

Daniel S. White was born around 1848. He enlisted as a sergeant in Company I, 2nd Vermont Volunteers on May 7, 1861, in Cavendish, Vermont. He was promoted to lieutenant January 8, 1863, and was commissioned as captain on January 26, 1863. He was discharged on October 24, 1864, because of wounds received at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5, 1864.

The collection consists of seven letters written to Marie E. Howe of Ludlow, Vermont. Daniel and Marie married sometime between September 1863 and May 1864, since the letters are addressed to Mrs. D. S. White after that date. The letters describe events such as the execution of a soldier for murder and the taking of civilian prisoners. He also writes about the tragedy of the Civil War and about the fear of dying in battle. The final letter on May 10, 1864, describes a wound he received at the Battle of the Wilderness.

## Letter 1

Camp 2nd Vt. Vols. May 11, 1863

Friend Marie,

I read your ever welcome letters day before yesterday and Lt. Howe and myself we engaged yesterday on the muster and payrolls I did have time to answer your letter but will do so this morn. It is a most beautiful morning a gentle breath just moving rich foliage of the trees which has just put out the many forest birds are warbling forth this morning song which full in gentle cadences upon the --- making sweet melody I in the heart with even the most casual observer. Who is these that cannot appreciate and admire the beauties of a scene like this. I cannot describe the beauty of the prospect nor the feelings which it may inspire but I know you can appreciate and admire them and cannot doubt that you have experienced feelings the same and therefore a further description is unnecessary. O! what a pity that a country which has so many beauties by was of climate and natural scenery should be blighted by the withering curse of slavery and civil war. That the country zephyr gentle as us the breath of the fairest maiden should be looked with echo of booming canon and exploding shells while the withering blighting curse of slavery that barrier to human improvement either moral, intellectual, or physical should contaminate the very air we breath. When will this stake of things cease? When will the right take the scepter of justice and assume the sway? I hope speedily I spoke of My bring pleasant month to ride. You know the army is under machinery orders. Some ideas occurred to one of us U read your question "isn't awful to die?" and under these circumstances I would not speak of it. People fear a natural death that home where all the comfort of life are to be had and a large circle of friends to administer to you every want but it is with us here we may be hit mortally wounded and lie flat in the cold ground with no pillow under the aching head and no one to administer one single act of kindness to drive the enemy. May 3rd when were wounded and cut up so I myself washed the boys wounds and gave them water and cut off their belts but despite all poor Crosby died all this without friends and a downy bed to rest on. I can't say that I fear being killed in battle still I may but it don't seem so but a dread of death naturally takes possession of one and it secures that a natural death would be only a pleasure (i.e. compared to the horrid death on the field) but see one dying from wounds so common that most all turn instinctively away without uttering a word. I do not think you so very wicked for we all have our faults and I have mine and no sooner do I act wrongly or do something "Comme il faut" than I am sorry for it and us as you say make any amount of resolutions for the future. O! no Marie I should be none of the kindest of teachers with

no word of reproof for you no matter what you did but the rest would have to "come to time" and that would keep my reputation as a teacher good you see for government at least. Don't like the unmarried principal all because he wears his whiskers "a la Burnside" Why that is the prettiest style out I think Do you think I ought to change to do a la Hooker which is none at all or at least but very few? I am pleased with the high unconsciousness on my father in-law excuse me Marie I should say step-father which you are pleased to favor him with. Indeed I think he is a nice man what I have seem of him. Yes I will believe you if you tell me honestly (no joke) that you have ever been in love, but it causes ideas to arise which I fear would suppress and the question "is her heart of adamant are her tastes too complicated and diversified to be suited." In the first place, I think on sober, second thought your heart must be susceptible of "tender emotions" therefore I acquit you on that and take in Dr. Brumen up and laugh. But I am not sure I am proof against falling in love and therefore I should hardly dare to come home 'till my year is out. So you have music scholars? I had not heard of that success to you as a music teacher. You seem to think your letter very bad looking, I never look at the writing in fact in reading your letters it always seems as though I were listening to your conversation as spoken not written I am most happy in the receipt of letters from you and never look to see whether it is beautifully written or not for that is of minor importance first it is to get one and I should be the last to wait five minutes to have it rewritten as I am always so ashamed of the looks of my letters and not. Infrequently of the composition that should be ungrateful indeed to ask you to rewrite then but write as often as you can -anything you chose and as plainly as you chose and I guarantee I should be but too happy to receive it.

I do not know how soon we will march but think it may be before long but where I do not know. You must be careful and while you use hoarse I would not try to sing much as it is the worst thing that can be done for the voice so says columnist writers in "cultivation and care of the voice." It never is with Sgt. Beckworth was bitten by a snake a few days since but he is alive and well now but we feared for his life that day he was bitten. The Co. are quite healthy now and the men are in good spirits. Our division only are here and the corps is farther towards Mannassas. Lt. Spafford Junior's brother stayed with us all day a few days since also Axro White & Geo. Clark the concert sniggers with whom you are doubtless acquainted. Please give my regards to all and accepts a quota for yourself. Please write soon. I must make out a descriptive list so good bye. The mail goes out in few minutes.

I am very truly your friend,

Daniel S. White

## Letter 2

Camp 4 miles from Culpeper

Va. Sept. 22, 1863

Dear Marie,

I forward you 4 pictures and you may take your choice in them and do what you like with the rest.

I am going to be paired off this week? and can't write but a few words. How do you do? Will I hope my dear? I am not very sick at least I take my rations regular. Excuse me from writing more this morn as it is mail time. Good bye my dear. Very affectionately I am Yours. Trust me tell them.

D.S. White

PS Please write very soon & a long letter as long as my letter was. Good bye,

D.S.W.

## Letter 3

March 31, 1864

My Dear Wife

As Oramel is going home tomorrow I will write after lives and let you know I am well. You will see by this I am going to enlarge my correspondence a little as small envelopes are by far too small. We have been out for target practice this afternoon and this afternoon we are to have a brigade drill. What are you doing today my dear? Practicing I suppose little thinking that you are to be so soon agreeably surprised but you are. Should you be happy to have him home again? I shall expect to hear from you soon. I send a can of milk along by O.G. So you can see what we use and if you have a chance show some of it to mother White. Please try a little in your coffee? I am going to Brandy Station this afternoon on business. I don't know as I can write any more now Food Bye for now My dear wife. Brigade drill is passed and I have been to Brandy Station and saw Capt. Pittein but could not get no situation for all, yet though think I shall before long . I left his address with Capt. Pittein. While we were out to drill we witnessed a splendid horse race for \$10000 per side-Money soon won but I think that rather doubtful way to make money. The Paymaster is here and I have got to get the payroll signed so much for baibg a captain. Have you ever heard anything fro, that Capt. wife you got acquainted with in Brattleboro? Oramel will probably be stationed in Brattleboro and you must go and see him if he is? I send you a paper and Artemas Ward at a brass candlestick (mate to one have) and if there were anything I could send you I would get it and send it to you but have looked sutlers over and I can't think of anything that can I can send you that you wish. You must enjoy yourself hugely while Oramel is at home. Without a doubt I shall be very homesick when he leaves but I shall have to stand it I suppose. I expect a letter tonight from my wife give regards to the folks and accept the warmest devotions of my heart. I must now attend to singing in the rolls. Good bye my dear wife, write soon God protect and guard you is the prayers of you affectionate husband. DSW

## Letter 4

Head Qrs. Co. "I" 2nd Regt. Vt. Vols.

May 1864

Gen. orders No. 25

My own Dearest Wife,

I received your ever welcome letter tonight dated "Head Qrs. of Light Infantry Putney, Vt. April 28th 1864," and I was very glad my wife to hear from you and learn of your improved state of health and I do hope that while I am out rise you will at least be blessed with good health and then I can feel easy about if I know you are contented and happy. You will at least try won't you my wife and be happy while I am here? Well I was very much pleased with your picture and I think it very good. "O! you, you put your hair in papers didn't you" It's a decided improvement I think my wife. I asked Capt. Ballou if he would like to see my wife? Said he should showed him the old one and the new one and he thought you did not look as you used to and wished to know if it changed every one as much as it had you-I told him I did not know as you had changed any only you were not hardly as lively as when we boarded there. Said I had got to give him your picture told him I could not as those were the only pictures I had of my wife- don't think he will ever get one by my giving it to him for it would be put up in some "house" as his wife the first I know and I don't wish any man to have my wife's picture who visits a "house" at all. I am very glad you have gone a visiting and hope you will continue and I will tell you where to go if you can't think where to go. I believe you are under contract to visit Mother when you return. I wrote Mother Bates you were coming to make her a visit when you returned from Brattleboro. Mother says she is very lonesome and often looks at those bottles used to drain the cider in and wishes we were all there together to drink cider again.

I wouldn't object my wife, would you? I too think early spring a little dull but when the leaves begin to spring out and the birds sing and the flowers present thin variegated hues to the eye. I think it the most pleasant season of the year for it reminds one of youth when the mind is light and buoyant and the spirits vivacious and no trouble hangs like a dark pall over the mind. I remember will what reflections and impressions I had when I saw these beauties of nature of what I would do when I was a man. I never dreamed of a war among ourselves or that I would ever witness a battle or much less participate in one, but we see by this how short sighted we are and how little we know of the future or the manner in which we may be affected by it and it is well we do not. Those remembrances are among the happiest of my life, yet I little knew I was happy, but was constantly looking forward to the time when I should be a man and act for myself, but I think even in this could I only be with my wife I could be perfectly happy, but for awhile at least I must for go the pleasures of her society. I haven't got any of the sitting photographs of me and but two of any kind and they are not very good. Ha ha by "painful experience" substitute "pleasurable" vice "painful" can't you my wife? So you got a new dress well you won't have it cut low in the neck I suppose shall you my wife. Sergt. Taylor may like the style of the blue thin but not now - ha ha. Well that is nice I'm sure "leaps white you are detailed for fatigue tomorrow to report at 7A.M. with one days rations." Isn't that consoling my wife? Don't know how far I have got to go to do my days work. Come and go with me my wife and I'll I learn you how to march and carry your haversack with dinners and supplies in it. No, you will eat from my haversack if you will go? I'll put you in command of the whole detail and

let you "drive." Please give my regards to Father and Mother, Emmy & Reasy, Grandpa and Grandmother & Sarah and all who may inquire after me. Heaven guide you my wife and account the whole love of your devotee.

Husband D.S.

## Letter 5

Fredericksburg, Va. May 19th 1864

My Dearest Wife,

This is a mail going out and I'll write you a word and let you know I was wounded Thursday, May 5, thoroughly below the knee. Don't think I shall have to lose it. I shall go to Washington soon and as soon as I can get my trunk sent. I will try and come to Brattleboro. Don't worry it's alright and I am well taken care of. Geo. Patch step mothers son lost his arm and is here. The Vt. Brigade lost 1235, Rebels 2600. I'm too weak to write all names but will send a list though not complete of Co. I lost 40, killed and wounded, and 3 missing.

I'll soon see you. As soon as I get to Brattleboro I send for you. Good Bye

## Letter 6

Bush Hill Camp Aug. 3rd,

Friend Marie,

I read your letter yesterday and was very much pleased to hear from you that you were well and in the enjoyment of one of heavens richest gifts. I went yesterday to witness one of the most painful sights it has been my lot to witness since my enlistment of ever. A young man of about 24 years of pleasing dress "hung by the beck until he was dead." He belonged to the 2nd N.H. regiment. His crime was killing a woman in Alexandria. The crime of killing a poor innocent woman although the wife of a rebel should not go unpunished. I could witness such an execution without the least compunction could you not Marie. The Corporal was along and when he dropt the corpl. say well "I do not wish to see any move" and looking into his face he was white as a sheet he said his heart was all of a flutter and said that he could not stand that. Our whole brigade was present to witness the execution and others besides some 20,000 in all. Did you ever witness the execution of a man Marie? We read the box which the very kind and patriotic Cadus of Ludlow furnished for our comfort and the contents we deal sparingly out at each meal and merries looking set of faces you never saw than among our men when they see the kindness of their brothers and sisters at home that although distance divides them the same feelings of sympathy exists for their welfare which was always exercised towards them from infancy. The cooks are preparing breakfast for us and what do you think we are going to have for breakfast we are to have fried pork bread and coffee. Will you not come and take breakfast with us if you will come you shall have a bit out of the box. The Rebels are within 8 miles of us and we are making preparations for a warm reception at any time by falling trees across the road and possibly make them attack us as wee wish them to. I went over to see the Vt. 3rd the other day all as well as usual stayed in Washington at the National where I saw W.B. Hatch, D. Chase from Vt. Corpl.

sends his regard to all who inquire after him. Please excuse bad writing as I have no place for to write. Write soon. Give my regards to your father and mother and all who inquire after me.

Yours in Haste

Yours Truly D.S. White

Corpl. says he will write you today or tomorrow.

## Letter 7

Camp Bush Hill, Va., Aug. 12th.

Friend Marie.

I read your ever welcome epistle day before yesterday and but owing to the fact that I had to go on Picket duty I did not have an opportunity of answering it until now. We returned about two hours ago bringing in 6 prisoners about Revellie a poor Negro woman with one small child in her arms and a little boy by her side came to my sentry (my detail bring the furthest out and consequently the most responsible post) and wanted to pass but she had no pass and on telling her that she must go back again she began to cry and tremble in every limb saying that her master would kill her as he had often threatened to do if she attempted to leave. "Please sir take me and kill me but do not let me go back into my masters hands." I was touched to the prick by her supplications but the most mercy that I could show her was to make a prisoner of her and sending to headquarters which I did. About 10 o'clock two ladies came along after the runaway but I foiled their first attempt but the second I could not foil and therefore I had two white ladies and a colored lady as prisoners on my post and on one other the rest of them were taken amounting to 6. I had to go without breakfast this morning for I went after it I found that a large blood hound was "fastening his deadly fungus upon it." There! There! There! A signal cannon, and attack! How mournfully it sounds as it passes over our camp I must go move after "I attend the Call" 1/2 past to no attack but all is still we are all ready to march belts on and blankets ready to put on teams harnessed. You may expect that we'll have a better in a few days as I understand that the rebels are constructing a battery not 2 miles from here. You will find the 2nd Vt. at her post ready and willing to put her down this unnatural rebellion. You may expect a letter as a battle takes place for I suppose that you have an anxious solicitude for the "dear one(s)" Wilson is well. He was very weak about the time of our last engagement at Bull's Run and he generally is if there is anything to do danger or no danger. I hear a story is in circulation in Ludlow that the provisions sent in the box was all appropriated to the use of officers. Now for the benefit of those who contributed to fill the box I would say that such a story has no foundation either in truth or reason the contents were distributed as nearly alike as could be to every man in the company and all that was marked to some particular person was delivered over to him as I help open the box and am supposed to know as much of the matters as any one. The Corpl. is well and in fine spirits he at present is discussing the merits of some very fine peaches a pleasant past time surely. Give my warmest regards to father and mother Ballua sends his regards also my regards to all who inquire after me I should have labored a little in the composition of my letter had I known it would have been published but never the less it was not published in the NY Herald you are at liberty at any time to select items if they of sufficient interest. In haste.

Very Truly Yours, D.S. White

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of the strawberries which you sent us and pronounce them very nice indeed. I need as heretofore play the harp piece for me if I'll come over tonight there's no attack Please sing "Annie S\_\_\_\_" for me appreciate the spirit and beauty of peace.