

Waxahachie, Texas, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1886.

My Dear Darling, Dallas

After much anxious waiting and expecting I received yours of last Sunday to-day. I could not conjecture why it did not come. Monday morning I was astonished to receive such a large official envelope on the back of which was endorsed in pencil: "Geneology of the Rust and Davis families". While hastily tearing it open I think a thousand thoughts of what it might contain passed through my mind. I expected to find a lot of legal documents or printed geneology on linen or parchment, but instead I found it to contain two nicely performed handkerchiefs from you. I had no thoughts of a birthday present, and really had forgotten that I ever had a birthday. Many, many thanks to you; but if we both live to see my next birthday I hope to receive the grandest present of my life, for which I may thank Heaven. No, I don't want you enclosed in an envelope and labeled "geneology", but I will come for you. My greatest desire and wish is to be worthy of my birthday present which I am to receive twelve months hence. I want to show my appreciation by making her lot one of comfort and happiness as far as such is in my power.

We have got many hard lessons yet to learn - especially you speak of Mrs. and Mrs. Franklin. I see at a glance that they are trying to live beyond their income, consequently both, no doubt, wish they had waited awhile. To live within my income is the hardest lesson I ever tried to learn. Surroundings are hard to overcome, especially in the matter of young people making a creditable display. Where we usually we may be so financially situated that we can't make anything above a passable outward appearance; but it matters not what people think and any of our conditions and prospects so we live within our means our own minds will rest at ease with regard to our prosperity. The spirit to excel and rival I think is entirely too rampant

7 These days. People will strain the very last cent and  
run in debt to come up with their neighbor in  
outward appearance. This is all well enough, provided  
their pockets books can stand the pressure. Don't get  
the idea now that I am trying to discourage - anything  
else but that it is only the believers ahead that like in the  
path of every young couple's life, and too much caution  
cannot be exercised against them. Our future yet is un-  
known but it must not remain so long. If I am only  
to receive a hundred dollars a year that I am calling  
own I want to know it. I want to know what I can do  
do and where locate. It is very necessary that I should locate  
somewhere soon and the suspense of not knowing when  
now is terrible to me. My ancestors were poor, and the  
majority of them are so now, but they have lived and  
provided comfortably for their families and enjoyed  
life, so far as I know. I am endowed with the same  
equal, and I dare say better advantages than they  
had, and I don't see why I should not succeed  
as well or better than they. We have got to learn it is  
true but what else are we here for? and how are we to  
learn without a teacher? and who can that teacher  
be but experience? People who don't work out their own  
salvation will never be saved, and those who try to  
live in the woe of another's life are sure to fail. There  
are many little faults that we can catch now and  
not do more that will prove of benefit to us after marriage,  
and I am glad you are catching dots from others.

It has been very cold here. Sunday night the ground  
froze and all the young and tender garden plants were  
killed, as well as the peaches & raspberries. Last night we had  
a very heavy white killing frost that was almost like a  
young snow, and I suppose it finished up the killing  
work. It is quite cool to night and I think we will have  
another light frost.

That was a funny dream you had. But I had a funny  
too the other night. It is too long to tell, but I thought your  
father played a joke on us both.

No, you are just right. I shouldn't be discouraged about  
my prospects, and it is wrong for me to murmur after God  
has so richly blessed me. I can make the average wages

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stony trade, and furthermore I am qualified for other  
callings if I should turn my mind to these.

You noble little creature! I can't help but say that,  
when I read in your letter where you say you can do  
quite a "good deal myself" and own the expenses of a  
printer. Of course, I know you can, and more than that  
you are so willing. You don't know how proud I am of you,  
but I do wish I had a kiss.

Yes, I am perfectly well satisfied that it was Mr. Lotz's  
own fault that he failed. I hope that any man he said  
of me under favorable circumstances, were he dead,  
if I chance to go to Dallas I will go to your Uncle's,  
and thank your grandmother for me, for I don't know  
any one there should I go.

I scratched and rubbed my ear so much after  
I got here that it spread, & it swelled, and was very  
sore, but I used the salve you gave me and it is nearly  
well again now. My blood is in much better con-  
dition, although I think I have had two light chills -  
I know I had fever, but not enough to amount to  
much.

I am going to leave this place as soon as I can collect  
money enough to pay my board and get out of town.  
I never had such a time collecting my pay. He just  
lies about it with impudence. I wouldn't mind it so  
much if he wouldn't fool me so often. I can't help  
but feel sorry for the man though, and I hate to ask  
him for money when I know he hasn't got it. I do  
really think he might let me have enough to keep  
my board paid up. I'll get him so he will want to  
take me off though and I won't go till he pays  
me up. I think that scheme will work well! When  
any money is paid into the office in his absence  
he never sees it; one of the boys will pocket it and  
tell him about it, but I don't ever get that chance  
since I am a stranger and they never call to settle  
with me. Such as this will discourage me quite -  
to think there is a fair chance for me to lose what  
I am laboring hard for.

You don't love any idea how much I miss John  
and Ed and Mable and George, Washington and John  
Henry William and Mable Lister Mary Jane and  
all the rest of the children that I had for table com=  
pany at Esterville. Wonder if they miss me too?

I must close and go to bed now. I think my letter is long though it doesn't cover much space. I shall look for another good long letter next time.

Tell your mother I won't go to Claremont, or to the for west at all. I don't think myself it would be good policy. Wages are little better and expenses about double. Good night. Lovingly  
Regards to all.

Your true Nat.

P.S.

We are to have a hanging here on May 8<sup>th</sup> 10. It is a negro for the brutal murder of his wife. He was sentenced yesterday. Lively a white man also will hang - and named ~~Proctor~~ I forget it now. His trial is set for the 13<sup>th</sup> of April. The prisoners last night tried to break jail through the assistance of outside parties who attempted their release, but the guard discovered them and fired several ~~shots~~ shots at the intruders. District court is still in session and lively will continue till first of May.

Don't send any "April fool" this year. And look out you don't get fooled. I am expecting nothing else, so it won't count if I do get fooled. Bye, bye.

Much love from Nat.