

Letter 1

Westminster West, Aug. 29, 1860

Friend James,

Your last kind message dated July 29th was seasonably received--that is, it arrived soon enough. After starting, but like the Paddy's XX, it was a XX long time in getting started. There are two reasons why I shall not belabor you for not writing sooner. The first and best is you gave a very good reason for so doing. The second I know of a certain young lass, about my size who is frequently remiss in Epistolary writing and sometimes without any reason save negligence. Yet it will not prove true in my neglecting you this time, for often have my thoughts reverted to you and other friends there, but could get no opportunity until now to write. We've just experienced a slight shower which has dampened the grain, so labor is suspended for a time, giving me a few moments to hold converse with a highly respected friend, who, I fear, feels himself sadly neglected by my past dilatoriness. Soon I shall have more leisure, and then, I'll venture a promise of punctuality for the months to come if no more.

My health is good, tough as a bear, hearty as an ox and weigh more by several pounds than last fall. I had an excellent place to work this season, and have enjoyed myself very much. It will be with some regrets that I leave the good home and kind friends I found in the neighborhood. Yet, such is life. We form dear friends and soon part from them perchance never to meet again in the world. But memory (ever true to her trust) will oft times make true friends seem to be near each other though they are separated by many a weary mile. Is it not so? Oh! James, sometimes the thought that were it not for memories' magic chamber in whose halls we are permitted to save, and have, as it were a panoramic view of the happy scenes of past days, we could bring before the mind's eye the many happy hours spent in each other's society, this would be a dreary life to live. Would it not, kind friend? How do Lucy and Charlie get along this summer? Exceedingly well, I dare say. You spoke of having a select school but did not whether you or Lucy were going to attend or not.

I shall finish work this week. Paid off and the next Monday, if nothing prevents, shall commence school in Townshend about 18 miles west of here. I would very much to visit home and in W but cannot this fall. Please direct Townshend Vermont when you next write and may that be soon convenient. I will not delay answering so long again. Respect to all friends, accept this hastily written letter from Otis.

Letter 2

Camp Lincoln date Oct. 2, 1862

Mother, I take this chance to write you. We came here at about half past three and came directly to our camp. It commenced raining that night and has kept it up, not verry hard but it is nasty enough. I have been to the twelfth to see if Otis was there but he was not. I saw a fellow who knew him and said he is in the 16th Regiment and is at the village so I did not see him and may not have a chance as there is a guard all around the camp today. They say they draw their corps. If so, I shall have my picture taken as soon as I can get to the village and send it to Lucy first chance. We drew our blankets that night we got here both woolen and rubber so can keep dry if it does rain and we have got our canteens to draw. I can't think of his name. He was cousin to Father. You and Father went and stayed to his house one Fair time. He saw me and stopped and looked at me and said I looked as Father had at my age. He is corporal in the Calais Company. Aretus Thayer and William Trask bunk with me or I with them. I find you forgot to put that root in my budget so I need to find some here but it is a sand plain and where is nothing but some shrub and sweet firms. David Car and West are here with Company I(G) from Montpelier. Our Company is B and we head the rest of the Regiment. Company A is a company from Burlington and is made up Irishmen and is not full so they will have to fill it from other Companies. Direct your letters if you write. I am here.

James H. Willson
Co. B 13 Reg
Brattleboro, VT

Letter 3

Brattleboro Oct. 10

Dear Mother and Sister:

I set myself to write you. I am well and tough as a knot. I can eat meat and I read as long as anyone of the company. Some of them giants be or are it is not good enough but it is as good as any Bread and Meat as ever I ate at home or anyplace else. We are to be sworn in today and tomorrow. We are to bed outdoors. XXXXX of Vermont for nine months. Then we shall see home again. All I hope. There is four regiments here now. The sixteenth came yesterday but I have not seen any of the boys yet. Otis came and stayed last night with me and I got a pass to go to the village with him the next morning. He is in as purty a company of boys as I ever saw together. They are all good-natured, pleasant and from 20 to 26 years old. Those words you saw on that letter. I did not put one J to the letter box and forgot to put on the stamps so they stuck it up outside and I went and put on a stamp so they sent it along. There was 6 Waitsfield men here to see the boys from that town. Eddie Porter is here to see us and that is the only Warren man here yet. I was in hopes someone from our part of town would be here and they may yet, as we do not go till one o'clock tomorrow. Tell Mell I will write him as soon as I get to Dixie and tell him of my journey. I hope the boys won't be as tight as they were coming here. 2 o'clock we are sworn into the United States Service. Two in the regiment would not take the oath so they were marched off to the guardhouse to stay till they would which will not be long in they say that they did not understand about their pay. The Warren boys are all well and in good spirits. I cannot get to the sixteenth yet but the guard will be moved tomorrow. I guess I have had my picture tookin to send home and went out on drill with knapacks on and the strap came across it and being so warm that it turned white so you could not see what it was a Man or a Beast but it has come off by some rubbing hands. I meant to have another taken but they have left the ground and I could not get a pass so the rest must be taken when I can get a chance. My sheet is most covered so I must bid you goodbye for now.

James Willson

Letter 4

Capitol Hill, Oct. 15, 1862
Friend Melville

Here I am at last in Dixie on a rise of ground one mile and a half from the capitol. How long we are going to stay I don't know. We started from Brattleboro at Two o'clock last Saturday. We arrived here at half past-four Monday. We stopped every few miles on the road in the day time. The first place we stopped was at North Hampton. One man came along with a horse cart load of apples and told us to help ourselves and we did. His apples were nice as I have ever saw. Others came with baskets and wheelbarrows. All along the road the people were all out showing their hats and handkerchiefs as we passed. Every place we stopped before we got to Baltimore. It was just the same at Philadelphia. We got some dinner and XX to the depot (we crossed a ferry to get to Philadelphia) and piled into the cars, freight cars, with boards round the sides and holes broke out for light and air. The girls came around and shook hands with us. Some of them were pretty as one would wish to see and not a bit afraid. We started near night and to Baltimore. We went in a hurry. The road was uneven and the cars hard so we got shook up nicely, when we got most there we stopped in a piece of woods and stayed half an hour. What it was for, I don't know as there was not wood nor water. We arrived at the city about half past three and stayed till daylight and got some breakfast to eat. The nigers and hogs were thick as hairs on a dog. We came very slow from there stopping often to let other trains pass, some group the same way and others going to carry troops, to some other quarter. I have seen some of the boys I used to know before I came here Oct. 16th. I have just come in from review of the brigade (what there is of it), we went out at eleven. It is half past two we were kept marching and facing till some of the boys began to grumble about it. Some of them fell out of the ranks but none in our company. I could have gone as much longer and not been so tired as some of them pretended to be. Oscar Stearns tents with me or I with him. He is well and so are all the Warren boys. This is the worse looking country you ever saw. I have seen nothing growing but cabbage and that is out of our reach. Within 5 miles of here the ground is so hard we have to use picks to dig a place to cook our salt beef or salt hoss as the boys call it. It goes very well. I like XX much. I can eat as big a loaf as comes along and all the beef I can get everyday. I don't buy cakes and such as some do. All goes well. I saw a fellow from Randall's Co. 2nd Vt. The company is full but only six of the ones that left home a little over a year ago are left. Some dead. Some sick. Some wounded. Some gone home. I must close as my sheet is most all covered over. I wish it was larger but you won't by the time you have pitched it all out, It will take so long. Write me how the folks all are at home. I went to get my picture taken for you but the artist went away so I did not get but one so you will have to wait till I can go where they take them. Remember me as your friend.

Jim

Letter 5

Capitol Hill Oct 17

Dear Sister Mine

Sitting in my tent, I thought I would write you a few lines. I am well and in good humor with myself and all around me. We have little tents, only large enough for two. For poles we use our guns setting the buts on the ground sticking the bayonette through a loop and tying a rope from the top to a pin in the ground and we are all right and if it does not rain, dry enough. If it does, I don't know how it will be. We arrived here yesterday near night and the first man I saw was Bogart. He seemed glad to see me and I knew I was to see him. Since then, I have seen Chaz Spalding, Steve Sterlin, Albert Selie, Haro Danon and I saw Harland Stodard at Philadelphia. He went with a crutch but was feeling well. I never saw such a crowd as was at the station. The street were full as far as I could see. They gave up a dinner and if it was Sunday, they were noisy enough for a weekday. We came from there to Baltimore in the night and we came in a hurry and had to stay there in the rain to pay for it, so we did not make much in driving so fast. I did not sleep any in three weeks, so last night I slept sound as log and have been on guard all day over the baggage so I can not write much more tonight as I am sleepy. I wrote one before this and forgot to write where to direct a letter if they took a notion to answer it, so you may tell anyone that wants to know to direct to James Willson Co. B 13th Vermont Reg. Washington DC Columbia. Write as soon as you can.

Jim

Letter 6

Washington Oct 23, 1862

Dear Parent

I received yours of the 18th today. Was glad to hear that you and the rest of the folks were well. I am as tough a knot never enjoyed myself better. Have some hard drills once in a while, but I stand it better than some of them. Jim Eldridge was here today. He is heavier than I ever saw him. He is about three miles from here. I went within half a mile of him after some cedar for bedding. It is the only time I have been outside the line since, except on drill and after water so you see I have not been around much. I have not seen but one real white woman since I came here. They are all black or yellow. She was real pretty and from Vermont to see a sick brother in the 6th. He was here to see another brother in our Company from Moretown. I have seen quite a number of the boys I used to know in Vermont. James Miller has been the other day. He is in a New York regiment. He did not look like he used to years ago.

Reet had a letter from someone in Warren. Em, I guess. By what he said about her and Lucy she had better work and Mell too or Mother Ann will put up so I shant know her when I get back. Does she believe that Roberts tried to electioneer for Reet or not. Dolph is as jolly as any of the boys. You wanted to know how much money I drew at Brattleboro. It was ten dollars and seventy-three cents. The Col. says our time commenced the time the draft was ordered so most two months of our time is gone. It does not seem so long as it is. I will get another blank filled and send to you. Tell Mell to write me and tell all that is going on in Warren. How is Deal (Delia)? Is she at home? Is Em as rough as she used to be? Oscar heard from home today. How does Grandfather mean to do this winter? Has he sold Crook Leg yet? If so, how much did he get for her and the oxen? How about them? Write me all about the farm. Tell George if he will write me I will write him a letter. He can't in an hour. Tell Lucy will write to her soon. Our accommodations for writing are not the best. I am lying on the ground, a board for a table so I can't write well. You must excuse all mistakes as I am in a hurry to finish before roll call. It is most gone so good night from your son.

Jim

Letter 7

Camp Vermont Nov. 9 1862

Dear Mother and Sister

I seat myself this Sunday morn to write you. My health is as good as yet and I trust will remain so. We are now in Virginia about three miles from Alexandria. We XXXX. How long we shall stay, I don't know. The report was that we were going to winter here and do guard duty. Then again, they say we are under marching orders. One can't tell anything about what we hear nowdays. Some of the boys have been ailing but we are all smart now. I believe they got a letter from Warren most every mail. I get, once and awhile, a letter from Mell. He says that Warren folks are having lively times nowdays. I am they don't all flat down. How does the school get along? Does it go as well as you thought it was going? I heard Mr. XX was dead and buried. Bint had a letter from Sarah last night. How is fishing? He wants to come down here as bad as he did when I came away. You wanted to know what Mr. Roberts said about voting for Reet. He spoke to me and asked if I was not one of the boys that had enlisted. I told him I was. He that said that Reet was going to run as a candidate for selectman and said as I was a schoolmate of his that if I went for him and he got it he would remember me. So he thought that it would be for my interest to go that way. If he does not like this, tell him if he will come down to Dixie and will take Mother over with him. We have had a snow storm here. It XX morning and the next morning, it was six inches deep and cold as Greenland. It made our eyes stick and you may believe I did not expect to see so much at a time. An old niger told me that there was not so much snow at any one time last winter and he presumed there would not be again. This I hope not. The weather is good now. Some mud yet but most all gone. If you have got yarn, I should like to have you knit me some gloves and send by mail. Some of the boys have had some sent to them and they came all right. Do this up so that they show for if they do, I may lose them on XX. How did you know about the party and the apple cart you wrote about? Mell wrote too about them. Said he liked the party best. As my sheet is most covered, I must close. Receive this from you son and brother.

Jim

Letter 8

Camp Vermont, Nov. 23, 1862

Dear Sister Mine

I received a letter from you awhile ago, was glad to hear that you was well. My health: good. I am heavier than I was when I left home and good deal lazier so you must be your own judge how often I stir. We have got a first rate Col. He don't make us to more than enough for our health. He has had orders to stay here this winter to do guard duty and have the men work on the forts. They are building them on every hill around and are digging rifle pits so you can walk miles and not leave the rifle pits.

25th

We have building barracks so as to be warm this winter. We have the best spot for Co. grounds in the Regiment. It is on a rise of ground so the water will run each way from our barracks so it will be dry and nice. Our sick ones are getting along nicely--Mr. Dolph has got back his tents and will be on duty soon. Arthur is well. You wrote something about him and the orderly. Reet has not called our Co. in only at noon. Sometimes when Albee was at the Colonel's to carry in his report.

Nov. 30th

It has been a long time I wrote the first of this letter. I have not had a chance last Tuesday night. We had orders to be ready to march at a minute's notice. We supposed that we were going to have a fight somewhere. Next day some of the boys were so sick that they had to be left. They had been raising Cain all day. We started at seven and marched till four in the morning. Then we rested a short time. It rained some. I laid down by a tree with my blanket round me and went to sleep. We marched all the next day, camped in a pine wood, started next morning at night, found ourselves at Union Mills--the place where so many cars were burned and not more than four miles from Bull Run Battlefield. We can see the field from here. Last night the first train came to this place. Since the fire we are on the front. Can help ourselves to anything we can find but that is not much. Most everything has been taken care off. The buildings have been stripped. I have been as far as I was allowed. I saw lots of graves Rebel and Union soldiers buried side by side but I have not seen a Vermont soldier's grave nor any of our Co. have not. We have found all sorts of things: old guns. I put one in the fire. It got hot and went off. I found a skeleton with an old bed blanket by it. Others have found other remains. One of the 15th found two revolvers with cartridges by them. Today I am on picket by the side of the run. George Trask is with me. Oscar was left at camp to see some of the things. The weather is nice so I am sitting on the ground in my shirtsleeves. We don't need a coat half the time, when we have anything to do. The Warren boys are all doing nicely. They growled when they had to leave their barracks but we have some now built by the Rebels but never were used. Some of them have never been roofed. We were some tired when we got here but are in fine spirits now. Yesterday Sergeant Gilsby and I were out looking round. We saw Col. Randall. He asked us if we did not want to

go down to the bridge he was going. As it was beyond the guards and was by chance we went. There is a new bridge and guarded all the time by a force of our men. The old Col. talked as freely as our Capt. would with us and make so, if anything. He is a nice man. We all like him much. He is rough but kind to his men. On the march he went afoot and put a sick boy from the ambulance on his horse because it was full and the boy would have had to have gone afoot. I must close now. Write soon to you.

Brother Jim

Letter 9

November 23, 1862

Respected Friend (probably Mell Eaton)

I seat myself on the ground to write you a few lines. I am tough as a bear I tell you and enjoy myself first rate. I hope you and the rest of my friends (if I have any in Warren) are as well off as I am. I had a letter from Mother last night. She was well as usual. She wrote me awhile ago that Lucy wanted to go to Mr. Thayer's to stay and go to school this winter. She has not written to me anything about it lately. I do not want that she should go there. Em is satisfied in there; Em acts so like sin some firmer that I do not want her with her a great deal. What does Em say about staying at home when the rest of the girls go to parties or doesn't she seem to care? But is not in so good standing with the boys as she was awhile ago. He wanted the Warren boys to go into barracks (we have been building some since I wrote you last) together and he would go with them when we got them more done. He and Corporal Leuce picked out a squad and wanted Oscar and I should go in with them. We told him we should go with Warren Boys. He could do as he liked. He is a regular sneak to tell the truth as it is. I don't want you to tell anyone as it will get to him for it might get me in a tight place. I told him so to his face. He said he did not care what I said here if I did not write home about it. Is Add Dotton at home now? If she is, I have a good mind to write to her. I have fattened up, so I don't believe I could get her stocking on you. I had some fun once last winter with her. I weigh 170 lbs. now. The next time you go to the river, you look on the window sash by the showcase in Jim's store and see how much I weighed the night I enlisted. I wrote my name and weight that night so as to remember but I have forgotten. I heard that Sarah Sargeant was married. How is it? Write me how the folks carry sail in Warren. Two of Co. G Boys buried today or one was. The other was sent home. What should you think to wake up some morning and find yourself here. With that XXX but look rather red. The grass is green, to see potatoes that were not along and see the Niggars husking corn, some plowing and sowing winter grain that I saw Monday when I was on picket. We went across. There happened to be some apples that were not gathered so we stopped and did the job for someone and took our XX. As we went along we lived high for the next 48 hours. We had potatoes. We had new milk and here want so many roosters left to crow. When we came in, we got lost going to the lines and had a nice tramp but we got round allright. At last picket to the nicest grind of guard duty that ever I did. I have written as much as you can get time to read so I will close. Write soon and oblige.

J.H. Willson

Letter 10

Camp Vermont Dec. 7 1862

Dear Mother:

I received a letter from you some time ago. You wrote that you would send me somethings in a box with Dave Gleason. We received them last night. The Cap Butter Cheese, Apples, and all that. I have not written before because I wanted to have time to write a good long one. Since I wrote last we have been to Union Mills. We marched one night going in rain storm some of the boys got an awful cold. I stood it first rate somehow. A hard jaunt don't use me up as it does some of them. When we came back, we rode on the cars, on them. I mean they were most all flat-bottomed except some of the hospital cars. The boys rode and the tops of them the winds blew so hard and the snow and the rain came like fur. We rode to Alexandria and from there we foraged it to camp. We got there. We had no tents, our barracks were not covered. The snow was four inches deep and more coming. On the way, the Col. of the 10th sent his orderly to tell us that we could have belongings at their quarters. As most of the men were on picket and their barracks were empty. By the way we made tracks across the lots. Was a caution. We slept snug and warm. The next day our tents came and had to shovel away the snow and put them up. We had a nice time in the cold. Then Bill and I went two miles and got fifteen cents worth of straw then asked so much a bunch and if we did not get as near our money's worth as any of them. It was not our fault.

Today is Sunday but not such a Sunday as we had in Old Vermont. Today the boys are all at work fixing their tents and getting wood for night. It was cold. The ground was frozen three inches. The water in our canteens will freeze so we have to thaw them out so as to drink but we have blankets so we lay warm. Oscar and I lay together. We spread our blankets together so as to have them both over us. We put on our overcoats take off our boots roll up our feet in the blanket go to sleep and sleep sound as a log. Tonight George is not very well. He is cross has a bad cold but will be all right in a day or two. Bill is hectoring him and George is as mad as a hen. This may not be very interesting to you but they are at it so I write it to get it off of my mind. I had a letter from Lute. She was well as the rest of the folks. Albee is well as usual. I guess though I have not seen him. It has been so cold we have not. I should like to know where you get this butter and cheese. It tasted good. It is not much like the sulters. His is not very good but he asks though to have XX. If good the sulter does not get much of my money. It is not much that I have but it is not all gone yet. We shall get some pay soon I hope but it does not make much difference. The Captain has not paid me all towards my clothes so there is some due me yet. I have heard from Jim Eldridge several times since we left Capitol Hill. The story is that we are going to stay here now for the winter but we can't tell much by what we hear. You said you would send me some papers I wish you would if you can as well as not. I hear that there is to be cessation of the Rebellion. I hope it is so for to see how this thing is carried on is enough to make a dog sick but I kind of like it.

Jim

See collection description at vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/willson.pdf

Transcriptions by Richard Vangermeersch

From the collections of Vermont Historical Society, Barre, VT 05641-4209

Letter 11

Fairfax Courthouse Dec. 19th, 1862

Dear Mother

I read yours of the 14th today was pleased to hear of your good health. My health is good now. I was most sick with a cold a few days ago. The rest of my tentmates are well. Oscar received a letter from his mother yesterday. Answered it today. You wrote about somethings you sent. I thought I wrote you all. I meant to at least. I have read all the things you have written about in Mr. Gleason's box. I received Butter, Cheese, Sugar, Apples, a cap then I received some stamps in a letter and some Gloves by mail so I have got all you have sent, I guess. If you sent anything with Mr. Dolph's they are at Alexandria. Lt. McElroy saw a box there for him. Yesterday and some more for the Regiment. They will be forwarded in a few days, so I guess I shall get something soon.

You asked me if we had enough to eat sometimes when we have been moving and our stuff does not get along we are short but, as a general thing, I have enough. I always do if we draw full rations. Since we were at Union Mills we have not but one train so we could not get our provisions along quite as fast as it ought to another thing. Our Quartermaster is sick, has not got along yet and our Commissary is sick and they have got this Jim Lamb from Montpelier to do our commissary work. He don't care much for the boys but feels rather large and he will have to travel soon. The Quartermaster will be here in a few days. We had had orders to march but I don't think we shall go as far as for the 9 month troops that have been in battle, they are none of the Vermont Brigade. I wish if you have my money that you do not want to use right away that you would send me some. I did not mean to send home for any but we have not had any pay yet. We have bought a small stove for our tent. It took all the money we had to pay for it. It cost 62 cents apiece. I said all I have postage stamps let yet. Tell Lute to write to me and not to wait for me as I don't get time every day to write and you write soon.

Son Jim

Letter 12

Camp near Fairfax Courthouse, December 25

Good Evening Friend Mell. I wish you a Merry Christmas. I received a letter from you last night. I was glad to hear from you. I can assure you. You wrote that you had not heard from me since Thanksgiving. I received a letter written on that day speaking of the hen and board fence. I have answered that. I got a letter a week from home and write as often but they don't get them. I have written one today. You wrote that it was cold when you wrote. It is as nice Fall weather here now as you had in Vermont two months ago unless it has been different than usual. I should think it would be lonesome now Black Emily is gone or does the Schoolmarm fill her place. If I was in Warren, I think I should go to school but I don't think I should be satisfied to stay there. I enjoy myself first rate here. Only when we have a hard march, then sometimes I get cross but it don't make any difference. It is trudge on keep up or the order is close up close up and so it is no use to complain of sore feet but thank fortune I have stood it pretty well. I have not lagged any yet but I have carried more than one tired boy's gun for him. You wrote of the battle. I had heard by the bye of it that had not had the particulars. We do not get any news here, only what comes from Vermont. Sergeant Thayer says keep straight and he would like to hear from you, if convenient. You know he is third largest now and he makes a pretty good one. He allows the boys to steal (draw, I mean) anything they want, when they are under him away from Camp Smith. Say he is all right. He has not seen a sick day since he has been in the service. He weighs 188 lbs. He is going to write to you one of these days. When he gets a good ring made of Laurel root to send to you, he wants you to write how Mr. Parmentier is. It is most roll call. I must close soon. Please write soon to you friend.

Letter 13

Camp near Fairfax Court House, Dec. 25

Dearest Mother and Sister

I wish you both a Merry Christmas. It is the nicest day here today and the ground is not frozen at all. The ground birds are all around. The quails are silently and the boys in fine spirits. The boys in our Company are rather sadder than the rest of the Regt. Oscar Reed from Waitsfield is probably not alive by this time. He is dying XXXX the fever last Friday. As I wrote you we had marching orders but they were countermanded but I had got my letter in the office before the last order. Same Saturday we went to Centerville seven miles to do picket duty. We started at seven. It was rather cool. The ground was frozen quite hard. We camped in some shanty that we built on purpose. Our whole Regiment went and two Companies went on picket. The rest acted as defense for the village. There were some cavalry there. One of the boys was killed by the Guerrillas only three miles from there and another taken prisoner. I saw the one that was killed. He was shot under the left arm, had a saber cut on his hip, another stab on the ribs. The scouts carried him in at dark. They found his saddle in a cellar of a house nearby. The next morning they went and got several loads of corn. The rebs carried off all they could in the night. Then they set the house and sheds on fire and were not satisfied with that so they set every one beyond that as far out as it was safe for a small scouting party to go. We stayed still yesterday. I did not have much fun as we expected Sunday. The Col. called for Volunteers to go skirmishing. He wanted ten men and two corporals and a Lieut. Palmer went. Oscar Gleason, Bill Trask and I were the only Warren boys that went that day. Instead of skirmishes we found we're wanted to guard a turnpike two miles out. We stayed twenty four hours and were excused from all other duty for the rest of the time, being the first to volunteer. You wished me to write how Oscar was. He is well. If he is sick, I will write so and if I am he will. When we got back, I found a box that came from home and Oscar XX. The chicken was spoiled. The rest was all right, except three or four donuts that lay on it. The butter and cookies were first rate. You want to know if I have enough to eat. I can say honestly that I have had enough to eat. Sometimes we have not drawn half rations but you need not fear for the boys that tent with me. I am going to tell it as it is. We have enough if we don't draw it from the Company. We got enough sometimes to last two days. When we are entitled to twelve crackers we sometimes draw 24 apiece and save what we don't eat for a time. When we are short and then I have got more than one loaf of bread at the Quartermasters so we have had enough and shall have unless something happens rather strange. I must close now so goodbye.

Jim

Letter 14

Fairfax Jan. 9, 1863

Dear Sister

I take my pen (or pencil rather) in hand to write you a few lines. I have been expecting a letter from home. I get one every Wednesday or Thursday night but it is Friday morning and no letter so I have made up my mind that it has been miscarried and will answer it before get in. My health is good. I can stand about as much duty as any of the boys, more than some. Oscar is well. He is at the city on guard but will be at home at night. When he is gone is the only time I am lonesome. Then it seems that the whole camp is out of order. The Trask Boys are as well as usual. Mr. Trask started for Vermont Monday. He is there before now. I am glad he is gone. Myron Davis XX with him and four more from this company. I shall not close this till Oscar gets back as I have got a pocket full of letters for him and may get some news from Warren as two of his letters are from there.

8 A.M. 10th I will try and finish this letter his afternoon. I was detailed this morning to chop poles to make sheds for the brigade teams. As it rains this afternoon, I am excused and will improve my time in writing.

How does the schoolmarm suit the district and the scholars? Do they think as much of her as they did of Miss Landon? Last winter I used to like her. You know there is an Ed Fisk in our company from Waitsfield. He is a good clever fellow. Perhaps he is related to the schoolmarm in some way. He has had a bad hand so he has been excused from duty but it has got most well now. Estha Whitmore is in the 12th Regiment Co. G. They are not more than a quarter of a mile from here. I see him once and a while. I have not seen Otis since we came from Union Mills to Camp Vermont but once but I have heard from him by seeing some of the Co. B Boys here or on guard. I heard that George Nichols is married But alive and kicking, I guess, as I can hear him delivering the boys their day's ration of bread. Tell XX much obliged to him for his card. Where is Elozer. Is she at home? And Elesha Carde? Is she at home or at Brookfield? I have a good mind to write to her. I hardly believe she would answer it if I did. Tell Mell (if you happen to see him) that a soldier's life is one that would not suit him. It would take a man of more breath to double quick it as we do sometimes. I shall write a little to George, I guess, so.

Good bye (Jim)

Letter 15

Camp near Fairfax Jan. 16, 1863

Dear Mother

I read your kind letter last night, was glad to hear from home again. My health is first-rate. We have not been paid off yet but hope to be soon. The eleventh has been paid, so Jim Eldridge wrote to Reet. Reet thought that his folks might have sent him something in that box that you sent to us. Oscar had a letter that explained it so that we made up our minds that the reason was but Reet did not seem to know what to think of it. We are going to move our Camp. We have been and stockaded our tents ready for a move. The Major thought it best so he took the Regiment over one day laid out the ground and set us to work. Our stockade is built of pine poles. About four makes through laid up like a pigpen just the size of our tents. Then the tent is patched on top. It makes us warm and nice. This is the fourth time that we have been ready for winter. It is getting some muddy now but we expect more some. The weather is mostly warm and nice. Oscar is well. He and I drew another blanket so as to have one to be on lay on two over us makes us warm enough. We do not sleep with our overcoats on as some do. Bill and George got a letter from their father. He had got to Brattleboro safe. He was 5 days on the road so he was rather tired when he got there. The box has not got along, Yet the express today will soon come. Then the Brigade teams will get it for the five Vermont Regiments to get our other stuff. They have to have one day in a week to do extra jobs like that. We have enough to eat and can draw clothes enough. Since Yayton has got well, Jim Lamb cannot do as he has a mind to. Tell Lucy that David is in our tent every day. He and Gil West had a flare up yesterday. Dave was too much for him, if he is small. I have not seen Otis since we left Camp Vermont. Estha Whitmore had gone home. He was sick XX when he was at Whitney's. What has become of Mell? Has he fell in love with the schoolmarm. What is the reason he don't write to me. I shall write to him Sunday whether I get one before or not and may best respect Eliza Condell and Ned Pike if they are at home, liking you get this. Who do you have to laugh at about Roth now days? It can't be me. The last of this letter meant for Yute. I must close now.
Your son

Jim Willson

much love

Letter 16

To Mr. M.B. Eaton East Warren Vermont

Camp (the Calsais this side of Hell) Jan. 23, 1863

Friend Eaton

I received your letter night before last. I am well and so are the rest of the Warren boys. We have had one more death in our company. John Canada from Duxbury. He was a good soldier and a nice fellow, good-natured as a kitten and we thought he would stand most anything but somehow the tough Bullyboys do not stand Camp life any better than some of the weaker ones that are always complaining. I don't want you to show what I wrote this time. Burn it up for I am going to tell the thing last an it is. I have written that it is all right so as not to worry my friends at home. To tell the truth, a soldier's life is not to be envied. Every time we have a march someone of the boys receives a death blow. Some to march in the rain and mud and they lie down in our wet clothes without shelter as we did the first time we left Camp Vermont for Union Mills and then to come back in a snowstorm and not have any shelter as some of the Boys did. (I went to the 12th with a few Men), uses men up fast. Then our other moves were hard. Our last one was a tough one. The ground was frozen hard but the bubbles were awful. Then, the night after, we got here, there came up a shower all of a sudden as the storms do here and gave us a regular drenching (our tents have come now but our stoves have not) We can get along if the rations are not short. If you never saw a hard cracker I will send you one, when I can get a paper to send it. For six days we have had only six a day. When we were entitled to 12 and a pound of pork and a ration of Beans, Peas, or Rice a day and many a day we have been on short rations one day or two or three days so that we got rather hungry (You wrote that you wished you could enlist. I tell you that you had better stay at home) and stand a draft of if need be (there is one man in our company that can not double quick that was not so short-winded as you for more than a mile) at and times we have had to run (and that harder than a double quick by a good deal) takes a man that is short of wind, he is not good for much here XX lays out as the Boys say. We have not had pay yet and know as we should get any. The general belief is that we served more than half our time. If so, we have hopes of seeing home again. Our company reports only 61 men for duty. The rest are sick or dead, mostly. Only 4 died. Some companies do not muster men so many men as ours. I am much obliged to you for what you sent to me and I wish you to tell Mother Ann that I thank her greatly every time I taste of her cheese. The things came all right except for a bottle of Molasses. The bottle got a piece broken out of the side as large as a cent so it all ran out. The rest was all right so we felt first-rate about it. When we left camp, we mailed the box up and it is going to be brought with the company cook's stuff. Well I must close now so goodbye. Write soon to your friend.

Jim

Letter 17

Camp Wolfsford VA Jan. 27, 1863

Dear Sister mine

I have the opportunity to answer your letter. My health is good and I hope this will find you enjoying the same blessing. We have been having quite a snowstorm. The snow is some eight inches or more deep. It has stopped snowing now and the pines are loaded heavily so every time you hit a tree, you get a shower of snow.

Evening. We have just been paid \$29. Two months and seven days pay lacking three cents. That they will keep themselves for seed or to get their Whiskey with. I don't know which. The latter I guess. I shall not send any home just yet. I shall wait awhile and then send part at a time. I do not want to discourage you from writing but I see you make a great many mistakes in spelling. Your little words more so than your larger ones. I want you to take pains and improve. It does not make so much difference when you write to me. I know what you mean if it is not just so. If you were to write to others, it might make fun of you.

Have Hyger and wife made up yet or do they hold mad as ever? I should think the brethren would be after them with sharp sticks. The orderly sends his best respects to Grandfather and Grandmother. He is well but not very well satisfied with the management thinks. It is no wonder our cause does not progress any better when all the Rebel property is guarded for them if they only claim to be union men.

Give my respects to Mell if you chance to see him. Perhaps you may see him at the schoolhouse after the little ones. Tell him I am all right and hope he is the same. You wrote something about visiting Em's school. How did you expect to get so far from home? You could not go afoot, that is certain. So how was it? I now got the papers from you. That was all. If you send anymore, send the Freemans so I can get the Vermont News. I want to know who is married and who is dead. Tell Emma Trask I will remember her the first chance I can get to write some lines. You send a sheet of papers and envelopes. They come handy. They would cost me here a cent a piece. How much to you there. Not so much. Do they? It is getting late and I must close. So good night

From your brother

Jim

Letter 18

Camp near Wolfs Shoals, Feb. 3, 1863

Mother

I seat myself to write to you. I am well and so are the rest of the Warren Boys. The weather is rather cold. The ground is frozen quite hard. I went to the station yesterday for the fun of it. The snow was so deep that it was hard walking and it was some six inches. I saw Otis there. He is going to Washington today. I have sent \$20 to you by express. It is sent with the Waitsfield Boys. They sent one express envelope to Mr. Boyce--the merchant--with over \$500 in it. Ours is directed to Calvin Hewit. It will be delivered to him so you can get it without much trouble. The Trask boys sent \$30. Oscar, \$15. He got him a pair of boots or he would have sent more. The paymaster, I have understood, said we should be paid the first of March again. If so, we shall have more than enough to last till that time. My boots last first-rate. My other things wear well. This Company has drawn over forty pairs of pants. Mine have not a hole in them, yet. Only they have been torn down at the pockets. My stockings I have mended some but with those you sent me, I shall not have to draw any unless Uncle Sam keeps us longer we expected to stay when we enlisted. If we have to stay till July, we shall see some warm weather. If we do stay we shall serve eleven months and over instead of nine but give me good health and enough to eat and I am all right. I have been on fatigue today building embrazures for the Cannons. The artillery Boys are good fellows as I want to be with. They are communicative and obliging. They are in our camp everyday and our Boys are to theirs. I must close now so good bye from your son.

Jim

Tell Lucie I will write her next.

Letter 19

Camp near Wolfrun Shoale, VA
Feb. 5, 1863

Friend Melville

I read your letter last night. Was glad to hear that the Warren folks were so well as they were. What seems to be the matter with Elvira? You wrote that her health was not very good this winter. You seemed to think your case was hopeless as far as the doctor's influence was concerned. I hope that you will not need a doctor's care. I should like to have been in Warren to go to that Oyster Supper at John's. I think I should have had a good time. If we could not play Wink up, it would suit me better than eating hard crackers in the Old Dominion. All the fun we have here is in eating our grub. Only when we have some Buggy ones, then we have some fun keeping them from running away. You ought to see them kiting round the tent trying to find a hole somewhere. George has some saved. He says that he is going to have something to carry his luggage when we move.

You write that Mills and Wife had a fuss. That is nothing new. They never could agree that I ever heard of. The old woman must think a good deal of her Boys, if she can not live with same house with them. You say you do not mean to carry on your farm next summer and want to know what would be the best business for a lazy fellow like you. I don't know what would. Most anything but a soldier's life. That is the worst thing that I know of. Some that were good to work are so lazy here, they can hardly live. So as a lazy man would stand no sight at all.

I tell you, Mell, you had better do most anything else but to enlist. Stay at home till I get back, then I will tell you why I want you to let others enlist if they want to. They will never be satisfied till they have tried it. All the fault I find is there are too many Masters. When I enlisted, I expected to be at home in May or the first of June, if I lived, but I find I have got to stay till after the 10th of July. So it takes most a year to work out nine months.

Charles Randall has been promoted to second Lieutenant in Co. G. They have been promoting all over the Regiment. Do you remember Clark that was one of the lawyers of Fathers, and Millses Court? He was orderly of Co. G. He has been promoted to First Lieutenant in Co. G.

Adjunct O. H. Whitney is Captain of Co. H in place of Peak resigned. I do not have room to write of the changes. I saw Otis Monday at the station. I went to have my picture taken. It was some six miles coming back I walked fast. The picture was in my shirt pocket and it was not quite dry or something. Anyway I let it so that it turned white and most spoiled it. I served one the same at Brattleboro by drilling with it my pocket.

We have not have had a drill nor dress parade since we cane here, nothing but guard and fatigue duty and enough of that.

We are having a snowstorm today, so if you have the same weather in Vermont, you may expect some sleighing after this. Do you ever hear what Grandfather mans to do with his farm next summer or not. If you see him, ask him and find out but don't tell him that I wanted you to. I wrote to him a long while ago but don't get any answer from my letter.

Evening. Our snowstorm has turned to rain and we are having a hard one, but our little white houses' shed ran first-rate. It seems like sleeping upstairs to hear the rain on the roof. I got a letter from Vermont tonight but I shant tell you who it was from. Reet has got home from Washington. He came loaded with all number of stuff for the Boys. Boots, 7 pairs, and other stuff, any amount. Smith went to the station yesterday. He came back rather merrily but would not thank me for writing about it. My sheet is full so I must close. Please write soon to your friend.

Jim Willson Co. B 13th Vt.

Letter 20

To Mrs. Rosalin Willson East Warren Vermont

Camp Wolfsford Feb. 8th 1863

Dear Mother

I read your letter of the 1st in due season. Was glad to hear that you were all well. My health is good, so is Oscar. He got a letter from home last night. We get letters from Warren friends every week. I get one from Barre once in about two weeks but have not heard from Greensboro for a long while. I have two letters from Uncle William's folks. They were all well when last I heard from them.

What do you think ails Bub's hand? Tell him to be a Good Boy. Go to school and learn all he can and I will fetch him something pretty when I come home. When that will be, I don't now but I will remember him. Has Grandfather got that letter I wrote him? If he has, tell him to write to me. I have got one from him. Perhaps you will get my last letter before you do this (you ought to anyway). If you don't, I have been paid and have sent \$200 to you. It was sent to Cal Hewit with the Waitesfield Boys. He will get it and you can get it of him. There will be some express to pay on it but I thought it would be the safe way.

Where are the Brown's nowdays? I have not heard anything from them since I left home. I heard that XX More had got home. How is it? If I knew where he was, I would write to him. I got a freeman night before last. I saw some berries marked. What do they mean? Is Mell hanging around or is not there anything to somethings? I have since school commencement. Reet gets some news once in a while. I sometimes hear the news. If I am far from home, I don't know what to write next. I have ran ashore for something to write so I will close. Please write soon to your son.

Jim Willson

P.S. I forgot to say that I found some stamps in my letters. I am much obliged for them and this sheet of paper came the same way.

J. H. Willson

Letter 21

Monday morning Feb 9th

Dear Sister mine

As I have time to write a few lines before mail time, I will write a letter. It will be a little and rather sprawling. George is rather hungry this morning but he will get along if he is careful. We will do the best we can for him. He is not so very hard sick. Tell George Bragg that it will be his turn for a letter next time. I must close now as the mail is just agoing. So goodby.

From you brother James Willson

I will send a holly leaf to Bub. Tell him we have such leaves to bother us here when we go in the woods.

Letter 22

Camp near Wolfrun Va Feb. 13th

Grandfather Hillery,

I seat myself this pleasant evening to write you a few lines. We have not had our mail very regular this week so I have not heard from home this week yet but hope to tomorrow night. My health continues to be good and I am in hope it will. I expect to see some rather warm weather before the first 10th of July. That will be the time our nine months will be up reckoning from the time of mustering in. There is some rumor of its being out nine Months from the time the draft was ordered but I don't expect anysuchthing. Some of the boys are ready to grab at anything that sounds like getting home in May but I am glad that I am contented here. I have seen so hard as I expected when I enlisted.

Sunday Feb. 15th I will try and finish my letter today. It is storming and muddy as you please. I got a letter from Mother and Lucy last night mailed at Roxbury so I must write some to them today. My pen is rather the worse for the wear and I am in a hurry for have got to go on guard soon. That is the hardest part of being a soldier. That we have had picket is not very bad. We have not had a drill nor dress parade since we came here. Nothing but guard duty and fatigue. Only target shooting that the boys consider fun. We shoot about 70 rods at a sheet of paper as large again as this I am writing on with a black spot in the center pinned to some planks about 5 feet square. Some of the boys hit it everyday. I have hit the stockade every time but the first and the paper but I can't hit the Bullseye. Hartwell says to understand every motion in the manual of army but one. When the order comes hit the Bullseye, he has never learned how and I am in the same predicament. I hear Mr. Trask got home that he is discharged. I am glad of it. He never ought to come. I must close now so goodbye. Please write soon.

Yours

James H. Willson

Letter 23

Feb 15th Sunday

Mother

I read your letter last night. Was glad to hear that your health was so good. Mine continues to be good. I have a cold now, that is all that ails me, except laziness. I am troubled with that considerable lately and expect to be more before my term of enlistment is up. I have been writing to Grandfather so I will send this with his and I must write a little to Lucy and Bub. I am glad to hear that our money has got to Vermont. Oscar is well and so are the Trask boys, and Aretus. I got a letter tonight from the M.B. Eaton so I have another to write. Soon you will see that my paper is not ruled but I will try and write as straight as I can. I must close now and try and write soon.

James H. Willson

Dear Brother Sister

As I have been writing to Grandfather and Mother, I will write a little to you. I did not any to Grandmother but it was not because I did not think of her but I am on guard and can't get time today but I will remember her next time. Give my love to her. How do you both like the school and schoolmarm this winter. Bub, which do you like best? You have Lucy write me for you and tell me all about this school this winter and how you and Frankie Bragg get along and how Lucy and that white-headed fellow make it well. Lucy what do you think of the times? Do you think that some pretty fellow of your acquaintance will get drafted or don't you care? I expect there will be some squirming in old Vermont but they need not feel so very bad about it. If they don't have anything worse, they won't have a very hard chance for their life. We expect to move soon. We have been most four weeks in this camp and that is long enough in one place for our health. Gilman West is here this evening. David Carly is here most everyday and a good clever fellow he his too. The Warren boys are all well. It is most time to take my place on post.

So goodbye please write soon to your Brother.

Jim

Letter 24

To Mr. W. B. Eaton East Warren Vermont

Camp near Wolfrun Shoals Va
Feb. 17, 1863

Friend Melville

I read your letter of the 10th in due season and take this opportunity to answer it.

My health is good and Oscar and the other Boys from Warren are well. Sergeant Thayer says tell Mell that I am all right and hope to be back in Old Vermont once more sometime next summer. Sometimes the report here in camp is that we are going home the last of May or the first of June. Then it will be a settled fact that our time will not be out till after the 10th of July, that is my opinion of the subject that five more months more will pass before we get home again.

I should like to see Miss Fiske, the schoolmarm. Won't you give me an introduction when I get back.

I hope Miss Edna will get back to Warren before next July. I don't know how you like my nonsense and don't care much if you write to me. You will have to take such answers as I choose to give.

Have you seen Eliza Cardell lately and Emma? I no need to inquire about anymore. You will know who I would like to hear about. You were so good to guess in your last letter to tell the truth. I would like to see that woman that taught our school that winter.

When you whispered in the class, you know what a fool I was that I did not try to learn when I had a chance. I can see it now but could not then.

How do your Horses and other stock do this winter? How does your hay hold out? Please write me a Regular Farmer's letter. When you write again and as much fun and news besides as you wish. We are living first-rate now days. We have pork, fresh Beef, Beans, soft bread and good hard Crackers, and tea or coffee twice a day. And today we are having a regular Vermont Sugar snow. It snows fast and there is about six inches now. (I don't mean to have you think we are going to eat the snow by what I wrote). If you see Myron Davis give my best respects to him and he can tell you what kind of a chap I made down here. Tell Mr. Trask that Oscar and I have got his boys so they mind quite well.

Only George will be sassy and swear once and a while, when he gets hard up or something else to say. What have you concluded to do this summer for a living? I hear they are going to draft five more regiments from Vermont. Don't be scared into enlisting

unless you want to come very bad. I think when I get home I will let some of the rest take their chances of coming unless I can get a horse to ride or can get into the artillery. Then there is not the fatigue work to do that we have to now. I must close now, for the want of something to write so goodbye.

From you friend

James Willson

T.S. Reet says if you will write to him, he will be sure and answer it.

Letter 25

Feb. 23, 1863

Grandfather Hillery

Received a letter from you yesterday when I got home off picket. We went out yesterday with two days rations but we were relieved before night by _____. They are a hard set of boys. There are only 150 men in the whole regiment reported for duty. 17 men relieved our post. They were all of Co. D. They had but one officer in the Co. He was a third sergeant so you see they were hard up. They have been out 22 months lacking 4 days. We have got the Measles in our Regiment. Some in our Co. have got them. Some are sick now and some have got well. Oscar Stearns is a little unwell. We are afraid that he is coming down with them but we have got a good tent and we shall take good care of him and not leave him for someone else to mend so they don't go to the hospital but they fix up a tent in the co. and take care of our own boys. My health is good and so are the other Boys. We expect George will have this and then we shall have our hands full. He is so old X. He will have his own way let come what will. We are having an awful storm.

The wind blows and it snows in regular Vermont style but we are comfortable. Our tent is warm and the wood is plenty and we have a good stove and we can keep warm as mice. I should think by your letter that something in Vermont are rather high. I don't think I shall be able to say at home if they are too hard on a fellow. We get our board free and good pay. We have got 20 loaves of bread and any amount of hard tack. So you see that we shall be awhile yet. I must close now as I must.

Letter 26

Camp near Wolfrun Shoals Va
Feb. 26th 1863

To M. B. Eaton

Thursday morning, two o'clock

Perhaps you will think it strange that I up this time of morning but the truth is some of our Boys have got the measles and I have been detailed to help take care of them. Oscar is one of them. There are three in our tent--Albert Chase, Byron J. Stockwell and Oscar. They are all doing nicely most ready to take their own tents. Oscar's measles have not began to come out enough yet but he will be all right in a few days. I take care of them daytime and part of every other night, so you see I don't have to be up nights only half of a night in every 48 hours and no need to do that, as the boys, any of them, are willing to help take care of them. Well, Dr. Mell, what did the medical board think of your case you wrote? You had been to see them at Waitsfield. Did they consider you fit for military duty or not? I am much obliged to you for finding out what I wrote to you. You wrote you wished I was there to study medicine. I got your letter that if our time out, till the month of July that I might make more patients than you for I could care for sometime even if we were in practice. If, when, I get home and I enlist again during the war. On my return I expect to see in large black letters printed on a shingle Dr. M. B. Eaton's Office. How nice that will look to the young Dr. as he drives his turn out up to his office and turn out to consist, I suppose, of the little guys in a sulky. Well, Mell, she will make a good one.

You wrote that you should not write anything about the time you had at Fuller's because I should hear about it. Now, I don't know. The most I hear about such things you write. I have not had a letter from Warren only from you and my own folks for more than a month, so you see that you have to keep me posted or I don't hear much about parties, the Girls, and such like. I should think you stayed most as long as we did to Mister Jones last winter. You know that Eliza Cardell had a letter from me. I don't know about writing to the Girls if they are going to tell of it. Writing to them being out of my line of business. It makes me crall all over and think that some are well for saying that the girls get letters from Jim Willson.

What does Bro Roberts think of the times? Will he want to leave his woman and go to fight Rebels? I am most afraid to come home for fear of Byron Joslin. He threatens to have everyone of Co. B arrested that had a hand in that said on him last fall. I don't hardly like the idea of an arrest soon after reaching Vermont. If he does make a fuss with the boys, he must remember. If they were hard boys then, nine months in Dixie won't make them any better and they may be worse than they were then. If he is not mad by this time, then I am no judge.

Letter 27

Warren March 2, 1863

I take this stormy day to write a few lines to my grandson James. I received your letter of the 22 instant and was glad to hear from you and the army. I have not much news to write. It snows hard today the wind south and cold. The snow flies grand. I hurt my knee last week. It is very lame. I went to the river last night to hear Col. Joyce's lector on the war. The house was full. He spoke well for two hours or more. He told us good things (now it snows). He told us to be patient and all would come round right in the end and I think it will and the slaves will be free and that is what I want. I think we have bin in too much of a hurry. I shall expect you home when your time is out, if you are well. If you have altered your mind since I carried you to Moretown last fall, I want you to write. I have had a chance to let my farm for five years to Merrill Hillery. He was here last week, He and his wife. I told him I would not let it till your time was out.

Robert Hillery

Letter 28

Camp Carusi Va Mar 3

Mother I received you ever welcome letter last night. It found me in good health and enjoying a soldier's life as well as could be expected. We are having some nice weather now. Everything around here looks nice, when they are trying to raise anything. The first day of May our Col. gave us leave to go anywhere we chose, only we must be back by five o'clock. Some of the men went as far as Mount Vernon but I thought that was a little too far to go so I went another way. We got some dinner and got called mostly Yankees a good many times. The Women are all rebels. Their husbands--what are not in the rebel army pretend to be neutral but their wives and daughters are rank traitors. Some of them seem to be union but there are not many such. Only once and awhile and a great while at that. Who was Grandfather got to work for him this summer and what does he give him a month? Today they are fighting at Kelleysford near Fredricksburg. I seen a man that left there yesterday morning. He said they were at it then and we can hear the cannon from here. By the sound, they must have warm work. There is a continual roar all the time. It sounds faint but it is plain to be heard. The man I saw was the sutler of the 2nd Marine Regt. Their time was out the 25th of last month but they chose to stay and help take the place before they went home. He was going to Washington with his teams to wait till the men came along. He said the Hooker drew all his forces in front of the place. Then that night he sent one corps down the river to a ford with orders to engage the enemy, if possible. They were successful. Then the enemy concentrated their forces at the place where his main body and the troops down the river were. Then he whips up the river in the night and crossed with ninety thousand men and took their position on a hill in shelling distance of the railroad so they can not be reinforced by that way. Then he called the rest of his across, as he needed them. The army are sure of victory. Besides Gen. Hooker's command. Gen. Hentgelman is there with fifty thousand men as a reserve. I can not write anymore as it is getting late. Please write soon to your son.

James Willson

PS I forgot to say that we have been paid. We got 52 dollars. I have sent 40 to you. It was sent the same as the other with the Waitsfield boys and directed XX. You can get it there, when you get it, write how much you had to pay for it.

Letter 29

Camp Wolfrun Shoals VA March 8th 1863

Grandfather and Grandmother

I received a letter from you tonight, was glad to hear you were so well but sorry to learn that Grandfather hurt his knee. The weather here is changeable. One day it is pleasant. The next it will rain. We have rain and mud instead of snow and drifts as you do in Vermont but I think that snow drifts are more pleasant than mud. My health is tip top and so are the rest of the Warren Boys, except some that are sick with measles.

We hear that there are a good many deserting from the Army but I had rather stay here than go home as a deserter. You wrote that if I had changed my mind since you carried me to Moretown, You wanted to know. I have not. When I get home, I shall stay awhile let some of the rest take their turn at it and see how they like it. If you want me to take the farm, I will. I probably shall not get around in time to do anything before haying, so I can not do much this year but, if you want to let Merrill have it instead of me, you need not mind what we talked about. I should like the place for I think I could do well there as anywhere.

If I don't have it, I shall try and get someplace to work on a farm, for I don't know anything about anything else.

I wish you could send me a dollar or two if you have it to spare and when we are paid, I will send it back. I paid out more than I expected to. We had to pay for sending some of the boys home, have paid J. Richardson \$1.00, have had my boots tapped and heeled and have got over a dollars worth of stamps but don't want to spend them as I had to send to Washington by some of the Boys for them and got a lot of paper and envelopes and when one lives on bread and meat and coffee, beans, sometimes the same thing night over, he sometimes wants something else and if we are short of rations, he certainly does. I can not write anymore now, so goodbye. My love to Lucy and Bub. Please write soon.

James H. Willson

Letter 30

Camp near Wolfrun Shoals VA Wednesday
March 11th, 1863

Friend Melville

I read your kind letter of the 1st tonight. I was glad to hear from you. I can assure you you was sorry to hear that so many of the Warren People had me with such sad anxiety. I hope I shall not hear of anymore. One of the Co. H boys got badly hurt a few days ago by the falling of a tree on his tent while he was asleep inside. I should think by your letter and what George Bragg wrote that you have some parties in old Vermont yet. I think I could enjoy one once in a while full as well, as they everyday routine of camp life. We have not quite four months more to serve so if nothing happens I shall be at home sometime. If what Grandfather wrote to me, I think I shall go to him. When I did before as to have a steady home for awhile. If they don't pass a different law, you are exempt from a draft for the next three years, at least as I understand it. I do not find a soldier's life so very hard. It is the strictness of the thing. If I can, I shall get the regulations of war and carry home for those to read that think the soldier's life are all pleasures.

12th I will try and finish my letter this morning. It is a pleasant a morning as you will see in Vermont next month or in May, unless you have an extraordinary spring. Before you will get this, you will probably hear of the Rebel raid at the Courthouse. The rebs went in there last Sunday night and took General Stoughton prisoner and captured some horses. It is too bad to loose the horses but, as for Old Stoughton, he has been wanting to go to the front and take his brigade with him but General Casey said he could not take the brigade. If he wanted to go without it he could and now he has bone and the Second Vt. Brigade don't care much. I guess this Regiment don't at any rate. You wrote me once that you went to Waitsfield when the examination was there. Did you get exempt or did you not try?

Don't let anyone see this page of the sheet. I had a letter from X last night. I wrote that some were rather afraid they would get drafted. If they take all between 20 and 25, except the exempt, it will take some that I know of that would rather stay at home.

You wrote that I had better write often to Fidelia or she might forget me. Now what do you mean by that? You and I used to be good friends once and don't know why we aren't now. I presume you were in sport when you wrote what you did but I am going to tell you something. I have written her three letters since I rec'd one from her. Her last letter was written about the 20th of January, so you see it has been sometime since I have heard from her. Now, what do you think is the reason? I want you to write me what you think about matters and things and keep to yourself what I have written. Please write soon to you friend.

Jim Willson

Letter 31

Wolfrun Shoals March 13th 1863

Dear Mother:

I read your letter tonight and was glad to hear from you and that you are so well. I hope what you wrote about the smallpox is not so bad as you fear and I hope it will not spread any more. There has been one case in this Regiment but it was a good while ago, when we were at Fairfax and that Man got well. Oscar has got better of his measles and if he don't take cold he will be on duty soon. As for our times it is out as soon as I expected but by good rights we ought to be back by the 25th of May. Grandfather wrote to me that Merrill wanted to take his farm for five years but he would not let it to him. He wanted to know if I wanted it, the same as he and I talked last fall. I wrote to him that I did but have not heard from him since but I expect to have it when I get home, if I want it.

Saturday Morning March 17th

I will try and finish my letter today, was to have it in the office today. I am not quite so well today as common but it is not anything serious. My stomach is a little out of order. I shall be allright in a day or two. Yesterday was a cold, raw day for this time of the year. How it is today I don't know. I have not been outdoors yet but will have to soon, I think. Lt. Albie Dewey is well. He stands it pretty well lately. The rest of the boys are well, except some that have had the measles. They are doing well. I had a letter from Mell last night. His folks are as well as common and our folks too. He said. He had seen them lately. He and Hattie are allright. I guess I can't write much more so goodbye for this time from your son. Jim

Letter 32

Camp near Wolfrun Shoals
March 14th 1863

Friend Mellville

I rec'd a letter from you last night commenced March 3. It was a good long one and that is what I like to get. I don't hardly know what to write this time. I do not feel very well today nor have not for two or three days past. My head aches pretty hard most of the time but I am in hopes in a day or two I shall be all right again.

I got a letter last night from Mother. She was well when she wrote. How do the folks all do in Warren? How are the Captain's people this winter. Is the old Capt. the same as ever? He used to be riding out after the old white nag most every day, when I was in old Vermont. Didn't we have fun. When I get back--if nothing breaks before I get home, if there does, I may come back and try it over. We are like to have some fun soon, for the rebs now the mud has began to dry up seem determined to bother us some but they don't try to cross here. If they make trouble for us, they will cross below here and try to flank us. Evening since I commenced this letter. We have been called out in line of battle to fight the rebs. There were some horsemen seen on a hill near here. Our cavalry scouts went across the river and only came back. He reported the other two shot but more Calvary came up and crossed. They found one of the boy(s) at a house wounded. He said the other one was taken prisoner. We have been ordered to stack our arms and to be ready to fall in at a moment's warning. We have had orders to take our arms to our quarters but I have them ready at any time so if we are called out tonight, we can be on hand. Last night about 4 miles from here, the Rebs crossed the river, took all their pickets and went on to the courthouse but did not make out so well as they did before. The men that went into the village got nabbed so instead of getting a Bridadier General they were taken themselves.

Now the mud is dried up some, the rebs won't give us any peace until they have tried it once and get driven back. We could hold two Brigades easy for there are four rifled guns (six pounders) and two howitzers that would rake them as they came up and then we have rifle pits on this side and have destroyed those on the other side. If they have Artillery, they can bother us some but none but Calvary will be able to get between us and the main forces in front. I will finish the letter in the morning after I see if we are called out for a brush. If we are, I will write you how it was done. If I don't, get done for myself (Ock says he will do the job for me). Sunday morning had a good nights sleep. No rebs showed themselves at the places. I am feeling pretty well this morning. The excitement yesterday did me good. It was better than a dose of your physic would. I must close now so as to get it in the mail. Please write soon to

Jim Willson
Co. B 13th Vt

Letter 33

Camp near Wolfsrun Shoal
Headquarters 13th Regt. 2nd Brigade
Cargo Brigade defenses of Washington

March 15th 1863

Dear Sister mine

I read a letter from you and Grandfather last night. I will answer yours now and his as soon as I get some news worth writing.

My health is good now, though I have been rather used up for a few days past. Oscar is getting along nicely. He is out around again. Two other boys in our tent are all well. I had a letter from Mother a day or two ago. She was well when she wrote. Tell George Bragg not to punch for a woodchuck until he hears him whistle and knows he is there but if he raises any turnips this year, be sure and hoe them thoroughly so they may grow well.

We are having a sort of thunderstorm tonight. The fighting is very sharp and the thunder heavy. It does not rain but it hails dreadfully. I had a paper from Grandfather tonight with some letters for this regiment--one from Sargeant of the Co. H. He writes a good deal that the rest don't know anything about. He is all brag about his Co. but he no need to for they are made up from transfers from other companies and they were not the best men by a long shot, but they make decent soldiers for business but they are the ruff ones of the Regiment. Reet is all right as usual. I must close now, as the boys are raising particular cain. Give my best respects to Grandfather and grandmother and tell them to write.

James Willson
Co. B 13th

Letter 34

Wolcott March 22 1863

Beloved Friend (Mrs. Willson)

Have tried to write to you a number of times before but have been so busy trying to get settled and my studies started that I could not bring my mind to it. How do you like living in Randolph? By the way I came up to Hardwick on the stage from Montpelier in Company with some of the Greensborough people. Once in a while I could hear someone laugh. I thought it sounded like someone I had heard before and asked.

Who it was on the outside of the Stage that enjoyed a laugh so well and they said it was S. Willson. He laughs just as Henry used to, when the Stage stopped to dine, I could see Henry's looks very plain about him.

A negro man of the name of Brown preached today. He looks real cunning. He gave _____ a penny to kiss him. I thought I did.

Have you called on Mr. Sherman proper since you went Randolph and have you become acquainted with Frank's Husband?

One of my cousins were (was) married there a short time ago. Elder Gray from Waterbury is here. I suppose you know him. He has got his hair colored and it makes him look quite young. Have not had a good hearty laugh since I saw you down to our house. Wish I had stayed at home. Should have had a good deal better time if I had.

Hardwick is a strange place, I tell you now. They ball all the time--once or twice a week at any rate--and about every man has a bottle full of whiskey. It is rather of a dissipated place to speak the truth and I have got into a good Family to room, I think.

Do you hear from James often? I don't know much that is going on about the war. I can't get a hold of a paper. Once in a dog's age, I get hold of a word once in a while by hearing some of the folks talk. I have to keep pretty busy most of the time having four studies. I almost wish I had gone to Randolph for then I could go in and see you once in a while.

Although I like well here but you know it is pleasant to meet an old acquaintance. Do you hear from Warren often. I have not had a letter since I came up here from Warren. My sheet is getting full and I must close. Have commenced a letter to Lucy. Accept my best wishes and write often.

Eliza V. Bragg
South Hardwich, Vt.

Mrs. Willson

Letter 35

Headquarters 13th Regt. Vt. Vol.
Camp near Wolfsrun Shoals
March 28

Friend Mell

I rec'd yours of the 19th in due season. Was glad to hear from you. Once more to learn that you were in the land of the living and likely to be for some time to come. My health is good and Ock is getting all right again. The Trask boys are all well. We are having a regular soaker for a rain storm today. So by tomorrow the mud will be most knee deep and probably by the next day it will be dry again. We don't know one day what will be next half so well as we used to at home. It is just so with everything else. A fellow may be sound asleep and be dreaming of home and the first thing he knows he is detailed to go out as a scout because some of the rebs are near enough to seize some of our pickets and then skedaddle (____torn____). The citizens have picked off some of the men (some of the cavalry that are with us, I mean, the Penn. Boys) but they were not quite smart enough to get sent to the Capitol for their pains.

Sunday morning

Today is rather cold but it is rather a pleasant day. We have just come in from inspection and will write little more in this letter. I have a letter from Mother last night and another from Grandfather. Mother wrote that she was well. I have not seen Otis for more than a month. When I saw him last, he was well and seemed to enjoy himself first-rate. The 15th and 16th Regiments have moved from the station to Union Mills and The 14th are here with us. As you can see that we have three Regiments and a Battery besides squad of Cavalry. The rebs are seen on the other side of the river most everyday but there are not forces near here. They are only some Cavalry scouts. They are on higher ground than us and as soon as they see our scouts start out, they are off. We have a Regiment all around our Camp nights, so they can not cross. Some other ford and surprise us as they did Old Stoughton at the Courthouse Church.

31st Well, Mell, I will try and finish this letter today. I have been on duty so that hindered me some and yesterday I went to Union Mills. Our postmaster is sick so I went to carry the mail. John Richardson is the postmaster. The man where we took dinner the day we were organized. I saw Otis yesterday. He was well and seemed to enjoy himself first-rate. He has been promoted. He is a corporal now. Captain Wilder has gone to Vermont on a furlough. You wrote that if I did not get any new sugar here to come X your house. I think I shall have to as there are no maple trees here. Only once in a while a soft maple and they won't run anymore. About a month ago the sap would nicely so we have some, sap to drink. It snows today so we shall have some more mud but it won't bake by a day or two to dry the ground again. Oscar and George are on picket. We expect them in

every minute. We do not have so much picket duty to do now as we did before the 14th came here but we have more fatigue yesterday. One regiment dug about 40 rods of rifle pits but it won't take long to finish them and when we have nothing to do, we shall have to make some (N-word) when there is work of some kind. How do you make it go with your studies? Can you english those long words any X? I must close now so good bye.
J.H. Willson

Please excuse the crow tracks for I am in a hurry.

Letter 36

Camp Widow Violet, VA 7th April, 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd your last letter last Saturday night. Was very glad that you are well and the rest of the family. My health is good, Oscar is well again. George and William are well. Phineas Billings was doing well when last I heard from him. Sergeant Thayer is well. The rest of the Warren Boys are well.

Captain Wheeler from Calais is well. I see him quite often. Rec'd one dollar. I am in hope that we shall get some pay soon. If we do, we probably shall not get home till July. I don't much expect to anyway but there may something turn-up that we shall go before if we do there is only six weeks from the 25th of May to the 10th of July and what is that compared with the time that a great many will have to serve. I had rather be in the place that I am now than to have stayed in Vermont and stand a chance to be drafted this Spring.

Do you hear anything about Mr. Cyrus Jaslin of Waitesfield? If so, would you write and let me know what he thinks about matters and things generally and the X he had last fall in particular. I have some curiosity to know what the opinion of most people are on the subject. I can let them know mine soon enough when I get back and they can hear it just for the asking. The people of Waitesfield made Capt. Wilder a visit when he was at home and adopted some resolutions and sent them to the Company by him. I should have liked to have had them here for a few minutes. They would soon have found out what they thought of them.

We are encamped now in a nice place on the Widow Violets farm and the camp is named after her. She moved out of her house the day before we came here to the next house where she now is. The woods here are full of hogs. The boys get, once and a while, one but after they get it, is no longer known as hog. It is called possum. William Backus and I went and got one last night (It is not allowed). Coming in, we were met by the Col. He asked us what we had in our bag. We told him Virginia Possum. He said all right be careful and let the patrols get hold of us, and went along; so you see he don't care how well we live. We have plenty that we drag from the Commissary but we want a change once in a while. I must close now so goodbye for this time. Please write soon to your son, J.H. Willson, Co B 13th

Letter 37

Camp Violet VA 13 Reg Co. B April 11th, 1863

Friend Melville

I rec'd a letter from you last night. It found me well and enjoying myself well for a soldier and that is not anything to brag off, although a life like the one we lead is not hard. It is being far from home and our time being so near out. If we were in for three years, we should not be half so impatient as we are now for the nearer we are of home, the more we want to start. I have always thought that our time would be out in July but our last requisition for clothing had to be put in for a month and a half, when before then we have drawn once a month but how they say we must draw all we want for the next six weeks. What it means, I don't know but the six weeks will take the time till the 25th of July--the time that some claim our time will be out. I don't expect to get home soon. If we get back in June, I shall be satisfied. We expect to be paid off in a few days.

Capt. Wilder has got back to his company. When he went off, he did not let his company know that he was going so that we had no chance to send any word to our folks. Oscar and the rest of the boys are well as usual. Brit Billings was getting better the last time we heard from him. How goes sugaring? Are you going to have a good sugar season this spring? The grass here begins to start considerably so that the ground looks quite green. We have got a good place here. There is not much duty to do. We have to go on picket once in ten days and there is about three from a company detailed for guarding about camp, so were are having nice times. The most we do is to eat our rations and play ball. We have a raid about so often but the rebs don't venture far enough to get their X into any trouble. Last night there were some firing on the line but did not amount to much, only calling out two companies and rousing the rest of the Camp.

Sunday morning I will try and finish this letter today. It is a very pleasant morning. We heard some bad news for Mr. Dimick. The report came here that his home and one of his barns were burned. When you write to me again, please write how it happened as far as you know? I most forgot to say that Tom Smith was not with his company but was at a house acting as a safeguard for one of the citizens about a mile form here. He comes to the Company about once a week. Lieutenant Palmer is under arrest for disrespect to his superior officers. That is what the charge is. I believe the most of the thing is this. The next day after the captain came back, Palmer was present at roll call, (this has to be a commissioned officer present) and one of the boys did not get into ranks before the orderly began to call the roll. The Captain wanted Palmer to report him for it and Palmer would not. He told he could do as he pleased but where he reported the company, he should report it as he pleased. The Capt. reported him and the Sgt. Came and got his sword. The boys all are down on the Capt. (or most of them) but we dare not open our heads but the time is coming before long that we will all be as big as Capt. Wilder. The Capt. has always used me well and I have no cause to complain till now. He used Palmer as near as a man can be used and this is not the first time. I must close now.

J. H. Willson
Letter 38

Camp Violet Va April 12, 1863
Mother

I received your letter last night, was glad to hear from you, but sorry to learn that Lucy and Grandfather were unwell. The rest of the family I thought were well.

My health is good and the rest of my tentmates are enjoying good health at this time. The Col. is not here now. He has gone to Washington on business but will be with us again soon, I hope for we always have the X when he is here with us. When he is gone, Lieutenant Colonel Brown likes to show his power and at something all the time. He does not seem to know what a man can endure. I have heard Col. Randall damn him the worst that I have any other man in the regiment for being so particular with the men, when they got a little tired, instead of resting them as the old colonel does. Brown rides back and hurries the stragglers along to X places. We have not been paid off yet but we expect to be soon or our time will be out by the first of June. I hope if that is the case, we shall not get paid although we are having an easy time here.

I had rather be back to help someone do their farming. As for the pay, we get as much as they would want to pay and more but the weather is getting to be rather warm. Once in a while a day is cold as you please, the next will warm and pleasant. The grass begins to look green. The farmers are planting and sowing the winter grass looks nice. We are in a place where there never have been any camps, scarcely. One Cavalry Camp was burned near here. Sometimes I don't now when but not long I should judge by the looks of things around. There are pieces of tents, wagons and arms and most everything pertaining to camp. There is also a part of the carriage for a gun. The wheels are not burned much but the rest of the woodwork is spoiled. The boys have found several sabers, that were new in the bushes that were thrown away in a hurry to get away from the rebs. I had a letter from Adelia Friday night. She wrote that the folks were all well. Charley was larger and uglier than he used to be. The men that stayed home and cried go ahead last fall will wish they had tried it. I guess when they are--some of them--obliged to some this spring. Tell Grandfather and Grandmother that I shall write to them soon. I must close now, so goodbye yours with love James.

Since I wrote this, we have been ordered to be ready in the morning to march. Where we are going we do not know but it begins to crall into my head that we were mustered for yesterday. I think our brigade has been signed over. If so, we have got to X for the rest of our time.

Letter 39

Camp Violet April 19 1863

Dear Mother and Sister

I read your letters last night, was very glad to hear from you.

I hope these few lines will find you enjoying better health than when you wrote last. My health is good and I am tough as a knot and enjoying life first-rate. The weather is rather warm but the nights are so short that guard and picket duty is more a pastime than anything else. So you see that we are doing nicely. Out here there is a Cavalry Regiment with us here, the 7th Mich, so our duty is lighter than it has been anytime since we came into Virginia.

I got a letter from Jane Hadgman last night. She said her man was in the war so she thought she would write to me. She was well and her husband was the last time she heard from him. Perhaps you remember reading about the time that Ellsworth was shot at Alexandria, of the Rebs burning a bridge and cotton factory and sinking a ferry boat. Well, it was at this place. The ferry boat has been raised and runs now. We can get plenty of fish of three kinds by going to the river after them and taking a boat and net or we can get perch and eels with a hook and in the night we can get plenty of pout but we can't go nights only when we are on picket. Then we fish, some of us all night. There are fifteen on a post at the ferry and only one stands at a time so the rest can sleep or go anywhere they please, only they must be within hearing all the time, so if anything happens they can be there but nothing has happened and so it has been all right if we were half a mile off.

What do you think of Mell as a Dr.? Does he know anything or is he a regular numbskull? You ought to know by this time. You have been such long enough to know something about it. I had a letter from Julia Babbit a day or two ago. She wrote that the folks were all well in Greensboro as usual. The last time I got a letter from Barre, the folks were well there. It has been some time since I got it and I have forgotten whether I have answered it yet or not so I must write one today. When you answer this, write all the news you can. Think of that will interest a soldier. Have you board out yet? Who is going to teach our school this summer? Where is Lorraine Pike this spring? I will not inquire about Ruth for I expect you will let me know without. Tell Bub that I want to know how the little calves get along and the yearlings to how have they stood the cold weather and hard storms. I have got a laurel root ripe for him to smoke when I get home. I must close now. Give my love to Grandmother and Grandfather. Tell them I shall be back the first of July to help do the haying.

Letter 40

Camp Carusi April 25

Dear Mother and Sister

I recd your letter last night, was glad to hear from you and to learn that your health was improving.

My health is good and bids fair to be. I had a letter from Mell last night before last. He was well then and I presume is now or if he is not, you probably know of it by this time. Oscar is not very well today. He has a bad cold. The Trask Boys are well. Brit Billings is in the Hospital at Washington yet. Tom Smith is in a hospital in Alexandria. He has a lame knee, so he can not do duty.

We have been having great time today policing our grounds, preparatory to a ground inspection tomorrow, which will take most all the afternoon but they can't have a great many more unless they have them all the time and when we go on inspection, we are not doing anything else. It is eight months today since we were organized and it is only a short time till the tenth of July XX the time as long as possible, it will not extend longer than that time. I for one don't care. I should like to be at home but, as I am not, I am contented here. Who has Grandfather hired to work for him this summer and what does he give him a month?

The Government is trying to get Volunteers from this Brigade to fill up old Regiments. They give them a months furlough and a bounty of fifty dollars. There are a good many that will enlist from this Regiment and I presume there are as many in the other Regiments in the Brigade.

You wanted to know where we were. We are down the river from the shoals about say from eight to ten miles. I do not know the distance for a certainty in Fairfax County opposite the town of Occoque, Prince Williams County Va. The river only divides the two places. The name of the place I never have heard but we are on a farm belonging to an old Italian by the name of Carusi. He is an old simpleton but as rich as mud. In the Village across the river, there used to be a cotton factory but it was burned the day after our troops took possession of Alexandria and Ellsworth was shot. The bridge across the river was destroyed at the same time, so there is a ferry boat and all the small boats. The citizens can have them to fish days but can not go out of sight and must return them on this side before night. I must close now, so goodbye. J. H. Willson tell Bub he is to be a good Boy and we expect the paymaster next week as he is in the Brigade. Send me one of them largest fish hooks in the box where we used to keep the garden seeds, the largest one you can find.

Letter 41

Camp Carusi April 25, 1863

Friend Mell

I rec'd your letter of the 17th a day or two ago and will try and answer it now. To begin with, my health is first-rate and bids fair to be if nothing happens. I was sorry to learn that Mother Ann had been sick for if she was as much worse to get along with when sick as other folks are. They care of her.

By what you wrote about going after the doctor, you must have drove rather fast. Your colt did well to go that distance in the time she did. She is smart to travel but you must be careful of her. She is young and just the right age to sport and you that it will not take but a little to have a horse take cold after being drove hard and use them up before you hardly know it. I remember how I used to use that black horse and how he could not go with yours. I hurt him by hard driving. Rut is well and as long and clever as ever (you know what it means to call one a clever fellow). When he gets home, he will be contented to stay as long as I shall, I guess by what he says.

Sunday morning. I am on guard today. I have just come in from guard mounting so I am out of the review and inspection that is coming off today. Gen. Stannard, our Brigadier, is going to be here although he has not got along yet. The fruit trees here are in full blossom. The grass has started so that cattle can get a good living. There are plenty of cows here but no sheep. They have all played out, as the boys say.

I wish you would get me a fishline and send me and I will make it all right, if you will write that you have to pay for it. Get the stoutest one that you can, for here are some big fish here. I have seen some that weight three pounds and they are a little too much for any line that we can get here. Lieutenant Palmer is on duty again. The trouble that he and the Captain did not amount too much, only for a few days. He has got his sword and is all right again. I can not think of anything more to write as the drums are beating for review. I have not got to go out but I can't write in such a noise and it is almost time to go on guard. I have been thinking that the General can not call us out for many more reviews unless he has them every day, for it is only a few days till the tenth of July. I must close now so goodbye. Please write soon to

Jim Willson
Co. B 13th Reg.

Letter 42

Camp Carusi May 10, 1863

open careful

open careful

Dear Mother

I rec'd your letter Friday night was glad to hear from home once more. My health is good as usual. We are having some nice weather now days though it has been rather rainy of late. Gen. Stannard has been on a visit to this regiment and has gone away today. He stayed till after inspection. We all like his appearance first-rate. He does not appear much like Gen. Stoughton. I hear that he Stoughton has been exchanged and that he is in Washington. All we ask is that they will keep him there and not give him the command of this Brigade again, for we are well suited with the change we have had. I have been and got some Tobacco seed today to send home in this letter. There is enough to sow half an acre, most. Do not sow it all this spring, only part of it. Be sure and sow part anyway and keep the rest till another spring for it will have to be sowed in February in order to get ripe so the seeds will grow. We have been in this camp one month and nine days, so we begin to think it most time to move. The 12th at Rapahanoc Station and the 15th at Warrington guarding the railroad.

We may not move for some time but we have not staid out about so long anywhere, so I think we shall move.

I am going to Mount Vernon in a day or two if nothing happens. I do not suppose it will do me any good but I want to go. We are so near now and it may be the only chance I shall ever have. It is only 7 miles from here and I can get a pass for two days, so I shall be all right if I go. When next time you write, let me know if you have got my money that I have sent. If you have, do what you are a mind to with it--only have it safe. Tell Grandfather that I will write to him sometime this week. I must close now so goodbye.

James H. Willson

(There are nine tobacco seed spots in the letter.)

Letter 43

Camp Carusi Sunday May 17, 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd your letter of the 10th on Friday night, was glad to hear from you. My health is good and the rest of the Warren boys are well that are here. Since I wrote last we have been having some excitement here. One morning three teams started for the station--two, six mule teams and one, four horse team with one to drive. Sargeants Bayer and Jillsby were with them. One of the teamsters was from this company, Frank Griffith. They had got about half way there when some Rebs that were hid in the woods sprang out and demanded them to surrender. As they were not armed and the Rebs were, they had to give up. The Rebs took off the Mules from the wagon and started across the river. They made the boys ride Mules barebacked. At that, the mail carrier came along and saw what was up. He came back to camp and reported. The Col. came round to the companies and called for volunteers to go and try to get them back. The men all wanted to go, so they had to detail men in order to keep any in camp. Some he went up the river to cut off their retreat. The rest of the men went where the teams were taken. I went that way after that we took the trail and followed it to the river. There we found the men that went up the river. The rebs had crossed before they got there so they gave us the slip. Some were sent on after them with what cavalry we had then followed them till they found that it was not use then, came back. The Rebs took the boys to Braintsville and paroled them. They got back to camp night before last, stayed one night and went on to the camp, not having but one team left. We must do something and so the Col. sent men over the river to Prince Williams County with orders to take every horse they could find that would do for team horses. Our Company got five. The rest got enough to make out thirteen so our teams are replaced in part. It seems hard to take a man's horse from him but if they will take our mules, they must look out for their horses. It was Guerillas that took our men and teams and one of the sorry horses that our boys took from a plow in the field over the river, our boys that were taken say was rode by one of the men that took him, so you see just what kind of neighbors we have here. I must close as it is most time for inspection.

James H. Willson

Letter 44

Camp Carusi May 22th 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd a letter from you tonight and I will try and answer it tonight. My health is first rate now days. There are some few sick in our company. Only one dangerously. That is Aladuren Stowell of Morretown. Last week two of our boys died. Cyrus Thayer of Waitsfield and Charlie Billings of Fayston. Charley had always been tough as a knot but after he had the Measles, since then he has not been so tough and all the sick in our hospital are Boys that had the measles. Who lives in the old house? I heard that someone did but have forgotten who it was.

Think by the appearance of things, we are going to move from here soon. We have stayed long enough in one place. It will be two months the 2th of next month since we came here to this camp and that is plenty long enough to stay in one place. The weather here is rather warm for comfort in the middle of the day. What it will be by the 10th of July is more than I can tell but one thing is certain, the Col. will not make us do more than is absolutely necessary. We have not had a drill for most two weeks.

I must close as I want to write some to Lucy and Bub and please write soon.

Dear Brother and Sister

I will try and write you a few lines. I got a letter from Mell a day or two ago. He was well. When he wrote, as you probably know without my telling you.

I had a letter from Barre and one from Greensboro last night. The folks were all well, when they wrote. Julie Babbit wanted to know when I heard from home last and how the folks all were.

I heard from George Bragg a short time ago. He did not write but a little but he seemed to be the same fellow what he used to be. I will pay him off for some of his jokes when I get home, if I ever do. We probably shall be at home the first days of July, perhaps not till the 10th. Some think before but I do not but there is one thing that bothers me. Some of the men were drafted. Men drafted the 10th of September, how they can keep them till July, puzzles me some. If we take the places of drafted men, why should not our time commence when theirs would if they had been drafted on the 10th of July as they would have been if we had not enlisted when we did. I must close now, so goodbye from your Brother,

Jim

Letter 45

Camp Carusi May 27, 1863

Dear Mother

Sunday night has come around once more and with it a letter from you and Lucy. It found me well. I have been gone from Camp all day. Have been to a Va. Sabbath school. There were only a few large schools. There are a good many small children around these parts. You note that the funerals of the 13th boys that were sent home. That taken place and that they were buried with military honors. Since then, one more of our Co. has died and been sent home. Little Ben Reed was sent home yesterday and before you get this, he probably will be buried by Monday. There is Jim Cardell. What possessed him to come here? I must go and see him and find out how the folks are.

Monday morning. I will try and finish my letter today. It is rather warm for comfort but all we have to do is to get in the coolest place we can find and stay there. Col Randall, Capt. Wilder, Jim Cardell and several others have gone to Mount Vernon today. They will have a warm time of it. I pity the Horses more than I do them. I had a letter from Aunt Julia a short time ago. The folks in Greensboro were well when she wrote. She said that William's sugar house and container had been burned and he had lost his best colt, so he has had rather hard luck this spring.

We begin to think our time is most out, only 40 days longer in Va. And perhaps not quite that. Perhaps we shall be in Brattleboro by the 10th of July, not before. I wish you would write me what clothes I have at home. I have forgotten whether I had anything fit for to be seen with on or not. I may have a chance to get things before I get home at better advantage than to wait till I get home. There is a man in the Company that wants that when we got home, I shall promise to work for him in haying. Had I better or will get a chance nearer home? You know it will be late before we get home and ready to go to work. Perhaps, I shall be lazy to work when I get back. I expect to be homesick as a dog for awhile. I have caught some of the largest catfish with those hooks you sent me. Oscar is well. I guess he is on picket but I expect him in every minute, as the relief has gone and you probably have heard of the Rebs stopping the cars that the 15th Boys were guarding and know that the particulars so well and better than I can tell you. I just close now so goodbye. Give my love to all from your son.

James H. Willson

Letter 46

Camp Carusi June 7th 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd your letter of the 21st May, Friday night, was very glad to hear that you were all well. I have been rather hard up for me for a few days but am as to be on duty today. If I am careful, I shall be all right in a day or two. There is nothing that ails me more than has at home a hundred times. My stomach was out of order so took a good dose of salts and it has done the cure or nearly so. Will quiet in a day or two.

You wished me to write when I should come home. Now I will not answer you like Dana of Fayston did his Wife, when she asked him. He said he did not know but probably should come when the rest of the Regt. did. If nothing happens, I think that in just about five weeks from now, we shall be in Brattleboro or on our way there. Perhaps, we shall not start from Va. Till the 10th but I can't see any prospect of such a thing. I wish I could though. I should like to spend the fourth in Vt. But don't expect to. There is going to be a general inspection today. Guns, Equipment, knapsacks, and everything. I have been to the captain and got excused. I do not know why it is that some of the boys dislike Capt. Wilder. So far as for my part, I don't want a better Capt... He is obliging as a man can be. I never ask a favor of him in my life but what I got it, unless something extraordinary was going to happen. Then I always got a promise for some other time. Not on duty, I have gone where I pleased. Only have been in camp at parade, as every soldier is required by the Col. to be here or his orderly is to report him (the orderly of his company, I mean). Oscar has gone on picket today. The men have to be on duty once in three days but as it is warm and pleasant, it is not very hard and another thing is a great consolation to think that every time they are out it is one time less they will have to be on duty. Today, when they came in from inspection, they said that they could not only four more such in War and some thought the fourth one would be in old Vermont.

What did you mean by what you wrote about something happening to Bub before I get home? Is he not so well as he used to be, or what else is it? Give my love to all and keep a share for yourself. This from your son James H. Willson.

P.S. I rec'd a letter from Mel tonight when the mail came in and another from I sent Julia. They were all well in Greensboro when she wrote.

Letter 47

Camp Carusi June 12th, 1863

Grandfather and Grandmother

I will try to write you a few lines to let you know that I am alive and well and expect to be at home in about a month from now. That is longer than I expected when I left but it can't be helped, so we may as well hold our tongues and do our duty as before for it will not do any good to complain. Uncle Sam has a notion of doing things as he has a mind to and he will not bear to be dictated much, if any.

June 12th I will try and finish the letter this morning so as I have to start this morning. The weather here in Va. is most awful warm. There has not been any rain here over thirty days at all and only once in awhile a shower for as long before that. The rye and wheat are headed out nicely and everything is nice. We think, though, the farmers say that everything is behind hand this spring. I wish you would write me now horses and cattle are setting now days. I most close now for it is mail time.

J.H. Willson

Letter 48

Camp Carusi June 12 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd your letter of the 7th last night or this morning rather. I was on picket last night when the mail came in and did not get it till this morning when I came into camp.

My health continues to be good. Oscar and the rest of the boys from Warren are well. The weather here is warm enough to satisfy anyone. Last I lay all night without any blankets on the ground under a tree and slept first-rate.

I expect that when we get home, we shall have to lie on the floor in order to sleep any, for a while at least. The (It) begins to look short till the time for us to come home. It is now most the middle of June so the 10th of July can't be far away. Perhaps, we shall not start for home till the 10th but I think that we will be in Vermont at that time. There has many a five and ten dollars change hands this last payday. Some had bet that we should be at home the 10th but when that time passed and we were in Va. Someone had the bet to pay the 10th instead of being in Vermont. We were paid two month's pay so we all have nowdays, even if we are in the army. I have sent home fifteen dollars. I suppose I might have got along with less till we were discharged but I thought I would be sure and have enough. I am not obliged to use it, because I happen to have it by me. It is sent the same that the other was. We had such good luck the other times that we thought best to send it all the same way. I shall not get anymore pay till I come home. Our time is so near out. Tell Bub to go to school and be a good boy. I must close now, so goodby for this time from your son.

Letter 49

Camp Carusi June 15 1863

Dear Sister mine

I shall write you a few lines today, as I am on picket near camp. There are only three of us here, enough to keep a post near camp like this, it being only to keep citizens out of camp and to see that none of the men stay away from camp, as there is a move of the army and we do not know but we may have marching orders. Baggage wagons have been passing every hour since three last night. All night we could hear them. They cross the river on pontoon bridges which they brought with them. I hear by some of the boys that troops begin to come along. Whether it is so or not is more than I know what this movement means is more than I can tell. It may mean one thing or perhaps another. If we have marching orders, I will write again as soon as convenient and let you know our destination. If we do not start soon, we may not move till we start for home. Our time is so near out and if there is a battle near here before the 10th of next month, we will probably be in. By "we," I mean our Brigade but I, for one, had as X not see any fighting while I am out here. When you write me next week all about the neighbors how they are. I had a letter from Cousin Julia Babbit a short time ago. She wrote that they were all well, only Leonore's little girl. She was sick. Leonore had been sick but was getting better when she wrote. I have not hear from Barre for some time. What has become of the folks there. I do not know. I have not seen David Carr for about a month. He is at Union Mills with the Battery. I expect that he will be ready to come home with us when we start. Jon Smith and Orlando Billings are doing well. So I hear Aretus and Oscar are well and tough as knots. We have sent off our A tents today and have got to make fly tents. As for the rest of our time, we can, if it hold so dry as it has along back, we have not had a good shower for six weeks or more. The crops begin to suffer the want of rain. What is the weather Vt. this summer? Is it wet or dry? What does Grandfather think about wanting me when I get back? I forgot to ask him when last I wrote to him. Tell him if he does not want my help through haying to engage me a good place when I get back for I do not want to loose much time for, if I have got to work when I get back. I am going at it before I get homesick and begin to dread to work. We are awful lazy now a lazier scot I do not believe can be found anywhere. We hardly want to stir enough for our health. We have a drill once in a while but not often enough to get the men fairly waked up as we used to. The Old Col. said we will take it as easy as we can while we have on chance and if anytime is wanted before we go home, they will find his men ready for it. I believe we would take a little brush with the rebs just to see what his men are made of. He thinks they are all right. Well, I must close now. Goodbye. Please write soon to your brother.

Jim

Letter 50

Camp Carusi Va June 15th 1963
Friend Melville

As I am on picket duty today and have others with me to keep guard while I write, I will write you a few lines. To begin with, I am well and the rest of the Warren boys in camp. There is a great movement of the army going on this time. You probably know more about it than we do here. You can get the news sooner than we can but one thing we know that Gen. Hooker's army is falling back, that many of his supply trains have already crossed the river and passed this place ever since three yesterday. Wagons have been continually moving past this place and large herds of cattle. The troops begin to come in but the question is what does it mean. Is Hooker fearful of a defeat where is or does he want to draw Lee out and fight him this side of his stronghold at Fredericksburg? Some thing that there will be another Bull Run fight soon. If we do, I am in hope the Bull will run a different way from what he has twice before (the troops are crossing at the shoals and Union Mills today so I have just heard). If we have another fight there within a month you need not expect us home till after it is over. If our time is out, there may not be anything of the kind. It there is likely to be any such thing, we shall know of it for certain before long.

The weather here is awful hot. There has been no rain for more than six weeks. The ground is very dry. Wheat and rye here are all headed out. Corn is not so forward. The largest I have seen in the fields was about a foot high and that I am thinking is higher than it is in Vt., unless it grows fast there then it used to when I had it to take corn (some of it, I mean, not the whole).

Is there any skedadling from Warren now days? If so, write Who they are. I hear that Wilder Drew and one other had left Waitsfield in a hurry. I hear that Wilder Drew was a different fellow from that. How is it with Joe Eldridge? Does he pretend that he wants to enlist as bad as he did last fall when we were about starting away? I believe his Father promised him he might come in the spring if he only would stay at home through the Winter. Has Jim Cardell got home yet? He left here long ago.

Won't we have some good times, when I get home. If nothing happens to me before that time, I shall have to work for a living to be sure but there are a good many days that a fellow does not feel not working that he can have a pretty good time and not hurt him. I am thinking that Mother Ann will have as much as she Will want to attend to as keep track of me for a while after I get home. Although I do not mean to be very rude, I must make up for this lost time spent here in Rebs Virginia. Well, I have written all that I can think of for now so I must close. Remember me as your friend.

James H. Willson

You will hear from me again if there is anything new turns up that I can hear of or no if I am well.

Letter 51

Fayston June 21

Dear James

I once more try to write you a few lines. My health is the best that it has been since last summer. The Dr. says that if I am careful, I shall get well. I suppose that you will think strange to know that I am in Fayston. I am out to Fay Thay's for a few days. He came after me and would not take no for an answer so I came. His wife is very sick and has been for two weeks. It is thought that she can not live. They have had three Doctors. Joshlin is the main one. They think that there is not anyone that can take care of the sick like me. They would not let me stay at home any, if I went to all the places that wanted. I have not been to any place in Warren but to take care of Emma Trask because if I go to one place there, I shall have to all and it will not do for I could not stand it. I have been here since last Wednesday and shall go home this week. I think the report here is that they are having some hard fighting these days. When will this war end? How glad I shall be when you get home. Fay says tell Reet that he must write to his folks right of forth with and that he is tough as a knot and ready for a draft. There have some twenty or thirty run away from this town and Waitsfield to get rid of the draft. It has got to be twelve o'clock and I am so sleepy that it is hard work for me to write. I wish I could write you something that would make the time seem short to you, while you had to stay in Va. Be as contented and as happy as you can under the circumstances. It seems too bad that you have to stay so long for nine months. The report here is that a good many of the thirteenth have enlisted over again. I hope you are not of the number. I would not enlist again for the present. The time does seem so long to me. It does seem as though that June never would come to an end, but I know that it will. I am afraid that they will keep you longer than July. I can not write anymore tonight for I am so sleepy. I can not see so goodbye for this time. Old Mr. Ainsworth has enlisted and gone to the war. They are enlisted to fill up other Regiments. Accept this from your mother. Good night.

Rosalin Willson

Letter 52

Camp Carusi June 22th 1863

Dear Mother

I rec'd your last letter some days ago but have been so busy that I have not had time to answer it till now.

My health is good at this time and the rest of our boys seem to be feeling well now days. We remain on our old ground (no, I am mistaken we have moved just swung the Regt. round so we are within ten rods of where we have been all the time). We have not had anything to disturb us as yet, although we are on the very front here. There are no troops between us and the Rebels. One wing of Hooker's army is within eight miles of here and are the only guard they have, so we occupy a very important position. If we allow ourselves to be surprised without giving them the alarm, serious consequences might be the result but we shant. Our pickets are vigilant. No force can approach without their being aware of it. I think now that we shall stay here till we start for home and that will be but a short time. We may not start till the 10th but if we don't, it will not be long though the general belief among officers and men is that we shall be in Vermont by that time. It does not seem that nine months have past since I left home (or nearly that). It has been the shortest nine months that ever I saw and the time now passes off very fast. I suppose the reason is that we are kept too busy. We are on duty three days in a week but it is not hard. The nights are so short that it does not seem as bad as it did last winter and we can lay down and sleep anywhere without a blanket and not be cold. There has been fighting above here for three days, mostly artillery and cavalry. I went to the station yesterday as one of the guards (we have to guard the teams since the others were taken) and I saw some of the wounded and some prisoners. They said our men were driving the Rebels and after I came away. There were some more passed. Some were minus legs and arms. They were hit in every place that it don't seem possible that they could live so long. I have not heard from Barre for some time. They were well when last I heard from them. I had a letter from Aunt Julia a few days ago. The folks were well when she wrote. I must close now so goodbye from your son.

James Willson

Letter 53

Fayston June 28, 1863

Dear James

I once more try to write you a few lines. My health is good at this time. I went home today and stayed a short time, found them all well and what was the best--a letter from you. I thought when I wrote you before that I should be home before this but Mrs. Thayer does not get along very well. I think she will get well. Dr. Reublee is doctoring her. Hiram Jones has buried his other girl. She had diphtheria. Dr. Judkins is very sick. It is said that he can not live. At any rate it has been very sickly in Warren and he has had to go night and day till he was all wore out and then diphtheria sot in last night. The Doctors told Pharas that he could not live. What the folks will do, I do not know, if he does die. Everyone is feeling very bad about it but I suppose that it must be so. How anxious I am about you. If you can only come home safe and well. It is all that I will ask but we cannot tell what a few days will tell. I wish that I could think up something to write to you that will comfort you in the dangerous position that you are placed in. Keep up good courage and put your trust in God of battles and I hope that he will care you safe through all your trials. Calvin has got that money all right so I heard. I have not seen him. I can not think of anything now to write tonight.

Monday. I am rather down-hearted today. I do not know if anything that has cast such a gloom over the community as the sickness of Dr. Judkins. He probably is dead at this time. This morning they thought he was dead but he revived a little. I can not write anymore this time so goodbye. Hoping I shall see you soon.

From you Mother,
Rosalin Willson

Letter 54

(undated) (unaddressed)

In this letter, I send a piece of wood. It is not very pretty but I will try and make a better one and send sometime. Tell Mell if you see him, to write me as often as he can get time, as I am very busy now. Every company has to go on picket once in three days so we have to sleep two days in the week in order to stand it as a soldier should. We have to keep awake on guard as one neglect endangers the whole Brigade. I will write soon as I can so goodbye.

James H. Willson

Letter 55

Map

Letter 56

(Missing)

Envelope Addressed by James Willson
To his brother--Master Robert Willson
East Warren, Vermont
Postmarked from Alexandria on April 22, 1863

Letter 57

(undated)

Grandmother Hillery

I seat myself this evening to write to you. My health is good and I hope it will so till I go home. Our time is all of half gone. I hear that they are going to draft in Vermont this spring. If they do, they probably will take some that don't want to come to Dixie but they will have to or get someone to take their place and presume they would give someone a good premium to take their places. I wish they would give me a good bounty to take some of their places but I shant be there so there is no danger of my coming again for some time after I get home. What does Grandfather mean to do with his farm next summer. I hear that Mell is not going to carry on his farm next summer. He is a foolish fellow if he don't unless he means to enlist and I don't think he will. Does he want to enlist as bad as he did last fall if he does. He can have a chance this spring, according to what his Father told him when we came away. I must close now so good night from your grandson.

James E. Willson

Letter 58

(undated)

Dear Friend (Lucy)

Father and Mother are going to Brookfield today. I wish you would come and stay with me tonight if you can. I wanted to come over to school this afternoon but don't know as I can, be sure and some, don't let anyone see this. Burn it as soon as you read if not before. Excuse bad writing and spelling for it was written in a hurry.

Ever the same

Delia

Letter 59

(missing)

James H. Wilson to Mrs. Rosalin Willson, East Warren, Vermont
Postmarked June 29 from Monocacy Maryland (on the way to Gettysburg)

Letter 60

First part from Lucy

Second part from Rosalin Willson

Fayston Sept. 20, 1863

Friend Melvill

I received yours of the (rest of sentence not written). I was glad to hear from you and to hear that you were well. I am glad that there is one in the world that will take notice enough of me to write me. My health is pretty good at this time with the exception of a very bad cold which makes me cough and causes my lungs to be sore. I guess I should get over it in a few days. I felt very bad to think I could not go to Warren the Sunday before you went away. Pharas tried his best to get someone to stay with Mary so I could go but there were so many sick that it was not possible to get anyone. I will try and tell you what little news there is. Perhaps you have heard it before. Old Mr. Simeon Stoddard is dead. They found him dead in the lot where he was to work. His son-in-law, Dudley, died in a few days after. John Beard is buried today. Jack Dany, the man that you saw here X buried a child last week. Old Mr. Thayer was alive yesterday morn. Have not heard since. Emeline is yet very sick. It is feared that she can not get well. I went home the next Sabbath after you went away. Found our folks all well but Charley. He was better so he could set up half an hour at a time. I have not heard from him. Since I wanted to go home today very much but it was not convenient. When I shall go, I know not. As soon as I can.

Time passes of very heavy with me. I do not know what I should do, if I was not here to work. It is not very easy for anyone to be low-spirited where Mary and Pharas are, him especially. He is so full of fun that one can not help laughing if they feel every so bad. Mary says tell you that she is getting better but she shall keep me till I am eighteen. It would not be a very great wonder if I should stay all winter. If I go home Lute will go out somewhere else to work and I think it will be better for her to stay where she is. Do you not? I do not think that she will have to work so many hours in a day, as she would have to anywhere else. (Oh, dear me how the children do shake the table.)

Sabbath eve. Pharas has gone to Warren today and I hope that I shall have some news from there to write you. Rufus Billings' wife was buried yesterday. John Poland's wife is very sick. Pharas has just got home. He says that Father's folks are full as well. His father is no better. Emeline not so well. He says she looks as though she was dead. Aretus is getting better. You must make your commas as you read this that is you can read it. Oh, I liked to have forgotten Ester's school was out the next week after you was here. If you consider this worth an answer, please write me soon. Excuse all mistakes and except (accept) imperfect letter from your friend and well wisher.

Lucy

Pharas has got home. His father is no better. Emeline is but just alive. She died last night to appearances. They pried her mouth open and gave her some brandy and she come to. Probably will not live the night out. They can not get to do or be there. They are afraid that they will take the disease. How I do pity them. If I was at home, I should go and help them. X's Wife and both children are sick with the same complaint. Mary got so tired yesterday that I shall not go home today. James Nichols is very sick. He had been to Mr. Thayer's to work.

Wednesday. I do not know as this letter will ever go to the office. I expected (blotted out) home today. I feel somewhat bad about it but we are all selfish. They told me yesterday that I might have the team to go today, so I thought I was going but Pharas harnessed the horse took his wife and X. Off they went, which they had the right to do but I came very neigh being mad. Do you blame me? It is the second time I have been ___ so this week so I do not know as I ever shall go till I go for good and all I would not stay here if it was not a good place to work, for work I have got to. It is not every place that I can work. They that hire want their hardest work done which I can not do, if there is much of it, so I must be kinder, peacable. It is hard to be obliged to anything that comes across the grain but I guess I shall live through it. I think sometimes that some of our folks might come and see me oftener or write but as they think best. If I knew that I could get in a shop somewhere to work this winter or where I could do tablework, I should go where I was not known and see then if I could not be contented to stay for the children. I have about made in my mind that I wish to go of some 50 or 60 miles where I can not get back and then I should be contented. Do not let anyone know what I have written. If you can find out yourself, you will do well. Mrs. Johnson, Dr. Smith's daughter, was buried yesterday. I seem as though everyone is agoin to die. In the next time you hear from me you may hear that some of us has gone where James is. Why did he have to be sacrificed? What have done I _____ that I should be so affected? I think sometimes that I am a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. Have you got a good school and what do you study? Good day for this time you may.

Rosalin

These blots to the children

Wednesday I do not know as this will ever go to the office. I expect to have some time today. I feel somewhat bad about it but we are all selfish. After you have read what is right side up, commence on the second page at the word Wednesday and read the edges first and then you will see how it goes. Write me a good long letter and I will do the same by you if you wish to from me again. I will expect of a short one if you can not find time to write a long one.

R.W.