

Transcript of Letter from Delphina E. Mendenhall to John L. Ham, February 1, 1879

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Box Number: 279

Folio: f.63

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Jamestown N. C.
1st
of 2nd
mo. 1879

To John L. Ham.

Dear Friend

I am the old lady who rec~ four prisoner s discharged from Salisbury when it was expected Genl. Sherman would march from Columbia S. C. to that place, and avenge the horrid cruelties that had been perpetrated there.

It was a cold, dreary, rainy evening when you reached my house, and were received at the kitchen fire, untill we could kindle a fire in the dining room.

office, and were supplied with hot water, soap, towels, oil for the frozen feet etc.

You had blankets, that had been sent you by your Government. (I am thankful that I can now say our government.

Next morning after breakfast you were furnished with provisions to carry with

you. Just at starting, I asked your names & residence- George Gardner of N. Y. State & John L. Ham of Maine, are all the names I recalled tho I have in the house a memo book containing the address of each.

My maiden name was Gardner. My husband George C. Mendenhall emancipated 50 slaves & removed them to Ohio previous to his death in 1860. By will he emancipated 30 more being all he owned, & left me sole executrix. In 1860 I succeeded in removing a part of these to Ohio. In 1861 I started with all the remainder, & was turned back by an armed mob— There was great rejoicing among the pro-slavery part of the community. as calm as a summer sea, on my way home, for I trusted in my Saviour for deliverance.

Every year during the war, efforts were made to take some portion of these poor colored people out of my hands for army use. The war closed without one of them being involved in it— for God was with me.

I did not suffer any losses by either army— But by the destruction of the Banks, and State Stock, this means my Husband left for my support in old age, is gone, and persons indebted to my Husband's estate, were made insolvent by the war.

My cousin Abel Gardner, who has been an inmate of our family more than 20 years during the life of my Husband, still lives with me. He has been all his life, a case example of pure integrity & uprightness.

By losses in the Bank, & the insolvency of those who had borrowed money from him, his comfortable estate, was also mostly destroyed by the war. He is near 70 years of age. If I live two days longer, I shall be 68 on the 3rd of this month.

He is the man, who walked with you to the Depot. We live $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles North west of the depot.

My only Sister, a widow, residing here with her young children, when you were here,

has passed away in peace, to the "Better Land". One daughter preceded her, another daughter died four years ago, both prepared for the Solumn change of worlds. the other children are gone, some in Indiana, some in Texas, to try to make a living.

Some of the colored people emancipated by my Husband, are doing very well. One of them is a graduate of Howard University, Washington City, and is now teaching a

School of 70 pupils, about 10 miles from me. Another noble boy, graduated at Howard University, & married a young woman also educated there. They both studied medicine, at Washington, & are in Henia, Ohio, with a fine practice among both White & Colored people.

+ My dear friend, if I have been the instrument in doing any good act, remember, not I, but the Lord Jesus must have the thanks.

Truly thy friend Delphina E. Mendenhall

Please let me hear about thy journey home from Wilmington, and history since. I have written freely by example.