



[0798_01]

Edens Ridge, Tenn.

May 24, 1898

Miss Inez Martin,
Free Hill, Tenn.

Dear Miss Inez,

Your letter arrived all O.K. and it was more than appreciated, and I will say, am very sorry to hear of your illness.

I'll bet you was extraordinary [sic] good looking.

but I hope by this time you are looking alright, and that your color has been restored.

Miss Inez you will have to explain more fully about the late Dr. Hall calling it P.M. if you mean for me to understand, as I'm a little dull on that anyhow.

Well I guess you had a nice time at the association and also, the commencement. But you missed a right smart by not being at Rock Springs. I would of been glad to have seen you there. for I have many things to tell you guess you got good news from Bristol in your last letter.

Did he say any thing about Country Cousins?

Miss Inez you said the Dr. had gone and the fever had run very low, and that you had a rapid [time?]. But I dont [sic] reckon you will do all the Drs. that way, will you? As long as you can comply with their requests and desires. but of course I will say Miss Inez, if I keep company with a young lady, it is my disposition and grit to be first when I'm about or not at all. Although when I'm not there, they are at liberty to go with who [sic] they please, for I dont go with any body but what would please to go with the best if I know it.

And I would ask the same in return.

But pardon, and believe me Miss Inez. There is no one I care to go with except you. Miss Inez please dont think I'm trying to flatter you for you know it's not my disposition.

I just merely write as I feel, for I certainly abhor such stuff as you might call it.

And on the other hand I feel that I'm writing to a young lady. That's far above the like.



Miss Inez I put confidence in any thing you would tell me. And I try to live in a way that would cause other people to believe and trust me. Miss Inez you have seen that my regards for you has been greater than I could conceal. Also, the attention shown you (by me) was more than ordinarily politeness.

Of course Miss Inez we are but School children as yet, but I write you this so you may understand me.

I would like so much to see you and have a long talk with you I enjoyed my self so well at your home although I was a little ashamed for staying so long, but I enjoyed my self so well. And the kindness shown me by you and the family, is certainly appreciated by me.

So kind words and a pleasant voice, are things easy to give. Then we should be liberal with them, for sometimes they spring up a flower, that ever appears to us blooming.

As I have already got off the subject, I'll try to give you the latest. I heard from Mrs. Ketron yesterday. She had many things to tell me. had a lot to say about the telephone business guess Prof. told her about us talking, for I told him about it. She said she advised you to put a phone in your room. Also, I would have business over at Dr. [Howes?] right after and she said you was [sic] going to the convention and advised me to be careful and not have a collisions with Mr. Joe.

She is certainly a tease, isnt [sic] she? Well, I had better bring my remarks to a close. I'm sure I've already worried your patience, so hoping to hear from you right soon. I am as ever your true friend.

Walter

[0798_02]

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.

June 20 1898

Miss Inez Martin,
Free Hill, Tenn.

My Dearest Friend

If you will pardon my long delay and short letter. I will try to interest you the best I can for a little while. Well, I have been hustling around a right smart for the last two wks.

I've devoted a great deal of my time to the sick My sister Mrs. Dickson has been very low with fever, not expected to live, but is some better now.



Well Miss Inez, I heard of you being at Ford Town hope you had a nice time. I would love to of been there, but my sister being so bad I could not come. Miss Inez it seems a year since I saw you. I would like so much to hear you laugh it would remind me so much of old R. S. I made a business trip to Slaughter Tenn. last week.

Found Larry & Orvil in the corn field. Larry has a bicycle and I think rides a right smart. I have one but dont [sic] ride much for I've had so much to do havent [sic] had time. Have you learned to play Guitar?

When did you hear from Mrs. Ketron and did she say any thing about me?

What has become of that lady that was with us at Cedar Creek? Tell her I am up on that music.

Have you had your fishing party?

Well Miss Inez, as I'm so pushed for time I will again ask you to pardon my short letter and write a long letter to Mr. Mason.

I am as ever your sincere friend

J. W. Birdwell

[0798_03]

Edens Ridge, Tenn.

Aug. 18, 1898

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill Tenn.

Dear Miss Inez:

You may think me a long time answering your letter. And you know I used to be accused of being somewhat sensative [sic] well I dont [sic] know what about it, but from what I've heard I hardly know whether or not you want to hear from me.

Miss Inez please let me ask you a few questions, not that I'm mad though but I just want to ask you kindly. Did you ever tell any body that you maybe thought something of the young men to whom you had been paying your respect too [sic] but in a way that you would be degrading your self to pay too much respect to



them?

But it is not the reason I have not written to you sooner. We have had a severe spell of fever this summer and I have been waiting on the sick so I have'nt [sic] had time to write letters or any thing else.

My brotherinlaw [sic] Mr. Dixon died last week from fever and I've been over there for some time.

Miss Inez, if you are not mad at me I would be glad to come up, so you write me soon and let me know. For I've many things to tell you you just write me when to come and I'll tell you all about what I've heard. Miss Inez, you are aware of the fact that I'm a very poor correspondant [sic] but I always can talk talk [sic] enough though Miss Inez, I have been some what backward in talking to you. That is in telling to you what I would like to, but I've several things to tell you now.

Guess you had a fine time in N. C. Also, found you a fellow out there. I saw Mrs. & Prof. Ketron yesterday, and they want all of us in school this year guess I will start in two weeks. Are you going? Well I'll close for its [sic] dinner and there are some of our friends here and they are talking so loud they bother me (you know how it is when old people get together).

Please excuse bad writing and all mistakes

Yours Respectfully

Walter

[0798_04]

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
Sept 27 1898

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill, Tenn.

I've been due you a letter for quite a while, doubtless you think me a time in writing, but I've been in the sick room ever since I came from your house except I went to Johnson City week before last.

I would like to have stopped at your house a while but did not have time. I was in a hurrah [sic] to get back for my brother Richard was right bad with Typhoid fever. He is improving now and will soon be out again. It seems that we have a time with the fever. I believe it would be best for us to get out some where and change water and probably it would stop because there may be some local cause some where here and if we would leave 2 or 3 yrs. it would be better for us. Dont [sic] you think so?



Well, I guess you are looking forward for a good time at Johnson City Fair Oh, I do want to go so bad, and its [sic] very doubtful whether I can or not. Mabe [sic] I can go the last day.

I have a right smart of kinsfolk there. They wanted me to come If I am there I hope to see you then.

Well Miss Inez maybe you would like to know something about my trip from your home to R. S. I certainly had a fine time. I saw the sharp topped [sic] house. Also, the gray mule. Then I felt that I was on the right way I arrived there about 8 oclock [sic] and fooled them completely. Will tell you when I see you.

Miss Inez, are you going to be at Ford Town on the 3rd Saturday in next month? if so, would like very much to be with you that day. If possible for me to get there. I wish we could take in the Soup eating also.

I heard from Mrs. Ketron last week. They are very anxious for me to enter School. dont [sic] know first where I can start where does your your [sic] school commence? dont whip too much. Has Miss Bessie got better? Does she aim to go at Cedar C. again, pardon my long delay and badly composed letter. write soon to your best friend

(David) Walter

[0798_05]

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
Nov. 2, 1898

Miss Inez Martin,
Free Hill, Tenn.

This quiet night as I have got my mind kinder settled down upon business to some extent, I find that I am due you a letter. Since I heard from you Death has visited our family and has taken away my darling sister (Mrs. Dickson) the dear mother of two little orphan children. Just a little over 2 mos. ago her husband died just one year ago to the day of my sisters [sic] death, my mother died. So you see I have not been in a writing way.

Miss Inez, these afflictions are some what hard to bear, but when we are alright and ready to go, it is easier [sic] to give them up. I am glad that so many of us saw the necessity [sic] of being ready and have moved in that direction. it only binds us closer when we have these dear loved ones gone before.

Well I am through with my little sermon.



Miss Inez, I hope you will pardon my long delay I am almost ashamed because you are so punctual in your writing. Did you go to Ford Town? Write me all about it and who those four young men were you was [sic] going to talk too [sic]. I wish I could have made the fifth one.

Dont [sic] you and that young man (Prof __) get off and not let us know ha ha Well Miss Inez, I think I will start to school real soon now. guess Prof. thinks I am not coming but I've got my corn all in and will soon have my wheat sowed then I will be ready for School. How are you getting along with your school fine I suppose. I do imagine how you boss those little fellows. before I worry your patience with my[scatter?] letter I will bring it to a close hoping to hear from you real soon. I am your true friend

Walter

[0798_06]

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
Nov. 29. 1898.

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill, Tenn.

My Dear Inez,

Your very dear letter rec'd 17, which was a source of happiness to me it is always a pleasure to see them coming. They seem to cary [sic] with them joy, and a host of good thoughts, which adorn the daily life of the writer.

Miss Inez, you asked me to call you just Inez I shall by your request. Though it dosnt [sic] seem like addressing you right just to call you that. When you wrote me last you said you had stolen away for a purpose which was a source of pleasure to you. Do you really mean that? I hope you do.

Are [sic] there any body else that you know, which gives you more pleasure? Inez, be frank. You know any body will kinder [sic] exaggerate [sic] a little especially in expressing them selves in regard to their love affairs, if you will pardon the explanation. I except [sic] a part for my self. Though there has not been much love in our letters, you know I expressed my self in regard to love, about that being the first thing with some. They dont [sic] wait long enough to know. My short experience teaches me, that we should thoroughly investigate before we are totally carried away. Just let me say here I cant [sic] give you a correct statement. I'll go to school a few more years then I can tell you more about it probably. But will say, I have met several ladies, in my time, but have never saw one yet that I cared as much for and would trust as far as you.



Miss Inez, you have gained an influence over me, that no one has ever gained. And I hope that influence will never be shaken. Inez, allow me to ask you some questions. I think you have had time that you could answer them. Do you care any thing for me more than just a school friend? Is there any one else you care for more than my self?

I think you have known me long enough and known my disposition well enough to tell me any thing. Well I will leave that subject at present.

You seem to be having lots of weddings in your country. Who next? I know of the gentleman with whom you ate breakfast. Tell Miss Sallie D. not to marry while she is in Washington, as us Sull. [Sullivan] people are terable [terrible] to get struck on them Washington Co., people What time did you get home from R. S.? I left there at sun down and came home. Did you get cold? Wasn't the association a success.

Did Mr. Joe want to take you home that night? I thought of what you said when we went to Pleasant Valley. I believe thats [sic] the name Does Mr. Joe know we are writing?

Are you going to have any thing to do in our county soon? I hope you will and and [sic] let me know. I would like to visit your Co. again soon. Well I supposed you are tired reading my badly composed letter. I will try to do better next time.

Write a long letter real soon, your truest-friend

(David) to Susa

[0798_07]

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
Jan. 2, 1899

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill, Tenn.

Dear Miss Inez,

As I told you over the Phone I would be at your house Sun. and never came, I feel that I'm due you an apology, though I think my excuse is a good one.

I went over to Dr. Clark yesterday morning and they said I should not leave so I stayed untill [sic] this morning. Guess you was [sic] not very badly disappointed though. I certainly would like to see you, for I have many things to tell but am looking forward to this association. I'm going to enter school. Mon 9.



Will answer your letter after I start.

Yours ect. [etc?]

J Walter (Mason)

[0798_08]

Pactobus, Tenn.
Mch 1 1899

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill, Tenn.

Dear Inez,

Your letter recd. some time ago, and it seems that our correspondance [sic] has grown cold to some extent. Whose falt [sic] is it? You neglected answering my letters two diff. [different] times for a month before I did yours.

No, no, I am mistaken only once. I negl [neglected] the last time but had a good excuse in a meeting as you reminded again, you would never give me any satisfaction about things or not as much as you should if you did really care anything for me.

Miss Inez, you know I've expressed my self in regard to my feelings, and the same feeling is still existing yet.

In reply would hear of you getting four [covered?] envelopes else-where.

Well, I certainly appreciated do appreciate your letters. because they are real and remind me of days gone bye. Miss Inez, is it because you have gone back home and cant [sic] see me so often that you have become a little negligent? I will leave this for you to consider.

Well, I am in school, having a nice time. Progressing nicely. but oh, its [sic] not last year. Just about to have a tear up about their closing ex---. They got David Mason mad this year. Wish I could see S--- now, would tell you.

It was suggested that we should have a contest for [medal?] at close. opposition was taken by one who always is on that side, she told some of the boys it was too much a one sided affair etc. got them out of the



notion. please dont [sic] mention. Yes, and now the one is in for it. Dont mention, dont mention, or you will have to come down and plead the case. As you say, "the change ought not be so easily brought about."

Also, I give you a special invite to our close not that its [sic] so grand. but I want to have an all day chat with you. it will take all day to tell you what I want to. I hope you wont become offended at any thing I have said I just shot off hand.

Hope you have had a nice time this winter and you may not get sick and loose [sic] what you have so faithfully earned. I think if you use Barker's Liniment you will come out all O. K. ha ha I send you 12 good fiddle pieces in this letter. Just imagine the past. Yes I love good music and pretty girls too. As ever D. Mason

over

Say I think we ought to write more often.

Write me real soon.

[0798_09]

Envelope dated JUN 15 1899
Pactolus, TENN

Pactolus [P.O.]
Sullivan Co. Tenn
June 13th 1899

Miss Inez:

I am instructed by our Board of Directors to inform you that the meeting of said Board, at which the Teachers for the Seminary during the approaching, or insuring year, will be employed, will occur on Saturday the 24th inst [instant] at 2 o'clock P.M.

A large majority of the patrons of the School are anxious that you shall be elected as 1st assistant teacher. The manifested performance for you is very flattering to your recognized ability as a teacher. Your popularity amongst our people is something of which you may well feel proud, as it gives evidence of great worth and merit.

Could you be present at that time?



By Order of the Board

H. B. Owens
Secretary

[0798_10]

Envelope dated JUN 24 1899
EDENS RIDGE TENN

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
June 22, 1899

Miss Inez Martin
Fountain City, Tenn.

Dear Miss Inez: -

If I thought you would appreciate this letter, or even take time to read it, I might write you a very long letter. I know I am due you an apology; or would you except [sic] one from me? There is this about it, do we know who to listen to? No, No.

Miss Inez, did you know there was [sic] some people in the world that didn't want us to correspond? I couldn't begin to tell you would I ever try. But I will say while at school, I heard things that I know is [sic] not true. It was told by one young man over there, that you went square back on me, etc. I was perfectly disgusted to think people would be so deeply interested in our business.

I just thought you didn't want to hear from me, but still, that's not all, I did wrong in not writing you about it. Miss Inez, just let me say, i hardly feel worthy of so good, so noble and so true a girl as you are as a special friend. This is not flattery. I feel, and mean every word I say. And I would ask you, will you be as a friend Still? Will you not hate me? Though I will not ask you to write to me any longer, for fear it would be worrisome to you. But may I feel as a welcome friend when we may meet.

May God help you not be mad at me, believe every word I have written, and that I still remain as true a friend as ever to you. Please write me a letter real soon and tell me everything I guess you have heard things as well as myself.

May God bless you in all your work. I am as everything
Walter (D.M.) to Susa



P. S. Miss Inez, please answer this next week if possible. It would trouble me so much to think you are mad at me, and wont [sic] forgive me. Don't do as I have.

With great success to you. Goodbye

David Mason

Again, I could write more, but I fear you wont [sic] appreciate this.

[0798_11]

Envelope dated JUL 12 1899
EDENSRIDGE TENN

Eden's Ridge, Tenn.
July 1899

Miss Inez Martin
Free Hill, Tenn.

Dear Miss Inez: -

If it is not asking too much of you, and it would not be too worrisome to you, I would like to call at your home for the purpose of having a long talk with you in regard to our affairs which has [sic] been so interesting to some few people. If would like for me to come, any time will suit me except 5th Sunday in this month.

I couldn't interest you with a letter just now, but I hope to see you real soon as I have some things to tell you. I can come up and back the same day. Hoping to see you soon, I remain

Your friend
Walter J. Birdwell

Nay verily - not Walter & ----

[0798_12]



Stationery "The Middlesborough"
W. W. Howe Proprietor
Middlesborough, Kentucky
2-21-1902

Miss Inez M. Martin
Jonesboro Tenn

My dearest Inez,

How happy I must be, have gotten to dear sweet letters from you in the past week. You are a dear and good girl. Yes, really dearer than I deserve.

Well had I the opportunity [sic] I would write too.

Then my dearest one has turned down such good chances for her poor lovely "traveling boy" who is absent and far off. Inez, you are dearer than I could ask. I will not say that I deserve for if any needs a dear one to love them I do.

I have fought through trials and tribulations to attain what I have now.

Some times I feel that I am more than I deserve though I guess I am not.

Dearest I am so proud of you. I love to repeat it, it's so sweet to know there is a girl with beautiful brown hair [sic] and blue eyes and that possesses every trait of character a true Christian lady could possess could love me. Inez I love you in return. You are dear to me.

Am so glad you are getting so long with your School and that you have gained the confidence of your patrons. Hope you may ever be successful in all your undertakings.

Please tell me what Prof. K. has to say about Mrs. K's death. don't see why they never answered my letter. Probably they never got it.

I am really glad you like and sympathize with the boys on the road. They deserve sympathy much more than they get.

Dearest, you are under the impression that Mr. Johnson died. No he didn't, he finally recovered after so long. he was taken so sudden and lingered so long on the verge of death, and am glad to say, he recovered.

I was there yesterday, can work the town in less than a day then I usually spend the balance of the afternoon in the kitchen.



I spent about three hours in the kitchen yester-day. I told them about you long ago and they never fail to ask about you.

They wanted to know when I was going to marry. I told them real soon.

Dearest they have put a type-writer on my table making off the bill of fare, so will finish later.

Hellow [sic] dearest. It's now most train time and the boys have persuaded me to go with them to Pineville so will write you again this week.

God bless you dearest remember me often

As ever yours

Walter