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From the collections of the Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont.

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List of Known Personalities.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Cummings, Executive Officer (second in command) of the 16th Vermont Infantry Regiment and author of these letters.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cummings, Wife of Charles Cummings and receiver of letters.

Colonel Asa and Mary Blunt, the Commander of the 12th Vermont Infantry and his wife would wintered with the regiment from November 1862 to March 1863.

Lieutenant Jabez D. Bridgman, Adjutant (Regimental Personnel Officer) of the 16th Vermont from October 1862 to January 1862 from Rockingham, Vermont.

Major General Silas Casey, Charles Cumming's first divisional commander.

Lieutenant William Danforth, The Second of Lieutenant of K Company 16th and a civil Engineer by trade.

General Davis, Then Quartermaster General of Vermont.

Colonel D'Utassy, Commander of the 39th New York Infantry and brigade commander in Casey's Division.

Lieutenant Colonel Roswell and Mrs. Mary Farnham Second in command of the 12th Vermont and his wife who wintered with him from December 1862 to April 1863.

F.F.V. – First Families of Virginia.

Major Halsey, Second Brigade's Paymaster.

Major General Samuel P. Heintzman, Commander of the Defenses of Washington.

Lieutenant James Henry, Quartermaster of the 16th Vermont from Royalton, Vermont.

Frederick Holbrook, Then governor of Vermont

Colonel and Mrs. William Nichols, Commander of the 14th Vermont Infantry Regiment, and his wife who wintered with him in Virginia.

Major General Fitz John Porter, Commander of the 5th corps of the Army of the Potomac in the spring of 1862. He was court martialed and cashiered for not following order and assisting General Pope in the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Colonel Francis V. Randall, Commander of the 13th Vermont Infantry Regiment.

Major William Rounds, Third in command of the 16th Vermont Infantry from Chester, Vermont.

Major General Franz Sigel, Then Commander of the Army of the Potomac's 11th Corps.

Commissary Sergeant Charles Simonds, Chief Non-commissioned officer in the regimental commissary (rations) department and later promoted to Second Lieutenant of Company I, 16th Vermont. He resigned on May 4th, 1863.

Major General Henry Slocum, Commander of the Army of the Potomac's 12th Corps.

Brigadier General George J. Stannard, Second commander of the Second Vermont Brigade.

Colonel Edwin H. Stoughton, First commander of the Second Vermont Brigade.

General Peter T. Washburn, Then Adjutant General of Vermont.

Adjutant and Mrs. Vaughan, Adjutant of the 12th Vermont and his wife who wintered with him, Mrs. Blunt, and Mrs. Farnham in Virginia

Colonel Wheelock Veazey, Lieutenant Colonel Cumming's Regimental Commander.

Alonzo Webster, Chaplain of the 16th Vermont Infantry Regiment.

Private Abner G. White, Company B, 16th Vermont.

Colonel Percy Wyndham, A professional British Officer and Cavalry Brigade Commander of Casey's Division located at Fairfax Courthouse in the spring of 1863.

No. 1

East Capital Hill Washington, DC
Oct 28th, 62

Dear Wife,

Here we are on a little plateau a few feet elevated about an extension but slightly broken plain of table land with a view of miles in every direction. We are in plain sight of the capital and its magnificent dome rises about one mile west of us, while they Asylum is the same distance east of us with the Navy Yard and the Potomac just below beyond. It is a magnificent spot. Today our regiment is excused from drill, and under the direction of Lt. Danforth of Co K, a civil engineer of eminence our camp is being laid out with great skills. My tent is pitched and after writing this letter I shall get some boards and make a floor stable.

Our journey hither was slow and tedious. We arrive at New Haven about 10 o'clock Friday evening and shifted from the cars to the Streamer Continental. Starting from NH, we arrived in New York City at 8 o'clock Saturday morning. The troops were fed on the wharf, the field and staff at the Astor House, while I took breakfast with Isaac at a restaurant nearby. We were then transferred to two small steamers and were transported down the bay by Staten Island to Port Monmouth, NJ, 20 miles from the city. Our intentions of going to Philadelphia by the Camden and Amboy RR was changed as two regiment, one from NY the other from Maine were on that road. The ride down the bay was remarkably fair, the water being smooth as a pond and the weather pleasant. On board the officers were gratuitously furnished with a lunch of cold ham, bread, butter, cheese and apple pie. At Port M, where we arrived at noon. We remained on board the vessels, not a house being in sight (nothing but Neversink Hills in view aside from the railroad which ends in the water/ until after twelve at night, when in the darkness we transferred our men, baggage, and horses to the cars, a dark and irksome job. The occasion of this delay was an accident on the road that day. We had, however, excellent cars and the RR agent did every thing to make us comfortable, I had three hours sleep while riding. Sunday morning about 8 we arrived at Camden, disembarked and crossed over to Philadelphia in ferry boats. A splendid breakfast we in waiting furnished by the Soldier's Aid Association and we were served with great adoration and kindness. In the mud and a drenching rain, this meal and these attentions were doubly pleasant and marked a green spot in the memory of every man. Every person we met in the Quaker City was kind and cordial. Men bowed respectful, women waved their handkerchiefs and Union flags and small welcome, and even the little boys and girls came up to us in (damaged text) and gave us their hands (damaged text) "good bye" and "god bless you." In the midst of a pouring rain we marched two miles to the depot, where in the street we loaded into freight cars with many hole cut in them and boards knocked off for ventilation. They were the best obtainable. A rapid ride over the Phil, Wilmington, and Baltimore Rail Road, 95 miles, brought us to Baltimore in six hours, or at 6 1/2 o'clock Sunday evening. All the way to Havre De Grace - the dividing line between Delaware and Maryland we were enthusiastically cheered, every house sent forth its greetings, but in Maryland Union flags and cheers were infrequent.

At Baltimore we changed cars in darkness and rain, about e - (damaged text) several to that of High W on a raining night spent after a march of over a (damaged text) We arrived at the Depot of the Baltimore and Washington Railroad, near (damaged text) we were furnished with a

good supper, which is never provided partly at the expense of the general government partly by the city, partly by the state and the balance by private contributions. Giving back to the depot, a large open shed of huge dimensions, no cars were there to take us along. It was now 9 o'clock and when we could move was a matter of uncertainty. So following the example of the men I laid my rubber blanket on the wet, muddy - floor, and with a stick of wood for a pillow and my shawl for a covering over my saturated great coat. I laid down and in five minutes was sound asleep. At 12, or midnight, the cars came in and we loaded in the mud and darkness into some dilapidated cattle car for Washington. It rained all night and the water ran in through every crack and between every two boards of the roof, until all with in were wet nearly through except as partially protected by thin rubber blankets. The officers were stowed into a little beaky car, where then were but two thirds as many seats as persons. But their was but very little complaint. Everyone was cheerful, and songs, we have a large number of five singers in our regiment - and stories kept us in good humor during our *eight hours* ride from Baltimore to Washington, a distance of *only forty miles*. Our movement was slow without parallel in my expensive. The engine was poor and we were of time so we had to wait for all regular trains. But government could do no better for us. During Pope's retreat the Baltimore and Ohio R. R., which runs this road lost over 600 cars in VA, by the rebels, crippling its rolling stock. It rained, oh how it rained, all the way until we arrived within two miles of Washington, when it cleared off.

We landed about 9 o'clock Monday morning, got our breakfast in detachments at a soldier's saloon, supplied by government with goat rations. The colonel got his orders and at 4 p.m., we were marched to our present camp. We got ready the best we could for the night and today not a man but what reports for duty. I got cold sleeping on the ground, but with that exception never felt better or heath in my life. The 12th Vermont Regiment, breakfasted us all, officers feeding officers, and companies feeding corresponding companies by letter, A taking A, etc. Was it not kind? Last night Col. Randall invited me to supper but I was too busy to go. Other of the field and staff did go. He also took care of my horse. Today we have established our officers mess. Colonel, Lt. Colonel, Major, Adjutant, and Quartermaster

I have not been to the capital. We passed it in marching to camp, nor to a hotel since we started. I am not giving to what up my appetite by a splendid meal only to make my usual made of life seems worse. By the way sitting in my tent at this writing I can see the dome of the capital less than a mile off. We are in Gen. Casey's Division and all the Vermont Regiments are within half a mile of us. We shall be at least temporarily brigaded, Col. Blunt the senior Colonel Commanding, in a few days we shall probably have some General in command.

All about as are encampments. It must be that 20,000 troops are within two miles of us. The 11th is four or five miles off. A battery of artillery is now riding by my tent not two rods off. There is now and then a small house in sight on these fence-less fields of 10,000 acres but the whole is one vast camping ground. The 2nd Vermont has occupied this very spot.

I am very well and think I shall be. I could not have selected a more desirable spot had the choice been left to me. It looks as if we might remain here a few weeks, but in war nothing is certain. Give my love to mother and kiss the little darlings for me. I think of you all I need not say how frequently.

No 2

East Capitol Hill
Oct 29th, 1862 - 8 p.m

Dear Wife,

The 2nd Vermont Brigade, composed of the 5 new regiments are to move tomorrow - Wednesday morning, in accordance with orders just received to Camp Seward in Virginia, three miles from the Alexandria side of Long Bridge. Today we were assured by an officer on Gen. Casey's staff that we were likely to remain here at least two months. Accordingly we purchased stoves for our tents, and ordered lumber for the floors. My stove is not yet up, it is a little sheet iron concern oval in shape with two holes on top six inches in diameter with covers. The funnel runs out through a rip made in the tent. My tent is just like the one that we had in the 11th Regiment.

Today I rode down Pennsylvania Avenue past Willards Hotel and Presidential Mansion to corner of G and 22nd street to the office of Capt. Robinson who furnished forage for officers horses. I went to headquarters to learn how to untie the particular red tape used in this connection.

The tenement occupied by "Old Abe" is respectable in appearance, and I should judge decently comfortable. It is large enough for his family, I presume, but not so large as I had supposed. I did not call as I am the last comer and ordinary etiquette would forbid my making the first visit, in as much as he could have known of my arrival by consulting the War Department. Nearly opposite the War Office, I was stopped by a patrol and asked for my pass. I cheerily told him that I had just come to town and was on my way on official business to Secretary Stanton. "All right" said the credulous officer and I passed on. Ordinarily it requires paper from the Colonel, Brigadier, Maj. Generals to visit the city. But I have had as yet no curiosity to see any of the sights.

Our mess is composed of the Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Adjutant, Quartermaster. We left the chaplain to dine with the surgeons, and non-commissioned staff have a mess by themselves. Today we had sweet and Irish potatoes, pork, sausages, beef steak for dinner with pickles, cheese, and coffee. For tea, bread, butter, cheese, tea, and pies and peaches. When we get away from Washington, we shall not fair so well.

The nights are foggy and cold, worse than at Brattleboro I think. I caught a magnificent cold Monday night, but it is all in my head and nose. My appetite is good and I sleep well.

Tell Mrs. White that Abner is well. I have just spoken to him. He is on guard and as cheerful as a cricket. Albert S. White of Co B., was left at Philadelphia in the Hospital of the Ladies Relief Association sick, threatened with a fever.

A large number of the men have taken cold sleeping on this ground. They are not so sick as to be unfit for duty, only coughing and blowing their noses.

Please direct you letters to "16th Vermont Regiment, 2nd Vt. Brigade, Camp Seward near Washington, DC."

Give my love to mother, kiss the babies and accept my assurance of loving remembrance.

Your affectionate Husband - Charles

- P. S. I send that party this time. C.

No. 3

Camp Seward, near Washington
Nov 2nd, 1862

My Dear Wife -

Your letter of the 31st (No. 1) was received in camp this Sunday afternoon, and I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gave me. I can well appreciate your feelings in relation to our separation in thinking of my own, but you judge wisely. I think, when you conclude it not best to dwell upon the subject. I purposely omitted reference to the subject in my letter. We will accept as a matter of stern necessity and make the best of it!

Mrs. Harris was paid or rather the money was left with Joseph Clark who hold the note, \$40, on account of this years interest on the house. She wanted some money badly and as I had intimated in the spring that perhaps I would pay half yearly asked me for it at the same time acknowledging she had no claim upon me for it. She is a little fussy. If we do not move soon into I will send you \$10 to pay John and Mrs. W's milk bill, Frost and Goodhue's advertising bill to date will probably cover all I owe them. I told Goodhue so. You will want dry wood for the furnace. There is some splendid furnace wood under the shed, but if you can get along without it perhaps it had better be saved for the stove or fireplace.

Our regiment is encamped about three miles from Washington southwesterly and on a large farm run to waste. Who is its proprietor is more than I know. There are no buildings on it, and the cellar hole was field up last year by troops encamped in this vicinity. It is not more than five rods back of my tent, and over it are growing tomato vines on which were some small, ripe tomatoes. The camp is about half a mile from the pike leading from Washington to Fairfax Court House. Four large forts are in plain sight and one of them. Fort Albany is less than a mile distant. Our camp fronts south, and in that direction about 5 miles distant tower against the sky the imposing building known as Fairfax Seminary.

We came here Thursday morning. Our whole brigade marched through Pennsylvania avenue nearly to the President' house, then turned and crossed Long Bridge. The sight of the avenue was splendid, so said O. H. Platt, now paymaster, and L. E. Chittenden Register of the Treasury both of whom you know. We all encamped nearby when wood, trees felled last year to give range to the guns of the forts and water is plenty. The ground is quite dry and rolling, the best the Colonel says he ever saw in Virginia, and the delightful weather of the past few days makes it comfortable. The days are hotter and the night damp, more chilly than in Vermont. One takes cold easily by evening exposure here. Thursday we laid out our camp and pitched our tents in season for supper at 8 o'clock in the evening, having no dinner except such as we carried in our haversacks.

Friday we policed the camp, got to gather forage and provisions, etc. That evening we received an order for a division review of about 16 regiments under Gen. Silas Casey in whose division we are, at 11 o'clock the next morning on the plain near Fort Albany about a mile distant. Friday morning came, the line and then the column was formed and the troops just put in motion, when an orderly came riding up with orders for us to strike our tents and in an hour be ready to march to - creek near Alexandria, three or four miles distant. Accordingly everything was packed in half an hour, and my horse stood in front of my quarters saddled and bridled with a great coat on in front and blankets behind. Then the order was countermanded, as to the 14th, 15th, and 16th regiments for reason that before we moved our miserable guns are to be

exchanged for something better. I am sorry to say that we cannot get the Springfield musket. We must take up Enfield, Austrian, or some old smooth bores, but anything will be better than the seven different styles, all poor that we now have. Our arms will probably be exchanged tomorrow and we shall move in a few days. Rumor hath it that a formidable expedition is fitting out for Texas under Gen. Banks and that the Vermont Brigade is to form a part of it. I do not even guess as to its truth of falsity, but I am ready to go where and when ordered so that I can serve my country.

My health is fine, remarkably good. My appetite excellent and my food relishes well. We have in our mess fresh or salt beef, salt pork, good beans, vice, sweet or Irish potatoes, and some 'fixins'" purchased of the sutler. Friday the boys caught within our guard lines a splendid hare and present it to the officers mess. We live well enough now and I should be well contend with half the variety. I do not thin our board will cast us more than the \$12 per month, if it does as much.

I had a luxury today. I got up at 7 o'clock and took my pail, basin, sponge, and towel and went about 3/4ths of a mile to a fine spring, got a pail of water, and then a few rods off in the middle of a thousand acre lot, with scores around me doing the same thing. I stripped and gave myself a thorough washing. I tell you the water did not feel half as chilly as it does in the chamber. It felt warm and good not a pimple was raised and then the walk back to quarters with my basin, etc, in one hand and twelve quart pail of water in the other gave me a glow that I have felt all day. I never so enjoyed a washing in my life, but then I should never think of doing such a thing at home. After breakfast I inspected the entire regiment, dress, arms, equipment, clothing, tents, kitchens, cooking utensils, etc. It took me there and half hours and I worked smartly.

Gen. Baxter was in camp today. He rode past we while I was inspecting my regiment, so I could only bow to him. Tripp came out with us and has been here most of the time. Several of the Brattleborans in the Vermont Cavalry two miles off have visited us. Capt. Williams, Wheeler's brother of John of the 142nd New York was in camp today. I see hosts of people that I know, but when we get further away we shall see less of friends. I have not paid a visit nor eaten away from my regiment nor shall I do so if I am well except when on official business - at least at present.

Today heavy cannonading in the direction of Centerville and Thoroughfare Gap has been heard almost continuously. There is a fighting in that direction and *smoke*. More than 30,000 troops have moved from the vicinity of Chain Bridge in that direction today. As to results you will get them in the New York papers some that we.

I got a Washington paper almost every morning before 7 o'clock a.m., and a New York paper of the day previous at the same time if I want but I do not get many as I have not time to read newspapers. I bought two and carried them two days before I could look at them. All the papers I want at present is one from Vermont. I have not seen one since I left.

I thank Lizzie for her "letter". Tell her she is papa's darling and that he thinks of her and little Charlie, their mother and grand mother every night when the labors of the day are ended. He sends the little dears a lot of kisses. Give my love to mother and rest assured of the fond remembrance and affection of

Your loving Husband Charles.

No. 4

Headquarters 16th Vermont Regiment
Camp Vermont
Nov 8th, 1862

Dear Wife,

Yours of the 5th postmarked Nov 6 and No 3 was duly received this evening. Your No. 2 was also as duly received. This has been a busy week with me, and now at half past nine I sit down to write you - a pleasing duty.

Monday at 2 p.m., we started from Camp Seward on notice of an hour and a half and left the south corner of Alexandria at the corner of the ten miles square constituting the original District of Columbia for our present camp below "Hunting Creek" about a mile west of the Potomac and about 8 miles northwest of Mt. Vernon. I think you can find about our locality on the map. We marched a somewhat circuitous route about 10 miles, passing Fairfax Seminary, naturally one of the loveliest places I ever saw, now despoiled of much of its beauty by a year and a half occupation by our troops. The buildings stand on an eminence that overlooks a panorama from N. W. To S. E. Fifteen to twenty miles distant including Washington, Alexandria, Georgetown, and numerous small villages and the Potomac with its fleet of vessels and streamers. The buildings are in good order and consist of a large central edifice, finer than any building in Vermont except the Capitol, three large halls for dormitories or boarding houses, a chapel twice as fine as the Episcopal chapel at Brattleboro and other out buildings. The cupola of the main building is 150 to 175 feet high and command a magnificent prospect, and is itself a landmark for a circle 30 to 40 miles in diameter. These buildings are in a fine grove of oaks covering 50 or more acres, in which is a large Episcopal church, the old Fairfax mansion and etc. The Fairfax Estate at one time contained, I believe from 10,000 to 20,000 acres and the Fairfax family was one of the "F.F. V's" and the special friends of Washington. The seminary is now used as a hospital for our sick soldiers. Trees here been cut down, the slopes masked by encampments and two graveyards containing the dead bodies of more than 300 of our men speak in strong but silent language of the unwritten horrors of this accused rebellion. On the estate an encamped at least 15,000 troops and perhaps many more.

We, in common with the other Vermont Regiments, are encamped on ground that was occupied last winter by Union soldiers, on Mr. Somebody's farm, and not 40 rods from his dwelling, which is guarded by sentinels to protect his family and preserve our own men from license. A white flag is hoisted in his yard to indicate this protection. His barns are used for stabling horses, his farm is despoiled, and he is prevented from communicating to any considerable extent with the outer world, and yet some of our officers think and say that even his family, women and children should receive no protection because their head is at heart a rebel. The Colonel and I fight namely such inhuman notion. We cannot see why his larder should be robbed and defenseless females, children, and "niggers" be left to starve or beg on account of the notions the head of the family may entertain so long as he deports himself quietly.

Thursday I was field Officer of the Day and as such had charge of the pickets. These consist of four companies and are stationed from 2 to 3 miles from camp, the chain extending from the Potomac irregularly 8 miles westward. I visited all the posts twice in the daytime and once in the night. In the 24 hours I rode from 40 to 50 miles horseback, though forest, ravines,

pastures, and bush and brier. The night visit was pleasant in the extreme. The major accompanied me at his own request to learn how to discharge the duties. My only draw back was a persistent diarrhea that caused me frequently to dismount. The night was light as the moon was near her full and the excitement of enjoying the pickets of riding up hill and down, jumping fences, ravines, ditches and dogging boughs, etc., I cannot portray. The night ride was made as rapidly as possible consistent with my duty and yet it took me from 8 1/2 p.m. to 3 a.m., it was cold but I did not suffer much where I touched the saddle looked the next morning like half done mutton and was about as tender. But I am quite well now and free from lameness and almost from soreness. I am rapidly learning to ride, can gallop a mile in a little more than two minutes, and feel quite secure in my seat. My horse is a jewel. He can camp out with no other stable than a fallen tree top, although for a few days he has had a log stable, is kind and gentle as a kitten, eats everything he can get, even dead grass, leaves, is the pet of the camp. He is altogether the handsomest horse in the regiment as well as the best. Under the curb bit and spur he "gets up" magnificently. I can sell or swap him any time, but he cant' be bought. He does not know enough about galloping without doing it at a breakneck speed, but he will soon learn.

Yesterday we had a regular Vermont snowstorm. It snowed all day and the wind blew in such fitful, driving gusts that I could not make my store draw, so I was wrapped in my great coat all day. The snow piled in drifts 12 to 18 inches deep. This morning it was frozen stiff, and even the water in my tent pail was frozen over. Tonight the snow is nearly gone, and the melting mood of the article associated with the soft Virginia mud is disagreeable. Then is good enough in the soil to sever knives and forks well. It is all clay, clay, now hard almost as a rock, soon to be soft poachy two or three feet deep. That the soil and it makes a mortar sufficiently plastic and consistent to lay brick with for chimneys. Oh how it sticks to boots, and clothes and then when dry the dust clings also. If all "sacred" thing cling as closely no one need go astray.

When we shall move or when we shall go in a mystery. We have received orders to hut for the winter, but the way the order is not carried out leads me to think that such is not to be our fat. There is a remote prospect that Col. Veazey will be Brigadier General of this brigade in case, we all remain together, in which event I shall be likely to command the regiment. I do not want the place so long as I can serve with Col. V but he and others say that I can do it and do it well. I do not take any stock in such talk, but I feel that in time I can discharge the duties of my present place as well as the best that I have seen. I like the ordinary duties much they are to my taste and accord with my habits of mine.

I eat well, sleep well and am toughing rapidly. My diarrhea of a day or two since was occasioned by taking cold and a consequent stoppage of the bile. By the way, I left at home 2 ounce of opium that I have bought. Will you not get a little paper box at the jewelers seal it in and mail it here. The postage will not be more than 5 or 6 stamps and the article will be invaluable. It is my sheet anchor in such complaints.

As to Dr. Hinnmon's bill I do not want you to pay it. Mr. Brown probably sent him my bill and he returned this. Let it remain. That fifer must look to John Hunt for his pay. H. Was Captain and directed me to get him. I presume Mr. H., will pay him, don't you do it.

I think of you all and particularly of wife and children I need not say how frequently, and the thoughts afford me great pleasure. I would like to drop in and see you all dearly, and yet I am not at all anxious to go home. I feel as if I had a duty to do here and I mean to do it to the best of my ability. If one regiment does nothing to distinguish itself and aid in putting down this rebellion it shall not be my fault. I will do my duty and then my sheets will be clear.

Give my love to mother and a kiss to each of our dear children. Tell them of their paper and say that if he could see them he would hug, kiss and tell them lots of stories. With renewed assurance of my love.

I am fondly *thrio our*

Charles

Remember me to all neighbors and friends

No. 5

Camp Vermont
Nov 16th, 1862

Dear Wife:

Your letter No. 4 was received Wednesday evening, and like all other messages from home was a source of good enjoyment. I am especially gratified in knowing that all the dear ones are well, hale and hearty. I trust that this winter both of the children will get such a start in vigorous, robust health that they will be able to weather the storm of diseases that usually afflict little ones.

The weather here tonight is cold and rough. The wind is in the north east and before morning rain is expected. I have only one tent - most of the field officers in this brigade except those in these regiments - have two tents opening into each other. We are entitled to two each in quarters, but find it difficult to get them. My little stove is today on the front side of the tents the funnel running out of the door as the direction of the wind forbids its "drawing" on the other. Yesterday morning about 4 o'clock I returned from the "Rounds" as Field Officer of the Day, and built up a fire. It burned briskly for a while so I went to bed, but in an hour I awoke nearly suffocated all the smoke coming into the tent. I got up and drowned the fire in a hurry and then turned my stove about as above.

We have commenced drawing timbers - logs and poles - to build our winter huts as per orders from division headquarters. It looks as if we were to stay here all winter, but I hope looks are deceitful. Gen. Stoughton arrives Tuesday and assumes command of our brigade. Capt. John S. Tyler of Co. C 2nd Vermont is to be on his staff as Assistant Adjutant General, and John Wheeler as Aide - de - Camp.-

Col. Veazey remarked that if Stoughton is encamped here all winter will the little lone wanderer on his shoulder the bells, flirts and - in Washington would find constant employment. The "*gallant*" Brigadier has a great reputation in the army as a woman's man. He is probably the handsomest brigadier in the army or at least would be called so by the girls.

Today after inspection which commenced at 9 and lasted until one. The field officers dined by invitation with Commissary Sergeant Charles Simonds. We had roast beef, sweet potatoes onions, boiled rice, maple syrup, butter, cheese, coffee, ale, and bread, salt pepper, and Worcester sauce. There is no danger of starvation. In our mess our board has not been quite \$3.50 per week, we have four servants who eat with us and whose rations go into the mess and our mess chest and other purchases for fixtures, mess chest, cooking stoves, etc, will amount to about 12 cents each. We live well enough although butter is 40 to 42 cent per lbs, milk 10 cent a quart. We can buy sweet potatoes for \$2.50 per barrel.

Friday my sword, sash, and belt arrived. The belt is a common regulation belt, the best for service, the sword and sash are both very nice. The letter from Gen. Davis forwarding them stated that he hoped to furnish me a pair of pistols from a similar source. All favors thankfully received.

My health continues good, except that I have a cold in my head and a slightly sore throat all the time. In using my voice three hours on battalion drill it gets quite husky. I can drill the

battalion in very well for a new hand. I know the drill tolerably well but find it necessary to keep my wits about me to give the commands correctly, promptly and in proper succession. Col. Veazey and the other Colonels all say, as I am informed that I shall make a first rate officer, so I think I am doing as well as can be expected. I write this stuff to you as you will be gratified to believe that I am not making an ass of myself.

Not having moved for a week or more then is not much more of news that would interest you that I think of.

Speaking of furnace wood, there is some under the shed in the yard that give had better use. Then will not be much drawn until sledding farmer do not bring it in on wheels. What is under the shed will prudently used last until nearly Christmas unless it is uncommonly cold.

I saw Herrick the assignee of Hadley and told him concerning the bill for meat and spoke about the arrangements I had made in my own mind of meeting it with certain debts due no and which would soon be available. One from Joseph Clark and one from Bradley's Estate. I shall write him soon.

Give my love to all the household. I should like to drop in for an evening and see you all most dearly, but then I think that I could not return to my duties here with any sort of complacency after so doing, so I take it out in thinking of you all. Kiss our dear little ones for their absent papa who thinks of them daily and hopes they are good children.

Your Loving husband,

Charles.

No 6

Camp Vermont - Fairfax County, VA
Nov 22nd, 1862

Dear Wife,

It is now Saturday evening after 8 o'clock, and I take two hours time in talking to you, albeit it is through a medium much less satisfactory than I could employ were I seated by one cozy fire place, with a baby on each knee. It does no good, however, to wish for a different state of things just now, so I will not dilate upon a scene that my imagination after, very often vividly pictures.

My time is very much occupied in the affairs of my regiment, in drills, discipline, barracks, food, hospital, etc, and all the available balance save writing an occasional letter to the Phoenix, you and a few friends is devoted to the study of tactics. I have been through the "School of the Battalion," a part of the "School of the Soldier," and all "the school of the guides" besides understanding all with portion of the "School of the Company¹." I have this evening just returned from a regular recitation of all the commissioned officers at the Colonel's headquarters at which we closed the first book aforesaid. I design to keep ahead of the major and line officers. After finishing the School of the Company, it is proposed that we review the School of the Battalion. I to hear recitation of the right wing and the major those of the left. I have drilled the battalion two afternoons and made it go tolerably well.

Tomorrow (Sunday morning) I go on picket again as the Field officer of the Day. It is a hard day's work, and then to conclude with the "rounds" after 12 o'clock at night is when it is pitch dark is not the most interesting performance in the world. But I have made up my mind to do all my duties cheerfully and to the best of my ability which will not only give me expectation as an officer, but it makes what would otherwise often to irksome a pleasant task.

We have just had a rain that would credit to an equinoctial and mine about all the time for four days and night, and the night in rained the harderstand the went blew the fiercest my tent stove would not draw at all, so to keep the tent free from smoke I put no fire and meant to too cold which and cheerless. Everything inside as well as out was damp and disagreeable. Didn't I think of a good two whence and almost wish I was in it? Since the rain it has been muddy and oh! such mud. It sticks to everything. To cap all we men all ordered on Thursday to Fort Albany - five miles distant through Alexandria - to be reviewed by Gen. Silas Casey, division commander. The mud was from three to eight inches deep, soft and as adhesive as salve, so that when it was not more than three inches deep it would to stick to boots as to cover up and leave the ground free from it all around when the foot was placed. Well, we marched through this sort of stuff and in the rain all the while to Alexandria about two miles, when we found sidewalks and pavements a very sensible relief. We went nearly a mile beyond Alexandria when a mounted orderly from headquarters meet us and told us that the review was postponed on account of the weather. I wished our march had also been postpone. But military operations have no regard for the weather. If I had been Gen. Casey, I would have had the review if it rained pitchforks.

I am glad that you get along so well with the things at home. I knew you would just as soon as you had had a little experience. You will have a good supply of garden vegetables and

¹ Transcriber's Note: The School of ... are a sections of Casey's Tactics, then the army training manual written by LTC. Cumming's Divisional Commander, Major General Silas Casey.

pork. I think you had better have the rose bushes and etc., taken care of. By the way I have seen some beautiful trees here that I would like to send home if I could get the right size and they would bear our northern climate. First is the arbor vitae (Red Cedar) which grown two - three to six times as large as ours, but the branches are as fine, thick, and compact and well turned in outline as if trained and trimmed. Then some of them are all covered with small, bluish purple berries rather small than blueberries. They are splendid trees and would become a lawn admirably. Then there is the Fox Wood - such as rulers are made of - which grows as large as the largest lilac bushes and has leaves thicker than any tree we have, about the size of myrtle leaves but of a paler green; these leaves remain on all winter and a snow drift would be surpassingly fine. Then there are several beautiful deciduous trees with magnificent great, straight, smooth trunks that set out a forest admirably. The red oak and chestnut are the only trees that I have seen here that grow as they do with us. Laurel is abundant but the wood is different and I suspect the flowers also are. This of the root of this that so many fancy pipes and rings are carved. The flora of this country is vastly different from that of Vermont.

I am right glad to know that the children are so well if they get strong, hearty and grow well they will be better able to weather the troubles of another summer. I trust Charlie will get strength out of his fatness. Tell him and Lizzie that papa would give a great deal to see them, hold them and kiss them; but when he comes home he will make up for lost time. Tell them also that papa sees lots of little "nig Dinahs" down here, some of whom are very good looking.

There is no immediate prospect of my having command of a regiment for Col. Veazey is not likely to be promoted at present. Stoughton is to be our Brigadier General, which suits me as well as Col. Veazey. Stoughton is an excellent tactician and will drill the brigade finely.

I do not know where to look for the 41st Mass. There are so many new regiments near here that it is impossible to find any particular one. Our division and brigade are yet only provisional. When we are definitely assigned, we shall know more of our neighbors. The 2nd New Hampshire is within two or three miles of us I understand. If so I may possibly see something of some of our Cheshire County friends.

If we remain here or are likely to be here long enough to render it advisable for me to get a leave of absence a day I shall go to Washington and get the photographs. I would not give a fig for them on my own account, but as you desire them you shall be gratified if possible, and I shall be pleased there at.

I received the opium in good shape, took one pill of it and was cured thereby with a little dieting of a persistent four days diarrhea and have since been well and smart. Opium is my sheet anchor in such cases. I like your gossiping letters as you call them. They are newsy and exceedingly readable and good. All these little things from home are just what I want to hear. By the way, I heard of Charles Gladding's sudden death.

My horse is doing finely, better than any other one out here. He is getting fat and is as hearty as Charlie. He is the best dispositioned horse I ever saw. His name is "Billy," and he knows when I call him.

Tomorrow on picket, I shall go within 2 miles of Mt. Vernon. Most of our officers have been there but I have no desire to go. Except to gratify you I shall not be absent from the regiment except on business. Kiss the darlings, and imagine you are getting several yourself, from your loving, devoted husband -

Charles

No. 7

Camp Vermont - Fairfax Co. Va
Nov 28th, 1862

Dear Wife,

Your letters all to No. 7 inclusive have been all duly received. In relation to the matter of which Mr. Fessenden spoke you advise him correctly. The advertising was to go to pay my taxes and insurance. I have had such an arrangement with him for several years.

My health is excellent and I suffer less from diarrhea than heretofore, although a ride of 30 to 40 miles a day on picket shakes me up. Now I have to do duty once in three or four days, as there are but two regiment of this brigade in camp. Last Tuesday evening the brigade was called upon for 3 regiments to go to Bull Run at Union Mills about 30 miles from here. They left about 9 o'clock in the evening at an hours' notice and the rain coming down abundantly. It was pitch dark and unpleasant. Had not the 16th Regiment been on picket at that time we should have been one of the regiment to move. Whether we shall soon go, or stay here all winter, whether those gone will come back here or not are matters that we know nothing more about than you do.

There is not much of interest to you here. I can only tell you of myself. I am in my tent yet, but shall next week if we remain put me up a stockaded house 24 feet long by 10 wide and the walls 6 feet high. Logs are split and hewn on the inside for six inches to a foot or more in width. A trench is dug in the ground just the size the building is to be, about 18 inches deep and these palisades are stood up on an end faced in, close together and even at the top. The earth is then trod in and banked up on the outside. It will contain two rooms, a sleeping apartment with a board floor 10 by 9 and an anteroom where I shall smoke, hear recitations of officers, etc, 15 by 10. I have proceed old brick for a chimney and shall have a fire place in each room. The floor will be something like this

The elevation like the enclosed. The floor of the front room and the hearths will be of the "sacred soil" smoothed down while wet and then dried. So you will see that I am making preparation to be comfortable as the circumstance of the case will admit. If you and the babies were here we could get along pretty well indoors but our outdoor conveniences would not be particularly desirable.

Tomorrow I go out on picket again, and as we establish new lines on account of the late heavy rains I shall be out most of the 24 hours. With my great coat and the vigorous exercise of horseback riding I shall not suffer with cold.

Speaking of riding, I ride with great confidence now. I can jump an ordinary fence or a ditch five or six feet wide without any difficulty. You would laugh were you to see me galloping over the county, as the sight would be so novel a one for you to behold.

I was sorry to hear of mother's sickness. At her time of life and the condition of her general health. I fear she may not ever recover her ordinary vigor. If you receive this at Westminster give my love to her, Sarah and the Doctor and when you see her to our other mother also. Tell them all that I do not in the least regret having enlisted. On the other hand I feel daily more assured, if possible, that I am in the strict line of duty.

What do you hear of Israel? He has gone back to Annapolis, but is he exchanged or likely to be and has heavy indication of his further destination, whether with the 21st Mass Regiment or otherwise?

Next time I will endeavor to write you something more interesting if possible, but I have this evening written you a communication for The Phoenix, in which you will find sundry matters touching our troops, so I will not fill much space in their repetition.

I am my dear wife, devotedly yours, - Chas Cummings

PS. No 1

Give my love in the form of a kiss to each of our little darlings and tell them that papa hopes that they are good children - Charles.

PS No 2.

I wish my business signature about without thinking, I have to write my name so many times that is slips off mechanically. - C

PS No 3.

No more postscript to this.

No. 7 (No. 8)

Camp Vermont, Fairfax Country, Va.
Dec 4th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

Your Nos. 6 and 7, and 8 were duly received, both I believe since I have written you. I may have made a mistake in numbering my letters, but I have written once a week all the month of November. The delay in your receiving my letter, of which you speak arises from its not having been forwarded from Brattleboro, I think. I sent it to Alexandria by Quarter Master James Henry, who said he mailed it.

I hope you had a pleasant Thanksgiving. I was sorry to hear of mother's ill health but hope from the time of your last that she is getting better. She has not much vigor of constitution left, and at her age any unusual sickness in head leads me to certain serious apprehensions I am quite well as Capt. Clarke will tell you on his return. I never looked or felt better so far as health is concerned in my life. The Captain, E. Gorham, George Howe, and Major Carpenter, Paymaster, dined with us last Sunday. That evening I went to Washington, going up from Alexandria on a steamboat, nine miles I arrived in the city about six o'clock, and put up at Willard's, where C and G were stopping. The next day at 12, I went to the Capital, saw our members of Congress and Senators besides sundry other notables, saw congress opened, heard the President's message past through and left. Among other things and the main occasion of my visit. I went to Brady's and sat for my photograph of which I am to have a dozen cards-de-visite. I sat and only had the upper half of my body appears without sword belt or sash. To have in full lengths would make the features so small, and the day was raining requiring a long sitting or standing to get an impression that I feared the picture would be worthless full length. I did not stop to see the plate nor get the cards as they could not be printed except in fair weather and work was so driving that several days would lapse before they were done. I shall probably have then by Saturday. This job is for your especial delegation. I shall send 10 of them home and you may dispose of them as you think proper. I propose also by and by to purchase a dozen or so of some of our generals say McClellan, Burnside, Smith, Brooks, Banks, Old Abe and wife, etc, send you I saw some very excellent ones in the city.

Tuesday and Wednesday, I went into the woods and cut the timber for my winter quarters and drew it to camp for which purpose I detailed a dozen men. Next week I shall put the building up. It is to be 26 feet long inside by 10 wide, and 6 feet 4 inches high, divided into two apartments, one for my private quarters 10 feet by 10, the other about 10 by 16. A chimney between with a fire place to each. My bedroom will be floored, have a window, and if needs be I shall attach a private privy on the rear side. I can build a bed of boards, of the ordinary width, box style and fill it with straw which will be quite comfortable. I have two large blankets that I borrowed from the Quartermaster's supplies. A pair of nice ones that I bought some time since costing \$10, the two white ones from home that do duty as sheets, my shawl, rubber blanket and great coat and caps. So you see that I sleep quite comfortable. The other apartment of my

building will be devoted to recitations in the evening, and for smoking and company. It is very evident to my mind that we shall remain here two or three months.

Now what do you say to taking Lizzie and coming out here in about two weeks. Mrs. Blunt is here and Mrs. Veazey is coming out with some friends about the time I suggest. The Colonel wants you to come and it is needless to say that your presence here would give me infinite pleasure. I speak of Lizzie because I should like to have her here. She would delight the camp and besides it would relieve mother if she should come. I should just as well like to have Charlie too, but that would be impossible. I can make you both quite comfortable in my quarters, and the days are very pleasant here when it is not stormy. The nights are cold to be out it, but you would be quite warm inside. All that either of you would want to wear would be plain, warm clothing, rubber boots, woolen night caps, etc. We have enough to eat and that which is good enough. We can buy milk all that we need. If I arrange my building as I have suggested and shall do if you come you will experience no inconveniences from camp life for a few weeks. If you decide to come I will send you the necessary funds and direction etc. I have not yet received any pay but I can get the money. We shall probably not be paid until January. By the way, I had an order for \$26 in my wallet, on the state treasurer from a soldier in the 8th Vermont Regiment who had allotted \$10 per month. A fortnight since I sent it enclosed to Treasurer Page to send you the amount as soon as payable.

I see by the last Phoenix that that regiment has been paid up to September so that I suppose the amount will be speedily sent you. If it is not right, he would probably have written me. He will send you, if he sends anything a check which will be payable to your order.

Think the matter all over about coming out her and write me, bearing in mind the pleasure it would give me to have you come if you think it possible or advisable. I omitted to say that I received a letter from Gov. Holbrook last night in which he writes that in a few weeks he will visit Washington and our camp. Clark and Graham will also be out her again in two weeks or so. As Mrs. Veazey will go via Springfield from Boston, you may find it preferable to come with the Governor. If you see him and concluded to come I will write him concerning the matter.

I did not receive any presentation letter with the sword, etc., It was purchased and sent by Gen. Davis, but I see by the Montpelier papers that my reply was read in session in the house by Speaker Smith. You will probably see it copied into the next Phoenix.

Today is Vermont Thanksgiving. I had roast beef for dinner and turkey and chicken, etc, for supper. Doing well, eh? At 3 in the morning, I start to visit the pickets which job will take me until 7 in the morning. It is a cold ride at that cold time but the air is bracing. My great coat, cap, and mittens keep me comfortable.

You would hardly think it, but I wear nothing in the day time outside my vest but my thin flannel blouse made for last summer but as yet is warm enough generally. Occasionally when it is quite cool and I am riding but little I put on in the cape of my great coat. I do think that unless I am very careless this climate will agree with me quite well. I have not had a meal of victuals nor had a headache since I have been out here. Since my first considerable diarrhea. I have not suffering in that direction. The piles trouble me a little. I suspect riding horseback does not help that matter. My throat does not trouble me except I drill the regiment all the afternoon, but that will in a great measure be subscribed by constant practice of talking in the open air.

Politics is ignored in camp. I do not see a newspaper more than every other day. I carried the President's Message in my pocket from Monday afternoon at 3, when I brought an extra containing it, until this afternoon when I first found him to read it. We do not know half so much as the NY correspondent pretend to about the war, so we have no opinions about movements.

Yet it is generally through at by one MC's that Burnside, will be as inactive as McCellan. Fitz John Porter's case opens badly. Col. V was in Washington today and he says that Morrill (M.C.) told him this afternoon that Gen. Grant was having today a big fight in the southwest. The news was obtained at the War Department. We occasionally discuss the manner in which the war should be conducted, but that don't amount to much.

The fact is to run a regiment as we have been situated requires most of our time. The 13th, 14th, and 15th have been away ten days and the 12th and 16th have done all the picket duty, taking about all the able well men of each every 48 hours. Then there are but three field officers for officers of the day. I was detailed Sunday and again Wednesday but in the later case the major went for me as I was doing labor, so I went today for my Thanksgiving. The 15th will be back tomorrow, and the others in day or two I hear, so that we shall have more drill and less picket. Our men are generally in their winter quarters and an quite comfortable. The Colonel and I look sharply after them as men in camp will not take can of themselves. We have not lost a man as yet, nor have are any dangerous sick, while the other regiments have lost several the 15th eight or nine. Most of this difference is owing the manifest superiority of our Colonel. He is acknowledged to be the best officer in the Brigade. He is an excellent man, kind hearted of good principles, and I am greatly attached to him. I admire him. We get along together splendidly.

If you ever him to get though with this disconnected letter you may think yourself fortunate.

Please give my love to mother, to the babies in a manner that they will best appreciate. Remember we kindly to all inquiring friends, and say that our Brattleboro boys and all well. I omitted to say that Jo. Simonds and Briggs who waters the shirts were here last Sunday-having come on with the general's horses.

I am my dear wife - your loving husband - Charles

No 8 or 9

Camp Vermont, Fairfax County, VA
December 10th, 1862²

My Dear Wife;

Yours No. 9 of Dec 3 was received Saturday evening and I was much, very much gratified with its perusal. This evening I am in the Colonel's old quarters. He has moved into his new house, and I am building mine. I shall complete it before Sunday and there I shall be ready to receive company. Since I wrote I have changed the plan somewhat. The building is 25 feet long and 12 wide. It will be 6½ feet height at the eaves with two rooms as heretofore described. It will be exceedingly comfortable - almost too much so for a soldier. The building runs east and west and the windows of each room will be on the south side so as to let in the sunlight. I do not propose to carpet the floor nor fresco the walls just yet. The whole cash expense to me will be about \$3.00 - for lock, hinges, spikes, and latches. The timber is confiscated and the labor besides what I do is done by the men.

Gen. Stoughton arrived in camp last Sunday and assumed the command of the regiment. John Wheeler and John Curtis Tyler are not of the staff. Capt. John S. Tyler of company C, 2nd Vermont Regiment to be chief staff as Assistant Adjutant General provided he can get relieved of his command - which is probably. The General made his headquarters with the 16th until he got his ready in the "Mason" house nearby. He likes the 16th and both the officers and men will fare better under him than under Col. Blunt. I am heartily glad of the change.

C. A. Miles of Brattleboro has just left my quarters. He arrived in camp today and has spent the evening with me. He will remain out here two or three weeks with his headquarters as Gen. Stoughton's. He communicates nothing new except the scandal about W. C. Perry and Laura Atherton, his table girl for the past three years, but not at present in his employ. Perry's family think his intimacy in that direction more than friendship will warrant. Very likely.

I do not know why that I said nothing to you about Israel's not having a furlough, except he communicated the matter to me only in answer to a direct question, and as I did not think it best to make the fact public. I forgot all about mentioning it as I sometimes do in relation to a matter communicated to me as a secret. In fact I do not know that I have thought of it since, except for a moment when we were passing the guard at Brattleboro.

I am very well - never felt better or ate heartily in my life. I eschew turkey, chicken, sauces, etc, and confine myself to beef, pork, oysters when I can get them, beard, potatoes, onions butter and cheese with tea and coffee, not all at one meal of course. I mean my food shall be plain, well cooked and nutritious. But I will not encourage any fancy appetite I have not drank a quart of liquor since I left Brattleboro in fact only now and there I last it, about the same as at home. I weight 162 pounds and my muscular strength seems almost twice as great as it used to.

All who and etc., me think I am uncommonly rugged. With the exception of our seven cold and a consequent diarrhea about a month since I have not had an ache nor lost a meal of victuals. If you and the babies were here I do not think I should lack anything in the way of

² Transcriber's Note; The Original letters states its date as November 10th, however, this is an error as LTC. Cummings write on receiving his wife's letter of December 3rd, and talks of the arrival of his new brigade commander, Colonel Edwin H. Stoughton, who arrived in camp on December 7th, 1862

enjoying myself. Since the military quite as pleasant as I can wish and my position sufficient for my present aspirations. I did not come out here expecting anything would be rose colored and laundered and I have no disappointment whatever. I think I correctly appreciated in advance at least all that I have met with except perhaps everything is more agreeable than I could have hoped for.

I send on by this nice are more photographs which I trust will meet your wishes. It is on your account wholly that they were taken and if they please you all my trouble in the weather will be more than repair. I have 13 sent me. Our I gain to Col. Veazey for his wife's album. Miles took one, one I have with me and the 10 remaining I forward. They are subject to your disposal. Please give one to my mother. If you give away any select the best, darkest for yourself.

Last Saturday I saw in camp at Col. Blunt's, Mrs. John Hunt and Mrs. Hernet Berrows as well as Mrs. Blunt. They were all quite well and enjoying life well. Cpt. H. Mr. D.W.C. Clerk new executive check U. S. Senate, and Capt. N. Tucker of Burlington were with them Ros. Henet is at Willard's in Washington at his old ways J. J. Crandall is doing will as tailor to the 11th regiment.

Capt. R. W. Clarke is still in Washington and rumor says that he goes to bed rather unsteady quite regularly. I suspect he is on the board road from all I can hear. Like Crandall, he has not caliber and strength of named enough to know where or rather to decide at the night time to say no. I am sorry that his appointment and the comparatively idle life he has in consequence then of should the thus perverted. He had better had taken the field as I have done. I feel safe in believing that then cannot be sufficient indictments pursued to my mind to had me to drink to my injury as I believe or to the neglect of my duties. I take no credit for this as not much for I do not want it.

I get my washing done, after a fashion, by a family of Negroes close by camp. It cost me about 62 cents per dozen, and without ironing. As soon as my clothing is returned by my servant hang them up on a line across my tent over the stove when they remain until they an wanted to wear. In this way they an thoroughly aim.

What dozen think of coming out here, either with or without Lizzie? Since my last letter two of the sick in the hospital have died both of typhoid fever. They were on from down other from Whitey have. Those who come from the high hill town do not acclimate as well as those from the river and valley town. The dampness in the night here is not unlike the fogs and etc., at home.

Give my love to mother and the usual for to our dear children, and likewise me always
your

Loving husband.

No 10

Headquarters, 2nd Vermont Brigade
Fairfax Courthouse, Dec 14th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

Just as I had my barracks nearly completed when I was promising to pass a comfortable winter, and the next evening after I mailed my letter containing those photographs, to wit; on Thursday evening Dec, 12th our Brigade received orders to be prepared to march at two hours notice, and immediately, thereafter came a circular ordering us to move precisely at 5 o'clock the next morning. Accordingly some tall swearing was indulged in rather freely - not because we were to change our camp for one nearer the enemy, but because we were to leave our comfortable winter quarters erected with so much labor for others to enjoy (a new brigade having been ordered to occupy them) and move to where the same labor would have to be gone through with again.

In common with others I spent the evening after a hard day's work on my house in packing up my traps. That completed I retired to rest at about 11 o'clock p.m. to awake at 2 in the morning. A hasty breakfast at 3 and I was on my horse at 10 minutes to 5 and a very short time we were in motion as follows: 15th, 16th, 12th, 13th, and 14th

I did not turn around to give one lingering look at my anticipate abode of domestic felicity, but as soon as I was fairly out of sight of the place I told the Colonel that I was glad that we were forever away from that clay pit.

We marched about four miles before sunrise. Two miles and we came on to the Alexandria and Fairfax Turnpike which is quite level and almost straight. We made a halt every one to two hours, of a few minutes to give the men an opportunity of breathe. At 3 in the afternoon we arrive at Fairfax Courthouse, distant from Alexandria from 15 to 19 miles. Half a mile further in the woods we were directed to our camping ground in the skirts of a forest where camp fires were still burning. It appeared that the 11th Army Corps under Gen. Sigel had left the rear guard but a day before, for the advance, or towards the Rappahannock and that our brigade with the 2nd Conn. Battery attached were to occupy the place. We had not eaten our supper when an order came for the 16th Regiment to report on the Fairfax and Centerville turnpike at 8 o'clock a.m. In readiness to march three miles beyond that place - 10 miles as all from here - to do picket duty for four days. The picket there requires but part of a regiment on at a time, so the great difficulty is in the march. The picket that this regiment relieved Saturday morning lost two men Friday night by guerrillas so that there will be some excitement in picketing out there. Soon after this order of removal and after I had retired, I received an order to "report with the least possible delay" at Gen. Stoughton's headquarters for instructions as Provost Marshall at Fairfax Courthouse to which I was appointed. But I didn't go until morning when bright and early I was on hand, received my instructions, took peaceable possession of a fine brick building, two stories high, entered as an office for the County and Probate Clerks, cleaned it out and put things into condition for work. My predecessor under Gen. Sigel had occupied a small wooden building full of filth and smelling like an Irishman's shanty only worse, but I was bound to have as good quarters as could be found in the place. I have the whole building, two rooms besides entrance and stairs 20 feet or so square and 10 feet high with two windows on each side of both rooms and

a fine open fireplace at one end of each. I have a guard detailed daily of 50 men each besides a proper protection of officers, which will soon be exchanged for a permanent guard.

My duties are to attend to all matter connected with the granting of passes, persons cannot travel in this country without passes, person order and quiet in the place, arrest all drunken persons, whether citizens, officers, or soldiers, shut up grog shops and attend to municipal duties generally - besides granting safe guards, arresting "secesh" and the like. I have the county jail at my command where I put the men at night and in the morning they are "brought up" for examination and punishment if necessary.

I do not fancy such business half so well as picketing but I make it a rule to obey orders without murmuring and without hesitation so I have gone at it with a will. How long I shall remain here, or how long the regiments will be stationed here I have not more means of knowing than heretofore. But I do not see how I can make arrangements any more for your coming. There is no decent place but what is full. Nearly all the "secesh" have left and their houses are used for hospital purposes, there being about 700 sick of Gen. Sigel's corps here including two cases of small pox.

Fairfax Court House is situated in a beautiful country and was once a beautiful place for this part of Virginia, but like all other places that have been the theaters of war and ultimately occupied by our troop and the enemy, it is the picture of desolation. The constant encampment of soldiers has deprived the county of all fences, caused buildings to be torn down, mutilated, and destroyed the Courthouse proper is smaller than our town hall and it looks as that would were the windows broken out and boarded up and all the inside ripped out and the wall defaced. It is now used for the storage of our commissary stores. The building I am in is the only one that is comparatively unscathed. The "Green" containing the Court House Clerks building P.O., and other smaller buildings, where the ablest men of the old Dominion has been trodden upon, encamped upon and demeaned until a New England Farmer's outdoor hog yard would be clean and sweet in comparison. It is filth exemplified. It is probably worse than ever before as Sigel's Corps have just left with all this German and Dutch nastiness left behind. I shall clean up somewhat tomorrow having detailed men for that purpose.

This place was two years since the center of a thriving trade probably two thirds as much as that of Brattleboro, but it all gone, and sutler's holes fill the place once occupied by prominent men. There are not more than a hundred houses in the place and half of these are used as hospitals or for the use of the army. I do not think that more than ten or twelve prominent families remain. Gen. Stoughton succeed Gen. Sigel in having his headquarters at one of these. The building owned by F.F.V's. and the ground trod and the court house rendered classic by her eloquence of the great men is rendered arrive and a wash, and this is only a fair sample of what has befallen Old Virginia. No fire, even if it should burn every house in our village of Brattleboro could be half as desolating to the place as was has been to this part of Virginia. Houses cattle, fences and inhabitants nearly all grasslands dissolute running up to weeds and briars and no encampment for the future. The people here look dispirited and ruined as in fact they are. I will stop for words fail to convey any adequate idea of the picture one sees on every hand. Desolation is the word that most nearly conveys the idea, but that is hardly sufficiently emphatic.

In this building I occupy are kept the records of the county court. Probate court and the U.S. District Court. Until recently the will of George Washington was in file here but that and some of the more important papers have been removed for safety to Alexandria. But the office is full of old papers going back two centuries or more. I use for my pillow one of these old

volumes. There is probably scarcely any other place in Virginia around which more or pleasant historical associations cluster and longer than about this same old place but its fragrance is now flagrantly odorous.

My health continues good and I should be in capital condition could I get enough to eat at reasonable rates. I am away from my mess and so I am compelled to pick up my living as best I can. I had nothing to eat from Friday morning at 3 o'clock until Saturday night except some hard bread that I brought in my haversack. Today I got a meal of poor beef steak, potatoes and coffee at half a dollar, so I hauled out the remainder of the day in "hard tack" and cold water. I am thankful that my appetite is good and that I am not over particular as to my food provided that it is clean.

There commenced a great battle at Fredericksburg yesterday and is continued today with what results I do not hear, but trust that it is favorable to our side. It is about time to hear of Union victories here in Virginia if we ever expect to bring this war to a close.

Gen. Slocum's army corps 20 to 30,000 strong passed through here yesterday and today en route from Harper's Ferry to Fredericksburg and the seat of the war. Why they did not move in season to have a hand in this fight is more than I know. His rear guard was attacked by guerrillas and one man killed and another wounded. They were around evidently attempting to cut off the train as is their usual custom.

Banks is supposed to be near Richmond but as I have not seen but one newspaper in a week. I do not keep very well posted in army movements.

When you direct your letters do it the same as now except after "Washington, D.C." add "at Fairfax Courthouse, VA" for I am precisely at that place.

Give my love to mother, kiss the dear little children for their absent papa and rest assured in that affectionate love and constant remembrance of

Your husband – Charles

No 11

Fairfax Court House, December 16th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

Yours No. 10 - 11 of Dec 11th was received today. I was eagerly awaiting it, but supposed our indifferent mail arrangements in our transitionally state accounted for the delay. It gave me pleasure to learn the arrangement you were making to come out here although recent movements as explained in my last must temporarily delay if not altogether frustrate our plans. Under the circumstances, I think you decided exactly right in regard to taking Lizzie, much as I should like to see the dear little girl and that other as dear darling Charlie. I had my doubts when I wrote about the matter as to the propriety of taking her, but I was fully content to let the matter remain for your decision.

What can now be done to arrange for your coming remains to be seen. I can get rooms but no board. And I am away from my mess as yet living room hand to mouth just as I can get food. I should like you to be prepared to come at a week or so notice, yet do not incur any great trouble in your preparation. You had better take my trunk as you suggest. Mrs. Veazey is in Washington and has been there several days, but her husband is away beyond Centerville on picket, when the men sleep on their arms nights and where danger of raids is somewhat imminent.

In this place there is no such thing as society. Full half of the best houses and mansions have been torn down by the ruthless hand of soldiers and guards are constantly stationed at others to prevent like destruction and depredations. There are men here with families who are of secesh proclivities and who will not take the oath from principle, yet they are gentlemen and pledge their honor not to aid or abet the enemy. I think much more of them than of those cringing, fawning ones who take and break an oath with equal facility. If I want any of their rooms I can have them without remonstrances, but I pity them when disorderly men in hospital are quartered upon them to destroy and mutilate their cherished treasures. In my capacity as Provost Marshall they come to me for protection and they get it too to the best of my ability.

It is passing strange that so man of our men, who at home would not steal or break into a private dwelling to the terror of defenseless women and children, will total abrogate all these principles that have been taught them at home, and act as if no one's except themselves had any rights, or feeling worth caring for. But such is the humiliating fact. However, I shall endeavor to protect every orderly, quiet family just as far as I can in the enjoyment of their horses and household property. Feel of course we got from the forest but not from dooryards. Shelter we will have for once sick, but I have ordered it to be sought in public buildings as hotels, churches, and in deserted houses just as far as possible and not to the detriment of families.

There is no such thing as society here. It is all broken up and in confusion. I am not in my own camp where I could be comparatively quiet and retired at the conclusion of my days labors, but I am in what was once a public square, busy in my office or riding about the village in the

discharge of my duties from 8 am., until 8 pm., with not a single chance out doors of attending to the calls of nation except when every side is exposed to view of soldiers. I sleep in my office on the lower floor by putting two benches together, much like the long ones we used to sit upon when we went to school, and sleeping upon their united seats. As soon as we can get transportation my bench will arrive. There I shall move into the upper story for my sleeping room.

I have hosts of passes to grant multitudes of complaints to listen to and all sorts of municipal matter to attend to that keeps me very busy. Somebody must do it, and moreover I made it a rule when I entered the service to obey all orders promptly and without grumbling so I have gone into it with a will. Yet I had rather be with my regiment. But then are some lights as well as shadows. The shadows are the misery, filth and dehydration with which I am brought in contact with. I have to order rations for straggling soldiers left behind, help sick and weary ones to some hospital or temporary quarters, arrest drunken ones as well as the seller of liquors etc, etc.

Today I sent to Washington two rebel prisoners forwarded to me by Col. Sir Percy Wyndham - an English Barnet commanding at Centerville. They were from the 34h N.C. Regiment and were captured near Chantilly, where Israel was taken prisoner. They were father, son, the former looking as old and feeble as Dan Estabrooks and the son badly wounded in the arm. They wanted to get to NC but I would not let them go down Dumfries, Stafford Court house, and Fredericksburg on account of information they might give the enemy. So I sent there to Washington with orders to report to the Provost Marshall there. The old man wanted transportation for he did not feel able to walk, nor did he look very able, but we have not half transportation enough for our own necessities; besides I thought of the toilsome march Israel made out of his way so as not learn the where about of the rebels so I told him to walk the best he could. Yet I pitied him, tired out and jaded as he was. Since 8 o'clock this evening I have spring a trap that all the afternoon. I have been setting and arrested a sutler and his clerk who kept a little shop here much like that at the bridge in Main Street selling liquor to soldier. They are in jail. In the evening they will be tried before his honor the "Provo," and as the proof is ample they will be convicted, sent across the Potomac and all their property confiscated. Martial law is quite summary and with guns at the back of the officer easily executed. But a large measure of direction is necessary that a power so ready and convenient is not improperly wielded.

I shall send word to Abner White tomorrow of his brother's death, had no chance today.

I had heard two days since of the accident to Gen. Davis' daughter. It must be a painful affliction to the parents.

I shall probably see Gov. H before he returns.

Give my love to mother and the little darlings and dear children and believe me, if I am disappointed in not seeing you so soon

Your loving, devoted husband

Charles

I shall write quite as often now a warm room into and paper are so handy

No 12

Fairfax Court House December 22nd, 1862

Dear Wife;

Your No. 11 acknowledging the receipt of the photographs and No. 12 have both been received the latter mailed Saturday this evening; so you see the mail comes now quite direct.

Yesterday I saw Gen. Baxter, Col. S. M. Waite and Frank Holbrook. The Governor could not come out. It is good to see a face from Brattleboro. Col. Waite said he would see you and tell you that I was in prime condition.

I should like several things from home that I could name, but then is but little use in sending them, for the delays and perplexities in getting them out here, to say nothing of our liability to move into some out of the way place are so numerous and palpable as to render this hammers union inexpedients. Saturday a full car load of Express matter for the 16th Regiment was carted up from Fairfax Station making nine 4 horse wagon loads. Some of it had laid in Washington or elsewhere on the south for many days and even some weeks. Then the expense is such as to make this mode of transmission unwarrantable. I had rather get along as I do now. I get enough to eat in the course of the day by hazing around. I have bought some butter, the commissary gave me some coffee, sugar, and bread. I have a coffee pot and I got asked to eat with some sutler every little while, so I get along in no very expressive manner.

It is not very likely that we shall remain here long. Gen. Slocum commanding the 12th Army Corps has his head quarters here. His troops are all the way from Fairfax Station to Dumfries. We are still attached to Casey's Division headquarters of which is at Washington. If we move it will probably be in the direction of Dransville, which is a little way in the direction of Harpers' Ferry.

Col. Veazey went to Washington Wednesday of last week and returned Friday. His wife met him there and returned home again. Col. Proctor was in Washington about he same time to see his wife but she did not come. I should like you here on some accounts but the total uncertainty of one movements is such that a visit now would be troublesome to you and perplexing to me for there are no carriage in this part of the world, and the roads defy carriages.

Miles is still stopping with Gen. Stoughton. His intimacy with that family the past year and his having not infrequently visited them at Bellows Falls leads me to suspect that he is courting the General's sister but this may be only my surmise. I never heard the thing suggested by any one. I suspect it is quite dull in Brattleboro just now.

I am glad that Lizzie recognized her papa in the photograph but I don't think Charlie did. Do give Lizzie one of the pictures for her birthday present and tell her to keep it carefully to show papa when he comes home. I should like to see you all dearly, but I don't allow myself to get discontented albeit I very often think and dream of home. So long as we are all well the separation bad as it is, is not unendurable when we consider the occasion. There is no danger of the 16th seeing very active service at present.

I have written so many passes for white folks and Negroes to go to Washington to get something for Christmas that my hand aches so, I will not prolong.

Love and Kisses to you all - Affectionately Yours, Husband - Charles

No 13

Fairfax Court House, VA Dec 29th, 1862

My Dear Wife;

A happy New Year and a Merry Christmas to you and our darling children and mothers. Yours last was handed me last evening while in camp. I had posed writing to you Friday but a brigade drill and the necessity of my commanding the regiment as Col. Veazey and Major Rounds were both sick in connection with the pressing duties of the office, deprived me of that pleasure. Then I was sure I could do it Saturday, but orders came from my regiment to hold itself in momentary readiness to be called out kept me from doing it. Well Sunday came and at one p.m., I closed the office and took a brief nap intending to write immediately thereafter. But orders again came for the regiment to be in readiness and I was constantly engaged in endeavoring to learn what all the rumors of war meant. I had on my hands three men of the 5th Penn Cavalry, who had been driven in while picketing on the Occoquan twelve miles south of here at 11 am. and being cut off from their camp made their escape. They reported that two brigades of rebel cavalry. Stuart's and Fitzhugh Lee's and Hampton's Legion were this side of the Occoquan making a raid in this direction. Other dispatches from couriers and telegraph partially confirmed their statements.

According at five o'clock I was ordered to march the 16th Regiment with 2 days ration to Fairfax Station 2 1/2 miles south of here. I had previously solicited liberty to go in case the regiment was called out. At 7 o'clock I had the regiment there and two pieces of artillery under my command on the north side of the Alexandria and Manassas railroad which LTC. Hawley of the 3rd Wisconsin held the south side. Probably there is \$300,000 worth of stores at the Station consisting of property that the rebels would like to capture or destroy. As near as we could learn there were about 1600 rebel cavalry out. While in the R. R. Depot attending to the dispatches we found that we could get an answer from Alexandria but none from Burke's Station three miles east of us in that direction. The Supt. had a large train ready to start for Alexandria and telegraphed to know if he should move it along. Answer came "yes, immediately" But we prevailed upon him not to send the train as all was not right. It subsequently appeared that the rebels had dashed through our pickets, made a dash twelve miles inside our lines captured the telegraph operator, substituted one of their own at Burke's Station only three miles east of us and Stuart was reading all dispatches and having all about our strength at the station as Fairfax and elsewhere. Just as he was leaving he sent an audacious message to Washington and then cut the wire

It further appeared that he was intending to divide his force at Burke's Station and with one half destroy and capture everything at Fairfax Station while with the other he would make a detour to the east and both divisions would meet at Fairfax Court House and complete the job, by capturing general and staff officers. What he learned at Burke's had him but then unknown to us to change his plans. I was up looking for him or someone else profiting by his diversion all night; my horse was not unsaddled for 18 hours nor was I out of the saddle two hours in the time. I had my men strongly posted and pickets out in every direction that cavalry could come a mile

and a half. I knew that we could give him a warm reception while we could not suffer much loss, as infantry can empty saddles to just so well do find themselves with the bayonet that cavalry cannot do much with them. But they let us alone and I missed a grand opportunity for an advantageous scrimmage. I had received orders to hold the post at all hazard and we could all of us them have down it against 5,000 cavalry.

Stuart foiled in this swept around to the east and came dashing up the Alexandria and Fairfax Courthouse pike to within a mile and a half of the village. But here he found a regiment of infantry on each side of the road concealed in old rifle pits and 2 cannon and a like number of howitzers in the road. He got one volley from two companies of infantry and half a dozen shells which probably killed nobody except a horse, yet blood was distinctly visible in some spots in large pools in a great many places. Quite a number of men must have been severely wounded. Stuart beat a hasty retreat and swept around to the north of the place towards Vienna and Chantilly

The dotted line represents the route taken, They drove in our pickets are Wolf Run Shoals. Both Stuart and Lee are natives of this county, several of their soldiers are from this town.

Col. D'Utassy, who is with a brigade at Union Mills, came down this morning to render assistance, but finding none needed went back. One of our regiments is out all the time, each four days in succession picketing near Centerville about two miles on Bull Run. D'Utassy is below and Sir Percy Wyndham is above at Chantilly (where Israel was captured.)

Finding all present danger of attack over, I was ordered back this afternoon. I arrived in camp sleepy enough and if this letter is stupid, you will ascribe it to my first preparation for an engagement.

By the way, Stuart captured Liet. Cummings of Co. D, Vermont cavalry from Barnet. In return he lost several of his own men as prisoners one of whom I send to the provost Marshall at Washington in the morning.

Heath excellent, and spirits good. You need feel no apprehension about my needlessly exposing myself but I will never come back with reputation of cowardice that some of the Colonels of the Vermont regiments have in the army.

Veazey is getting better so the major: bilious attack of week's duration is what's the matter."

Give my love to all the family. How I should like to see you all. Lizzie is 4 and Charles 2. Last night was Charlie's birth night and I often thought of it and its remembrances while out on duty riding alone. Kiss the little dears and believe me - Most truly

- Your loving husband Charles

No 14

Fairfax Court House, Va. Jan 2nd, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your last kind letter was received in dues season, and in reply I intended to have written yesterday so as to wish you a Happy New Years on that day. But business is increasing in the office and then the command of the Regiment on my hands during a week has closely occupied my time. There is nothing worthy of note occurred within a few days. Col. Veazey has improved and is now out with the regiment on picket. Major Rounds is also out.

I had much rather be with my men than cooped up here listening to the complaints of everybody from officers down to privates, and of civilians women and niggers and of endeavoring to adjust nice political questions by arresting or refraining to arrest secehs sympathizers. It is about as mean business as can well be imagined. I have power enough, except to protect peaceable inhabitants for miles around from depredations by lawless cavalry soldier some of whom would well grace a gallows, but the difficulty is to so adjust and exercise it as to satisfy myself and my notions of equity and justice. Thus far I have abundant reason to believe that I have won the respect of the inhabitants and they frequently say that during my administration better order has been presided than heretofore.

But wife, it make my heart sick to see such frequent exhibitions of malignity, ferocity, and brutality joined to such wantonness as some of our Union troops manifest. They will (some of them) steal the last hen or potato a poor woman may have in the house and if she remonstrates she must listen to indecent language if she escapes bodily harm. This fault is largely attributable to the laxness of discipline in the regiments. Officer who have been elected seem to act too frequently as if they must allow this brutal license even if they do not encourage it or order to maintain the good will of their command. Then again full half of those elected or appointed to office are men who are no more fit for command than they are for decent society. They are men with whom gentlemen find it repugnant to associate.

Stuart's raid caused much excitement in Fairfax County. In all he probably had 4000 cavalry and 6 pieces of artillery, divided much of the way into three detachments. It is credibly reported that one of his captains dawned in citizens clothes took supper in an eating saloon just opposite my office four or five hours before they sought to enter Fairfax Court House and while I was with my regiment was at the station. They are smart, audacious, and they know every cow path in the county thoroughly. I still think that the celerity with which our forces were concentrated and the property at this place and at the station from capture or destruction. I yet apprehend that this reconnaissance may result in an attack on us from the direction of Manassas and Centerville. But just not we are in a glorious state of uncertainty. Since I last wrote our regiments have had orders to be ready to march at a moment's notice with two days rations, which orders were countermanded the next day. In this state of things we realize that we have no home nor abiding place.

I never knew such delightful weather at Christmas as this year. During the past ten days I have sat without fire with open windows and in the piazza on the north side of my office with my

light flannel blouse on and took no cold. The roads are in splendid condition and were it not for the short days should imagine it was October or early May. We have had several premonitions of storm but they have vanished into thin air in a short time. No lovelier day than this Friday was ever known at New Year's.

My health continues excellent but I am afraid that I shall soon get too tender in the house to endure the tented field when storms come. I now get my meals with an old FFV but much reduced in circumstances in consequences of the war. But the good old lady, the mother of 14 children ten or a dozen of whom are living is a good cook considering the paucity of the market, so my meals are warm, regular and palatable. I commenced this Tuesday noon. I had got heartily tired of having a plate and provisions around in my office and I could not arrange a mess as it would not pay to expend \$10 or \$15 on implements that might have to be left behind in a few days. The family is smartly secesh from the youngest child a little younger than Lizzie to the oldest daughter at home about 18. She is comfortable looking but is neither elegant nor refined, but rather agreeable on account of her "secesh" and spunk. However, I have no time or disposition to play the agreeable. So I do not see much of her, nor indeed of the family as I am only in the house long enough to eat. I sleep in my apartments on my cat and under my blankets. I have not slept in a bed since I left yours.

You speak of the relation of a husband as being more than that of a lover. Indeed it is. It is much the nearest and dearest relation on earth, but yet it is more easily severed than that of parent and child. These last will cling to each other or rather the mother will to the child whatever may beside. But the marriage relation when cemented as in ones is certainly the dearest one we can sustain, and especially is this the case when commuted by the lives of two darling little children who serve to make our mutual affliction only the stronger. Husband, wife, and children indeed constitute a trinity that is constantly inducing and enforcing unity. A happy family is the purest and most delightful abode of bliss afforded to mortals. May ours ever be as it has always been such a home.

I like your chit - chat about home matters. It is interesting to know of the movements and changes that are going on in B. Never mind about green wood or more than three or four cords to last next summer. Wood will be cheaper a year hence I think with the back you have a good supply until nearly summer except for furnace.

Love and kisses for all.

Your our loving husband - Charles.

No. 15

Fairfax Court House, Jan 11th, 1863

Dear Wife,

I have been preparing several days to write you but an unusual piece of business has prevented. I have the permission of the General to drill in Brigade with my regiment, which occurs twice a week, and necessitates the study of evolutions of the line. Furthermore I have within the last three days made examinations into the several liquor shops in this place, and yesterday I confiscated about 20 dozen bottles of the contraband, which I shall turn over to the Medical Director, keeping of course all that I may want for my own use.

During the past week, also, I have tried several cases, treason, desertion and the like five of whom I have sent to the Old Capital Prison at Washington. These in addition to the granting of passes, answering questions, etc, have (keeps me quite busy.

Yours of the 4th (No. 16) with its enclosures - Sarah's letter and two pictures - reached me in due season, and gave me great pleasure. Your letters are always welcome for it is sweet to hear from you of the children, mother and of what is going on about town on all such matters as cannot of course find their way in the newspapers.

I am much pleased to receive your picture, although I fully agree with mother in thinking that it does not do you justice. I think both the operator and position faulty the first in not having any tasks as to position and in a defective light; and second in causing you to sit looking at the instrument rather than as he should have done, had you look say from one to two yards at the right and a little higher than the object glass. But all this criticism is not intended to depreciate the value of your likeness in my eyes. To me it speaks of you, my darling wife, the object of my deepest affection and highest regard. As such I have shall cherish it most devoutly. Well. Col. Griffin has gone and done it. It strikes me that in the affair then was so much straining for effect that the thing was greatly overdone. It must have so appeared to disintended observers. The bride must be a daughter of MWM Dinsmoor, who is a brother of Saint D. The Ex. Governor. I have not yet seen any one who has caused me to regret that I am not in a condition to manifest my regard by the highest compliment a man can pay to a woman and when I do I will write you full particulars and give you fair notice. Until then you must consider your husband, although a military "assifer" loyal to the good heart that he is fully conscious loves him far better than he deserves or is likely to merit.

Mr. Fessendon's death will be greatly loss to the town of Brattleboro. He was really one of the best men in the place, and the notice of him in last week's Phoenix does him no more than justice.

I am quite well as I have been ever since I had a little cold and sore throat at Camp Vermont. I got to eating so irregular owing to the inconveniences of getting and preparing food in my office that I have taken to boarding, as I wrote you in my last. Then is not a decent boarding place at Fairfax Court House as there is no market, no nothing. I should live much better with my regiment. But I am thankful that I am not squeamish about my food. I have lived on boiled and fried pork for more than with week without any potatoes and I can do so some weeks longer. My food is of the least consequence so that I don't actually go hungry. I can live where any soldier can. As the best (proof of this I will only instance the fact that I have not had

a pain for six weeks - except that I got tired of being shut up in the office all day, but an hour's ride on horseback cures that. I do not now get up very early, not before 7 to half past mornings. It is not necessary so I lie abed, but I do not sleep after six. I lay and think how nice it would be to have you and the little dears to kiss and talk with. I do not write this regretfully or then has not been a moment since I entered the service that I have not felt glad that I enlisted. I do feel that in this service I am doing my duty. But I do every day, morning and evening, think of the dear ones at home and how much pleasure it would give me to see them all.

As to what I think of the war I have no opinion except this - that the North will surely and certainly triumph in the end - it may not be this year nor the next, but truths justice and right must in the end prevail. I am not particularly jubilant over any great victory like that of Rosecrans, brilliant as it is nor am I dismayed by any defeats. We must take them as it comes, rain or shine, yet there is seed time and harvest always. As to the propriety of this or that movement beyond the sphere of my personal influence, I do not discuss even in my own mind. I mean to do my duty as faithfully as I can where ever I am ordered assist my superiors to the best of my ability obey all lawful orders according to the spirit of the Regulations and Article of War, without a question or murmur. This is just the way I feel, and I can't feel any different.

If I were to express any opinion upon anything I am ordered to do it would be this. Fairfax Court House is the dirtiest, nastiest, most destitute place I was ever in. It has been tore to pieces and nearly destroyed. There is not a house standing that is even half furnished and I don't believe there are chairs enough in turn to seat the inhabitants all at one time, let alone the army. Second the business of Provost Marshall is the meanest part of army duties. I never did like a staff appointment. I have told Holbrook, Washburn, Davis, Col. Veazey and others so many times. I would never accept of one even if I could be Chief of Staff to McClellan. But here I am ordered and I have not made one word of complaint although the whole thing is so distasteful. Yet I have expressed my opinion as above when asked how I liked it.

It is in obedience to orders that I stay, and I will never ask for favor when very order is made but will obey without a look of discontent except that told Gen. Stoughton that when the 16th was ordered into action he might as well consent to my going for if he did not, he would have an opportunity to court martial me. He speaks warmly in approval of the manner in which I do my duty here. There is a trade with Slocum's corps opposite me who used to have in So. Boston and knew your father. When you lived come of E. I think he lived on the opposite corner; his name is Beck or Buck. Also Capt. Spaulding of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry (loyal) learned his trade in Shaw a dozen or fifteen year since and knew your grandfather and Mr. Hixon and his sons. So you see extremes meet sometimes.

Well dearest Good- bye. Kiss our little darling children, give my love to mother and may God bless and protect you all.

Your living husband - Charles.

No 17

Fairfax Court House, Jan 18th, 1863

This sheet was blotted before writing, but I have no other convenient.

Dearest Wife,

It is now more than a week since your last was received and it must be that another letter is now at hand. So I possess my soul in patience. I am sure that you would have written on this had there been any occasion for urgency such as ill-health in yourself or our dear children.

My own health remains most excellent. Indeed I hardly remember the time when I have been uniformly so well. The weather is now quite cold to the "natives" and to some of our soldiers, but it seems quite mild to me. I do not dress any warmer than when at Brattleboro in October, for I wear the same pants, vest and the same thin blouse. Yet I ride an hour or so nearly everyday without any overcoat or any addition except cap and gloves to what I wear in my office. I have not had a symptom of a cold for six weeks nor an ache except I sometimes get quite tired out in listening to the same complaints repeated with scarcely a change or variation continuously.

I think it would be well to let the children have access to out door air daily when pleasant. As you are so much occupied with your household duties is it not possible that they are kept in too close and consequently get colds? These thoughts suggest themselves to me when I see better than every before since I was a boy the exhilarating invigorating and healthful tendencies of pure air. It is true I am indoors now much of the time. But my room is what would be called a cold one, the doors are almost incessantly open so much so that for convenience I brace it open - it is an outside door on each end of the room and then I am out and in all the time for hourly then are calls for me to attend to some duty in the street.

I have thought over and over again how I can manage so as to have you with me. The advantages comfort and happiness such a condition would bring with it are too obvious. The disadvantages are these. There is no mode of conveyance from here to Washington - 20 miles - except horseback or sutler's wagons. The same may be said of conveyances in the place. There is not a riding carriage in or about Fairfax Court House except government teams, sutler's do, and ambulances. There is not a female here from the North. I am all the time engaged from 8 a.m., until 10 p.m., except my meals except I stole time enough one evening to play seven games of euchre with Dr. Baker, an Englishman. The traveling here is such that unless the ground is frozen it would be impossible for you to walk. Mud, adulterated with filth and unmitigated is the order here.

It is rumored that we shall soon move towards Thoroughfare Gap soon move with what truth I do not know but the rumor seems plausible enough. I have made up my mind that in the army there is no abiding place. My experience in preparing for your reception at Camp Vermont settled that question.

I suspect that I shall have to visit Washington this week. We have taken several political prisoners that will probably find a resting place in the Old Capital and I shall be wanted to give my evidence against them, unless prospects of an immediate forward movement prevents.

The President's proclamation has waked up all the latent bitterness in the Southern heart, and secesh is on its rampage. The atrocious sentiments uttered in this messages and speeches by Jeff Davis find echoes more or less strong in this part of Virginia. What is to be the result is

beyond human here. I am becoming a little shaky in my faith that the "Union of these States" is to be preserved. Our prospects are darker than ever before; and then is so much division at the North that when the time of one nine months men expires I do not know who will take their places. Look at the matter in another point of view. The feeling of bitterness engendered in the hearts of all the South including those who fought against secession until it became a fixed fact, against the old Union is one that will never be out lived. It will take generations efface from their minds the irreparable mischief that treason as we call it has done.

Of course I am for fighting it out. I take a more cheerful view of the matter than nineteen – twentieths of the officers I meet. You will understand me as depicting the general opinions of those I meet in drawing the above influences. The facts are as stated. I understand that at Washington our M.C.'s indulge in very gloomy forebodings. I stick to the line I marked out at the commencement in determining to let politics and such things alone while in the service and attend solely to the fall and timely discharge of all my military duties.

There is nothing new in camp. Mrs. Proctor was here a few days with her husband in his camp, but I did not see her nor know of her visit until she had gone. Abner White was my "orderly" yesterday and thought he should like the place every day when the guard is detailed from the 16th Regiment. He is a good boy and a good soldier. There have been ten deaths in the regiment. 8 of which were in the Wilmington Company. Quite a number of officers have resigned - a way we have of getting rid of inefficient officers, they having that opportunity or the alternative of being sent before a board of examination. Among these is Adjutant Bridgman who was a very inefficient officer.

The Colonel is in excellent health. So is the major. The 16th is by all odds the crack regiment of the brigade. The men drill superbly.

I would like most dearly to see you all. You if out of sight are not out of mind. I think of all thru and the picture you drew of Lizzie wishing you to lay on your "hind side" so as to distribute your attitudes equally delighted me. Say to them that papa sends his love and wants to hear from and of the little darlings. What do they say? How do they do? Can Charley climb or run or does he yet toddle? All these little things are delightful.

Enclosed is a letter to Lizzie. Please teach her to read it. Give my love to mother and rest assured that I am always your own loving husband - Charles

Fairfax Station, VA Jan 29th, 1863

My Dearest Wife,

I have received three letters from you since writing one which is a delay on my part that must be attributed to several causes which will narrate.

On Sunday Jan 18th, I wrote and I had written twice previously within eight or nine days. On Monday afternoon the entire brigade had orders to move to Fairfax Station and Wolf Run Shoals six miles further south. I had have to leave to join my regiment after disposing of the business then on hand - including one confiscation case and several prisoners arrested for various cases. The immediate occasion for this removal, which I was daily anticipating was the moving of Gen. Slocum's corps, which stretched all the way Fairfax Station via Wolf Run Shoals to Dumfries to join the army at Fredericksburg, thus leaving a vacuum that must be speedily filled. Accordingly the 12th and 13th Regiments and the 2nd Connecticut Battery were sent to Wolf Run Shoals and the 14th, 15th, and 16th Regiments and the Rhode Island Battery ordered to the station extending from half a mile this side to a mile beyond crossing the railroad at right angles.

Tuesday morning the troops were put in motion at seven o'clock and those whose destination were at the station soon were in camp. About ten o'clock that morning rain commenced falling and continued to fall until Friday noon, rending everything wet, nasty, and oh! how muddy. I concluded my business Wednesday night at the courthouse and was relieved of the duties of Provost Marshall for which I am devoutly thankful.

Thursday morning Jan, 22, I got a four horse team loaded in my tent and camp equipage and in the rain rode horseback down to the camp of the 16th. Here they were the front of the camp in the edge of a soft inactive cornfield and the rear in a pitch pine grove with stumps and brush all around. I got six men detailed and commenced clearing away, burning brush and digging up the ground to level it as my place fell on side hill ground. By great exertions I got my tent pitched at dark and a floor (if such it could be called) made of pitch pine poles from 3 to 4 inches in diameter laid closely together. Remember these poles were all wet, soggy and nasty, but they kept me out of the mud. I got my stove up in one corner started a fire after a while out of wet wood and then the steam arose magnificently. I turned in about nine o'clock and slept soundly where, when at home, I should not dream of laying down. The next day I cleaned up about my tent, burned brush, cut down stumps, etc, employing three men. Saturday I got some boards and made a floor, although I felt too unwell to do anything. At noon I gave out. My head ached intensely and I was sick at my stomach. I then found out that I had taken cold. My lungs were as clear as ever and I was not stuffed in the throat in the least. The cold all so settle as to effectually clog the action of the liver, causing oppression in the region. Sunday morning I washed me all over then went to the surgeon and got two colocynth and one blue pills which I took and in the mean time and until Monday noon ate nothing whatever. This is the first ache I have had for a long time, and after the medicine operated I felt better, but I did not feel like doing anything Monday.

Tuesday morning immediately after breakfast I received an order from Gen. Stoughton whose quarters are yet at Fairfax Station to report in person at nine o'clock. I went up and spent the day in taking testimony and preparing the necessary papers in a case of confiscation of goods of a sutler who had sold liquors to soldiers. It was a wet, rainy day, and the mud in some places in places in the road was ten to fifteen inches in depth. Upon my return that evening to camp I learned much to my joy that the Paymaster had arrived and that we were to receive some return

for our valuable services to one excellent Uncle Samuel. The men were paid from the date of the organization of their companies to October 31st and the field officers from the date of their commissions to the 31st October only. I had expected to be paid until the 31st of December, but I was disappointed with all the others. I have since learned that had I gone to Washington after I had been Provost Marshall one month I could have got that months pay. I being on detached service. As it is I only got after deducting the 3 percent tax which officers have to pay \$192,60 of this amount I shall send you within a week - just as soon as the Paymaster returns from Wolf Run Shoals - a draft for the sum of \$100, which you can get cashed at any bank in the state. I could sent the bills now but a draft is safer and costs nothing, only the paymaster got out of blanks when he paid us and had to send to Washington for more. Had I been paid in full to Jan 1st I should have sent you much more but as it is you will have to wait probably six weeks. I have paid up all my bills out here and have enough left to pay my expenses for the ensuring two months, besides the \$100 I send you and the \$480 that will be due me next Saturday night. So you will see I have not been very extravagant.

Last Tuesday was the anniversary of our marriage. I thought of it all day and evening and upon receiving the six years that have elapsed since that time I often very often mentally exclaimed what a dear good wife I've got. I have had no momentary dire, nor even dreamed of a possible condition of things wherein I was not fully abundantly and more than satisfied with the choice then solemnly and deliberately made. I am indeed blessed with the devotion of a darling wife and the love of two dear children that have crowned our union and made the strongest of ties even yet more indissoluble. God grant that it may long continue.

Burnside has resigned and so have Sumner and Franklin and Joe Hooker is in command. I apprehend that the greatest cause Burnside had to delay his movement is to be found in the fact that some of the old army Generals do not fancy the President's Proclamation and so they measurably refused their cordial co-operation. With me Generals are nothing, but the cause is everything. If it is necessary, I hope all the Fitz John Porter's, Griffin's and Franklin's will be weeded out and men put in command who believe in fighting for love of country and patriotism, more than for men professional reputation. Their is evidently in the army a sort of West Point aristocracy that inflect some of our officers, and something else that I do not know the name of. To my mind it is clear that McClellan was derelict in obeying the orders of Halleck last August in moving from Harrison's Landing to this region. F. J. Porter has just been convicted of culpable remissions in not obeying with alacity the orders of Gen. Pope and so it goes. There are other officers of the same sort in the service. They should be wed out. If a general is so important, or so big, or is too proud to obey all the lawful orders of his superiors he should be degraded at once no matter what his rank and previous services. The trail of Porter and his richly deserved sentence will open the eyes of the country I hope and of officer also. But it is useless to speculate. Then will be some desperate fighting this spring.

The weather again. Wednesday morning the ground was covered with snow and all day long it blew, it snowed, and it melted. My outside tent: I got the second one erected Monday directly a front of and joined to my first for saddle, wood, extra luggage etc, broke down under the weight. I spent the day in fixing up for evening recitations, the first of which has been held during the writing of this letter. This morning the ground was covered with twelve to fifteen inches of snow. I much mistake if you in Vermont didn't catch it this time. Today I attended and conducted dress parade out in the field where the snow is a foot deep. Yet we are quite comfortable in our tents, much more than I supposed we could be.

I entertained no fears that my secesh land lady would passion me when I was paying her a dollar a day for poor board. Yet she gave me the best she could and treated me kindly. She and her seven children at home - 3 absent - and husband seemed to like me. She said that she liked "gentlemen" let them belong to whatever army the might and that whenever in Virginia if I was sick and in want of a home. I should have one in welcome at her house so long as she had one. Her youngest just Lizzie's age was all the time in my lap, and she would resent my being called a "Yankee" to her I was "secesh" "Cos the Colonel's a good man." All the people at Fairfax Court House treated me with deference, mostly I supposed because I was the "Provo." I did not say harsh things, nor harass them. I told them I cared not what opinions they entertained about public affairs. It was only their public speech and actions that I could notice. So long as they demeaned themselves as peaceable persons, obeyed my rules for their government, and maintained a prudent reserve of speech I would protect their persons, families and houses from harm and depredations of course reserving to myself to occupy all necessary accommodations for public quarters, hospitals, etc. I do not believe there is a prominent man in the place but what would do me a kindness should the fortunes of war place me in their power. The General said I was a splendid magistrate. I am of opinion that it pays to be decent as well to the advantage of the government and the Union cause as to individuals.

I am quite concerned about Charlie. The cough is the least part of it. I do not like the appearance of those sores. What they are I cannot imagine but their slow, lingering, half hidden operations are indicative of some latent physical depravity I fear. This, joined to his bodily weakness the comparatively little power in his limbs excites my apprehensions for his future. I have for a year felt that there were will grounded reasons for believing that it would be a delicate takes to raise him to a well, strong man. I feel much solicitude about him. Lizzie's organization is so delicate that her lungs will be likely to receive the first impressions of disease. Yet I think as much open air and as little furnace heat as possible will be the best as a general rule.

I am quite well now. It is remarkable the elasticity with which I recover from any attack and how well I bear exposure. I do not know of a man in the regiment so uniformly well as I have been nor of another one that could have borne the transition from sleeping in a room to a tent in mud and water so well as I have done.

I told Gen. Stoughton and Col. Veazey of the incidents of Tyler's funeral scene. As they know the Major and his weaknesses they were greatly amused.

Poor Godfrey, liberally educated, is gone. I remember when he was one of the pleasantest families in Brattleboro and his wife well education too and thoroughly domestic - of remarkably fine sensibilities will due of a broken heart! Hunt is going in the same way, but he leaves no wife to share the disgrace or to be dragged down to the tomb.

I am glad our society is prospering so well. My judgment in settling Mr. Stowe is thus vindicated. Please remember me to him and his wife, and \$10 of my earnings shall go to his support another year.

Love and kisses to you all and another letter in a few days.

- My darling wife, "I am fondly thou own " husband. - Charles

(No 19)

Fairfax Court House, Feb 4th, 1863

My Darling Wife,

The Colonel and I have just returned from Washington where we went Monday afternoon. Having got paid some money I thought I would spend some of it - so I purchased a blouse, pair of boots, saddle cloth, belt, and cravat, costing me nearly \$40, including expenses. Everything is dear any where but especially so at sutlers. We pay nearly \$2.00 per bushel for potatoes, 40 cents for butter and other things except what we can purchase at the quartermaster at government prices in proportion.

At Willards we met Gen. Phelps just from Brattleboro, having been summoned thence by government for what purpose I do not know. In the evening we went to see Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and had a pleasant entertainment. They appeared in "The Fairy Circle" and she in "The Law for Ladies."

While in Washington I also purchased a few photographs for you album at Brady's. They are not the best but are the best I could get. I purchased half a dozen more but must have left them. I shall write for them and get them soon.

As I have been unremitting in my attentions to you I will amend by enclosing a check for \$100. I understand from Major Halsey that early in March he will pay us for four months which will give me the means to send you a good lump. Unless some accident occurs I shall not have to buy any more clothing for several months if at all except possibly another pair of boots.

It is cold out here. The snow is three fourth gone and now the ground is frozen quite hard. It has scarcely thawed today. But I prefer this weather to the wet, muddy, cloudy, foggy air of the last few weeks. I feel quite well and am in good condition.

I must attend the dress parade for which the call has sounded, get my lesson and hear a recitation this evening. Doing all this I can't write much more and get this into the mail tonight, and I am anxious that you think receive these remittance as soon as possible.

The enclosed check you can get cashed at either bank in the place, and it will help you some. I only wish that it was double the amount.

I hear intimations that we shall move soon, where I do not know. Just as soon as the spring opens there will be work to do in the field.

Give my love to mother, kiss Lizzie and Charlie and believe me

Always your loving husband - Charles

Fairfax Station, VA Feb 27th, 1863

My Darling Wife,

A very unusual length of time has elapsed since you have received a letter from me, and I am greatly pained to find that it has been, when you receive this more than three weeks. I say to find, for on the evening of the 13th inst. I wrote you a short letter which I supposed my servant put in the mail, as I was not well enough to go out, but which I think was not sent as upon inquiry this evening he says that he said one here directed to you since that date, but during my absence it has been mislaid. Then again brother Henry was here the next week and he promised me that on his return he would call and see you, which I supposed would partly answered in place of a letter. This a time I have returned to camp and have just found and read your letters of the 15th and 22nd the last with sadness on account of the distressing intelligence it brings of the death of my dear angel mother.

I most deeply regret the anxiety I have occasioned you, my own dearest wife, by neglecting to write you before this, and I well make all one amends in my power by seeing to it that you will never have occasion for a like complaint in the future.

As Henry probably has told you I have been considerably out of health since I last wrote. The case briefly is this: In returning to my regiment from being Provost Marshal at Fairfax Court House, I caught a severe cold by exchanging a dry room in a brick building for a tent on very wet ground, but my general health was so very good that threw off the evil effects of it with comparative ease. The seeds of it however remained and when I went to Washington. I made such additions that the next day after writing you the letter enclosing the photographs I found I was in possession of the worst cold I ever had in my life. I did what I could do readily in camp to cure it but it daily grew worse. It resulted in an inflammation of all the air passages of my head, throat and bronchial vessels with considerable fever, but fortunately it did not sensibly affect my lungs beyond the larger bronchi. Nevertheless I continued by abstinence from eating etc., to get along and do duty except taking the command of the regiment on account of the loss of my voice a great extent, until Saturday the 14th inst. In the meantime I thought I should get over the cold as soon as it had had its run, until the 11th after which time I found that it was likely to produce constitutional complications unless attended to. During all this period I was compelled to lie down two or three times every day from sheer exhaustion. It was all I could well do to keep about. Had I been at home I should have occupied the lounge most of the time. Thus I kept on until Saturday the 14th when, after the Regimental drill in the morning. I rode to Fairfax Court House to consult Dr. Baker, an English gentleman of 20 years experience in this climate. He told me that I could not remain in a tent another night without imminent danger for a tent is so sensitive to the sudden changes of this changeful season of the year, that it is next to impossible to make medication available in it. My whole system was in condition known among physicians as hypernomia - a tense fullness amounting almost to general inflammation. He strongly urged me to get a room in a snug house and take care of myself. So I followed his advice, got the medicine he prescribed blue pill, doves powder and flax-seed and lemons, and went to Mr. Jackson's where I boarded when I was Provost Marshal at this place I remained until this afternoon. That Saturday evening I took my blue pill, drank flax seed tea with lemon juice in it, soaked my feet in hot water with mustard in it, and took sweat after going to bed. The next day I

felt much improved Monday night Henry and Mr. Beaman came and in the midst of a violent snowstorm they left the next day. Henry did not speak of mother's illness as likely to be immediately dangerous, but thought it doubtful if ever I should see her again.

Speaking of myself I continued to improve during the week, but I did not get along very fast. My windpipe was sore and every cough seemed to irritate in greatly. However, I should have gone to my regiment Sunday the 22nd had not a terrible snow storm set in which was by far the worst of the season. The wind blew and whistled like in Vermont, and the snow fall and piled in drifts without thawing in the least. Monday and Tuesday were also cold days, and for the first time I heard the merry sound of sleigh bells in the "Old Dominion." Wednesday was pleasant but the snow was on the ground so deep that the Colonel thought it not best to send my servant with my horse for me. Thursday it rained hard all day, and tonight I am in camp. During the time I was at Mr. Jackson's there was neither pen and ink in the house, but I sent out Monday and got some with the design of writing you. But owing to some movement of our troops in front, resulting from the capture of some of our pickets there have been no passes granted to Washington and Alexandria from Fairfax Court House except by way of the station all this week - and I have had but one chance to send a letter until this evening and then the messenger an aide of the General's could not wait until I could write even briefly. Then again I was expecting daily to come to camp when I could write definitely of my situation. So much in relation to how I have been and why you had not heard sooner from me.

I will say that Mr. Jackson and his family treated me very kindly, and that Mrs. J took great pains in preparing everything I needed.

During all the time I was then I was continually thinking of home, of wife and children and of my dear mother. Yet all this time I was more low spirited than ever I was before in my life. You may remember that when I was sick a year ago last fall you could not understand why I was so silent and abstracted. I suffered during the past two or three weeks in the same way only to a greater extent, but I am thankful that I have nearly recovered from that feeling now.

My dear mother is gone, but what is our loss is her gain. If any person ever realizes in the future state the beatitude of heaven as described in some parts of the Bible, that dear mother will most surely. I verily believe she never made an enemy in her life, nor do I think there was ever a person who wished her ill in any manner whatever. I never heard her say a harsh nor an unkind word of any person, nor do I believe she ever felt the least ill - will or unkindness towards any living being. Always ready to excuse who others judged harshly. She would forgive and forget any slight or injury, and overlook all errors. Truly do I say that I most religiously believe that so far as it is accorded to human nature she was a woman without guile. She loved her children with the most devoted tenderness and never wearied in ministering to their comfort. I am glad to learn that he was spared great pain and suffering and that her end was peaceful physically. I well know her mind would not be disturbed by fears or doubts. She is gone and may her example be imitated by her children. She loved so devotedly and unselfishly. My dearly loved wife I thank you most gratefully for this manifestation of your kindness in being present and ministry to her in her last hours. I know well she loved you with a love scarcely second to that she felt for her own children, both on your own account and as the chosen wife of her eldest son. She had more than once told me of this. Had it been possible I would have been with her to smooth her dying pillow and to receive her parting benedictions. It will always be to me a some of peculiar pleasure that you was able to do all this. God bless you for doing it.

I am now pretty well. My cough has nearly left me, and what little there is comes from the mucus in the bronchial vessels. My lungs are sound, and altogether I am much better than when I

went to Washington. I have no sort of doubt that I shall get along, for I assure you that I will be careful.

I did not know anything of Lieut. Simonds amours until I received your letter albeit I knew that he had an unenviable reputation for a man of family or even without a family in the line. I asked the Colonel about it. He told me that it was common talk in the camp, and that Simonds had spoken to him about it, denying that he had gone to that extent, but admitting more or less intercourse. It seems that three women claim his services, but their names I have not learned. Simonds is acting Provost Marshall at Fairfax Station, the duties of which office consist mainly in having charge of the freight, loading and unloading cars, and countersigning passes for transportation merely. He is quite unwell. I think these new developments will make him sick. He is unquestionably a libertine, but he thought probably that he was sufficiently smart to avoid the ultimate consequences of his indulgences. I do not pity him. I told him more than a year since that he was disgracing himself and friends. He has made money in his hotel fast, by selling rum and keeping improper persons on his premises have naturally contributed to his gains. I hope this lesson will be useful to him. But I will say for him that he discharged the duties of Commissary Sergeant so ably that he deserved promotion he received. However, the regiment feels disgraced by his conduct.

To night there is quite a gathering at a new building near the station, erected for the Quartermaster's Department. Mrs. Col. Nichols and a dozen other Vermont Ladies had made preparations for a social dance and gathering there, and they invited all the field officers and some of the line officers there. The Colonel and Dr. Lyman of Vermont have gone. Your perhaps remember the Doctor. He dined with us at the time of the convention and is now the agent of Vermont to look after the sick and wounded soldiers. It will be a pleasant time bathing in the mud. These ladies somehow manage to ride out occasionally on horseback, but there are not enough side - saddles for them all to go at once. I believe they will leave for Vermont soon. A recent order has been pronounced by the terms of which all the troops around Washington from the Monocacy in Maryland down to the Occoquan in Va, are organized into the 22nd Army Corps under the command of Maj. Gen. Heintzelman. This includes the three Brigades in Casey's Division, of which the 2nd Vermont is the 2nd Brigade. Our designation is: 16th Vermont Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Casey's Division, 22nd Army Corps." But all this is not necessary in directing to us now. Should the entire corps move together then it would be necessary. I think that these new brigades will be detached in the spring and sent into the field and our places here filled with shattered brigades that had have sometime in the service. I hope so, for I should not like our time to expire with no sight at service.

There does not seem to be much army news just at the present moment. The traveling is horrible and it is next to impassable to move an army.

All the troops in the service are to be mustered tomorrow, as is usual on the last day of every two months. It is from these rolls that the men are paid.

If I can find a small holly tree, that I can box and send home I shall send one this spring. I gave Henry a small twig. It is a beautiful evergreen.

I do not know of any general news that is of any special interest. Our troops cannot do much except to drill on their company grounds, and study tactics.

I shall write Sarah tomorrow. Give my love to mother and tell our dear little ones that their papa does remember them many times every day. I am my dear wife your loving faithful husband - Charles.

Camp near Fairfax Station, VA
Feb 28th, 1863

My Dearest Wife,

Your letter numbered 26 and dated Feb 15th with Sarah's letter enclosed, reached me by mail only this afternoon. Thus it was only until last evening that I had any tidings from you of mother's sickness and death. I wrote you a long letter last night and which went out in this morning's mail; but as Capt. R. W. Clarke is in camp tonight and will start for home tomorrow I will avail myself of the pleasure of writing you another letter.

I send home the sword presented me for reason that I have one that I prefer for service, and in moving about a second one will be quite likely to get lost. Please rub the blade with a little sweet oil and put it in a dry place. I have worn it on parade and drill in Virginia.

I did not know until today that Mr. Dutton was dead. Both Capt. C. and your letter described the fact. He was a most estimable man.

This afternoon the 14th, 15th, and 16th Vermont Regiments have been ordered to be ready to receive marching orders at a moment's notice with two days cooked rations where to I do not know, but I suspect in the direction of Leesburg towards Harper's Ferry from here. It is said that the rebel cavalry is threatening an attack in that quarter. After all just as likely as not it is only a big scare. I knew Thursday morning of the Rebel's having crossed the Rappahannock at Kelley's Ford, and I see it in today's papers. I got the news from Col. Johnson of the 5th N.Y. Cavalry, who immediately started on a reconnaissance with 1200 to 1500 cavalry. He was to return today, but as his headquarters are at Fairfax Court House. I have not seen him since his return.

What the plan of government in the spring's campaign is I have no more means of guessing than you at home have. I hope it will be of such comprehension, directness, and sagacity and be executed so vigorously and persistently that the rebellion will be measurably subdued.

The most painful spectacle that now presents itself is that of the traitorous copperhead "peace" men in the north who are talking and acting treason under the guise of restoring "the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is." They are a secret confederation of traitors who see in the putting down of the rebellion and the consequent downfall of slavery the loss of their natural political allies and their future party poverty. It stirs one's blood that the miserable, craven hearted demagogues not content with their own treason should seek to link the brave soldiers who are periling all they hold dear in the defense of their country with them in their shame. C. H. Davenport of Wilmington is one of this number. He came out here and after hearing me talk said I was the first officer he had seen who was willing to support the administration to the utmost in putting down the rebellion and in employing any and every means for that purpose. He went home and most shamefully belied the 16th Regiment. I meant him in my letter and not Mr. Howard.

Last Monday a series of resolutions 4 persuasive of the sentiments of the 16th Regiment in relation to the war were drawn up and signed by every commissioned officer present and after being read on dress parade were put to vote, when on the question of their adoption from six to seven hundred men all that were present, answered a thundering, hearty, unanimous aye! These have been sent to Vermont, and will appear in some of the papers. The army is all right and if the men and women we have left behind us will take care of the miserable platoon who are

maligning us we will put down the rebellion here, and then come home and squelch their treasonable speech and practices.

I have faith that we shall succeed. I recognize but one alternative - Disunion or the subjugation of the rebels. To disunion, I will never willingly consent so long as my arm and my tongue is left. Whatever I am, I am at my country's service until this great work is accomplished and may God speed the day.

I am dearest Lizzie your own loving faithful husband - Charles

I have forgotten the numbers. Instead of "2nd Vt. Brigade" Please direct "2nd Brigade Casey's Division, etc."

Fairfax Station March 9th, 1863

Dear Wife,

Your letter of Feb 15th was received Feb 28 and yours of Feb 25th and March came to here in due course of mail. Since then, I have not received any letters from you. I wrote you last Saturday and sent the letter by Capt. Clarke who then said that he should be at home Tuesday, but who I applaud did not "fetch around" at that time I also sent home the sword presented me.

Last night was an exciting time in this vicinity. It was one of the darkest, rainiest, and muddiest night that was ever felt - it could not be seen. In the night Fitz Lee's cavalry made a raid into Fairfax Court House from the direction of Falls Church and captured Gen. Stoughton, all his horses and about a hundred men. They surrounded the house and other houses where Col. Wyndham and Col. Johnson's Headquarters where. An officer rode up and knocked at the door of Stoughton's house. John Martin asked "Who's there?" The reply was "a friend who wishes to see Gen. Stoughton upon the door." John opened the door when the officer and other entered and putting a pistol to John's head, demanded to be shown to the General's room. John said that the General was at Fairfax Station One of the party replied that "He knew better as he had seen the General at the court house late in the afternoon." John then showed them to his room where he was a sleeping. But further threatening on the part of the rebels had him to know where to the General's room. The officer entered wore the General's room. The officer entered, woke the General and told him that Fitz Lee commanded the place and that he, the General, was his prisoner. So Stoughton got up, dressed and followed his captor without more ado. Col. Wyndham was in Washington, so he was not captured and Col. Johnston of the 5th New York cavalry who with his wife and children making his headquarters in the village escaped by jumping from his window in his shirt and security himself under a barn floor not 10 feet from where a rebel guard was stationed. Some of the men taken belong to the 16th Vermont and 2 of them to Company B to wit Putty Baker and Barney Pratt.

I do not learn that even a gun was fired by our guards. It was a most complete surprise and was a brilliant exploit Gen. Fitz Lee used to live close to here. He owned the ground on which our camps now on. Nearly all his cavalry was raised in this county and they knew every road, lane, path, stream and house intimately. Besides, there is good reason for believing that they have spies in at Fairfax Court House nearly every day.

I had a narrow escape. I went up to the court house after dinner yesterday. It got to be dark before I got through supper at Spencer Jackson's where I boarded which I was Provost Marshall and they wanted I should stay all night it was so dark and rainy. I was also urged to stay at headquarters. My horse was put up in the General's barn. I waited until it was time for the moon to rise, say 1/2 past 9 and then got my horse and started for camp. Up to this time it had not rained and although raining, the sun had set in a totally clearly sky. I had barely mounted my horse when the rain began to fall, slowly at first. My path was across lots, through woods, brush, and mud.

I could not see a rod before me to discuss anything. The sky was pitch black and the rain increasing. I rode on about two miles until I came to a house of a good Union man where some of our sick soldiers are quartered and as the rain was then falling in torrents and I had a stream to ford, I concluded to stay the night. This remaining, I was in camp before breakfast. It is proper to remark that at 2 o'clock it nearly cleared off, and the moon shone out. I was away from the court

house about an hour and a half before the raid. Had I stayed all night, my horse and saddle, would have been captured and I should have been on my way to Richmond. As it is, I am here and very well.

Your affectionate husband

Charles.

Mrs. Stoughton, the General's mother and her two daughters are at the courthouse, and were stopping in a neighboring house. It is not necessary to say that their feeling are painful in a sense. General Lee, who captured Stoughton was a classmate of his at West Point.

In camp near Fairfax Station, VA
March 16th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your letter of March 6th was received Wednesday of last week, and yours of the 3 inst., was delayed until Saturday the 14th. The box you spoke of as having sent has not yet been heard from as yet, but then we have had no express matter come to the Regiment since Wednesday. It may be along tomorrow. I have delayed writing two days awaiting its arrival.

My health is excellent, although my voice has not got its usual timbre, or fullness and seriousness. Week before last I drilled the regiment four successive days and I used it too much. I should not have done it but the Colonel was away and I wanted the practice. My appetite is enormous and I am getting fat for me not to an extent to exhibit any alderman is rotundity as yet.

During the last four days I have been engaged in commanding a detail of 600 men engaged in constructing rifle pits for the defense of Fairfax Station. I am engineer and all having made the plans, location, and all else without one visit or direction from the Colonel commanding the Brigade. It is new business, but by the time I get thorough I shall have learned something. I have now about ten days more of work planned out, including four redoubts for artillery. I spent all day Sunday and most of my time evenings until 12 o'clock in making plans and specifications to guide the captains who immediately superintend the men. My outer lines on opposite sides of our camp are two miles apart so I have plenty of horseback exercise. At first it was contemplated to have a new officer detailed each day but after the first day the entire work was placed under my supervision. When completed I shall have three to four miles of rifle pits for the defense of this important place, important because it is the entry point for the supplies of an army holding this section of Virginia.

I was quite glad to receive the hair from the heads of the dear ones. It is a reminder of the little darlings who hardly suspect how dearly their father loves them nor how glad he would be to see them. Doubtless the hair has faded some since it was cut off, and yet I am not positive I do not see some streaks of red in Charlie's

I see copied from the New York Times an article or communication in reference to Gen. Stoughton's capture, based on an extract of a letter written purporting to have been written by a soldier that is as man as it is unjust, charging in substance that the General remained at Fairfax Court House on account of an improper intimacy with a certain Miss Ford and etc., now I was not personally acquainted with Miss Ford but I know she enjoyed the reputation among both men and women of being a chaste and virtuous young woman and her family although secehes were as respectable or considered so, as any family in Virginia. The General's mother and sisters stopped then. More than that the general has not had his quarters there these two months, and I doubt if he had seen the lady twice in that time as neither he nor his family ever boarded there. The two parts of the house were entirely district, save a common entrance. It is bad enough that the General should occupy a house a ways from his immediate command, for comfort of himself and friends; but it is not necessary to charge him with what no intelligent friend or enemy even has any reason to believe him guilty of. But you know the old saying about ever men giving a kick to one going down hill. And this leads me to speak of Webber who recently died at Brattleboro. He was a moderate drinker only, but increased his rations after he quit business on account of his health, solely by the direction of physicians who knew his disease. There was no

engineer on the road who was so much relied on as he by the management, and he never could have held the place with any sort of reputation for intemperance among the intelligent. I would not extenuate his fault of drinking more than I should deem advisable for me, but he could not properly be called intemperate, at least until after I left Brattleboro, and then he was doomed.

There is nothing of special interest here yet. Our regiments have not yet been called out, but we are living in a state of preparation for such an event. The rumors of rebel raids, and advances in this direction are not infrequent. There is little doubt that this country is infested with spies. An expedition Saturday night under command of Lt. Vinton captured four citizens one of whom had admitted enough to a supposed confederate but really one of our spies to convict him I think. He will be sent to Washington unless the authorities permit us to try and hang him. He is in close custody.

There is some prospect that something will be done before long at Vicksburg and Charleston. The former place is pretty fully surrounded and invested and it is believed that the latter will be.

Nothing has as yet been heard of the two Brattleboro boys captured with Gen. Stoughton. All the others including Abner White are quite well and looking finely. Nearly every man in the regiment is healthier than when at home.

Enclosed is a photograph of Col. Veazey taken when he was first Colonel of this regiment and much thinner in flesh than now as he had but recently recovered from sickness. Also a fine one of Hugh H. Henry of Chester, with his big stock and all, and one of Maj. Gen. H. W. Slocum of the Army of the Potomac.

I also enclose one of a dozen or so copies of a profile view with measurements of a section of a rifle pit, representing one end of the embankment and ditches if cut down through perpendicularly, the main ditch on the miner side for the protection of the men and the step for them to stand on when firing.

Give my love to mother and in the usually way to the babies. I do not think there is any special need of sending it especially to you.

By the way I must not omit writing that yesterday - Sunday - was the most peculiar day of the season. Four inches of fine solid hail fell, and all the afternoon it came in a succession of showers accompanied with sharp lightning and almost continued thunder. It was a novel thunder storm, so very cold and sleety.

Good night my dearest, Faithfully and lovingly Your Husband - Charles.

Camp Near Fairfax Station
March 17th, 1863

My Dearest Wife,

Your very acceptable shipment duly arrived this afternoon and its contents will be very grateful if they are sour, sharp and high seasoned. I have sent to Abner White his two towels, 2 pairs of sock and box of pepper. The cheese pot was broken but so retained its form that the cheese was safe. The sauce can leaked at the top a little, probably from being bottom upwards, and the apples were considerably bruised. But considering the rough road it had to trail it came in good condition. All I can do now is to thank you, and when the paymaster comes, whom we expect this month, I will no longer be unremitting in my thankfulness.

I see by the newspaper that the recent capture of Gen. Stoughton is the all absorbing topic of conversation and criticism, and that it provokes all sorts of comment.

I was pained to see copied from the New York Times a gross charge of dalliance with a woman of easy virtue - a Miss Ford - and that assigned as a reason for his remaining away from the immediate command and his consequent capture made against him. The family of Mrs. Ford - was one of the most respectable in the place and the reputation of Miss Ford - whom I knew but was barely acquainted with, was a fair and unspotted as that of any lady in Virginia. Although the General made his quarters at the home about a month, he could have seen but little of her as he boarded in his mess and his apartment were taken care of by an old Negro wench. His mother and sisters occupied the same apartments but took their meals with him at his quarters in a house a square distant.

Gen. S(toughton) is a handsome man is young and fond of female society, but he never had the reputation nor does any officer in this brigade believe him capable of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman."

His military standing and reputation is however, much injured, and his promotion to a brigadier will never receive the sanction of the senate. The president has withdrawn his name for that office. Gen. Stannard will probably be assigned to his brigade.

As I wrote you last evening I do not have much news. I received a letter from Henry today. Expressing his pleasure that my name was not among the list of officers captured at Fairfax Court House.

Love to all - Your loving Husband – Charles

March 21st, 1863

Dearest:

I got my letter sealed before I thought of the extracts so I have to write a supplement.

I also enclose a slip entitled "A Sad Incident." I suspect it relates to Mrs. Tuckerman of South Boston, whose husband embezzled the funds of some Railroad when Treasurer; but of this I am not certain. You may have seen it in some other connection.

Bethel Ranger of firm "Thompson and Ranger" is at Wolf Run Shoals, six miles from here, with the 12th and 13th Regiments, repairing watches for the boys.

Lieut. Simonds is not worth much since the reports of his infantry tactics at Brattleboro. He was found drunk in his quarters when wanted for duty the other day, but was let off with a stinging reprimand. Another such offense and he will be court martial and cashiered.

Charles.

Camp Near Fairfax Station, Va.
March 21st, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of the 13th and No. 34, was received in due season. I am very sorry to hear of your ill-health resulting from your cold. You will need exercise great care. Pneumonia is the bane of a mild winter at home as it is here in the acclimation. But although my cold was so severe it did not affect the air cells of my lungs to any appreciable extent. I could then inhale a full breath as well as now. The inflammation was confined to the larger air passages. Your constitutional tendency to a weakness in that organ makes it indispensable that you attend to medication in season. I hope to hear, however, in your next letter that you are better.

S. C. Covey in company B, received news, through a telegraph dispatch from the governor to Col. Veazey, last night, that his wife and three children were sick, the former not expected to live. We got him a furlough for fifteen days and he started for Washington this morning to get it approved by Generals Casey and Heintzelman, and if successful, will have Washington and arrive at Brattleboro Monday by the morning train from Springfield. If tomorrow were not Sunday, he would get through from Washington tomorrow night - 23 hours being the regular time between the two cities. He will call upon you before he comes back. He used to peddle meat for Hadley and cut up a pig for us a year or two since. He was detailed as cook for Gen. Stoughton down to the time of the raid, and has since been on similar duty at Col. Blunt's quarters.

Gen. Stoughton has arrived safely at Richmond and is lodged with the other prisoners in the Libby prison. I suspect he will find it uncomfortable quarters in that lousy, filthy den, as his habits and taste for personal neatness and cleanness are of no ordinary order.

I regret that there should be so much bitterness manifested toward him by the city peers and such petty spite and small, low sort of malignity at home. The fact is there General has been pitted by overweening friends like Senators Foote and John P. Hale until he was more or less spoiled. He was a great favorite with Lizzie Hall, a Washington Belle and daughter of the Senator. He is a ladies man, that is he is passionately fond of the society of pretty and chatty young ladies. He was a good tactician and disciplinarian and did much in these respects for the Brigade. But he is far short of being such a genuine soldier as Gen. Phelps. However, he is dead to advancement. He was commissioned by the president on the 5th of November as Brigadier General. That appointment held good until his nomination, sent it when congress met, was acted upon definitely by the Senate and if they did not act upon it until the adjournment. They did not finally act upon it, so it expired March 4th. But the new senate was convened the same day, for executive business and his nomination was reviewed by the President. If there had been no action by the senate it would have held good until the adjournment of the next congress whenever that should be. If rejected by the senate that ended the matter. The senate did not act upon it, his friends delaying to press it for fear of defeat. After his capture it was withdrawn for it would have then been defeated sure. He received his renewed commission the day before his capture. Such is the regular course of all presidential appointments made in vacation.

I enclosed you slips one giving an account of the general's arrival at Richmond and the other a copy of Miss Antonia J. Ford's commission as Major from Gen. Stuart. Miss Ford was always regarded as a respectable woman and member of a highly respectable family. They were all secesh, her brother being in the rebel cavalry Stuart gave a number of such commissions. He

offered one to Belle Jackson, where I boarded, but she would not accept it, because Stuart kept her, and her sister and husband, when the two last were on their way through his lines a year ago last February to go to a minister's at Warrenton to get married over night, as prisoners at his quarters. Stuart, the Rebel General of Cavalry is only thirty and is fond of just such frolics.

I do not think the Jacksons had the least suspicion of the raid, and I am sure they would have done all the their power to protect me from capture. Mr. And Mrs. J are people who mind their own business and treat every solder who behaves himself well, courteously and kindly on which ever side he may be. Belle is secesh like all the hot blooded Southern girls, but all she can do is to talk, and that more severely than she means, much as Hannah does.

I expect Gen. Stannard will be assigned to this brigade, at least it is so understood. He is a plan, practical man with an abundance of good sense, and with that a good soldier. If he comes he will live in his tent like the others of his command, and if he is taken prisoner it will only be after a fight and with the rest of the brigade.

I have got my rife pits nearly completed having made about 3000 yards. Next week I have two or three redoubts to build for artillery and then the defenses for this station will be sufficient for any probable contingency.

The weather this month is quite stormy. We are having a constant succession of snow storms, small in amount but keeping the ground muddy and nasty. I suspect that in Vermont you will find nearly "six weeks sledding in March" this year.

The pickles are nice and quite acceptable. Such condiment are infinitely preferable to all the pies, cakes, etc., that can be sent.

If you can get Mr. Ellis to trim the grapevines soon it will be a good thing. It should be done soon or not at all, for if delayed they will bleed injuriously.

I am in the best of health and hope that this will find you fully restored.

Give my love to mother and the children and believe me,

Your loving Husband - Charles .

Fairfax Station, March 23rd, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock our regiments move - the 15th and 16th southwesterly to Union Mills, the present running terminus of the Alexandria and Orange R. R., and seven miles beyond the station on the same road toward the interior. We shall then be "in front" and have picket duty on Bull Run, in face of whatever enemy may be there. Here "picket duty" will mean something, and I shall have to be Field Officer of the day twice a week. I am glad of the change.

The 14th go to Wolf Run Shoals and there join the 12th and 13th. They will be six miles southerly from the station and about five miles from us - the three places being at the angles of a nearly equilateral triangle Fairfax Station the apex and the picket line the base.

Nothing new here except Baker and Pratt have been paroled and have returned from Richmond, Gen. S(toughton) is in the Libby prison sleeping on a floor with one pair of blankets in a room where there over one hundred other officers and lice more numerous than in Egypt in the days when Moses plagued them. How fair isn't it. Pratt says that Capt. Mosby had but 29 men and in this his account agrees with that of the captain, which I enclose. Although you have probably seen it before this.

In all my letters I am only to supply such news as you will not get from any other source so authentic.

By the way I have found Mr. Whitman of Springfield Vermont, (he who owns and is refitting the woolen factory at Thomasville, that Col. Veazey's wife is expecting and I judge from what he says is expecting confinement within 4 months. I suspect the Col. will be delighted or rather is with the prospect although he will want to be at home at the denouement.

You will please omit "near Fairfax Station" on your letters and substitute there on "At Union Mills" - otherwise as heretofore. I write this in my lap in the Adjutant's tent as my things are packed and it is so lack that I cannot so a line.

Just 5 months today since we were mustered in. Four more and we shall be mustered out. I hope the war will then be closed, otherwise if well I shall want a further hand in the matter.

Devotedly your husband - Charles.

Camp Near Union Mills, Va.
March 31st, 1863

My Dearest Wife,

Yours of March 20 - 22, was received on the 26th, which is the last letter I have received from you. I wrote you on the 23rd, the night before we moved camp, and have several times since purposed to write before this, but have not succeeded. It is now snowing and it has snowed all the morning, so there is nothing doing in camp. Major Rounds is field officer of the day, and my turn comes again Thursday - once in six days.

We have a delightful camp on a rise of ground smaller but not totally unlike the camp at Brattleboro, with a splendid spring of water in the rear. We are now "in front," close to Bull Run on which our picket line is stationed. This now classic stream is about twice as large as Whelston Brook in the spring, but it is fordable in but few places at this season of the year for cavalry, and not at all for artillery and scarcely for infantry. The banks on both sides are steep and precipitous in most places as high and steep as those of the Connecticut on the Chesterfield side when mother was almost afraid to ride. But at the same time there are numerous small ravines running into the main stream nearly at right angles, with corresponding steep banks up and down which we ride in visiting the pickets, making altogether the most easily defensive picket line and the very worst one to traverse that I have yet seen. It is nine hours hard work to start at Union Mills ride up on the line to Blackburn's Ford, about three miles, examine the pickets, supports and reserves, communicate instructions question the men as to their knowledge and appreciation of their duties, ride back again to the initiate point, and then make a corresponding visit to the line below, about the same distance - to Yates Ford and return to camp. If we do this twice a day as in case of any night alarm, there is a right smart chance of work in it.

It is not more than half a mile from our camp to Bull Run and half a mile from the opposite bank will bring us to rebel barracks now deserted, but from the rumors of last night and this morning likely soon to be re-occupied. The opposite bank is all covered with these old barracks well built, as much as the "Rebs" were without tents.

Centerville is strongly entrenched, the rebel earth works reaching down to this place and below. It was the head quarters of Gen. Beauregard's great army in the winter of 1861 -1862, while ours was at Camp Griffin and along this side of the Potomac. McClellan could not have successfully attacked Centerville with 150,000 effective men. This place is but three miles west of north from here. It was there and between that place and one present camp that the first Bull Run Battle commenced, our skirmishers during their pickets across Blackburn's and McLean's Fords. The main battle was three miles above the former Ford. I visited our right picket line and also Centerville on Sunday. That place is occupied by the 3rd Brigade, Gen. Hays commanding - of Casey's Division, the 1st being still further north in the vicinity of Chantilly - Col. Fessenden son of Senator Fessenden and the affianced of Gen. Casey's daughter, commanding. So you see our division is all in the front. Gen. Casey's Headquarters still remain at Washington, he being busy in writing up tactics for the Negro regiments. He is a great tactician. All the infantry in the service use his tactics under an order from the War Department, but he has no great reputation as a field commander. I am afraid that under him we shall see but comparatively little active service. But we shall see.

My health is excellent. A ride of four hours in low wet pines and a drenching did not give me the least cold, stiffness nor inconvenience. Our living is good enough. Beef, pork, and ham succeed each other with tolerable regularity. We are just now having some splendid ham bought at the U.S. Commissary's at 8 cents per pound, such as sutler's retail for 25 cents. Yesterday I was out and bought two fat young hens for \$1.00 the pair, and three dozen eggs for 25 cents per dozen. Generally we get milk for one coffee, and we have seldom been out of potatoes. For a week or so we have eaten butter that was able to go alone, but last night we got some that was better.

Yesterday I went to Wolf Run Shoals for the first time. I saw Lt. Col. Farnham and his wife and Vaughan and his wife and dined with them. The ladies wished to be kindly remembered to you. Mrs. F, has been here three months, but she has no children to have at home. She says she is getting along finely in riding horseback, and enjoys herself finely. Her trunks are in Washington and she has only a valise now, as she desires to be in readiness to leave if a movement takes place. In the 16th Regiment one Captain had his wife here three or four days, the only lady that has been in our camp from the outset.

Ranger is still out here and will remain until after next payday. He thinks Mrs. Charles Simonds takes the matter of the reports about her husband rather coolly. She says "Charlie is young man and strong while I have been comparatively an invalid for a longtime; and it is no wonder that when such old men as Rufus Pratt and W. C. Perry fall that he should give way to temptation." Now that is what I call amiability and considerate kindness. Do you not think she is a model wife under such circumstances? Eh? I suppose she will take the bantlings to bring up thinking it are equitable division of labor for one woman to have children and another to bring them up!

They do say that Perry is making a fool of himself - that he is boarding Laura Altherton at Brandon and paying his tuition at the Academy, and that he goes up then and stays more than a week to time, while he was only prevented from turning Ann out of doors by Silas Waite because she made so much fuss about his conduct.

I expect that we shall get paid off in the course of next week, when I shall remit you at least \$200. We have got to pay back to the State about \$100 a piece, we having received that unit as pay and rations from Sept 27 to Oct 23, and which was again paid us by the United States when they last paid us from Sept 27 to Oct 31. Then I have got to get another horse. If Lt. Col. Brown goes home as he is now expecting to I think of having his horse which cost him \$200. This horse is about 100 lbs, heavier than mine just the same color and the same marks with the exception of one white foot, and is a beautiful saddle horse always having been trained to the saddle. He is worth \$50 more than a horse equally as good from Vermont, because he is acclimated, and than horses are 20 percent higher than they were last fall. In doing picket duty and in moving camp two horse are needed, because in the latter case I can put on my blankets and strap on a valise and then be sure to have some baggage to make me comfortable a night or two before the teams come up. There is no chance to "forage" a horse from secesh for there is not now a decent horse owned in the country. They have all been gobbled up or stolen or sold to get them out of the way.

Speaking of my health you can judge of my condition when I say that I weigh 165 pounds, and work without an ache, and eat and digest any food like an ostrich. There is no exercise like riding horseback in the open air, and no medicine for one unaffiliated with disease like sleeping in tents, if in such a case any medicament can be admissible.

Speaking of horses again, while I was on the rifle pits I left my horse a few moment to browse in the brush, of which he like all horses that are kept up are find, and he by some means got a sharp stick stuck into the upper part of his eyeball which pained him severally. I have used him all the time and is now recovering his sight after no little doctoring,

If an officer has but one horse and that one is sick or disabled he is in difficulty. If we lose a horse by any unavoidable accident or casually government allows us \$125 for the animal - the price of a new horse out of the corral.

How are Lizzie and Charlie? I would give much to see the little dear and listen to them prattle. I would like to see you all as you can readily (conceive,) but it don't look very well for officers to get leaves or absences to go home when then team of service is only nine months. Time gets along rapidly out here, and the time will soon expire.

I have just dined from my two hens and as the mail will soon have I must close. Mr. Schuster's bill was probably for the year to come. He usually paid advance and had undoubtedly paid up to sometime between 1st of Jan and March 1863.

Love to all the family - Your loving husband – Charles

Union Mills, VA April 4th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

We now have to get our letters into the mail at 1 p.m., and our mail does not arrive here until half past two, which will account for my not having received yours when I wrote last, although it came to hand that same afternoon. Yours of the 31st ult, was received today.

It is now Saturday night, cold, windy and sleety. Such weather in this latitude is hardly within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Last year corn was planted and the gardens made in March; this year not a rod of ground has been plowed. Then have been but few more uncomfortable days in which to be out than today. At battalion drill this morning I wore my great coat and was hardly comfortable. In my tent I have to keep my little stove nearly red hot in order to be comfortable. The wind blows my tent so I could not write were not my table so firm. It is made of a large box four feet by two, turned bottom upwards and nailed to four legs which are stakes driven into the ground. This is at the right hand corner as you enter. In the opposite corner is a little sheet iron stove, oval = (o o) 16 inches long. 12 high and 10 wide, the tin around the hole of the tent being nailed to stakes driven firmly in the ground, so as to keep that part still. The stove has no legs, but is supported on three or four large thick sods dug up and turned bottom upwards. This side of the tent for about two feet in width has no floor; the remainder is floored with coarse rough boards. On the opposite side is my bed, a rubber blanket being plied up against that wall to exclude the wind. At the foot of the bed is my carpetbag, a box containing blacking, pickles, and etc. Under the table is my trunk, and overhead on a pole, hung from the ridge pole of the tent hangs coats, shirts, drawers, etc, while against the tent pole on the rear end hangs my sword, belt, etc. In front of this tent is another, both fastened together, in which are my horse equipment, woodpile, forage for my horse, feed pail, washbasin and the like. Such are my quarters here, but should we take the field, I shall be like to be cut down to one thin tent in that event I shall send my trunk, and all that I do not absolutely need from day to day to Washington. Keeping only the suit I wear, one change of underclothes, and toilet articles.

Such is my camp home here, and it is very comfortable except when the wind gives us such a shaking up. At this present moment I have had such a blast as compelled me to suspend writing.

I am heartily glad that you took Charlie down to Dr. Warner and that he is under the process of medication. If his medicine disagrees with or deranges his stomach diminish somewhat the doses. You will have to persist in its administration a long time. Days and even weeks will show no perceptible improvements, but I think that it will eventually disappear. I have had my fears that he was scrofulous ever the appearance of that first sore, or rather when I saw its slow development and that it refused to heal kindly. His large belly and the small development of muscle in his limbs confined those impressions. My conviction were only weakened by not knowing just how much to ascribe to his obstinate teething. But with patience and persistence I think he can be cured. Do not falter in the treatment which is undoubtedly good, nor let anything divest you from it. I have, however, no fears that like Hannah you will run after every new doctor and new medicine recommended by this, that and the other person. I should not be satisfied without at least three or four months trial. The iron he particularly needs on account of his general chacectic diathesis. (consult the dictionary. I cannot use other terms so

definite.) Charlie has the trouble lightly - nothing comparatively to what some children have who subsequently recover and lose all traces of it except scars. If it does not develop itself in the glands about the ears, neck, anus, etc, you will need elution but little apprehension. I think that small doses of some preparation of iron would be of service to Lizzie. Yet exercise in the open air will perhaps be sufficient. The little dears - I would give a ten dollar bill to play with them one hour.

I have never heard anything respecting Cousin Sila's family or personal affairs of the nation of which you intimate. I have not had a letter from him these two or three years. His home for years has not been a happy one, but he used to think much of his children. He was always kind to me, but he is so erratic a correspondent that I attached no importance to his not writing. I cannot conceive what the trouble is, yet I can hardly credit it any report of criminal conduct on his part. He partakes of the prevailing family characteristics - singularity manifesting itself in a dislike to so much social intercourse as characterizing some people. But I cannot comprehend or even imagine what the peculiar troubles in the case are. Lizzie is a good girl and a smart girl and I am glad that she proposes to be with you this summer. Please write to her that it will give me great pleasure to have her make one house her home just so long as she and you desire.

I am detailed on a General Court Martial at Centerville for the trial of such prisoners as may be brought before us. I understand that there are several officers to be tried for various charges, and one private for murder. The Court met Friday morning, but as the Judge Advocate was not ready to proceed, adjourned until Monday morning at 9 a.m. The court will probably sit all the week. I come home nights unless, it is very strong.

My health is excellent and I weight 164 pounds. Give my love to mother and the children, and believe me always your loving, devoted husband. - Charles

Camp Near Union Mills, VA
April 12th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours enclosing the photograph of our dear little Lizzie was duly received, and the letter and picture gave me great pleasure. Tell Lizzie that Papa has got her picture and thinks much of it. He has kissed it many times, just as he would kiss both the original, her little brother, and their dear mother were he to see them.

I am well and growing fleshy. I weigh 167 pounds. During all the past week I have been on a court-martial at Centerville.

It is now one o'clock p.m., and the regiments in this brigade have just received orders to be prepared to take the field tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. with shelter tents only, and seven days rations, 3 cooked and 4 uncooked. Accordingly I shall have to get rid of my baggage. I shall leave my bed and stove - send my trunk to Washington, and only take my blankets and leather bag. Good bye to the ordinary comforts of camp life. When we are to go I do not know. The Colonel has gone to headquarters near Wolf Run Shoals to learn if possible our destination

I may be able before I close this to say where we are going. In the meantime you will direct our letters to me as usual leaving off "Union Mills."

The weather yesterday and today is very fine indeed. The buds are starting finely. The ground is dry. Friday morning I had fresh shad for breakfast.

There is now news of consequence further than the above. So I will only add that I never felt better in my life. I am as plethoric that last evening I had the nose bleed quite smartly, more so than ever before. I really feel fat.

I do not as yet fully know whether I shall go with my regiment or remain to attend the court martial at Centerville, probably the former.

Where we are going I do not learn. - We have not got paid off yet.

Love to all - Your faithful loving husband - Chas Cummings.

Camp near Union Mills, VA
April 13th, 1863

My Dearest Wife:

Yours of the 8th and 9th (No 39) was received this afternoon. I wrote you a few lines yesterday saying that we had just received orders to move with seven days rations at 7:30 this morning. We were in readiness but the orders did not come, so we are yet in camp. We have not been informed of our destination. Casey's Division is under orders to move, It comprises these brigades, 1st at Chantilly commanded by Col. Fessenden, son of Senator Fessenden of Maine, the 2nd by Col. A. P. Blunt, and the 3rd at Centerville by Brig. Gen. Alexander Hays, numbering in all 11 or 12 regiments and four if not five batteries of 6 guns each.

From appearances we shall not move until Wednesday morning and I suspect our destination is some point on the Rappahannock in the direction of Culpepper, distant about 60 miles. The reason for this beside the strategic indications which are obvious to us, is found in the fact that a large force of government workmen are busily engaged today in rebuilding the Railroad Bridge across Bull Run at Union Mills. When that is completed, as it probably will be by Wednesday morning, teams will be enabled to run through to Manassas Junction and bring up supplies. Bridges will also have to be built at the crossings at Board Run and Cedar Run and the road repaired. It is not probable that the troops will be more than 8 or ten miles in advance of the rail line which will be one line of communication with our base of supplies - Alexandria. Such are my surmises, and I find that Gen. Hayes coincides with me as he said that he believed I had guess right. But nothing is certain in military movements. There is evidently no rebel infantry or artillery force between the Rappahannock and the Potomac, nothing but cavalry and guerrillas, and those have been pretty well cleaned out during the past week by the Gen. Stahl who has a cavalry brigade at Fairfax Court House and Fairfax Station.

Our court martial was in session all last week and owing to the sending in of new cases we has as many at the close as when we began. It is still in session and I have just received a telegraphic dispatch to sit as long as possible, so I shall go again tomorrow morning. It may possibly be so that I cannot go on with my regiment, but this is the less likely because two of the other members are commanders of regiments, and it is hardly possible for their commands to go along without them.

Henceforth, we are to be cut down in tents and in baggage. The field officers and staff are limited to three wall tents, which will put three in a tent, and the men to half a shelter tent each, so that by putting the two halves together they will have a tent three to four feet high but open at the ends making room enough for two men. I have sent all my baggage that I cannot take to Washington, where it will be stored by a Mr. Prentiss - a Vermonter. This includes my trunk, two pairs of blankets, a pair of blue ones that cost me ten dollars and the white ones I brought from home. Cotton shirts a pair of white drawers that I had none but little, books, except tactics, bible, your letters, etc. I have with me my three wool shirts and 2 pair drawers, stockings, 3 silk handkerchiefs, and a few small traps only. Had I been in the 11th Regiment, I should have had ample room, baggage and an easy time, but in infantry it is not thus But I like this service much better than heavy artillery where that does take the field there it is in the worst place. However, I must say that court martial and provost marshalships are my special aversion. I had much rather be with my regiment than be detailed for special duty.

I do not think that I wrote you wrote you that my horse met with an accident about a month since by getting a twig stuck into his eyeball. I am afraid he will lose the sight of that eye. He is not doing as well as at first, but he may pick up by and by. To relieve him I have bought another, a sorry old plug that a poor as a cow for \$65. What he will make if he has a good chance I do not know, but I think he will do some work.

Hereafter I will try that you get a letter from me every work, and often if we move but they will be short as hard work and poor conveyances for writing will necessitate it. Direct yours as herefore, but have off with "Washington, DC."

Love to mother and babies - I am dear wife, Your loving, faithful husband - Charles.

Camp Near Union Mills, VA
April 19th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

I have not received a letter from you since yours of the 9th inst. came to hand. But the day is so magnificently delightful and as it is Sunday, I have nothing of importance on hand to demand immediate attention. I will spend my time in the agreeable duty of writing to you.

You will readily discover that our forward movement has not been made yet. Why, I do not know. Reasons are not vouched in military orders. As to when we were to have gone had we moved there is a difference of the opinion of most of the officer through the direction would be towards Culpepper and the place the Rappahannock River near there, but a member of our Regiment detailed in Gen. Heintzelman's officer at Headquarters of the department says that he knows that we were booked for Suffolk, in the southeast part of Va. I should have liked the latter the best, both as we should sooner have a chance to see the enemy and because the season there is three degrees of latitude earlier than it is here.

During the past week, just as our boys had got under their shelter tents a severe and protracted rainstorm came on which so raised the streams and Bull Run in particular, as to carry off the bridge over that stream at this place - only the iron rails and a few pieces being left - and the river was totally unfordable. If we move now we cannot make any progress until the bridge is rebuilt, for there will be no mode of getting along supplies until the railroad is in repair. But an early movement from here does not seem probable, and yet we may receive marching orders without a moment's notice. We keep ourselves constantly supplied with seven days rations and over 100 rounds of ammunition.

We are no longer in Casey's Division. Last week our division of 3 brigades were placed under Brig. Gen. J. J. Abercombie an old West Pointer over sixty years of age, who is coming out to Centerville this week to establish his headquarters. Gen. Casey still remains in Washington. He is the author of our present tactics and is at work on tactics for the Negro regiments. Gen. George J. Stannard has at last been assigned to the 2nd Brigade and will arrive and assume command tomorrow. This is good news. We have been sadly in want of a General since Col. Blunt has been in command. The Colonel is not up to Veazey nor Proctor by a long chalk. The truth is that the 16th has the best Colonel in the Brigade, and the 16th Regiment can beat any other regiment in the brigade or in this section out of sight at any evolution and in any movement. This is conceded by Col. Blunt and Gen. Hayes of the 3rd Brigade

All the past week I have been at Centerville on the court martial, and it will take up nearly another week to finish the trial of all the prisoners now on the docket - and then may be other cases sent in. No one in this or the 15th Regiments has been brought before court martial nor is then a case before the Court at Centerville from this brigade. Our boys got disciplined in camp - all that is necessary.

My health is just as good as it can be. I have not felt so tough and hardy for many years. You would be surprised to see me eat and then I can lay down anywhere and sleep soundly on the floor, ground, or in any place.

Our term of enlistment is fast drawing to a close. By the time you receive this letter it will have two thirds expired and the pleasantest season and part of the campaign is yet to come.

Yours of the 15th was received a few moments since. I am glad to know that you are all well. And getting along well. I do not know what to do about the garden. It will not do to let it run up towards nor will it pay to put so much labor into it as I have done heretofore. Perhaps some way can be devised to get us out of the difficulty.

The season is quite late out here. Peach trees are now in bloom and the crocus and daffodil and such like are in their prime. A week of such weather as today would put a difficult aspect on the face of nature. I am sitting in my tent with the front down to keep out the sun with a neck scarf my shirtsleeves and sweating at that. But it does feel like some warm morning at home in May when I have been at work in the garden. The Blue Ridge in the distance which I can see for many miles is covered with snow yet. Strawberries are said to be ripe at Norfolk and Suffolk!

Love to the family and all friends - Kiss the babies for their Papa.

Your Loving husband - Charles.

Washington, DC April 27th, 1863

My Dearest Wife,

Instead of being at the "front" I am in the rear. Our court martial adjourned for three or four days and as then was not much going on in the regiment, I came to the city. Yesterday I was at the Metropolitan with Capt. and Mrs. Hunt. I go back to the regiment this morning.

Enclosed please find check for \$300 which with your name on the back in full as it is on the face, will get you the money at either bank in Brattleboro.

My health is splendid. In a few days will write more at length. I write on a best case now.

Love to mother and children - Truly yours loving husband - Charles

Union Mills, VA
April 29th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

While in Washington, Monday morning. I wrote you a hasty line, enclosing a check on NY for \$300, which you have doubtless received before this. I returned to my regiment at 10 o'clock the same morning, and am now on duty in the same.

Writing of the garden you suggest that Keith White will cultivate the same on shares. I wrote to William Hyde more than a week since that. I wished he would take care of the same and I would pay him for it. The fact is I want the strawberries especially and the pear trees, vines and current bushes well cared for. I think more of them than all else. To grow peas and corn so as to shade and injure them would be bad. If those are well cared for. I would not mind. I think that I shall hear from Mr. Hyde. If he does not take care of the garden you may do with it as you think best, but on no account let anybody put a plough in it, for it will injure it incalculably. It must all be spaded.

The strawberry plants were set for hills; a few died last fall, so I let a few runners grow to supply the vacancies. When the hills are all filled I do not want to let a single runner grown. They must be chipped off. I think then will be some berries this year.

I know nothing of our movements or intentions. Troops are moving around us daily. Hooker's army is moving. I judge to Rappahannock station. Our regiment went out then last week to protect the workmen repairing the railroad so that the cars now run 25 miles beyond our picket lines to the above place. The day, our men were out then Gen. Stoneman with his cavalry Division of 18,000 men arrived - so they are in front of us with nothing but guerrillas between. We now send men down ten or twelve miles on the railroad daily.

This morning ten rebel prisoners and 50 contrabands were sent in from that direction, some of the former owing some of the latter. But the Emancipation has so fixed things that the owners are now prisoners and the owned are free. These blacks do not seem to very much regret this changed state of relations.

The men of the 15th and 16th Regiments have sent home to Vermont from \$50,000 to \$60,000 of their 4 months pay - the 16th full \$30,000 How many mothers hearts will be made glad and children's mouths fed. Man who received \$52 sent home from \$40 to \$50 but there they do not have to buy their rations. This fact speaks well for the regiment.

Enclosed I send you a few photographs that I bought for your album. I did not find many that caused for and. I had no means of knowing precisely what you preferred. I saw some good pictures of rebel officer and leaders but I didn't want them. I trust you will like these, they were the best I could get.

Give my love to mother and kiss our little darlings for their absent papa.

Your loving husband - Charles

Union Mills, VA, May 3rd, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of the 26th ult., was received yesterday, and I am only repeating what I have many times written that the reception of our letters affords me very great pleasure. I like all the news from home and town and neighborhood, albeit I do not comment there on in my letters.

Our regiment yet remains here as usual, but the 12th has been sent forward to Warrenton Junction, about 18 miles in the advance. Gen. Hooker has at last crossed the Rappahannock and probably before this reaches you then will have been fought a bloody battle. I wish our brigade was with him, instead of wearing ourselves out in picket and guard duty.

The weather here is now delightful. The days are quite warm, but the nights are proportionately cooler than in Vermont. Today has been as warm as any May Day that I remember, I have been about camp, when off duty without coat or vest. This afternoon I went down to a small stream in the rear of one camp and enjoyed a refreshing wash and a change of underclothing.

I do not think the season is much more forward here, this year than it is in Vermont. It is not two weeks since the arbutus, hepatica, and saxifraga made their appearance. The snow drop has gone, but juncos, narcissus, and daffodils are in full bloom. However, I saw a large daffodil bud near Fairfax Station, when I was building fortifications, in a warm place about the 20th of March. As we moved so soon I could not keep track of them. The Pyrus Japonica is just now in moderate bloom. Peach trees are going out of blossom; but here it is aggravating to see every little peach shrub, gnawed by horses and trampled upon, and left to take care of itself in the waster's blossom so fully when in Vermont we can scarcely coax a blossom from them by the most diligent culture. To add to the enchantment of this climate and location not more than 20 rods to the rear of my tent half a dozen whip-poor-wills make music all night long. As I write I hear them distinctly, although the drums are beating tattoo. If this country could be settled by New England people it would soon be almost a paradise, barring the everlasting stickiness of the mud when it rains. Now the camp is a dry and nice as one could wish. The sky is clear, the air balmy and I have but just closed my tent.

I keep good hours out here, retiring about nine and rising from five to six in the morning. We breakfast at half past six - dine at half past twelve and supper at six.

Tomorrow I go on picket as Field Officer of the Day for the first time since April 2nd. I shall have about ten miles of picket line to visit, which will give me altogether from 30 to 40 miles ride. Monday morning I go to Centerville again on that everlasting Court Martial, which I am hopeful will these and there (adieu siore die.)

I forgot to write you that while in Washington I saw Capt. and Mrs. John Hunt. They are quite well and seem to be enjoying themselves finely. They are coming out to this camp next week to see Gen. Stannard and this regiment. John Curtis Tyler of the "engagement ring" notoriety is in Washington seeking an appointment. By the way Ranger said that Tyler brought two \$25 rings of him one he gave to John and the other to Mrs. Adams to muse!

My health continues excellent but I suspect the warm weather will take off some of my flesh. When we are we have good living and good water. Tonight I went to the Sutler's and bought a glass of ale and 3 oranges. Tomorrow morning we have a couple of fried fish, Potomac shad for breakfast. We have had them several times within two weeks. We get eggs for 30 cents

per dozen, butter 40 cents per pound, and cheese for 25. I can now buy apples. They are plenty a Washington and in camp at 2 cents each for small ones. However, I never cared so little for apples in my life. I have not eaten a peck this winter, nor an orange until to night. I wish I could get some of our parsnip. I would do justice to them.

Have you got the draft I sent you? Remember me kindly to our neighbors, and especially to Mr., and Mrs. Stowe. By the way I learned yesterday that Rev Mr. Sargent, chaplain of the 13th Regiment died in hospital after a very brief illness last week. He was a Universalist clergy man, you may remember him. As we are fifteen miles from that regiment we do not keep well posted in is affair.

Give my love to mother and the babies and believe me -

your devoted husband - Charles

Camp Near Union Mills, VA
May 11th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your letters of May 1st and May 6th have both been received, the last containing news of mother's going to Boston and the arrival of Cousin Lizzie. I should have written you a day or two sooner, but I was on picket Saturday and Sunday. Our brigade is now so scattered that the 16th is the only regiment remaining here, consequently we have all the picketing to do for six miles, and furnish 100 men as a guard at Bristow's Station, besides sending a guard of 25 men with the train down to the front daily. The 12th is down the Rappahannock at Kelley's Ford, the 15th at Warrenton Junction a dozen miles this side of the Ford. The 14th at Wolf Run Shoals, and the 13th down on the Occoquan near Occoquan village. We had much rather be down on the front than here, but have to take things as we find them. The reason the 16th was not sent front was, we had the most men fit for duty and it needed a strong regiment to do our work. From present indications it appears as if we should remain here during the remainder of our pilgrimage, as I understand that this picket line is to be maintained for the present.

The weather is now balmy, warm, and delightful. It is a treat for officers and men to go on picket, both as it relieves the monotony of camp life, and the air is fresh and fragrant with blossoms. All through this region are trees from three to thirty feet high as full of small delicate pink blossoms about the size of Lilac flowers and which come out in advance of the leaves just as does our pyrus Japonica. They are charming. Then there is a great abundance of wild flowers more beautiful than with us the names of which I have no means of determining. I wish you were here a week to ride out on picket and see what then is beautiful here. But you would find the path you would have to travel anything but slow. It is the worst ground to travel over that I have picketed or seen, but it is easily defensible. Along the bank of Bull Run the ground is intersected by deep precipitous ravines full of laurel, which here grows large and luxuriant and tangh wood.

Hooker's attempt, like those of his predecessors, is a failure. It does seem as if the Army of the Potomac was fated to ill-success. Stoneman's brilliant raid is the only redeeming feature and perhaps we except Sedgwick's gallant fighting. There was a report in camp last night that Gen. Dix had moved up from Fortress Monroe and taken Richmond, but it is not credited, although it is among the possibilities as there are no rebels about there.

Gen. Stoughton is in Washington confident of getting the command of the 1st Vermont Brigade. He is making out his official report of his capture. I hope he will get a command for he is above average of the more recent Brigadiers. Gen. Stannard is a capital officer, and a very fine man, and I do not want to change him for any one I know him so well, and he is so reliable. But Stoughton's assignment to a command would be a good sequel to the unmentioned abuse he has received

I am glad that there is to be a road through from High Street to the Common. Estabrooks will now sleep easier, but as for one getting an inch of his land I have not the faintest hopes of any such thing. Not while he lives shall we be successful. Please do just as you think best with the garden. If what is growing there in way of trees, vines, bushes and strawberries are cared for and the rest does not run up to weeds it don't make much difference.

I have had my head sheared so that there is not a hair on it half an inch long. It is much more comfortable and is easily kept clean. By old horse that I recently bought is picking up fairly and is today worth \$100, but poor black is not doing well, he ought to be turned out to grass three months. He is better adapted to a buggy and smooth roads than picketing out here.

Give my love to cousin, kiss our dear little ones, and tell them that in a few weeks their papa will be with them.

Your loving husband - Charles

Camp at Union Mills, VA
Monday morning, May 18th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your last was received Thursday and as are all your letter was heartily welcomed. I had though several times time of writing you in relation to the \$50 due Mrs. Harris the 1st of April and supposed I had done so, but I have so much on my mind in relation to my multifarious duties that I do not always recall all that I would write about. I should have written to you a day or two sooner, but I was Field Officer of the Day Wednesday and Thursday in charge of a fatigue party Saturday and yesterday and today an again Officer of the Day. Our regiment has six miles of picketing to do in a very rough line, without any help; but today the 15th comes back and will relieve us of some of this labor. But the weather in delightful and has been so for ten days so the men endure their labor well. The health of the regiment has at not former time been so good since we crossed the Potomac as now.

Then is nothing particularly new or interesting in camp just now. The only item of excitement that I have heard of is the capture of eight other men by the rebels a few days since. It appears that while half a dozen teams belonging to the 13th regiment were drawing supplies for the regiment from Fairfax Station, to near Occoquan village, a party of mounted rebs made their appearance and captured the men and horses and destroyed the wagons. In addition to a driver for each team were four or five men belonging to the regiment that had been off contrary to instructions and were riding back to camp, stragglers we call them here. The rebels, who are well posted as to our movements, made this dash and re-crossed the Occoquan River in safety. We are in the expectation of a raid in here about these days. Then has been no time for a week when Mosby with 150 men could not have come in here and carried off the battery and the general. With 150 men at Bristow's Station 100 on detached service, 200 on picket, and there is not many left for fight after taking out regimental guards and cooks. Saturday, however, we closed the fords on the river with felled trees, so that a dash cannot be made past our picket line by the mounted rebels. There is nothing new out here of great moment. It is reported that the rebels have an infantry force this side of the Rappahannock and that they contemplate a raid or driving us back within the Defense of Washington. If they do this we may be able to extemporize a smart little fight out here.

Our nine months expire on the 23d day of July next, two months longer at the end of which time most of us will be in Brattleboro, where we shall be mustered out of the service of our respected Uncle.

My love to all, and a kiss for the dear little ones.

Your loving husband - Charles.

Camp Near Union Mills, VA May 21st, 1863

My Dear Wife;

Your letter of the 17th was received this afternoon and its reading was attended with great delight. Not having much to do just at this time I have concluded to commence a reply.

The weather out here has been for the past fortnight delightful. A week ago Sunday it rained a little while I was out on picket and last week Thursday it was some windy. But I have had no fire in my tent nor sat by one for two weeks. In the day time when not on duty I wear no coat nor vest, nor cravat at any time. It is about as not during mid-day as it is at home in July. In consequence of this warm weather our program was last night altered so that today and henceforth it is - Reveille 5 a.m., Breakfast 5:30, Drill 6 to 8; Guard Mounting 8; Dinner 12 m, Drill 5 to 6:30 p.m., dress parade 7, Supper 7:15. Tattoo 8:30 Taps 9:30. I am up at Reveille and often before want my breakfast before 6 o'clock and shall leave the mess unless the colonel and major "come to time" eat hearty, three times a day; go to bed at tattoo and sleep soundly. But a new division order is now in force compelling the Field Officer of the Day to camp out in some central portion of the line to visit the line both night and day. As the line is of miles long over the most intolerable ravines to do all this in the rain and dark is a job that will pretty much use up the twenty four hours, and on two days in succession will add to the task. I had rather be in front along with Hooker, but as you seem to be so much better satisfied I will not complained.

I shall have to get one of Uncle Sam's honor to do picket duty with for the present "Peacock," the old plugs has a some back and had when I bought him, it would have been well had I not used him as much. Bill has streamed his off fore ankle. His eye is improving but will never be as good as it was before his injury. I have now got his shoes off, put a seton in his breast, and are doctoring him in good earnest, designing either to care or kill him. I do not expect he will be of great use to me down here, but he is a splendid buggy horse and will do good service at home. He is the kindest, best disposition, most willing horse to do all that is asked of him that I know of. Peacock is smart and willful. When I get his back well and him fat he will have to make work smart.

I do not think that I have in any measure got rid of the dandruff. I had my hair out cut close that I could wash my head, it is tolerably clean now but when the hair grows out it will be much as it was before. The ointment that I got for that does well for vermin, and by its use I have not yet been lousy. It is red precipitate ointment diluted with three parts of lard - reducing its strength to one fourth.

Lilacs, snowballs, etc, etc, and so on are in full blossom. I found a handful of Ladies slipper a week some and one Jack in the pulpit - Asarum Canadense. The flora of this country is peculiarly rich, richer, than any I know of in New England

By the way, when I was in Washington a month since I saw Prof. Cantell, who is in the service as a Lieutenant in a Maryland regiment. He desired me to make his kindest regards to you.

I did not think much of the picture I sent you. It was taken at noon day and was poor. The picture of the horse is good. The same day Houghton took a negative of my tent with me sitting there, from which he proposes to print some pictures. I regret to learn that Ranger's health is so poor. Mrs. Charles Simmonds is a perfect model of a wife. I commend her judgment and taste in bring up all her husband's children!

There has been daily discussion as to when the time of the nine months men expired, but a general order was read on parade a few days since settling the question that the period was not out until the 23d of July. A conundrum has been circulating in camp “Why is the 2nd brigade like an unborn baby?, which is answered “Because it is in for nine month unless sooner discharged!”

I have had no furlough this time. It was not necessary. After having shown Mrs. Smith “how to do it” twice she has been able to impart the necessary information to her husband. I trust this explanation will be deemed satisfactory!

I see by the Phoenix, as I informed would be the case, the good people of Brattleboro were somewhat sold on the 10th inst., in relation to the Richmond matter. But you at Brattleboro do not know how prevalent camp rumors are nor how incredulous we become out here. We accept nothing but official dispatches.

There seems to be we earthly danger of our moving away from this spot for the present, nor is there the slightest danger of any considerable number of us seeing a rebel. Our record will be a most unsatisfactory record in every respects.

The 1st Brigade did nobly at the recent Battle of Fredericksburg although Col. Grant is some imaginative in his descriptions. He has a faculty of “spreading it on thick” when he takes pen, ink, and paper.

We have a musical choir in the regiment, who give us an occasional concert that does much to cheer us. Among the tunes sung in one with the enclosed words, sang as solo and chorus. It is my pretty.

My health is excellent. Give my love to cousin Lizzie, my dear little Lizzie, and Charlie, and my dearest Lizzie each and all.

From there cousin, father, and husband – Charles

Union Mills, VA
Wednesday, morning May 26th
5 o'clock A.M.

Dearest Wife,

Saturday and Sunday I was on picket night and day. Monday I slept in camp, yesterday there was a reviewed of 15th and 16th Regiments by Gen. Abercombie who said of the manual of arms as executed by the 16th Regiment that he had never seen it excelled by regulars and had supposed it impossible of volunteers.

This morning at 7:30 our regiment goes down the railroad to relieve the 12th. Two companies will be left at Manassas Junction. 5 at Bristow's and three at Catlett's Station, towards Warrenton Junction. Companies B, I, and K go to the latter place in my command. So the regiment will not be together again for two or three weeks.

Well, I am glad to go, we shall thereby get rid of our picket duty in part or rather exchange it for guard and picket duty all the time in a country new to us and full of guerrillas. But guerrillas let infantry severely alone if the squad number ten or a dozen.

Nothing new here. I am quite well. The tree that I wrote you about as having pink flowers something like the Japan Quince, is the "Judas" tree we once had one between the cedar and Hawthorne.

Old Election in Massachusetts and only two months before we shall see our homes.

Hurrah for US Grant! He is the being man of this war. Though what difficulties and dangers and accidents he has waded and how gloriously he is succeeding for he must get Vicksburg and lot of pains. When I got settled I hope to gain your some account of our new position. In the mean time we shall be on this railroad between this place and the Rappahannock.

I am dear wife - Your loving husband - Charles.

“Catlett’s Station”, Va. June 1st, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your letter of May 24th reached me yesterday and its presents was a source of great pleasure. On Wednesday of last week the 16th Regiment moved up the railroad from Union Mills. Companies A and G were dropped at Manassas Junction, C., D., E., F, and H at Bristol with Colonel and major, and B.,I and K at this post, which is 15 1/2 miles from Union Mills, 12 1/2 miles from Rappahannock, and about 12 miles southeast of Warrenton. Of course I am in command of the Post. Our business here is to take care of the bridges over Cedar Run and Walnut Run, to protect the railroad here and to take care of ourselves.

We live well here as we can buy eggs, butter milk, and veal, and our men have brought into camp one of two “Virginia rabbits” known in Vermont as pigs. The water here is poor enough hard and brackish. I have sighed for a good drink of our Brattleboro water several times; it would taste much better than whiskey ever did. By the way I have not seen a drop of liquor since we have been in this camp, nor have I drank a pint during the last three months. But I mean to have some just as soon as I can get it, for something is needed to reduce this detestable water. For two weeks I have not chewed any tobacco, for I am heartily sick of the odious stuff that we have had, however, I smoke some.

We are now practically cut off from visiting Washington, for all passes to go there must go through regimental, brigade, division and corps commanders and come back again through the same devious channels before they can be of any use.

We have had one or two night alarms but they don’t amount to much. Saturday May 30th was, however, an eventful day with us. We have three daily trains from Alexandria, one of which stops along the road the other two generally 1st and 2nd, go on to Bealton and the Rappahannock with supplies for our troops there. Well as the first team arrived within about 2 1/2 miles from here, the rebels under Mosby numbering 125 cavalry and a howitzer manned with 20 artilleryists, it was destroyed in this way. The road here passes through a piece of woods and the rebels besides planting their artillery then concealed in the bushes had torn down the telegraph wire, taken out all the spikes that held one rail and fasten one end of the wire around the loose rail with the other end running out into the woods. The train came along unsuspectingly and just before the engine reached the place the rail was suddenly pulled out of place and the engine ran over safely on the next rail but the tender was thrown off the track so as to stop the train. A shower of carbine balls was directed to the engineer who jumped off the opposite side of the train. There shells were fired from the howitzer one of which passed though the smoke stack, exploding there, one through the safety value stack and one through the tender. 25 men from the 15th Vermont under Lt. Hartshorn were on the train as a guard, but they took to their heels. The rebels then destroyed the engine as much as possible, and burned chain of the twelve cars all of which were loaded with forage, cavalry supplies, etc, and then made their escape. The Vermont cavalry pursued within half an hour, came up with Mosby captured him guns and some prisoners. I heard the firing, saw the train burn, at late the smoke and suspected mischief, but as my duties were here I could not go away and going could have done no good. If the rebs had come this way they would have met wit a warm reception. With 25 men I could have charged upon the gun and captured it and all the men who did not run. Mosby is a darling brave fellow indeed.

I hope Grant will get Vicksburg which he seems likely to do; but I will not spend time in communicating upon the news as you can keep better posted than I can.

I am glad the garden is planted. Are the strawberry plants you will find some runners made last fall with which you can supply deficiencies as far as they go this spring or as soon as possible taking them up with much care on a trowel. I hope the Apple tree will bear a few apples. It is a Porter.

Love to cousin and the children and believe me - Faithfully your loving husband. - Charles.

Catlett's Station, June 6th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

I am in the receipt of your letter of the 29th ult, which was read, as are all your letters eagerly and with pleasure. It is a source of peculiar gratification to me that you all continue to enjoy good health and get along so well during my absence. Yet I am looking forward with the fondest anticipations to the day when I shall meet you in our own home and enjoy a respite from absence and Virginia life.

I shall probably remain here until the middle of next week, when we shall, according to present indications, return to Union Mills and picket duty. It is a pleasant county out here and the men enjoy themselves very well. The only drawback is that we have not half enough to do and no where to go. I got away however, Thursday afternoon and rode to Bristow to see the Colonel and Major.

We enjoy one luxury here that is unique. Every morning from day light to nearly noon the mocking birds make the air vocal with their delightful intimations. Not content with rehearsing the songs of the best singers, they were imitate the blue jay, chickens and the caw of the crow. Their notes are much sweeter as they sing from the tree tops than when enclosed in an iron cage and transported to uncongenial climates.

On my table I have a beautiful bouquet of roses, honey suckles, pinks, and etc, sent me commanding officer by an English girl residing two or three miles from here by the hand of her brother a physician. This is the third I have received and it makes my tent look cheerful. Cherries are now nearly ripe and the men are eating them. In one garden I saw peas in blossom the first day we arrived here, but the season is as unusually basken here as it is in Vermont.

My horses are getting along well. The black one is at Bristow turned out to grass and is a fat as a seal and but little lame. I think he will pretty much recovered. Peacock is doing finely. His back is so nearly well then. I ride him nearly every day. He is a wonderful horse on a gallop and is worth twice what I paid for him.

At Mr. Catlett's for whom this station is named, is a litter of little black puppies, one of which I want to get home for Lizzie but I do not know as I shall succeed. He is coal black except tan feet and a few tan spots underneath. There are from of them and the men amuse themselves in fondling them. They are not more than eight inches long and an as round and fat as pigs. Lizzie' eyes would sparkle to see them and she would have one in her arms all the time.

There are several occupied house in the vicinity of the camp and from their inmates we can leave something of Southern mannies and life. These people are for the Union just so far as it is for their interest and no farther. Some of them have taken the oath of allegiance to the Union and I have no doubt they would take a similar oath to the Confederacy tomorrow were rebel troops here instead of ours. But they treat us with marked politeness for we are just now "the powers that be." In all these families - and they evidently belonged to the respectable class - the women do the milking and hading while the men sit around and talk with the soldiers. One woman, the mother of fifteen children - the youngest less than a year old. I saw during six cows into the yard and she and her two daughter milked them while the man fair, sound, healthy, and not more than fifty was sitting in his doorway looking on. The fact is the "respectable" men down here in Virginia won't work. They will go hungry and ragged first. Now their niggers are gone they don't plant a rod of ground, nor sow any grain. They keep a few cows when they can

because they can sell butter and milk to the soldiers, and their wives and daughters can take care of them.

But this is a grand old country, and were it settled by our thrifty New England people, would be a paradise. It is easy to get a good living here. A splendid farm cost not more than \$15 to \$30 per acre, and sheep and cattle can be kept all winter without barns, only feed them from stacks of a few days when the snow is so deep that they cannot get their noses to the ground. But take it all in all New England is yet the most desirable place.

Love to all the household - Your loving husband - Charles

Catlett's Station, June 9th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of June 2nd was received Sunday, but there has been no mail sent out from here since so I could not write until this morning. About your going to Boston do just as you please. I have no wish at all about the matter. Consult your own taste or convenience and decide accordingly.

I am here at Catlett's station yet but one regiment will be relieved by the 15th on Thursday and we shall probably return to Union Mills and to picket duties. Within a week we have had two divisions of cavalry - Buford's and Pleasanton's encamped within a mile of us, but yesterday they both left for the Rappahannock. There is some movement in the wind but what it is I do not know either Lee or Hooker or both are moving. Our camp has been saturated with rumors of all sorts, but I take no stock in them. There is a terrible fight at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and the rebels will put forth all their strength before they allow these places to be surrendered.

Last Saturday evening I accepted an invitation from a Mr. Marks, who by the way has two or three rather pretty daughters, and lives within my picket lines to tea. There were also several cavalry officers present. We had a very good supper winding up with strawberries and cream! The first fresh from the garden, and the other very recently from his own cows. I do not think you have got along so far as that in Vermont. I ate very bountifully I can assure you for they lasted considerably little "McClellan pies" and "hard tack." There is not much of news here that would interest you. I think you would find it insufferably dull in camp but you would enjoy riding about this country if you were fond of horse back exercise - there is no other mode of conveyance.

I wrote out last Saturday so that there is not much to say. Now.

Give my love to Lizzie - all of the Lizzie's and Charlies

- Your loving husband - Charles.

Union Mills, VA - June 15th, 1863

My Dear Wife:

Your letter announcing your determination to visit Boston was duly received last Thursday, and I should have answered it sooner, but we came from Catlett's that day and I had my tent to pitch, horses to see to etc., the next day I went on picket for two days, and yesterday I was too tired and sleepy to write.

Since I last wrote a great cavalry fight took place about 10 miles from Catlett's just across the Rappahannock, between Generals Pleasant and Stuart's. It was a sever contest, the 8th NY losing in killed Col. Davis, 3 captains, besides 14 officer wounded. The 6th Pennsylvania suffered terribly, being badly cut up and the regulars under Gen. Buford getting handled quite roughly. But the rebels suffered more than we did.

Since we returned to Union Mills affairs have changed. Lee's army has been nearly doubled since the last Fredericksburg battle, and is now probably about crossing the Rappahannock to reach Washington or cross into Maryland and Hooker is reported to be moving up to keep in his advance. Last night the 11th Army Corps Gen. Howard commanding, moved to Centerville, only three or four miles from us. It is about 20,000 strong. Other movements are in progress but we do not yet know what. Our picket line on Bull Run, 7 miles long, has recently and is now being strengthened with trees felled from this side into the river forming an abatis almost impenetrable, except to a very large army provided with pioneers. We now expect warm work in this vicinity. It is thorough by our superiors offices that a battle at or near Centerville, perhaps on the old Bull Run battlefield is imminent. If there is any engagement in this vicinity we shall be likely to have a share in it.

Lee knows that during the coming two months our army here will be weaker than it has been or will afterward be. The departure of the two years and of the nine months regiments will during this time have been made and no new troops will arrive to take their places. So he will make a desperate push to carry the war across the Potomac into Pennsylvania and to take Washington. The seemingly warring prospects of the Confederacy in the West will stimulate him to unwanted energy, and as he is without doubt a much abler General than any other in either army he will be likely to inflict some desperate blows. Yet I do not fear for the result. It is possible that he may reach Harrisburg but not Philadelphia. Nor do I believe that it is in his power to get Washington. He may also contemplate as a part of his plan the driving of all Hooker's army by a movement on their right flank within the defenses of or fortification around Washington get the command of the Potomac below Alexandria, and then let Stuart make a raid with has 18,000 cavalry around Washington to Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Baltimore and then back into Virginia below Alexandria. He is evidently bound to do something striking something that shall arouse the drooping spirits of the Confederacy, strike consternation into the North and help advance the recognition of the Confederacy by foreign powers. If he does not do this or at least attempt it and in the meantime Vicksburg and Post Hudson fall, he knows the Confederacy will be in a very bad way.

I should like to see a little field service before returning. People at home think, perhaps naturally, that we have an easy time of it out here, much better than the 1st Brigade. But for the last six months we have had a much harder time than the old regiments without any of the excitement, stimulation and honor of fighting. Here at Union Mills our picket duty is exceedingly

laborious. It is the worst line on which to do duty that any of our officers have seen. I have been on two days at a time, in the saddle from 12 to 14 hours, with nothing but hardtack, salt pork, or herring to eat and water to drink, and not two hours sleep in the times. I would not mention this for I came out here to do my duty and obey orders cheerfully and with alacrity - only to show that it is not all fun and frolic here.

If we have an engagement I shall be green and awkward, but I shall try and do my duty let it be what it may - without rashness or dare deviltry, but as coolly and faithfully as I can.

Several officers from this brigade went to the Chantilly and Bull Run battlefields last week, and Col. Randall pointed out to Capt. Ball where Russell Benjamin fell. I did not go for I have uniformly held that I had no business to go beyond the line none even leave the regiment for any mere curiosity or sight seeing.

The weather is very hot and the ground awfully dusty. We have not had a shower in this vicinity since the 6th of May, and this clayey dust is as fine and impalpable as flour. Hence we are a dirty set. A rain would be very refreshing.

The banks of Bull Run are covered with laurel which is now in full blossom. It is the same species as grows in Brattleboro, but it grows here with great luxuriance, some of it being 20 to 30 feet high. It is a great curiosity to our soldiers, for the laurel does not grow in Vermont more than ten or a dozen miles north of Brattleboro. All vegetation grows here with a rankness and luxuriance not know to the north, and wood ticks, mosquitoes, fleas, flies, spiders and the like bite with tenfold frequency and power than there. I am well spotted up every morning, but after I get washed and dressed I do not mind much about the mater unit night when I have a refreshing season of scratching.

My health continues excellent You will remember that I told you that I feared more from chronic diarrhea than anything else. Contrary to my expectation I have not been troubled this at all. I have taken but two doses of opium, one in November to check a diarrhea and the other in February to stop a colicky pain. The piles give me now and then a little uneasiness but not much. On the whole there are but few who stand the climate so well I have thus far. I eat and sleep well. Do you not think I have not chewed any tobacco for more than a month but I smoke liberally.

My drawers are wore out and my shirts so small that I cannot wear two of them. One has been pieced out in sleeves a new collar added and I have it on. Then they are thicker than fulled cloth. I shall have to get me a pair. You would laugh to see me in these with the body as tight to my skin as mine undershirt.

I am looking forward with delightful anticipation when I can see you and our dear children again. How I long to fold you all in my arms, yet I do not often allow my mind to dwell on such thoughts. They will come constantly and unbidden, but I should get homesick should I cherish them. Time flies rapidly and the few remaining days will pass away. The 12th goes home the 4th of July, the 13th the 10th and the others the last of the month. It is now the middle of June and in less than six weeks our time will be out. After all this is a matter of regret. It is not right that a regiment so well drilled and disciplined as the 16th should, just as the men have become capable of rending their country efficient service, leave that service and this whole process of work, labor, toil and anxiety be gone through with to fit another set of men to take there place. So much valuable time is lost in this operations!

I do not think I can write much more that would interest you. So I will close with a benediction.

Give you my love to mother and Hannah and Artemas. Kiss our dear little ones for their papa who hopes to see them soon - and believe me always –

Your loving devoted husband -Charles

Camp near Union Mills, VA
June 25th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Since I last wrote I have recovered my usual health. Tuesday I took half of the regiment and marched 7 miles to Spriggs Ford on the Occoquan and did picket duty capturing three prisoners of the 15th Virginia Cavalry. Last night at 7 o'clock I received orders to call in my pickets and return to Union Mills. I did so arriving here about 1 a.m., this morning. Today the whole brigade started with 10 days rations towards the Potomac in the direction of Leesburgh, to join Reynold's Corps. It is likely that we shall see active service soon.

There is nothing else of special interest. My letters for the present must be brief.

Love to all - Your loving husband - Charles.

Near Poolesville, MD - June 28th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Thursday afternoon we started from Union Mills and marched a mile north of Centerville and camped. It rained all night. The next day we started and went 12 miles to Herndon's Station above Vienna and camped. I was Field Officer of the Day. The next day we went to the Potomac crossed on pontoon bridges and arrived at Poolesville about sun down, marching about 17 miles and crossing at Edwards Ferry, 30 miles above Washington. This Sunday morning we started at 8:30 for Frederick City. There are 40,000 or more troops around us all bound up into Maryland to meet Lee who is saphoud by as underlings to be somewhere northwest of us. There is considerable prospect that we may encounter the rebs in a fight.

We go into the 1st Army corps. Maj. Reynolds commanding.

The old brigade is close to us, and last night I saw many of the officers.

My health is excellent. I am living onhardtack and raw pork and glad to get enough of that, but I do enjoy the march.

I am writing this sitting on the ground, my horses saddled and my equipment by my side. Our march today will be about 20 miles.

This seems like the reality of a soldier's life, and I expect a fight will put on the finishing touches.

I got your letter of the 21st Thursday, a few minutes before we started and after I had written you a line. When I shall get another of your good letters I do not know nor do I even guess when this will be mailed. It will be dropped into the first Post office that we come across, perhaps today.

My dear wife if I get into a fight I shall endeavor to do my duty with dissection and faithfully, trusting the results to that kind Providence who rules has thus far shielded and presented us, and strewn our path with so much happiness.

Kiss the dear children for their absent but not forgetful papa. - Love to all your loving husband

- Charles.

Gettysburg, July 6th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

During the last ten days I have not been very well owing to the privations of a march added to a not perfectly healthy condition of the system when I started Thursday the 25th of June we started from Union Mills for, as we subsequently learned this place. It was that day that I received the last letter from you that has come to hand. When I shall get another I do not know. I wrote you at Poolesville, MD, Sunday June 28th. That night we encamped near Adamstown. Monday night we encamped I do not now recollect where but northerly of Fredericktown, MD. Tuesday night at Emmetsburg, MD where there is a Catholic College and a splendid institution of the Sisters of Charity, the oldest and parent of all in the United States. Wednesday night we came to within two miles of Gettysburg. When within six miles of the place we came in sight of the smoke and heard the cannonade of the first day's battle, which was between Gen. John F. Reynolds's (the 1st Corps) and the rebels to the number of 25,000. Reynolds was killed and our troops after splendid fight were driven back from the other side through the town to near where we lay. That night we reported to the 1st Corps. Gen. Newton commanding and were assigned to Gen. Abner Doubleday's Division. The next morning our brigade consisting of the 13th, 14th, and 16th Regiment - the other two being at Westminster, MD - 20 miles southeast guarding the corps teams prepared for action. We were in position all the morning until about 4 o'clock when the rebels opened their batteries, ones having been playing since noon. Within five minutes thereafter a shell fell within (six feet near my) horse exploded without doing major damage. Soon the field officers dismounted and our brigade advanced to support our batteries. We were then in rear of the crest on which they were placed and there so protected that not a man was hit or hurt although their shells passed just above our heads and exploded from a few feet to one or two hundred yards beyond us. This music was not at all agreeable. Just before sundown we were advanced up another hill a little to the left and deployed in line amid the bursting of hundreds of shells. One came thought the ranks about four feet to my right killing two men, one or two others were wounded. Up the hill we went and when on top the firing in that section had nearly ceased. We were near the center and not in the advance line there had been fighting on very ground where we were and two of our batteries had been taken and retaken. Our left had advanced and drove the rebels and they in turn had repulsed our advance with masked batteries and driven us back. Between the rebels and us was depressing basin through which ran a ravine well protected by brush and rocks. I was made officer of the picket and then went out and placed three companies as pickets there in two as support and the balance of the regiment left behind a clump of small trees as a reserve. I was on the line all night. After taking care that my line was right, I looked around and found this ravine full of dead and wounded soldiers about two rebs to one Union. Stretchers and ambulances were running all night but by morning nearly all had been removed. Between Union and rebel picket lines, parties of both were by a tacit understanding engaged in hunting up their dead and wounded comrades and friends without molestation. I assisted in bringing within our lines in a dying condition the Rebel Gen. Barksdale who was notorious as a noisy member of Congress from Mississippi. I could fill sheet with interesting descriptions of the scenes of that night. The groans of the wounded were mournful and sad in the extreme. Added to this was the confidence that in the morning the terrible conflict would be

renewed, and you can well imagine that I was thoughtful. The ground I occupied with my picket was the place where a great assault would in all probability be made.

At half past four skirmishing commenced on my left. I immediately went out to that point to order Co. I, there as reserves to deploy as skirmishers and connect with the line in the ravine at an angle back to woods on the extreme left of the center. While going out then and while on a little eminence about twenty to thirty reb skirmisher and sharpshooter blazed at me at a distance of 400 yards. The balls fell about me like hail and I felt as if my head was in a hornet's nest, but I was not touched. I accomplished my purpose and then returned by a more protected route. The situation of this part of the battle was something like this

This sketch as crude enough but fine if you can see that we lay between the fires of the two lines of batteries of cannon on our shells went over our heads but some of the reb shells burst near us and their grape and canister whistled well. We got on average all the forenoon about two guns in fire minutes, yet not more than four or five men were wounded, but there were many hair breath escapes. All this while we lay on our faces. We had had no supper, breakfast, nor did we get any dinner except some had an occasional moment to nibble on a hardtack. The 16th was in the advance of the whole line as the center was the outer arc of a small curve and the pickets on either side fell back in an oblique direction. During the forenoon we did not feel in great danger, but expected something ominous the afternoon.

About 2 o'clock the rebs opened the most terrific cannonading I have ever heard, and Gen. Doubleday, an old artillery officer says he never before heard anything like it. From 75 to 100 guns were into position and full 20 shells per minute passed over our heads and arrive among us during the next two hours. Their guns were served with a precision I never thought possible. A great tree around were we lying as big as one of the largest oaks in Judge Kellogg's yard was so cut up that no a single branch, nothing but the stump remained. But I cannot describe it. Our batteries did not reply so actively for it was apprehended that this terrific cannonading was a feint and the infantry attack would be made elsewhere, so they withheld in readiness for other service. The line of battle was three miles long and there was cannonading the whole length, but on center when we were at culminating about 4:30 p.m. a large column of infantry was seen to steadily advance from between the batteries and right glad were we to see them. They came out in front, protected by their shells which being a little above them came over their heads and deployed handsomely in line. On they came directly towards my picket line but the grape and canister from our batteries and the shots fire from my picket now acting as skirmishers warned them of the hazard of that route. They then turned and marched by their left flank. At that moment our bugle sounded our picket came in, we formed a line with the 13th and 14th rushed on. We were asked if we could charge. Our terrific yell from our men was the response and there we were after the "greybacks" In fifteen minutes the results could be counted thus - 300 rebels dead and wounded on the field and over a thousand prisoners were taken and 2 stands of colors. Of These the 16th took full 400 prisoners and in a second separate charge made only by the themselves they took these two stand of colors the 2nd Florida and 8th VA, and over a hundred more prisoners. Except some work done by a few sharp shooters the battle in that part of the field was ended.

Our men behaved as steady as veterans. Gen. Doubleday, knowing that we were green 9 months men hesitated to let us charge but Gen. Stannard said he would risk it. While we were at

it, he asked Stannard if he had instructed us to go through with the manual of battalion drill on the field of battle for he had never seen such perfect lines before.

Our prisoners passed by the Vermont old brigade and they cheered most lustily for us. The Colonel commanding the brigade now wounded and in pain said that when advancing his line he was sure he should have our batteries in five minutes for he did not believe there were more than a few stragglers in his way as not troops however, could remain undemoralized under such an artillery fire. He never was so astonished in his life before as he was to see those regiments come up so steadily. There is no corps that saw as that has not cheered us. The next morning Gen. Doubleday issued and sent us a special order complimenting the Vermont Brigade for the brilliant manner in which in the most advanced front line of battle we had withstood the fire of 75 to 100 pieces of artillery and so matonally contributed to the splendid victory of the day.

I have written thus to you for your will believe me but I could not write an article for the paper and do this brigade justice without being charged with one sided-ness as I am an officer therein. I believe that the 16th Vermont is the only regiment from our state that has taken two stand of colors in one hours fight.

But - there is another side to the picture. In the charge we had only 425 men, yet during the day we lost in the regiment 16 killed over 80 wounded and about 20 missing, some of whom are undoubtedly dead. It is more difficult to determine the precise number of casualties since the regiment was not all together from Thursday p.m., at 5 o'clock until Saturday morning and we were also on picket during that time.

The march we have made, and short rations and lying in the wet grass nightly has induced illnesses amounting to almost a fever. I was not fit to go into the battle but I would not have missed it for any consideration.

I am today stopping behind at a private house and taking thorough with tea and getting cleaned up. Last night is the first that I have had my clothes off for a week, and I have slept three nights in the rain without tent or blankets. My great coat, uniform coat, all my blankets and my saddle are lost through the cowardice and carelessness of the man who was to take care of them during the battle, and Peacock, my best horse whom I dismounted and left in the rear was killed by a shell. My carpet bag is with the teams and I shall get it by and by. All the clothes I have except those on me are my shirts, towels, and stockings. My coat that I wear is that flannel blouse made for me when I was a Lieutenant.

I shall feel better tomorrow and move on and join my regiment which I left last night with the 1st corps on the field of battle. As that Corps has done so much fighting here and was in the advance it takes the rear for a while.

Most of our troops have moved westerly and we suspect towards Cumberland Gap where it is reasoned we are to fight again.

The rebs completely cleaned out all the stores and all the Union people here. We occupy the best Copperhead mansions for our hospitals.

Save me the paper that make mention of this great and important battle.

Love to all and especially the little darlings,

Your loving husband Charles.

