

John Atkinson Bowling Green Warren County Kentucky United States  
North America May 10th 1866.

Dear Cousin Agness Frier, having Received your kind respects through my nephew William Wilkinson, I return the same, with a few lines & a request that you will answer them, for my Wife & mother say they like Agy Dent to write for she tells all particulars. and I say the same, for my Sister did write it is true but out of the thousand & on questions I had asked she did not answer one & you favour write a letter, for in her letter I wrote & asked you about as many questions about Worton & all those I knew they said you promised to write & sister said so also that is in answer to my many questions. but for fear you may not have taken care of my letter I will remind you again, I don't even know whether Cousin John Dent is living nor what doing for there must be quite a change in that family since I have heard any thing about them & William & your Sister Ann or did she ever get married. you could about your boys their names ages & where they were all living, but tell me but tell me it all over again for they have not been standing still since that time, & Give our kind respects to all on my Wife & Mother's side, & give us all the changes since you wrote last to see if they would let you mail the letter & let me pay all the postage and tell us all about the Bouldings, the Wathemans, the Gitlows, Jonsey Jenkins John Jennings <sup>Tommy</sup> Jennings Mrs. Jennings. . . Shutelsworth, Jackson that crust with me the Wilkersons particularly Dorothy & Bella Squires another sweet . . . she wants Cousin Mary Robinson to write & Give all particulars of over and over along with there. . . Billy Carter & Nelley Gray all write . . . family particularly . . . and tell we have received & . . . James Robinson at the well & all of . . . there is any weaving done in Worton now & Jo West, . . you see we take quite an interest in knowing how you are . . . and particularly your household dear self, for I can only see you as I knew you but I all ways live in



hopes to see you . . . for as I get older my affections grew stronger or  
 rather . . . for my country my relatives and friends, and . . . myself  
 from scenes of my childhood, affections of youth . . . from home, to wander ab-  
 about and greeting . . . wisdom to shun, with a heart that was like I went  
 rolling along. sometimes in sun shine, but oftener in gloom, with . . .  
 compassion, and far far from home. but the cares and the strife, soon im-  
 bittered my life, and . . . a smile, I soon became hardent to guilt and  
 exile, with on one to care for, nor no one to smile and . . . think of  
 my poetry for I can say nothing more. I have corrected the meter and put  
 it in five . . . and my wife is so proud of it she has put it by amongst  
 the heirlooms of the family, . . . will fall heir to a prize. but I have  
 wrote more. . . we will say some thing more. . . and that is tell me how  
 you got a long and how you did when all depended upon you, and whether  
 your children is kind and helps you I suppose soon of them is married by  
 this time, and whether you have got a new set of teeth for Jane as and they  
 cost fifteen pound or seventy five dollars. . . quite proud of them  
 my one is pretty good yet, but my head is as white as wool but I am as  
 fat as a Bear, but I have going to send you and sister Agness my likeness,  
 and you must send me yours that we may see one another in that was if  
 no other for you knew I had nothing in the way of good looks when I was  
 young, but my wife says as I grow older I grow better looking so I shall have  
 my share of good looks any way, but did you ever see a pretty that wasn't  
 fat, for it hides many a <sup>e</sup> rinkle and furrow, that care and thin spots  
 expose. Jane says change the subject and tell them some thing about the  
 war the four year war lacking one day, it is called a way but I think a <sup>war</sup>  
 Revolution or a giantick treason <sup>or</sup> the all three of them one side was  
 lacking one day, It is called a war but I think a Revolu



coled the Rebels or secessionists that is the South or eleven of the  
 sothern states, they defied government and set up government for themselves  
 expecting to have taken three more slave states with them but failed in  
 part or we might have at war yet. that left fifteen still some that  
 cleaving to the government union or Republican party, but the subject will  
 be too long I can only state a few instances connected with our selves,  
 during that period, in the first place the Rebels came into the three  
 remaining Slave states to enslave and get them over the Rebel's against  
 the government like they had done and so striken and decide that we might have  
 two governments, one South and one North as it is called, and for two of the  
 first years of the war it continued <sup>h</sup> rather in favor of the Rebels but by this  
 time the government siding what they had to do had prepared, but the sub-  
 ject is too long I shall have to be more brief still. for England had to  
 make all the . . . and the timber still growing in the forests of America  
 & the lead in the mines the cannon balls in the hills and powder too for  
 that charged Salt peter and . . . the ships also to build and remodel,  
 you will say how can that be but I will tell you, this conspiracy of the  
 south was about thirty years old and for the last four years previous  
 to the war the south held the reins of the Government and they made every  
 preparation for the coming struggle by having all the shipping sent as far  
 into foreign countries as possible or in to southern ports same way with all  
 munitions that when Lincoln was elected to the government they were ready  
 and the seat of government stripped of every thing available for defense,  
 and they the south did not think the government would make any attempt and  
 that they would fail if they did and so give it up, but the people  
 is the government in all such cases & they rose . . . between the two  
 contending forces amounted . . . the part of Kentucky we live in was taken  
 by the Rebels on the 16 of September, 1861, and we was cut off from all  
 communications with the north and the south took all and run it further



south by Rail Road River and the prices of things went up to a . . .  
 hite and one of the Suthern Jenerals had is head quarters at out house  
 with four thousand troops campt all round the place we had to grin an  
 bare it the best we could, the Rebels amounted to about sixty or seventy  
 thousand that held Bowling Green, but on the 15th of Aprile. . .the Union  
 troops came to our releife and got round them and flanked them and a  
 great battel was fote about sixty miles south west of this place coled  
 Fort Henry and Fort Donaldson between two Rivers, Tennessee and the  
 Cumberland. . .place through the Rebs as thay became coled expected that  
 the Union trips could march up to the forts bilt for them at this place  
 for the Rebs had not ben idel for thay had bilt no less than eight forts  
 and cut down all the trees within canon range and just expected to throw th  
 them down, the Rebs left about three or four on the after noon and thay  
 had burnt the Bridg in the morning and blown down the Rail Road Birdge  
 with cannon for it was iron. and then when thay thote the union troops  
 could not get to them for the river was so heigh thay set the town on  
 fire in a great many places and set all there houn stores of provisions  
 for thay had quite a large supley and yet could not get them a way such as  
 pork Belf Lard, corn, flour, wheat and ham that would not burn, thay  
 burnt the bildings with them and burnt two <sup>pork</sup> ~~pork~~ houses with fifty  
 thousand dollars and all the Rail Road Cars that thay could not get a way  
 but by this time the Union troops commenced playing on them with cannon  
 and I expected them every minute to come and my mill but some of my  
 friends prevaidd on Jeneral Mitchell to send a cavallery gard and her thay  
 came just as we got diner, in a troupe and Jane had just been saying  
 why did I not get out the flour and save that for I had several hundred  
 bare



Bbls and some five thousand Bushell Wheat and Corne, but I hate there  
 object as to destroy anything that would be of benefit to the Union  
 army, so I thote if I brote it to the House or Barn they would burn them  
 too, but when thay came I did run ~~I~~ down to the mill to hask them let me  
 take out a fue bbls of flour and just as I was asking the question Dr.  
 Goodwin rode up and said these is not burners, John, thay have come to  
 save and gard you. Well, I had like to have dropt, the ~~change~~ <sup>change</sup> was so  
 grate ~~(full)~~ for I thote they where the burners for I could think of  
 nothing else that day and seeing one grate smook after another in the  
 direction of town for we live  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of town and the vue is cut  
 of, but by sun down Jeneral Mitchell sent three Redgements and a squad of  
 Cavalery for me to cross as I had the only Boat on the River and thay  
 flock to every house in the neighborhood for thay had been on forst March  
 for two days, and Jane and Mother and a black boy went to cooking meat  
 and bread and capt on till day in the morning and by the time I had  
 crost them in my boat and had them in Bowling Green, wilst Jeneral Mitcheall  
 sat and staid about the kitchen chating to Jane and Mother, but by this  
 time as I have said the Rebels was gon but all this reads well enuf but  
 think where a ~~h~~army passes they devastate everything when I got back next  
 day thay had left nothing that thay could pack a way then we had another  
 union Jeneral Rusoe and a Brigade stay with us and thay playd the same  
 trick even stole my horse toe saddles & buggy bridel and cild and heat up  
 all my ogs, then just before the war was ~~over~~ <sup>was</sup> we visited by three riffins  
 in the dead of night with Revolvers cocked and thay took just what thay  
 wanted and about seven or eight hundred dollars in notes and thretened  
 to burn the house and mill if we did not launch out the gold but after  
 taking all thay could find thay got on ther horses and rode away & now to  
 conclude for you may see I have tired & it is twelve o'clock night and all  
 in ~~bad~~ <sup>bad</sup> but me be sure to rite and tell us everything of yourselph and  
 others so adieu.

John Jane & Mother