

DETESTABLE CREATURES

Submitted by Marty Everse

Following the end of the Civil War, Montevallo was occupied by the Union Army. Mattie Perry, the youngest daughter of Jacob Perry, who lived just north of Montevallo jotted a note to a friend in September 1865 describing conditions at the time. She was not a fan of the northerners and could not understand the kindness shown by some of her neighbors to them. Despite the annoyances of the garrisoned troops, life had resumed some semblance of past times.

Many of the Perry family papers are preserved at Auburn University's Archives. The spellings and punctuation of the following excerpt are true to the original.



Martha "Mattie" Perry wrote to her friend Callie from this house in September 1865. Known today as the Perry-Mahler House, this photograph was taken about 1946 before the Mahler family began their renovation of the structure. It stands today as the centerpiece of Montevallo's Shoal Creek Park. (Image courtesy of the University of Montevallo Archives.)

If my letter proves dull please excuse it for I have nothing at all animating to write, the times are so "dry" down here, have been for the last month, no amusements at all going on. I have the blues so bad sometimes, I scarcely know what to do.

I spent the summer very pleasantly, attended a good many picnics and fishing parties. They had some of the most splendid dinners at some of the picnics I've seen since the war commenced. You ought to have been here to participate in them. Can't you come over to see me sometime soon? I would be delighted to see you at any time. If you will come I will give you a nice little sweetheart. You will think he is the most handsome fellow you ever saw and is very intelligent. Callie, are you all ever troubled with these detestable creatures (the Yankees) over there. We can scarcely breathe pure air for them here, they are so numerous. At least they make themselves appear so by their continual roving over the country. They seem as so many brutes (indeed some of them scarcely look like humans) wandering about praying upon people's hogs and stealing whatever they can put their hands on. A company of about twenty five or thirty came out here week before last and taken several wagon loads Papa's corn and fodder, and didnt pay him a cent. Gave him a receipt for it and said they reckon he could get pay if he would go to Gainesville for it, wich would cost nearly as much to go there and back as the corn would amount to. They treated some of the other citizens in the same manner as they did Papa. It is surprising to me with what kindness some people treat the Yankees, even some of the citizens of Montevallo have been giving them parties and the young ladies riding out with them. I know you are tired of hearing about the Yankees so I will hush.

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