

The following letter from Ephraim Belt January III to John Machin (Or Machir) in St. Louis Missouri was “found” in The Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Ellis Library, University of Missouri-Columbia at Columbia, Missouri 65201-5149 by Ms Cherilyn Harris of 23034 NE 13th St., Redmond, WA 98053 and generously forwarded a copy of the original to Walter E. Belt, Jr. and Beverly Watts. Walter Belt’s draft interpretation of the original letter follows after amending it in response to suggested change from Beverly Watts and Cherilyn Harris .. (Spelling etc is shown as in the letter in most cases).).

CYNTHIANA June 2th- 1842,
(This was in Harrison County, Kentucky)

Dr John

I have just received your kind letter for which I am under many obligation to you I have been well in body ever since we parted but not in mind altogether. But I think I am recovering even in mind. There has not anything strange taking place Since your departure Cynt is the same old place yet there is but little going on here that would either amuse or astonish any person. I have been at one wedding since you left it was a Mr. Hillimans he married a Mrs Lucus of leesburgh Miss Mary Wortham, cousin Mary & myself was all that were invited we went and had a fine time of it—there was a great many there who live about Leesburgh & several from Lexington & Fayette County. We were up there tow or three days(About ?)& Spent our time very pleasantly.

(Original did not make new paragraph here)

the ladies in this place are all well and looks well, there is a young lady from Cincinnati on a visit in this place She returned in company with Miss Broadwell She is very handsom & I tell you she cuts a stiff—over the ladies of this place the boys are all on there heads a bout her with the exception of myself & I guess as how She cant come it over me for there are ladies in this place that I would not give for one thousand like her. That I suppose you are well aware of. You ask me if I have made a favorable impression on he whome I would like for a farther in law. No or at least I have never said anything to him on the subject but he is very friendly towards me & always have been, & I think he is a coming over .a.little, for ___, says he has never Said anyhting to her on the Subject since you left.the fact is he never said anything to her in his life all he ever said was said to her Mother. I believe all the diffeculty that has arisen has been on her brothers account & he kicked up about it, for what reason I have never been able to find out but lately he has become very friendly to me; She is as firm in her resilution as ever I saw her last night & she says She will have me ; or She never will marry any person. I have never asked her; if she would run off with me. Nor do I know whether I ever shall or not. But whether I suceed or not; you need not be worried a bout me shooting myself; for I would sooner kill half of the people in Kentucky than myself; did you give my best respects to the ladies of Maysville;(NE of Lexington and Count Seat of Mason County, Kentucky) but of course you did you spoke of several ladies from Louisville being on a visit at your place. I hope you enjoy your self fondly with them. I wish you a pleasant time of it. You Say that you do not think they will make any impression on your mind or heart. (Again no paragraph here in original letter)

I do not know whether to wish they may or may not for if you should have as much trouble as I have had I would not advise you to fall in love; but if it should turn out otherwise with you, I wish they may make some impression on you.-- we took up a man a few days since on suspicion of kidnaping a Negro boy; & sure enough it turn out to be the truth he had stole the boy. The sheriff of this co. took him back on yesterday but he was from Anderson co. This state.

(New paragraph ,not in original, added here)

Miss Mary Anderson has left town again the balance of the ladies of this place are all here & well I shall deliver your respect to them as fast as I see them . I shall go on the hill one day this weeke; You spoke of your flute being an inducement for me to persevere so it will be a little for I prise it very much & am under many obligation to the giver but the wish and will of yours would be a much stronger inducement for me to persevere.

There arent any on my part shall be left undone I do assume you give her your respect & she reteurns hers to you; but says you might of call on her if you did not think it too much trouble when you are here;

(Again a new paragraph not in original)

John from something I have learn since you left I am rather under the impression that you told me a small fib; ABOUT NOT COMING TO SEE m. c. j IF IT IS THE CASE John I think you ought to let me know for it would never would go any further; Cousin Clemintina Wall has been very sick but she is going a bout again; I hear from John T. Wall a few days since he was well. John write as soon as you get this & let me here all the news; things are very dull here it is almost impossible to collect money these times;

Burn this letter when you have read it excuse all improper Spelt words; give my best respect to all enquiring friends & except the largest portion for yourself write soon your frine & C (Companion ?) EB JANUARY

(This is Ephraim Belt January III)

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The following notes/ comments are from Ms Cherilyn arris:

1. Note he signs the letter E. B. January. I bet his middle name is BELT, from his mother's surname (His mother was Lucy Belt, daughter of Capt. Wm. M. Belt, Sr. and wife Deborah Waters).
2. The letter is written by a very young man- one who has not yet married.
3. His wife was Mary Thompson.
4. Who was m.c.j?
5. Ephraim Belt January III had a son named JOHN. Could this son have been named for Ephraim III's good friend, who received the letter, JOHN MACHIN-OR-MACHIR?
6. Thank John Machin (or Machir) for not burning the letter.

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The following notes/comments are from Mrs. Beverly Watts, Box 905, Willows, CA.95988-0905:

"You must remember that the letter was written at a stage when colonial handwriting was used. Punctuation was not used, no paragraphs, sometimes no capital letters, and the letters of the alphabet were quite dissimilar. Sometimes you will find a pause, if any, will be noted by a dot, a dash- sometimes it meant a phrase separation. Sometimes the words just keep flowing with no pause at all. Just read the manuscript over several times, and soon it will make more sense.. Also, in the deep south and even in Kentucky and Virginia you will hear colloquial phrases which will seem funny to you, but in everyday use at that time period.

This line of Januarys lived in Cynthiana and also Paris and Caseyville, which did lay in Mason and Bourbon County. Caseyville now lays in Union County. Maysville was the county seat of Mason County.

Colonial handwriting for a double SS was like a sf.

John MACHIN, I'm sure is not the correct interpretation of the handwriting. The letter may have been placed in that file in Missouri, because the filer thought that's what it read, But, knowing that MACHIRS were related to the Januarys and that they lived in Cyanthiana, I believe they were filed with Machin by mistake. Read the first name of the addressee on the original: JOHN,, remember that N....Now read the name MACHIN.. Compare the two n's at the end of each name. They are not alike. If you look at the alphabet of colonial writing , you will notice that the r has a slight hook to it with an upward swing on the tail.

E. B. January was 35 years old when he wrote the letter, and he did not outlive his father, predeseacing him by

ten years. If E. B. January III married in 1842, it would have had to have been after June 1842, and from the sounds of his letter, quite a bit after that. His first child by Mary Thompson (Was this William Henry January?) was born in January 1844, so the marriage must have taken place between June 1842 and May 1843.

The towns all mentioned in this letter are fairly close together by car, but in the 1800's ?

Clemintina January married Henry Machir and their bondsman was John Machir. Clemintana married second WALL after death of HENRY in 1828.

Most of people mentioned are relatives of both men".