, and 40 horses so he can afford to feed us well. I have not heard anything from Dirk, but he can't write me because he doesn't know where we are. But I can write to the regiment [to which he is attached].

I heard that we are to remain mounted which suits me fine. That's better than walking and the fellows belonging to our crew are fine boys. I don't know how long we will stay in this neighborhood but the longer the better, for it's a happy Canaan [Ben wrote *Canian*] here—we live

[2]

in a big brick house here and sleep on the carpet in the hall. I could have had a feather bed but chose not to take it. It doesn't make any difference to me where I sleep.

I must close now because it is late and the boys are already asleep. This is Secess paper, but it is in Union hands. Write me soon for I'll be sure to get your letters sooner or later. Goodbye [vaarwel=farewell].

Your loving B. Van Raalte

[Revision of Clarence Jalving's translation: Nella Kennedy
January 2008]

Camp near Jericho [KY], June 21th 1863

Liefhebbende Broeder

Het is met plijzier dat ik in goeje gezondheid uw eenige letteren mag schrijven wij hebben tegen woordig een heeren leeven wij liggen bij de boeren in de kost en daar hebben wij het beste dat de countirey kan op leeveren onze paarden hebben het eeven goed wij voeren van de groote hoop en als het op is dan gaan wij weer naar een ander zij zijn vet en zo wild als harten [?] drie Engelse jongen [sic] hebben haar zelven slim bezeerd maar zijn tog aan het beeteren dus uw kan wel begrijpen dat wij veel plijzier hebben en een goed leeven [leiden] de kersen zijn tegen woordig rijp te minste wij hebben ze al drie weeken lang gehad het volk behandeld ons heel goed maar zij zijn zoo secess als zij maar weezen kunnen de boer daar wij nu bij zijn heeft een farm van zeeven honderd akker 20 negers en 40 paarden dus hij kan er wel tegen ons eeten kan niet beeter van dirk hoor ik niets hij kan mij ook niet schrijven want hij weet niet waar wij zijn en ik niet waar hij is maar ik kan tog naar het regiment schrijven. het zeggen is dat wij mounted zullen blijven het staat mij goed aan het is beeter dan loopen en het zijn beste jongen [sic] die tot deze crew behooren hoe lang of wij in deze omstreek zullen blijven weet ik niet hoe langer hoe liever want het is hier happy canian wij zijn

[2]

hier in een groot steenen huis en slaapen in de gang en slaape op het carpet ik kon een veere bed gekergen [sic] hebben maar verkoos het niet het is mij net [sic] zelvde waar op ik slaap nu moet ik eindigen want het is laat en de jongens slaapen al, dit is Secess pampier maar het is in union handen schrijf mij spoedig want ik zal mijn brieven tog wel kriegen het zij vroeger of laater vaar wel

UW Lief: B. Van Raalte

[Transcription: Nella Kennedy,
January 2008]

Dear Brother:

Albertus ?

I am glad to be able to write you a letter and inform you that I am enjoying good health. We are living like gentlemen these days - living at the homes of farmers and there we have the best that the country can produce. Our horses are just as well off. We feed them well and when the food is gone we move on to the next place. The horses are fat and frisky and three English boys hurt themselves quite badly but are recovering. So you can see we are having a lot of fun and living high. Cherries are ripe and we have been eating them for three weeks. People treat us fine but they are real Secessionists. The farmer at whose house we are staying has 700 acres of land, 20 Negroes and 40 horses so he can afford to feed us well. I never hear from Dirk but he can't write because he doesn't know where we are. I can write to the regiment to which he is attached.

I heard that we are to remain mounted which suits me fine. That's better than walking and the fellows belonging to our crew are fine boys. I don't know how long we will stay in this neighborhood but the longer the better. It's a happy "Canaan" here -- we live in a big brick house and sleep on the carpet in the hall. I could have had a feather bed but didn't take it. It doesn't make any difference to me where I sleep.

I must close now because it is late and the boys are already asleep. This paper I am writing on is Secession paper but now in Union hands. Write soon - I'll get your letters sooner or later. So long.

Your loving

B. Van Raalte

#10

Camp near Jericho, June 21st 1863

My much loved Brother,

Dear Brother:

Albertus

I am glad to be able to write you a letter and inform you that I am enjoying good health. We are living like gentlemen these days - living at the homes of farmers and there we have the best that the country can produce. Our horses are just as well off. We feed them well and when the food is gone we move on to the next place. The horses are fat and frisky and three

would like harts.

English boys hurt themselves quite badly but are recovering. So you can see we are having a lot of fun and living high. Cherries are ripe and we have been eating them for three weeks. People treat us fine but they are real Secessionists. The farmer at whose house we are staying has 700 acres of land, 20 Negroes and 40 horses so he can afford to feed us well. I never hear from Dirk but he can't write because he doesn't know where we are. I can write to the regiment to which he is attached.

currently ripe, very good

at least

I heard that we are to remain mounted which suits me fine. That's better than walking and the fellows belonging to our crew are fine boys. I don't know how long we will stay in this neighborhood but the longer the better. It's a happy "Canaan" here -- we live in a big brick house and sleep on the carpet in the hall. I could have had a feather bed but didn't take it. It doesn't make any difference to me where I sleep.

I must close now because it is late and the boys are already asleep. This paper I am writing on is Secession paper but now in Union hands. Write soon - I'll get your letters sooner or later. So long.

Your loving

B. Van Raalte

"The people treat us very well/good but they are as Seccess, as they can possibly be. The farmer ^{who we are with} ~~where we are~~ ^{at} now has a farm with seven hundred acres, 20 negro's, and 40 horses so he can ^(I can't write to him) handle us. Our food couldn't be better."

Dear Brother:

Albertus

I am glad to be able to write you a letter and inform you that I am enjoying good health. We are living like gentlemen these days - living at the homes of farmers and there we have the best that the country can produce. Our horses are just as well off. We feed them well ^{from the big pile} and when the food is gone we move on to the next ^{wild like deer} place. The horses are fat and frisky and three English boys hurt themselves quite badly but are recovering. So you can see we ^{enjoy ourselves a lot} are having a lot of fun and ^{have a good life} living high. Cherries are ripe and we have been eating them for three weeks ^{already}. People treat us fine but they are ^{as} ~~real~~ Secessionists. The farmer at whose house we are staying has 700 acres of land, 20 Negros and 40 horses so he can afford to feed us well. I ^{have not} ~~never~~ ^{heard anything} hear from Dirk but he can't write ^{me} because he doesn't know where we are. I can write to the regiment ^{to which he is attached}. I heard that we are to remain mounted which suits me fine. That's better than walking and the fellows belonging to our crew are fine boys. I don't know how long we will stay in this neighborhood but the longer the better, ^{for it's} its a happy "Canaan" here ^[Canaan] - we live in a big brick house ^{have} and sleep on the carpet in the hall. I could have had a feather bed but ^{chose not to} didn't take it. It doesn't make any difference to me where I sleep.

I must close now because it is late and the boys are already asleep. This paper I am writing on is Secession paper but now in Union hands. Write ^{me} soon ^{for} I'll get your letters sooner or later. So long. *[Farewell and bye]*

be sure to

Your loving

B. Van Raalte

Camp near Jericho June 21st 1863

Liefhebbende Broeder,

Het is met plezier dat Ik in goede
 gezondheid nu enige letteren mag schrijven
 mij hebben tegen Woordig en heeren leeren mij
 liggen bij de boeren in de kort en daar hebben
 mij het beste dat de countrey kan op leveren
 onse paarden hebben het even goed mij voeren
 van de groote hoop en als het op is dan gaan
 mij meer naar een ander zij zijn vet en zo
 mild als herten drie Engelse jongen hebben
 haar selven him bezerd maar zijn tog aan
 het beeteren dus uw kan wel begrijpen dat
 mij veel plezier hebben en een goed leeren
 de kessen zijn tegen Woordig rijp te minste
 mij hebben ze al drie weken lang gehad
 Het-volk behandeld ons heel goed maar
 zij zijn zoo seer als zij maar weeren kunnen
 de boer daare mij nu by zijn heeft een farm
 van seeren honderd akker 20 negers en 40 paard
 dus hij kan er wel tegen ons eten kan niet
 beeter van dink hoor Ik niets hij kan mij ook
 niet schrijven want hij weet niet maar wij zijn
 en Ik niet maar hij is maar Ik kan tog naar
 het regement schrijven. het zeggen is dat wij
 mounted zullen blijven het staat mij goed
 aan het is beter dan wapen en het zijn
 beste jongen die tot dese crew behooren
 hoe lang of mij in dese omstreek zullen
 blijven weet Ik niet hoe langer hoe langer
 want het is hier happy camian mij zijn

hier in een groot steenen huis en slaapen
 in de gang en slaape op het carpet Ik kan
 een velle bed gedergeren hebben maar ver-
 koos het niet het is mij net zelve maar of
 Ik slaaps nu moet Ik eindigen want het
 is laat en de jongens slaapen al dit is
 excess pampier maar het is in unien handen
 schrijft mij spoedig want Ik zal mijn
 brieven tog wel kriegen het zij vroeger
 of later waer wel

UW Lief: B. Van Raalte.