

## Futch Family Civil War Letters

### General Overview

Letters from John Futch, Co. K, 3<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina Troops, to his wife Martha Ramsey Futch and a letter from Catherine Ramsey to Futch, her son-in-law. John Futch enlisted February 1, 1862 in New Hanover County and was reported absent without leave from August 11-31, 1863. He was shot for desertion on September 5, 1863. John and Martha Futch were married February 11, 1862 in New Hanover County where they lived with their families in the Holly Shelter area.

Note: The teacher may want to withhold the information about Futch's desertion and shooting until late in the lesson.

### Lesson Objective

Students will be able to

- Discuss physical problems on the home front caused by the Civil War.
- Discuss emotional issues between separated families.
- Discuss the difference in reading about the home front in a textbook and reading about it in original letters.
- Compare prices of items before and during the Civil War with today's prices.

### Preparation

Students should read some of the letters.

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**Activities**

Students should read the letters. The following questions should provoke discussion.

1. What do you learn about Mrs. Ramsey from her letter?
2. What do you learn about John Futch from Mrs. Ramsey's letter? From his letter?
3. What do we learn about the home front during the Civil War?
4. How did letters get "mailed" during the war?
5. How do the lack of punctuation and misspellings affect your ability to read and understand the letters?
6. What do you think happened to John Futch during the war?
7. How can you find out?
8. Where is Holly Shelter?

**Enrichment and Extension**

1. Discuss similarities and contrasts between how military families deal with their problems during the Iraqi War and how they dealt with their problems during the Civil War.
2. Investigate the movements of John Futch's regiment (3<sup>rd</sup> NCT). In what battles did they fight? Are statistics available about desertions?
3. Students can verify the prices quoted by Mrs. Ramsey by searching period newspapers. The teacher may want to have them search 1850s newspapers as well.

**Sources**

PC 507 Futch Letters at the State Archives of North Carolina  
Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served during the Civil War, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh).