

Yanceyville, N.C.

June 22, 1858

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

My Dear Sister,

Your very kind and welcome letter of the 5th .... and mailed the 10th did not reach me until a few days ago, and as it always does give me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction to hear from you and yours and that you were all well. I had almost come to the conclusion that you had not received my letter I wrote you sometime before as you are generally very prompt to reply, and in future I hope that we will correspond more frequently and, though distant and can't see each other often, that we may hear from each other. I hope to hear soon from Mr. Jarrett and that he has done well.

Fannie and our 2 little children are both well and hearty. Fannie is enjoying good health but the weather for a few days past is rather warm to be pleasant to her. Our little boy runs all about and is talking totally plain and is now quite interesting to me. Our little girl Hannah Graves, that is its name, is quite a fine healthy child, grows finely and quite smart for her age and I think though I may be considered a little partial that she is quite a pretty child. I would at least, sister, be willing to compare with anyone.

I am sorry to inform you that my hip is not well yet and it improves very slowly. It has improved some and I am able to get about with it a little better but it yet lacks a good deal of being well, and I can't get anything to do it much good. It has been a great deal of trouble and anxiety to me.

If I am able, I will be at Asheville the 3 Monday in July to attend court as a witness and I should be more than happy to meet you and any of your family there for it will be impossible for me to extend my visit to your house this time as the weather is so warm that Fannie will not go up with me this summer as I will not be able to travel more than necessity compels me to do, and I have been so much absent from my business this year, owing to my severe affliction, that it is important for me to make as hurried a trip as possible. I should like very much to be able to make my escape from this hot climate for awhile and enjoy your cool and fabulous mountain atmosphere for awhile but can't do it this year. Notwithstanding we have hot weather, we have good cool and pure water to drink. Our water here is greatly as good as yours and that is one blessing.

The farmers are now cutting wheat and it is not generally very good. Oats look well and so does corn, and tobacco looks very fair for the season. We will soon have roasting ears from the garden. We have had peas, beans long ago, had cucumbers, beets, simblands(?), and several other vegetables. Can you beat that.

June 22, 1858

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You must give our love to each one of the children and a kiss. Also to Adda and Mr. Munday, Mr. Sharp, Elizas and the children when you see them. Tell Mr. Jarrett to write soon if he has not before you receive this letter and also our love to him.

Write soon and give me all the news of your country.

Fannie joins me in love to you with a wish to see you and the children.

Your devoted brother

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

Yanceyville, N.C.

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March 21, 1878

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I want you to give my love to the girls and cousin Nannie McKee. She wrote me a very kind letter after sister's death. You must write to me soon and give me all the news and how all the friends are. If I had the time I would like to be at the sale so I could all the friends.

Give my love to all and each one of your children when you see them. When you get home, do write to me soon and give me all the news.

Fannie and Hannah send love to you all and Fannie says she will write you after she gets settled and feels able. I have not been to Asheville yet.

My little boys, Robert, Willie and Allie are delighted with the country. They have never lived in the country before and it is new to them. I fear though they will no be so well pleased when they have to go to work.

I hope to hear from you soon. Do tell me what has become of Mr. Coopening (?) and his children when you write. I remain your devoted brother.

(Signed) J. L. McKee

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Keys, Buncombe County, NC

March 21, 1878

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

My Dear Sister

I received your very kind and welcome letter just before I left Statesville and I do assure you I was truly glad to hear from you and that you were well. I was so glad that you were with our dear sister's children. I do feel so sorry for them in the loss of their dear mother. When a child loses its mother, it loses its dearest friend on earth. I was so much surprised when Hattie wrote me of Sister Polly's mishap for I did not know she was so unwell and feeble, and then the next letter from brother Robert informing me of her death. I was glad to hear that she was prepared for death and did not dread it. I hope that she is better off now than while here on earth.

Capt. Robinson told me last week that Lassie (?) was to be married very soon at Mr. Johnston's house as they was so torn up at home that it would be so inconveniently for the marriage to take place at their old home. I hope she is doing well

I moved up here last week, the 13th March, and am now living on Swannano, 11 miles from Asheville. I am sorry to inform you that by fire, security money, I have had to pay since the war, and rascality of a man I thought was a friend, has about ruined me and took all I have and have worked for all my life. I lost by 2 fires since the war between twelve and fifteen thousand dollars, and I have paid nearly three thousand dollars security money and been cheated out of several thousand dollars by trusting to a man who is worse than a highway robber and the most informal rascal I ever had anything to do with, and I thought was a friend. So you see, I have had bad luck. I have made money all my life until the last few years and you know when I had it, I helped my friends, but it is all gone now. My precious daughter, Hannah, married a man who had money and so she, in the goodness of her heart, is now helping me and with her help and my own exertions, I hope to live yet and keep from wants.

If I could only see you I could tell you a good deal. I wish you had not made your visit to Buncombe until we got here and then you could have come here from Sandy Marsh so easily and what a pleasure it would have been to see and have a long chat with you.

Fannie has had quite a severe spell of sickness and was hardly able to come here when she did, but she stood her trip very well. I wrote to Hannah how sick her Ma was and she went and stayed with her until she was able to come up. Hannah appears to be perfectly happy that we are with her. We do all of our own cooking and housekeeping. If you could see how nicely our little boys wash the dishes and clean up the house, you would be amused.

Yanceyville, NC

May 5, 1861

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

Dear Sister,

I received by last mail your very welcome letter and I was truly glad to hear from you for I had not heard from you for a long time, and I was anxious to hear from you all. I was so sorry to hear of poor Bettie's death for she had a promising life ahead of her. These afflictions are for some wise purpose that will be made known to us the day all things are made known.

We are all well and hearty at this time and have been since our little ones has recovered from the measles. We had a severe time of it with them. Our children are growing finely, and we think they are quite pretty and smart children.

We are all engaged in this country now in making preparations for the war. We hear of nothing but war and talk of nothing much but war. Three companies has been raised in this county, two of them have left for the Seat of War and the other is now ready and waiting the orders of the Gov. and they are trying to make up the 4th Company. My partners in business and clerks have volunteered and when their company leaves, will leave me all alone which will keep me very closely confined at home this summer. All kinds of businesses except farming has been suspended owing to the great excitement and unsettled condition of the country. Money matters are very light in this county now as the farmers can't sell their tobacco and they have nothing else much for market except corn, and wheat. Corn is selling for \$3.50 per barrel and wheat \$1.25 a bushel, bacon 20 cents a pound.

Strange as it may appear, I have not received but one letter from Ma since she returned home and it appears most all of my friends in the Mountains have quit writing and I don't know the cause of it. We have to keep a shirt(?) patrol over the negroes in this county as there is so many of them. I don't apprehend any danger from them until things get worse then they are now. We have cold and backward spring today all have to have large fires and is so cold.

Give our love to Elizas Sharp and Mary. How does Sharp make a living now and is he entirely broke up. Give our love to all the children and Ada and her family. How many children has Ada. Remember us kindly to Mr. Jarrett and tell to write to me and let me hear the news of the country. Sister, do write soon to me for I do love to get letters from you. If we can't see each other often we ought to write often. Fannie joins me in love to you and I remain your affectionate brother.

(Signed) James

P.S. Our Company from the town received their orders to leave for the Seat of War. May 7, 1861

Yanceyville, NC

June 6, 1861

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

Dear Sister,

I was much gratified a few mails ago to receive your kind letter and to hear from you. If we are so situated that we can't visit each other, we ought to write to each other often. I often think how we are situated and regret exceedingly that we do not live close to each other so that we could visit and see each other often.

We have all been complaining for the last 10 or 15 days. The children's bowels are affected by eating too many cherries which makes them very fitful. They are better for the last day or two. Fannie has a pain in her side breasts and general lability and loss of appetite which makes her rather low spirited and on the puny order. I have had rheumatism in my hip and legs just enough to keep me uneasy and (gniting) but able to attend to business. I am better for the last 3 or 4 days.

Our whole county is excited about the war and we don't hear of much else, only war. We are in receipt of daily news from Richmond and the seat of war which keeps us excited all the time.

This county has sent off 3 companies to the seat of war. One company leaves today and the other company leaves in about two weeks just as soon as we can get them equipped and ready for service. Our whole community, that is the females, drop their own work and go to work for the Volunteers and make them uniform shirts, drawers and tent cloths for them which takes a good deal of time, but they are doing the thing up right and gives great satisfaction to the Volunteers. I did not volunteer as my partner said he was a young man and had no family, and that if I would stay at home and attend to our business, that he would go; so he and our clerks have gone and left me alone to attend to the business here. Our Yanceyville Volunteers are now at Norfolk and all well except three who are complaining some. I got several letters from them today. Fannie had but one brother here and he volunteered in the Yanceyville Company. He is now with them and is in fine spirits and good health. I wish you was here to see how our men are doing. What are you all doing in Cherokee? I can't see anything in the papers what you are doing. I would like to know.

The war has suspended all business in this country. Not much doing. The farmers can't sell their tobacco and therefore most all kinds of business is over and I don't know what will become of us all, but our wheat crop looks fine, oats look well, corn promising, and our farmers are not planting so much tobacco this year.



June 6, 1861

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Remember us to Eliza Sharp and Mary when you see them. Give our love to each one of the children and Mr. Jarrett. Do write soon and often and I will do the same. I have not heard from Ma or any of the friends since your wrote. They all have quit writing to me.

I remain your devoted brother,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)



Yanceyville, NC

March 16, 1861

(Letter to Nimrod Simpson Jarrett from James L. McKee)

Capt. N. S. Jarrett,

Dear Sir,

I was very much pained a few days ago to hear by a letter from sister Polly of the death of poor Bettie. I do wish she could have lived for a consolation to her parents and friends, but the ways of Providence is just and we must submit to it.

I hope that you and sister have arrived at home before this as I suppose you have had a very unpleasant trip of it owing to the bad winter and unsettled state of the country.

I received your letter enclosing check for six hundred dollars for which I am much obliged to you as it comes in a very needy time. Owing to the present crisis it has made times very hard. Most all kinds of businesses has closed and not much doing and no such things as getting money. No sale for tobacco and consequently it has closed up everything, and I don't see much prospect of it getting better. What do you think will become of us? -- as you have been in the Southern Republic, you can judge of its operation.

I have had a very sick family since the 1st January with measles. Came very near losing our oldest boy and one negro, but they are better now and I hope will all be up and well again.

I should be glad to hear how you came out with your bridges as you expressed some fear as you thought the high waters would carry them away. Write me and let me know how you was pleased with Florida upon the whole and would like to live there permanently.

We have had a very disagreeable winter -- rain, mud, sleet and snow. Was not able to put up ice for summer use.

Fannie joins me in love to sister and the children and yourself.

Yours affectionately,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Yanceyville, NC

May 5, 1861

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

Dear Sister,

I received by last mail your very welcome letter and I was truly glad to hear from you for I had not heard from you for a long time, and I was anxious to hear from you all. I was so sorry to hear of poor Bettie's death for she had a promising life ahead of her. These afflictions are for some wise purpose that will be made known to us the day all things are made known.

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JAMES L. MCKEE (Born April 29, 1780)-1849 in Buncombe Co.

Married:

HANNAH BRANDON PATTON (Born July 21, 1788)

On August 23, 1804

Hannah Patton McKee's father was Col. John Patton (4-14-1765 to 3-17-1834), the son of William Patton and Hannah "Brandon" Patton. Her mother was Ann Mallory (2-12-1760 to 8-1855). James L. McKee's parents were William McKee and Mary McHenry.

Children of James L. McKee and Hannah Brandon Patton McKee:

1. NANCY AVALINE MCKEE (Born Nov. 1, 1808 in Haywood County, NC; Died April 5, 1880) Married: December 14, 1826 to Col. Nimrod Simpson Jarrett: (Born July 28, 1799 in Buncombe Co., NC; murdered on Sept. 15, 1871). (Letters to N. A. Jarrett from mother are signed H. B. Lowry) -- OUR GG GRANDMOTHER)
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NOTE:

(Hannah B. Patton McKee, after James McKee died, married James Lowry - Possible children could be Tommy, Jimmy, Charlie)

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Sunday Night, Yanceyville, NC

Nov. 24, 1861

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

My Dear Sister,

I have neglected answering your find letter longer than I intended but I was absent for several days after I received it. I went to Raleigh and saw brother Robert, Mariane Lowry and many other friends and acquaintances from the Mountains. They gave me a good deal of news from home. Some very good and some very unpleasant. It must have been a very serious time with the friends when they all left home when they bid adieu to each other. Perhaps for the last time on earth and my sister how hard to bid adieu to home and the loved ones left behind. When I think of it, I can hardly stand it, but I hope all these sad things that we are now having to endure and which we all deplore so much, may all be blessings in disguise and it may all be bound to our normal happiness. God grant that it may be so. Among the many friends I saw from the Mountains was Harvey Davidson. He told me all about the friends in Cherokee and Macon. I was truly glad to meet with him. I saw J. H. Bryson, C. D. Smith and many others.

I have not volunteered yet but don't know how long it may be before I will have to volunteer and be ordered off. Anyhow, it appears the yankees are getting closer and closer on us. I suppose you know all about the East Tennessee affairs which I dislike to hear very much. When the 12 month Volunteers return home, I don't know what I will do then for their places will have to be filled either by Volunteers or drafts. My partner in business volunteered last spring, left and I am all alone now, but I am trying to wind up my old business as it is impossible to get goods now and will be until the war is over.

Fannie and the children are all well and our little ones are growing up finely. Haywood, our youngest, 2 years old, is just beginning to talk. He is as fat as a pig. We have had a very sick negro woman but she is now nearly well - going about. I am enjoying fine health myself. I have not heard from Ma for a long time, only through brother Robert.

We have a good corn crop here this year, wheat was very good. Not much sale for tobacco. They are asking \$15.00 for pork, but I don't know whether the buyers will give it or not. Salt scarce and high, no coffee here, sugar aplenty in Richmond. When you see Elizas and Mary, give them our love, also to Adda and her old man and kiss the little ones for us. How many children has Adda? Give our love to Mr. Jarrett, Iowa and Leander. If I had time I would so much like to go see you all but these war times won't let a man do anything much that he wants to and he can't calculate one day what he will do the next. So under all the circumstances, it is hard for one to say what he will do.

Keys, Buncombe County, NC  
March 21, 1878

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

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Yanceyville N.C. June 22<sup>nd</sup> 78

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(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

February 22, 1858

-2-

might write to me occasionally and I know I would to them. If you ever see Thad Siler, do give him my very best respects. I should be glad to see him. Does he live down at Fort Lindsey yet. My respects to Sharp and his family and we would like to know how they are getting along. I hope Mary and William are doing well. The last time I saw Sharp, he was much engaged in a land suit. Do you know whether he gained it or not. I hope before this time you are all at work on the railroad through Macon county. I never hear whether you are at work on it or not.

The weather this winter has been remarkably mild though wet. Not able to get any ice to put up for summer use. On the 12th January, we had snow to fall 10 inches and up to a good deal of it still on the ground. We have excellent water here in the summer, quite as good as your Macon water and much better than John or William Siler has in Macon.

Fannie sends love to all of you and says she would be much pleased to pay you all a visit but as we have now so many children that it is a hard task to go anywhere now. I do hope that this will be the last we will ever have for two children is enough for me for they are so much trouble.

I have no local news to write you that would interest you and I fear now that I will weary your patience by writing so much and asking so many questions. I must ask you and Mr. Jarrett to write soon, and when you do write, I want you to take this letter and answer all the question I have asked you.

Write soon and I will do the same. Kiss all the children for me, and give my love to Mr. Jarrett, also John Siler and his family.

I believe me to be your affectionate brother,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

P.S. Fannie says she wants you to tell her how many children Ada and Arindna(?) had.

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

JAMES L. MCKEE (Born April 29, 1780)-1849 in Buncombe Co.

Married:

HANNAH BRANDON PATTON (Born July 21, 1788)

On August 23, 1804

Hannah Patton McKee's father was Col. John Patton (4-14-1765 to 3-17-1834), the son of William Patton and Hannah "Brandon" Patton. Her mother was Ann Mallory (2-12-1760 to 8-1855). James L. McKee's parents were William McKee and Mary McHenry.

Children of James L. McKee and Hannah Brandon Patton McKee:

1. NANCY AVALINE MCKEE (Born Nov. 1, 1808 in Haywood County, NC; Died April 5, 1880) Married: December 14, 1826 to Col. Nimrod Simpson Jarrett: (Born July 28, 1799 in Buncombe Co., NC; murdered on Sept. 15, 1871). (Letters to N. A. Jarrett from mother are signed H. B. Lowry) -- OUR GG GRANDMOTHER)
2. Mary "Polly" Caroline McKee (Born Feb. 3, 1811)
3. John Alphonso McKee (Born May 12, 1813) - June 8, 1843
4. William Albert McKee (Born March 3, 1815)
5. Sallie Carlisle McKee (Born July 7, 1817)
6. Lucind Emiline McKee (Born June 20, 1819)
7. James L. McKee (Born Jan. 6, 1822)
8. Elizabeth A. McKee (Born Sept. 13, 1824) - 1838
9. Harriet F. McKee (Born Jan. 6, 1827)
10. Robert F. McKee (Born Dec. 18, 1830)

NOTE:

(Hannah B. Patton McKee, after James McKee died, married James Lowry - Possible children could be Tommy, Jimmy, Charlie)

Yanceyville N.C. June 22<sup>nd</sup> 78

My Dear Sister

Your very kind & welcome letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst & mailed the 10<sup>th</sup> did not reach me until a few days ago & so it always does give me a great deal of pleasure & satisfaction to hear from you & yours & that you was all well. I had almost come to the conclusion that you had not rec<sup>d</sup> my letter I wrote you some before as you are generally very prompt to answer & in future I hope that we will correspond more frequently & tho' distant & can't see each other often that we may hear from each other I hope to hear soon from Mr. Farrell & that he has done well.

Fannie & our 2 little children are both well & hearty, Fannie is enjoying good health, but the weather for a few days past is rather warm & unpleasant to her, our little boy runs all about & is talking tolerably plain & is now quite interesting & so. Our little girl Hannah ~~Traves~~ <sup>Traves</sup> that is its name, is quite a fine healthy child grows fine & quite smart for her age, & I think tho' I may be considered a little partial that she is quite a pretty child, I would at least like be willing to compare with any one.

March 21, 1878

-2-

I want you to give my love to the girls and cousin Nannie McKee. She wrote me a very kind letter after sister's death. You must write to me soon and give me all the news and how all the friends are. If I had the time I would like to be at the sale so I could all the friends.

Give my love to all and each one of your children when you see them. When you get home, do write to me soon and give me all the news.

Fannie and Hannah send love to you all and Fannie says she will write you after she gets settled and feels able. I have not been to Asheville yet.

My little boys, Robert, Willie and Allie are delighted with the country. They have never lived in the country before and it is new to them. I fear though they will no be so well pleased when they have to go to work.

I hope to hear from you soon. Do tell me what has become of Mr. Coopening (?) and his children when you write. I remain your devoted brother.

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

February 22, 1858

-2-

might write to me occasionally and I know I would to them. If you ever see Thad Siler, do give him my very best respects. I should be glad to see him. Does he live down at Fort Lindsey yet. My respects to Sharp and his family and we would like to know how they are getting along. I hope Mary and William are doing well. The last time I saw Sharp, he was much engaged in a land suit. Do you know whether he gained it or not. I hope before this time you are all at work on the railroad through Macon county. I never hear whether you are at work on it or not.

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Write soon and I will do the same. Kiss all the children for me, and give my love to Mr. Jarrett, also John Siler and his family.

I believe me to be your affectionate brother,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

P.S. Fannie says she wants you to tell her how many children Ada and Arindna(?) had.

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)



Yanceyville, N.C.

June 22, 1858

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

My Dear Sister,

Your very kind and welcome letter of the 5th .... and mailed the 10th did not reach me until a few days ago, and as it always does give me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction to hear from you and yours and that you were all well. I had almost come to the conclusion that you had not received my letter I wrote you sometime before as you are generally very prompt to reply, and in future I hope that we will correspond more frequently and, though distant and can't see each other often, that we may hear from each other. I hope to hear soon from Mr. Jarrett and that he has done well.

Fannie and our 2 little children are both well and hearty. Fannie is enjoying good health but the weather for a few days past is rather warm to be pleasant to her. Our little boy runs all about and is talking totally plain and is now quite interesting to me. Our little girl Hannah Graves, that is its name, is quite a fine healthy child, grows finely and quite smart for her age and I think though I may be considered a little partial that she is quite a pretty child. I would at least, sister, be willing to compare with anyone.

I am sorry to inform you that my hip is not well yet and it improves very slowly. It has improved some and I am able to get about with it a little better but it yet lacks a good deal of being well, and I can't get anything to do it much good. It has been a great deal of trouble and anxiety to me.

If I am able, I will be at Asheville the 3 Monday in July to attend court as a witness and I should be more than happy to meet you and any of your family there for it will be impossible for me to extend my visit to your house this time as the weather is so warm that Fannie will not go up with me this summer as I will not be able to travel more than necessity compels me to do, and I have been so much absent from my business this year, owing to my severe affliction, that it is important for me to make as hurried a trip as possible. I should like very much to be able to make my escape from this hot climate for awhile and enjoy your cool and fabulous mountain atmosphere for awhile but can't do it this year. Notwithstanding we have hot weather, we have good cool and pure water to drink. Our water here is greatly as good as yours and that is one blessing.

The farmers are now cutting wheat and it is not generally very good. Oats look well and so does corn, and tobacco looks very fair for the season. We will soon have roasting ears from the garden. We have had peas, beans long ago, had cucumbers, beets, simblands(?), and several other vegetables. Can you beat that.

June 22, 1858

-2-

You must give our love to each one of the children and a kiss. Also to Adda and Mr. Munday, Mr. Sharp, Elizas and the children when you see them. Tell Mr. Jarrett to write soon if he has not before you receive this letter and also our love to him.

Write soon and give me all the news of your country.

Fannie joins me in love to you with a wish to see you and the children.

Your devoted brother

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

Yanceyville, NC

March 16, 1861

(Letter to Nimrod Simpson Jarrett from James L. McKee)

Capt. N. S. Jarrett,

Dear Sir,

I was very much pained a few days ago to hear by a letter from sister Polly of the death of poor Bettie. I do wish she could have lived for a consolation to her parents and friends, but the ways of Providence is just and we must submit to it.

I hope that you and sister have arrived at home before this as I suppose you have had a very unpleasant trip of it owing to the bad winter and unsettled state of the country.

I received your letter enclosing check for six hundred dollars for which I am much obliged to you as it comes in a very needy time. Owing to the present crisis it has made times very hard. Most all kinds of businesses has closed and not much doing and no such things as getting money. No sale for tobacco and consequently it has closed up everything, and I don't see much prospect of it getting better. What do you think will become of us? -- as you have been in the Southern Republic, you can judge of its operation.

I have had a very sick family since the 1st January with measles. Came very near losing our oldest boy and one negro, but they are better now and I hope will all be up and well again.

I should be glad to hear how you came out with your bridges as you expressed some fear as you thought the high waters would carry them away. Write me and let me know how you was pleased with Florida upon the whole and would like to live there permanently.

We have had a very disagreeable winter -- rain, mud, sleet and snow. Was not able to put up ice for summer use.

Fannie joins me in love to sister and the children and yourself.

Yours affectionately,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Yanceyville, NC

May 5, 1861

(Addressed to Mrs. Nancy A. Jarrett, Valletown, Cherokee, NC)

Dear Sister,

I received by last mail your very welcome letter and I was truly glad to hear from you for I had not heard from you for a long time, and I was anxious to hear from you all. I was so sorry to hear of poor Bettie's death for she had a promising life ahead of her. These afflictions are for some wise purpose that will be made known to us the day all things are made known.

We are all well and hearty at this time and have been since our little ones has recovered from the measles. We had a severe time of it with them. Our children are growing finely, and we think they are quite pretty and smart children.

We are all engaged in this country now in making preparations for the war. We hear of nothing but war and talk of nothing much but war. Three companies has been raised in this county, two of them have left for the Seat of War and the other is now ready and waiting the orders of the Gov. and they are trying to make up the 4th Company. My partners in business and clerks have volunteered and when their company leaves, will leave me all alone which will keep me very closely confined at home this summer. All kinds of businesses except farming has been suspended owing to the great excitement and unsettled condition of the country. Money matters are very light in this county now as the farmers can't sell their tobacco and they have nothing else much for market except corn, and wheat. Corn is selling for \$3.50 per barrel and wheat \$1.25 a bushel, bacon 20 cents a pound.

Strange as it may appear, I have not received but one letter from Ma since she returned home and it appears most all of my friends in the Mountains have quit writing and I don't know the cause of it. We have to keep a shirt(?) patrol over the negroes in this county as there is so many of them. I don't apprehend any danger from them until things get worse then they are now. We have cold and backward spring today all have to have large fires and is so cold.

Give our love to Elizas Sharp and Mary. How does Sharp make a living now and is he entirely broke up. Give our love to all the children and Ada and her family. How many children has Ada. Remember us kindly to Mr. Jarrett and tell to write to me and let me hear the news of the country. Sister, do write soon to me for I do love to get letters from you. If we can't see each other often we ought to write often. Fannie joins me in love to you and I remain your affectionate brother.

(Signed) James

P.S. Our Company from the town received their orders to leave for the Seat of War. May 7, 1861

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)

June 6, 1861

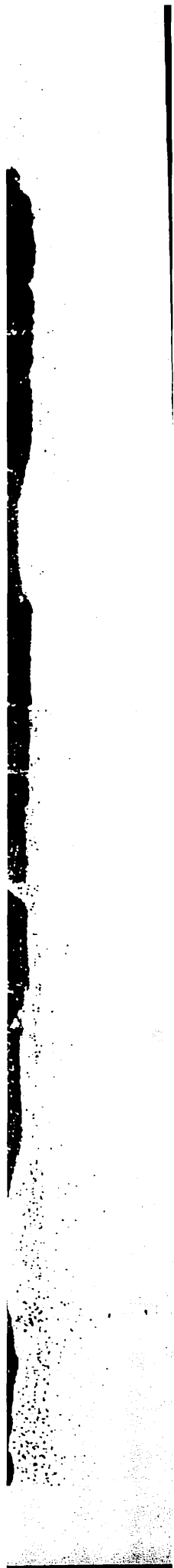
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Remember us to Eliza Sharp and Mary when you see them. Give our love to each one of the children and Mr. Jarrett. Do write soon and often and I will do the same. I have not heard from Ma or any of the friends since your wrote. They all have quit writing to me.

I remain your devoted brother,

(Signed) J. L. McKee

Copied by Mary Jane Walburg (1997)



Yanceyville, NC

May 24, 1860

(Letter from J. L. McKee to Niece, Bettie, Cherokee, NC)

Dear Bettie,

Your very kind letter came to hand by last night's mail and I was truly glad to hear from you and all the family in your country. I received your other letter sometime ago, and I was under the impression that I had answered your letter, but I suppose I did not.

I am glad to inform you that this leaves us all well and hearty. Your Aunt Fannie is quite well and enjoying fine health. Our little children are all well, growing finely. Little Hannah is a beautiful girl, very smart and a perfect chatterbox, always talking. She looks very much like Ma. She is the pet of all the family. We have not named our little boy yet. He is a good boy, can't quite sit alone yet. I do honestly think if you could see them and spend some time with them that you would be much pleased with them. I am enjoying fine health, weigh 200 lbs. this morning. I will be in Asheville the first of July as I am summoned there as a witness. I hope Ma will be at home by that time so that I can see her if I have time. I would be very glad to pay you all a visit but I have so much to do and my business is pressing me so closely that I have no time to go anywhere, and it is a great sacrifice for me to leave home at any time. I hope that if Ma does come to see us this fall that you will come with her. I would be so glad to see you and all the family. I don't know what is to prevent you from coming and spending some time with me. You must write soon and give me all the news from Cherokee.

Give our love to your Ma, Pa and all the family and Mrs. Sharp and family when you see them. Also Adda and her old man. How is she and her family. You never mention them in your letters. I would like to hear from them.

Wheat, oats and corn looks well so far. We have had strawberries for some time, peas and all kinds of vegetables, you(?) chickens and chicken pies, etc. Nothing new or exciting in this part of the country.

Your Aunt Fannie sends love to all. Write soon and believe me to be your devoted uncle.

(Signed) J. L. McKee