



The following are transcriptions of the letters of William W. Clemens, 2d Lieut., bvt. Capt.,
US Signal Corps 1861 to 1864

(Source: Clemens Family Records: <http://www.jeffandheather.com>)

Harrisburg 2 a.m.

April 18th 1861

Dear Father,

We arrived here safely at nine o'clock and were immediately marched to quarters prepared for us, such as they were. While undergoing the fatigue of a long drill in an armory here, we received a dispatch stating that we must leave for Washington in the first train in the morning and there to receive the necessary outfit. We had expected to receive them here, and that we would remain here a day or two at the least but it seems the government is anxious to have the Federal Capitol garrisoned as quickly as possible. We go on, in company with several hundred regulars. I have heard that Sec. Cameron will give the Penna Vol's the honor of defending the Capitol and we are in hopes that we will not see much active hardship or be engaged in actual conflict. We are ordered to be ready at roll call at 3 ½ a.m. and not having very comfortable quarters in fact there are no beds, a few of us came up to the Capitol and the houses having just adjourned I thought I would drop you a few lines, writing only in company with the clerks of the house who are transcribing the bills just passed. I was not able to see Annie as I was kept with the Co. until one o'clock. We are all in excellent spirits and look forward not to much hard fighting, but on the contrary to dull monotonous life for a few months at least. No having much of interest yet to write I shall have to close promising to keep you posted in all our movements. Love to Mother, Till & all

I remain your Affec Son

W.W. Clemens

Fort Washington
Potomac River
11 a.m. May 5th 1861

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter of the 29th yesterday and was glad to hear from home, it being the first letter I rec'd since I left. As you can see we have changed our quarters and in rather a hasty manner. None of us ever dreamed of having to leave the Capitol, thinking that after we were getting so nicely fixed we would be allowed to remain there but the fates have otherwise decreed. Our boys all got here last Tuesday except Lieut Wallace and myself, who did not arrive here until Thursday. Lieut remaining on business in Washington while your humble servant was out dining on that day with a friend in the city and I did not get to hear the orders until after the company had left, however I arrived here safely and the company welcomed me back amongst them, as though I had been away from them for weeks. Fort Washington is situated on the Potomac sixteen miles below Washington City on a most beautiful spot and in a position to command a great distance on the river as well as to form a strong battery against any land force, which may be sent to attack it. The Fort and property has been in disuse for a long time until within a couple of months during which time men have been busy mounting the guns and are still at it and when they are all placed into position with everything in order so as to be prepared for an assault. Major Haskins, the commanding officer, says we can hold out against ten thousand men. We are not within the main walls of the Fort, but are stationed in the "Water Battery" just in the front between it and the river. The Fort being over a hundred yds. from the waters edge on a high rise of ground. In case we were overpowered in our present position by the enemy we can immediately retire in the Fort through a gate leading from it to our Battery. The water battery is surrounded by a deep moat twenty five feet wide and the parapet walls are five feet high and of immense structure. We will have at our command, that is our company, an armament of twenty heavy forty two guns and we have a complete sweep of the river both up and down; the river taking a turn at this point gives us a great advantage over vessels coming up the river. In the rear of the Fort there is a very steep hill forming a hollow of great depth making it almost impossible for the enemy to come up without being terribly cut up. We

have, I think, a good commander, Major Haskins who has been long in the service and lost his left arm in the Mexican War. He is a small man, not very old is as far as we can understand one capable of his charge although there is hardly anything about him which would indicate his being a soldier. He is a quiet and unassuming man and goes and comes hardly without our knowing he has been present, but he is one who would be likely to look after those who may become affected. When our Company came here they had to work hard to find accommodations. They had to clean out a large shed in which were stored the gun carriages and lay a floor and make sleeping bunks for the men which was hard work and that together with the intensely cold weather which we had last week with a heavy rain all the time gave a great many of us the horrors. We were unable to get warm only at a large fire built in the open air and at night those who were not on guard could not sleep on account of the weather. It was most extraordinary, the wind blew a perfect hurricane off the river and it rained almost incessantly. Our quarters are dry enough but it was so cold and we having had such warm weather in Washington made us feel it the more, however it is now fair weather, in fact hot as I am able to say for I am writing this out doors with the sun directly over me with a gun carriage for a desk. I think we are in a safe place although we are right in the midst of secession, with Virginia only a mile on the other side of the river and some of the people just back of us proclaiming secession, but if Maryland proves true to the Union as I have heard she did we haven't much to fear from that neighborhood. This is a beautiful country and the river scenery is delightful. The river itself presenting a rather pretty appearance having so many fish boats continually upon it which with their white sails and tacking to and fro with the men chanting as they haul in their reins of shad makes indeed a fine sight. Shad are caught here and farther down the river in immense numbers and there is nearly all the time a boat at our wharf with them for sale. We can purchase a fine large one for ten or twelve cents. Two of us get together and fry one -which makes a good meal. We are not altogether satisfied here to tell the truth. Our men have not been looked after properly there are many things, which we should have and have not yet rec'd them most particularly, our uniforms for some are shabby enough having generally taken the worst clothes with us. We have thus far rec'd 2 prs. good shoes/first rate, 2 prs. stocking & drawers- 2 heavy woolen outside shirts and a haversack but we want something to make

us look like soldiers. We can make no complaint of our food it is rough but still we all feel satisfied and enjoy our meals, but the government should uniform us and unite us with our regiment for I can assure you none of us want to remain here all the time. Government vessels are continually running up and down the river to keep it clear and every boat which passes must stop to be examined by the officer or else we fire a salute across her bow which we have done a couple of times and they are glad enough to lay to. Capt Wren has resigned nominally his office in this company being a candidate for the Lieut Col. ship of the Regiment but he was defeated by Capt. Telheimen of the Logan Guards who are stationed here in the Fort. Smith will in all probability be our Captain in a short time. Tell all my friends whom I have promised to write to that I am at present unable. Paper is scarce and you can see I have no ink and we have no place to write or I should certainly write to them all but I will do so if I get an opportunity. Tell Eliza I had so many things to remember that I forgot to mention her in my last letter and she must overlook it. I wish she could see some of us cooking a shad as an extra dish and she might learn something, perhaps. Tell Fred Brown & any others who may say I owe a letter that I will write when I can.. Let them read this if you wish. I wrote to Gertie & Kate Rerrie from Washington and forgot to give them my directions. Tell Till to write them and inform them where I am. Write soon & often. Love to Mother & all. Remember me to all my friends & also to Anna.

I remain your Affec.....

Will

Sunday evening

I wrote the foregoing letter this morning and having just rec'd a letter from Tillie dated 8th I am sorry that I did not answer her first letter but shall write to her in a very short time. I am very sorry to hear that Mother is unwell and hope she may soon be better. Give much love to her. Tell Tillie, that, in answer to Tim's question concerning Dick, I think he belong' to him as I gave him to him, but that he shall allow Eliza to have some claim on him.

John was to see me this afternoon but remained but a short time coming after dinner and unwilling to remain until after supper. He looks first rate and is in good spirits.

With much love to Mother and all I am.....

Will

Fort Washington Moore Va.

May 12, 1861

Dear Sister,

I received your letter last Thursday and was of course much pleased to hear from you, it being the first letter I rec'd from you since I left home -and I would like to assure you, you cannot inflict a very severe punishment upon me by sending them oftener as a letter from home is, I think, more highly appreciated than one from me would be because WP here are anxious at all times to know what is going on in Fottsville, while you can feel satisfied that we are still in old quarters going through our regular routine of duties, unless immediately advised to the contrary. This is Sunday and is or should be a day of rest but not so with all of us here, for I now am writing this in the room set apart for the guard of the Fort when not on duty. Every day there is taken from each company a number of men who are compelled to do guard-duty for twenty four hours, each man being on guard two hours and off four, making each one serve four reliefs of two hours each in the twenty four. It may seem to those who have never experienced such duties that they would not mind being on guard for only two hours after four hours rest, but let me say that we are allowed no rest or sleep during the whole time, and also that the minutes are certainly not as short as some are. It affords a splendid chance to anyone to think of anything and everything when posted on the ramparts, during the early hours of morning and though he looks down the high walls and even stretch his eyes towards the woods in the rear all he can see will be his own sweet self and hear the tramp of his own feet. I think sometimes how useless it is for us to be compelled to perform this duty, but when we think of the importance of our position and the liability of being attacked at almost any moment renders it of double importance. There is besides this long guard another sent out into the woods which is called the "Picket Guard" who are able to give the alarm early to those in the Fort in case there were troops marching towards us, so you can see that every precaution is taken to protect those who are able to sleep and to give them time to prepare for their reception which no doubt would be a very warm one. There are gunners selected from the regulars who sleep beside their guns so that they may be ready immediately. We have been busy all week mounting guns and placing them in position and it is certainly the hardest work we can have, for each gun weighs over seven

thousand pounds and we must, fireman fashion, haul them from the wharf up into the Fort and up a very steep hill. It is very slow work as the men are unable to pull one far without resting yet still we are getting along fast enough. Yesterday afternoon the officers tried the new guns and a most excellent opportunity they had to do it, as the river, with few exceptions, was clear of vessels and the way the balls went skipping over the water was amusing. One ball, which we counted, made over a dozen bounds before it sank. Another we sent far into Virginia no doubt to the astonishment of the farmer in whose grounds it lodged. Every day there is a steamer passes here with troops and is greeted by a salute from the Fort as well as the cheers from the Boys who immediately mount the ramparts to greet their companions in war. This afternoon a large war vessel passed bound for Wash. loaded with human beings, the decks and the rigging being completely covered with them, putting one in mind of an immense beehive. The government is determined to settle the great difficulty now and I am glad, for if it is not done now when can it be done? And I only hope that it will be done so effectively that the South will be glad to accept anything, which the North may choose to dictate and allow them to return again into the Union. I have just heard that Gen. Butler's division has been ordered to retake Harper's Ferry where are stationed, as per reports, four or five thousand men. I only hope it is time as that will be the first strike towards accomplishing the object of the government and may the secessionists be so completely routed out of that position as will bring them to their senses and make them believe the truth as regards the great strength of the North, so that they will not think of any more attacks upon the property of the government, but act as they say they are going, only on the defensive. That is seizing every thing which they can lay their hands upon, but the sport will be stopped by the many thousands who have left their homes for that purpose. On Friday afternoon we were most agreeably surprised by a visit from a number of our Pottsville friends who were anxious to see how we were getting along. Mr. Geo. Patterson, the Cakes, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Bateer, Lin Bartholomew Campbell & others was the party. They could hardly report very favorably forces as it was raining and everything had on its most gloomy aspect but still they thought we were snugly fixed and better off than the great majority of the others. If they had come on a fine day they could not have but admired the beautiful scenery and would have been no doubt much better pleased. Col. Cake to whose

regiment we are attached says that we will all be united either here or at some other place which he will try to select and he will do all he can to obtain a good location for us, for what would be pleasant for the men must necessarily be so for him, as regards our comfort, we obtained an additional supply of clothing in the shape of a cap, same style as is worn by officers, in fatigue. A coarse blue blouse which is very comfortable and a pair of trousers each with a blue overcoat same as we have had but which we shall endeavor to change for one gotten up by our state, it being of a very dark mixed gray and a genteel coat fit to wear at any time. There was a great deal of amusement attending the distribution of the breeches nearly all of them being made large, all the small men being able to hide themselves in them, they will be altered by the tailors here in the Fort and then we will have somewhat the appearance of soldiers though we have not yet rec'd our dress uniform. My clothes fit me very well as I am not one of the smallest and should you meet me now you would not know me, as I myself cannot immediately recognize those of my friends who have donned the new dress. I have not yet rec'd a letter from the girls in Phila. but have rec' d two papers. They may have written and I not have rec' d it .You must tell Mrs. Clayton, Mrs. Nice and my young lady friends and Mrs. Lewis that they must not think hard of me for not writing to them but let them read my letters home if they wish until I do write them as really opportunity for writing are so few that I feel like writing home when I can, hoping they may glean some little news from them. Tell Eliza that every mess I eat brings me into remembrance of the good things she gets up and I have more than once wished for some of them. We rec'd the butter & eggs which were sent us from Potts and are living like kings for the time, but we must drop from this high living in a day or two for a few bbls. of eggs do not go far among a large party of hungry soldiers. With love to mother and all the boys and with the expectation of hearing from you oftener. I remain your Affect. Brother

Will

Fort Washington

May 31st, 1861

Dear Mother,

With the thermometer considerable above the "temperate" mark and not enough air to blow a feather an inch, I sit down to write to you, that is, I shall make the attempt not knowing how I shall succeed for I do not feel cool and collected enough on account of the hot weather which we are now enjoying. We have not had very warm weather for many days together as it has been very changeable, at times being quite cool but today it is hot enough to make us appreciate the shade and those who are fortunate enough to have no duty to perform can be seen lying here and there with an eye to the most comfortable places. Time flies just think of it -six weeks have already passed away since we left home and I can hardly realize that it has been so long but I think it is because we have hardly any idle time but on the contrary are kept continually on the go, always something to be done when another is finished. We are kept yet at work but it is being lessened and in a few days we hope to have little else to do besides our regular duties in the fort. We have now every morning an hours drill conducted by the Officers of the U.S.A. stationed here and the men are getting quite proficient in the manual and if they only had the time to devote their attention more fully to it we could compete with any of the companies now in the service. This morning there was a general inspection of all the new in the Fort and everything belonging to them, our quarters are inspected by the Surgeon. We were all drawn into line in the parade ground and had to stand about two hours in the hot sun until everything was gone through with and the Boys were a little tired and glad enough when it was over. It was an inspection which takes place once a month throughout all the forces in the services and it is a good thing for it compels everyone to have everything in the best order and his sleeping quarters must be very clean or he will find that he will receive such a reprimanding as will make him more careful in the future. The health of us all is excellent having but one or two who are sick and they are not seriously so and when everything is taken into consideration the change of climate, change of food, and change in our modes of living it is only a wonder that from among so many of us there are so few who have been sick but it is owing in a great measure to the care of the Capt. and officers who do all that may be for the comfort of the

men who are well satisfied to remain here the balance of the time in preference to being ordered away without knowing where they may get to, yet still there are many in the company who would rather see some fighting in earnest as well as your hopeful correspondent, than go home without having been in an engagement of some kind although it can not be denied but that we have performed great service in putting this place in order which has become a stronghold of the government holding a very important position we having from the first kept back all supplies from Alexandria which City must, by this time, be pretty sick of secession as it now entirely in control of the Gov't forces while the citizens, who are able, are leaving with their families as fast as they can as an attack is strongly expected in the neighborhood. Nearly everyday there are boats pass the Fort loaded with men, women, and children with all their furniture bound for a more safe place and last evening a boat stopped at the wharf with several families on board and as I looked at the troops of little children running about on the deck I could not but help thinking of our little boys at home. The death of Col. Ellsworth at Alexandria was heard with regret by us as well no doubt as it was by everyone, for we here had expected much from him and his regiment but his assassinator met his just doom and that in the presence of his own wife and I have heard those say who were there, that it was with great difficulty that the ??? were restrained from burning the town down out of revenge for his death. From what we can hear there are strong entrenchments being thrown up around that city and the army is so stationed between it and Washington that it would take an immense force to recapture the city but I have no idea that an attempt will be made but that the Gov't itself will have to be prime movers in all conflicts in endeavoring to repossess itself of its property and as for Fort Washington you may rest assured that it will be after today when an attack is made upon us because we feel as though we are impregnable and defy them to disturb us!!!! There is so little of consequence going on here now that it is with difficulty to find anything to write about and I certainly feel more like "napping" it this afternoon than writing letters and I feel as though I ought not to write at all until I hear again from home as I have rec'd only two letters from any of you since I left and if it were not for other correspondents who are more generous I would be totally devoid of all private news but I rec'd the papers which you sent. I also rec' d two "shirts" check in a box -to Heber Thompson but as there was no

name but my own on the bundle I did not know where they came from unless from home. Willie Weber sent me a box containing 2 pound cakes, 1 box sardines, almonds and other little things which were of course very highly appreciated by me. There was great deal sent on to different parties and we lived high on the good things. I expect to send some clothes home packed with some things sent by others which, when I do will be handed to you. Give my love to all and don't forget the little boys and tell Tim that I will be home soon. I want you to see that I get a letter from home. There is no use asking Tillie to write because she has not yet answered my last - and I will say that this will be my last unless I receive an answer soon to it. Remember me to Eliza and all my lady friends in Mah?????St. and with much love

I remain your Affec. Son

Will

The enclosed note from Ramsay Potts to his Mother may be handed to his Brother Clem at Rich Morris' store by one of the Boys. W

Fort Washington

June 2, 1861

Dear Sister Tillie,

I rec'd your letter yesterday and was somewhat surprised at it because I thought that perhaps you had concluded not to write anymore as you had delayed it so long and I had given up all hopes of receiving one from you. I wrote a letter to Mother a day or two since, complaining of your neglect, which you no doubt have read ere this. Sunday afternoon, and everything is quiet for the boys completely "played out" with the heat are lying around in the shade trying to sleep, for it is so uncomfortably warm today that it is impossible to feel cool anywhere, yet this morning we were compelled to turn out for inspection with our knapsacks packed with everything we possess and after we were through I never saw a more tired and worn out set of men and could you have heard the expressions made by them you would not ask the question whether they would enlist for three years more and it is the wish of all, as far as regards comfort, that we may be allowed to remain during the rest of our time. I've have been ordered by our Capt. to have everything in order as to be ready at a moments notice as he thinks there is a probability of our being removed from information rec'd from Wash. brought by Capt. Perkins USA stationed here who said he had seen an order already written out in the war department for our removal and all that was yet required was the signatures of the proper officers, but we still think that we will be allowed to remain. There having been a Battery erected by the "Seceshers" at Aquia Creek about thirty miles below us on the Virginia Side. We were impatient to hear from there as a force of armed vessels had been sent down to silence it. This morning a vessel which had taken part in the assault stopped at the Fort and we learned a few particulars from the men who were not very communicative. This vessel had fired over one hundred and shell and had rec'd three shots one through the wheel house and one forward and one aft, she was bound for Wash. for re- pairs and- ammunition. She also had on board a ball which had struck the water first and fell on the deck without doing any injury. The " Pawnee" I in whom all of us here are so much interested on account of her being kept in our neighborhood so much, rec'd eight shots but no serious injury, had accrued and from amongst our forces no one

was hurt. The person who was my informant says that the shot whistled over their heads and around them like a hailstorm and that there was originally fifteen guns and that up to last evening they had all been silenced but one. In answer to my question as to (how) many men were in the Battery? He said he did not know but said a "good many" for when a shell burst amongst them he said they could be seen running in every direction and think that they the secession must have lost a good many men killed. The depot and stonehouse there had been burnt to the ground floor. Andrew Russell was here. He came Friday eve and left Saturday morn and of course we were all glad to see him as well anyone who comes from Pottsville and thought it was a beautiful place. Tom Reilly is here now. He came yesterday and will remain a day or two with us, so you see we feel assured that our old friend have not yet forgotten us. In regard to Mr. Wardell I say that I don't believe much in him and I don't care a great deal for any remark he may make or anything he may yet still when I am so far away from home I should not like my friends then to think that I would dare to do what is reported I did and act as meanly toward anyone as he no doubt wrote home. I spoke to him and he said that "he had written nothing of the kind home and that he did not say he rec'd nothing out of the box", but I will use my own judgment as to whether I shall believe it or not. I "bunk" with Potter Evans and Engle and we mess together - Wardell in another part of the quarters. When the box came I opened it not knowing where it came from and to see what it contained - there was two small pound cakes, some small cakes, almond and a box of sardines. Charley Evans took a cake and I closed the box. There was a note asking me to accept it and to give John and Harry some. I then went to Harry and told him what I had received and that he should come at sometime after and take what he wished. This was at noon - at roll call 9 ½ p.m. he came and stood by me in the ranks which he hardly ever does, not being quite up to size, and afterwards as we were getting ready for bed he asked me if I could no give him "those things out of the box" I told him that I thought it strange he came at such a time and that it was impossible to do it at that time of night as it had been put away. Now mind I had as yet tasted nothing. The next day however I called him over and gave him one half of the largest cake and about half of the small ones together with a good share of the rest of the things and he went away then not altogether satisfied because, as I judged, that the box was not sent to his honor. What was left after he had

what belonged to him was divided not between John Engle and myself but amongst a dozen and out of the whole lot I did have scarcely anything for myself as you know I do not particularly care for anything like the things which were sent and if he wrote home that he got nothing or that even he did not get as much as he ought he tells a downright _____ as can be proven by all who saw the whole transaction. And the only thing I regret now is that I have devoted so much time and paper in such a worthless cause and if anyone wants to send him anything hereafter let it, for goodness sake, be directed to him personally for if our dear Harry thinks he must write to his Mother everything which may displease him he will be kept pretty busy which may take his attention away from his duties and he had better take to something else besides soldiering because a man necessarily has a great deal to put up with here and he must bear in mind that he is not at home where he can have somebody to run to with every petty grievance. I told him that he should refrain hereafter from writing anything home about me which would be likely to create a bad impression amongst my friends or he must abide the consequences and he has since been very friendly - strange! But enough. Give my love to all. The little boys must not be forgotten nor Eliza - Write soon and believe me

Your Affect Bro
Will

Thermometer about 150* and the flag on envelope about the same temperature.

Fort Washington
Sunday, June 16, 1861

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter night before last and was unusually pleased to hear from home as we had had until then no mail or news of any kind for over a week and we were all on tip-toe to know who the lucky ones would be when the names were called out and of course there were many who appeared not a little disappointed when they found there was none for them. You homebodies can hardly imagine with what pleasure a letter from home is read and how every spark of news is eagerly grasped at and what pleasing recollections of home are stirred up when we find out what is transpiring there and even what our friends are doing. No matter how much a man may desire to roam or how much love of adventure he may possess or how many exciting scenes transpire to which he may be witness, still he can find time to think of home and it is only the prospect of the return and welcome which we expect to receive that buoys us up and makes the time all the more agreeable to us. Many and many a time we hear the expression "how I would like to be in Pottsville only for a couple of hours" but not expressed on account of, if I may say so, home sickness but merely to have a peep at the old place - for we could never, I believe, were we to be in the service for years, find a place where we would be better off than we now are. Since the company has been divided we have a great deal more room and can fix up our bunks to suit ourselves without any fears of intrusion and a better behaved set of men, although I say it myself, can not be found in the whole army. I say this not upon my own judgment but upon that of others. Why Major Haskins and the other officers of the regulars have repeatedly said that a "finer volunteer company he never saw" and that the cleanliness of the men and their equipment is not excelled by any in the service and why should we not have everything in the best order? All or nearly all our spare time is devoted to keeping our things in good condition, and our muskets although they have been used in all kinds of weather, shine like new dollars. This morning after inspection Maj. Haskins turned around to Capt. Smith and said "you need not be ashamed of those men and I only hope they will go home all right". The Capt. very coolly replied that he was not and that as far as his influence would go the men would

still adhere to the principles which have been observed throughout the whole time. Maj. Campbell from whose regiment we are separated, although belonging to it, paid us a visit a day or two ago and was a witness to our evening parade, which takes place at sunset, when he had a fine opportunity of seeing our little garrison, consisting of about four hundred, all drawn up into line and everyone striving to out do the other both in appearance and in expertness in handling the musket and it no doubt was with a wish that his regiment would all be united and not be as it is not one half here and the other there. It has been not a little to the chagrin of the Col. of our regiment to find that he commands but a part of a regiment and that the 25th the last on the list. It is no doubt owing to the superior officers of the regiment that we figure so little in all the movements which are now going on and I can account for it in no other way than incompetence on their part. Those companies which are now in Washington under Col. Cate are very much dissatisfied with him, while we, being here separated from him I must say do not look up to him as our head and feel as though we were an independent company without being attached to our regiment whatever persons belonging to our company who have been in conversation with the Col. all say as far as they can judge he would much rather prefer remaining at Washington than to take his regiment in the field where some might be killed and then the citizens of Pottsville would blame him for their deaths!!! It has been a subject of regret to all of us that we had not been attached to another regiment with a good commander when we would by this time been brought into active field service which for my part I would much rather would occur. Although we deserve a great deal of credit, and have rec'd it from those in the department at Washington, for our promptness in response to the call of the President, our journey through Baltimore, the confidence which was established in the minds of the residents of the District on our arrival there and the work which we have done in placing this Fort in a state of defense and when everything is taken into consideration I think that we have gone through a great deal in two months. I do not mention these things by way of praising ourselves but that although not connected with any of the forces who may be brought into battle, we have still performed our duty. There is some talk among the members about enlisting for three years after our present enlistment expires. There are many who favor it, but it is agreed upon that we go home before we do. I say we, because I may be among the number, but I

will be better able to say after I get home. It would certainly be far preferable to do so if our services are needed than to go home and be out of employment, which from all accounts must be hard to find, as no doubt business must be brought to a stand still by the difficulties, which our country is now undergoing. But however I shall let you know if I do enlist again - which may or may not be - but dinner is ready now and shall lay this by until afterwards. The boys all looked pleased and I suppose we have something extra.

I have finished my dinner, which was a very hearty one and a little out of our ordinary course, but not so grand a one as Lieut Wallace said he enjoyed and for which a bill of fare was made out - but it consisted of a nice piece of beef Steak and boiled potatoes with a slice of butter. The butter was sent from New York, as I understand, by Bob Hunt - which was very considerate on his part and which is appreciated by us on the other. Now butter (when it is good) is quite a luxury here with us, we not being able to obtain any in fact except occasionally a colored woman comes to the Fort with a few pounds which is always nabbed up by the first comers. The slaves from the neighboring plantations come to the Fort every day with strawberries, vegetables of all kinds, cherries, pies and the much talked of corn-cake baked about two inches thick and about twelve inches in diameter which when warm are pretty good in their way but when cold they weigh about a pound to the inch and although we may be down south and in the land of hoe-cakes yet I have not tasted one good one. I told a woman one day when I took dinner with them at their house about three miles from the Fort that I must say that at home they knew how to bake de hoe cake better than she, I having Eliza's slap-jacks in my minds eye. I have made frequent excursions out into the country and have seen the cause of the troubles in all his glory and have had many conversations with them in the fields where they were at work and a more ignorant and stupid animal I never saw than these very niggers who have no idea of anything at all beyond the work which they may be doing. They look at the troubles now existing as if they would terminate in the total abolition of slavery and I do believe! they would secede if they thought it possible. I asked a nigger boy the other day if he would fight against us, he said he didn't know but wouldn't fight for Massa. All this goes to show that the idea of slaves fighting for the masters while held in bondage is a fallacy because many slave owners are living constantly more in fear of their own servant than of all the armed forces the North would send against them. Well

here I have gone on without knowing how far I have written and which perhaps tire you in reading and as for writing now it is almost a torture for the weather is so hot that I am almost melted and the flies are not by any means scarce and it keeps me busy driving them away. I want you to thank Mrs. Geo. Patterson for the two harelocks which she sent me and Mrs. Fred Patterson for an oil cloth one which has been of great service during the rainy weather we had. They are an excellent thing and a great protection from the sun and are worn by most all the soldiers in the service. Tell Mrs. Wm. Patterson that I am also much obliged to her for the excellent white cake, as Derry calls it, and may say it was the cake of the season. I also rec' d some smoking tobacco, a fruit cake from Mary Weber so you see that I have thus far been very fortunate. I expect next week to go up to Alexandria for a day or so to see the soldiers and camps in and around that city, there are about a half-dozen men ahead of me and when they return I shall go. Remember me to all the folks in the neighborhood who may enquire after me and to Bessie, Sallie B -and tell Sallie C that I often think of their front porch -particularly after dinner, as I used to stop there so often at that time. Give my love to Mother and all the boys as well as to Eliza and say that I often think of her and the good things, which she makes. Hoping you may soon write and with much love

I remain your Affec Bro

Will

Fort Washington, Md.

8 p.m. June 25, 1861

Dear Sister,

I have just come off the evening parade after having been loaded down with all our equipment for over an hour and compelled to go through with the same old manual of arms (which dose is repeated about six times a day) and this along with the hot weather has almost unfitted me for writing, but I thought it would hardly come amiss for me to write to you now, although I have not heard from home for nearly two weeks. Nearly all the boys have gone down to the river swimming and I find I am the sole occupant of the quarters which is rather a rare occurrence and a blessing which I can not expect to enjoy very long. We go in bathing here very often and the beach at high water is a fine one, somewhat stony but of so gradual a slope it is some distance to the main ship channel. The shore is covered with small shells of all kinds and many very pretty stones, together with many fine specimens of petrified branches and twigs which are found in the ground about a foot from the surface imbedded in a fine blue clay, quite a number of which have been collected by the boys. The river looks beautiful this evening and it presents a rather more lively appearance than it has for sometime on account of the many sailing vessels, which are passing up the river, no doubt loaded with government stores as the transit on the river is almost completely monopolized by government vessels. We have become so familiar with all the steam boats in the U.S. service on the Potomac that we are able to distinguish at a great distance what one it may be - and when one comes up the river everybody here is anxious to know whether she was fired at or saw any batteries being erected on the Virginia shore - but up to the present time there is nothing yet to prevent or interfere with the passage of our boats. On last Saturday the Major said he wanted four men from each company in the Fort to man the two life boats which we have here and make a trip down the river to examine the shores and see if there was any evidence of the approach of the enemy or of the erection of the batteries as had been reported. When our company heard of it there was about thirty who had their equipment on in about a half a minute and in the next had offered themselves to go, which goes a great way to show that although leading a rather inactive life yet they are ready to run any risk for the sake of

adventure. As there were so many who wanted to go there were many of course doomed to disappointment and when the men were selected the unlucky ones gave vent to their feelings not a little unkindly towards the Major, but as it was a mere matter of chance as to who would go no one could complain that they were not the ones - but upon the return of the party towards evening many were glad they did not go. The expedition was under the command of Lieut. Edwards, U.S.A. who is a good officer and as it was very probable that they would come in contact with some who are in the service of the Southern army, they were fully equipped and prepared to meet them. They started about nine o'clock a.m. under a broiling sun which is felt the more on the water and went nearly thirteen miles down the river stopping at many places to make examinations of the country around but found no signs of the enemy with the exception of having heard of a company of secessionists having been at one place a few days previous. They were promised a visit to Mt. Vernon but they did not have the pleasure. They were afterwards ordered to pass without stopping although they were close enough to see the house and grounds around it. Everyone here regrets that being so close to tomb of Washington we are unable to visit the place and were it not for the severe penalty which would be inflicted, there are many who would seal over and run the chance of meeting some persons who would in all probability resist their entrance to the grounds and I believe it is not allowed at present for anyone in uniform to gain admittance. Geo. Hill & Frank Bannan were amongst those who went and they were so sunburnt and tired as well as hungry that they looked as though they might see any amount of hardships and as they had to help row the boats all the way their hands were covered with blisters and as they did not have a chance to shoot anyone, all were perfectly satisfied that they did not go. The Major says we will all have a chance and in all probability there is to be a gunboat, manned by our men who are to cruise up and down the river, stationed at the Fort. It will carry a heavy forty-two pounder and a howitzer and if we get it there will be good opportunity for you to distinguish ourselves Perhaps!!! We received our uniform coats last week which are the regular army coats and they were obtained with a great deal of difficulty as none of the volunteer regiments were supplied with them but ours, we being made an exception by Gen'l Cameron in consideration of promptness etc. They are very thick and most too warm for such weather as we now have but we do not wear them very

often as we have our blouses which are excellent and well adapted for all kinds of service and only wear our uniform coats on dress parades. The men look queer in them and are my thing but comfortable but of course we must obey orders and melt in them when occasion requires. As I said the boys have all come back from the river and it is impossible to write with any satisfaction as I am interrupted every minute, while just next to me there is a party singing all kinds of comic songs interspersed with any amount of Shakespearian quotations given gratis to a large crowd of eager listeners who keep up a regular shout that I am compelled to give up my letter every moment and join in as it is impossible to keep a straight face when a certain few choose to perform in the manner they are now doing. Tattoo has been sounded and must go to roll call preparatory to going to bed but I shall close this for this evening. Perhaps I may have something more in the morning to write about.

26th 5 a.m. As we are not allowed to have a light after taps, which is ten minutes after roll call, I was compelled to lay my letter aside, which should have been finished last light. We are very early birds here and generally "catch the first" piece of pink we can lay our hands on -however I have been up since four o'clock and was kept awake for more than an hour before that by a very heavy rain which was indeed welcome as everything was beginning to look parched & dried up for want of water. It is not raining now but I think that we will have a rainy day and now at this early hour it is very close and sultry. I have had my breakfast over an hour ago (rather earlier than I took it at home) and I can say I did not have a great variety of dishes but only one which consisted of a slice of fat Port - and this with a Piece of dry bread & cup of coffee constituted our breakfast, but we have become so used to our fare and not expecting anything else we are perfectly reconciled to our mode of living. We have a mail now regularly every day and of course I am every day disappointed at not receiving a letter from home, but I am not going to ask you to write to me anymore but will write whenever I feel like it. I must close or I won't be able to get this in today's mail. With love to all and with a remembrance to all my friends.

I remain your affect. Bro

Will

Fort Washington, Md.

June 30, 1861

Dear Sister,

I do not know that I can occupy my time today more pleasantly than by writing to you and all at home and as Father says that you are at all times anxious to hear from me I have concluded I would write to you again without waiting for answers to my former letters. I was much pleased to hear from Father and particularly so as it was the second which I rec'd from him, but as he is not noted for being a very faithful correspondent I can not complain of negligence on his part, but I do think you might write oftener.

As you can see by the date of this I have again selected Sunday for writing. When not on the main guard we have no duties to perform and consequently have some time to ourselves, which is devoted by nearly all of us to letter writing and paper, pens and ink are in great demand & those who are peculiarly fortunate to possess a full bottle of ink with an over plus of paper finds his next door neighbor ready and willing to accept a portion and thus by constantly interchanging and lending each one becomes supplied with everything he needs. This is certainly a good place to study and find out one's character and disposition and should anyone appear selfish or unwilling to help another it can not pass by without notice by the rest for no one knows when he himself may desire to have a favor shown to him and it is only by being obliging and showing a willingness to assist others that a perfect good feeling exists amongst us. The great subject of conversation here is, when will we be discharged. Everyone knows all about it and yet none agree as to the proper time, while many are in hopes that we will be discharged at the expiration of the three months. There are others who say we will certainly be retained thirty days longer, but "the truth to suppose, there's nobody knows", but we will only be aware of that fact when we are mustered out. For my part it don't matter a great deal whether we are kept here thirty days longer or not, but as the minutes have already been counted by an over anxious Logan, it would be a great pity to have his calculation disturbed by prolonging the period of our service. You have no idea of the expectations which are indulged in by the men who look forward to their return home with any amount of pleasure in fact as though it were to be the happiest moment of their lives - and I have no

doubt but that the return of all of us safely home will be the occasion of a great deal of enjoyment by everybody generally and you can hardly wonder that you may find some one, like the young gent of the Logan guards, who has been inquisitive enough to find out the number of minutes which we are yet compelled to serve.

There has been a little more excitement here during the last few days than is usual and the strictest vigilance is exercised, occasioned by the probabilities of some move being made towards us. The supposition that there is something or other going wrong in our immediate vicinity, both on the Virginia & Maryland shores, has been almost verified by signs, which can hardly be mistaken. Rockets have been seen at night, which were answered by other parties and boats (suspicious) have been seen to pass from shore to shore. Parties have been sent out at night both by land & on the river but thus far have been unable to discover or detect anyone. Night before last I, with five others, well armed, were about starting from the wharf for a trip down on the Virginia shore where something suspicious was going on but were afterwards ordered back not a little to the disappointment of our party. Last night a party were down the river coming home after two o'clock this morning but reported "all right." Last evening we had a fair chance to try the range and accuracy of one of guns. Just at sunset the James Guy which runs up and down the Potomac, came down the river and we noticed that a tugboat was bearing hard upon her for the purpose as we supposed of giving the Capt. more dispatches. The flag was waved at a terrible rate but those on the Guy failed to notice it and as she did not stop at the Fort, a blank cartridge was fired at it which was unheeded by those aboard and she kept on going at a rattling rate. After she had gotten over a mile away, a ball was fired and I saw the ball in its whole course until it struck the water not twenty feet from the vessel which had the desired effect and we had the pleasure of seeing her turn round and come up again. The ramparts were crowded by the Boys who were eager to have a shot sent after the vessel and were impatient till a ball was fired and they had seen the result, at which they cheered as lustily as if we had captured a whole band of secessionists. The Captain of the James Guy as he neared the wharf said that we came as near hitting him as he wished.

Yesterday afternoon three large steam-ships passed here for Washington loaded with troops from Maine & Connecticut. The decks of the vessels and the rigging were

covered with men and as they passed the Fort they cheered and clapped their hands until they had got far up the river. We were not slow in returning the compliment, but made one of forty-fours speak to them assisted by the voices of the boys in the Fort. There is always a great deal of enthusiasm manifested on both sides whenever any troops sail up and down the river and if the south imagines that the soldiers of the North are only hirelings they will find that they labor under a mistaken idea when they come in contact with them in even numbers, but the strength and fighting qualities of the Northern soldier must not be judged from the few skirmishes which have taken place where led on by inexperienced leaders, that did not have a chance to show what they can do under fairer circumstances. Wherever or whenever you come across a volunteer, you will find that he has only the one object in view and that the cry is everywhere fight and that they are only too anxious to have a trial of their strength and are becoming impatient with the Government for the slowness of all its actions, but I think we can trust Gen'l Scott whose plans, no doubt, will work slowly, but effectually and when the move is once begun it will carry everything before it, but not without that great sacrifice of life which must necessarily ensue.

Apropos of fight - Col. Calkins with his 25th Regiment, excepting us here at the Fort, left Washington yesterday afternoon, and marched towards Harpers Ferry to relieve Col. Stone and his command, who are completely hemmed in between Wash. & the Ferry by a large force of the Southern army under Gen'l Johnson, I believe. The 25th or the bloody 25th as we call them, are accompanied by one of the Maine Regiments and it is very likely that they will come in contact with the enemy when, I hope, they may come off not only victorious but win such a name for Schuylkill County as will not easily be lost. Of course we here are anxious to hear the result of their expedition.

Next week we will be paid one month and half's pay including mileage, amounting to about twenty four dollars to each man and today we had the regular monthly inspection and the muster preparatory to receiving our money - when every man must be in the parade who is able and answer to his name or else he gets nothing. The Parade this morning was a fine one and as it was cloudy it was not very warm and we were kept drilling for a couple of hours as a battalion, commanded by Capt. Smith who is in especial favor with the Major and to whom everything is left in charge when the Major is

absent from the Post. I closed my letter or rather put it away until I had my dinner which was the same bill of fare "soup" & bread but with the addition of some blackberries for dessert - which I had bought from one of the many niggers who are now hanging about the quarters. Generally on Sunday there is about twenty niggers who come here some with things to sell and others out of mere curiosity and they lounge about answering the many questions which are put to them by the inquisitive ones and always ready to eat a bowl of soup when offered them and it is amusing to look at them for they enjoy the soup as though they never had anything so good. While here they will do anything for us such as go for water, clean our boots etc. and like to be with the soldiers as they say. It is now raining hard and everything looks dreary enough out doors and as a consequence the men are all in quarters and there is so much noise from their talking it is hard to write. I wrote to you and Father last week and I suppose you rec'd my letters. Judge Reilly remained with us a day and a half and was much pleased with his visit although he said he could not sleep a wink the first night as he said our boards were a little too hard but as we have been accustomed to them we don't mind them. Tell Timmy, Frank & Jim as well as the other boys I often think of them and that we expect to be home before long. Remember me to all the neighbors and to all the young ladies. Also to Eliza and Cassy. Tell Father to write and let me know how he has succeeded in what I asked him to do for me and let me know if he has seen that Gentleman yet. Give my love to Mother & all.

And I remain your Afft. Bro

Will

Fort Washington, Va.

July 7, 1861

Dear Father,

It is a most sultry afternoon and I feel more like napping than writing but as I now have the time to spare I thought I had better take the opportunity and do so, besides I just came off the main guard this morning, during which I did not have as much sleep as usual. There has been considerable apprehension, on the part of those who ought to know, of an attack upon this place and instead of the sentinels lazily walking their posts ere the arduous attempt to kill time only, the closest watch and care have been demanded of them during the past week and every little noise which may be heard or anything which may in the slightest degree create suspicion in the mind of the sentinel must now be reported and which is immediately examined into. Last night the Major was up and around the ramparts nearly all the time and I heard him say there was a strong probability of a feint attack being made upon us in order to take the attention of the government forces from Washington which place would in that event receive the assault. I for my part have no idea of such a thing occurring, at least at the present time for the confed. troops have been retreating and evacuating all their strongholds instead of pushing forward. Yet last night rockets and signals were seen on both sides of the river and small vessels passed from shore to shore, a couple of which were brought to our wharf and examined without discovering anything; one however escaped and after we had sent a shot after her thus alarming the garrison some what. There were also two scouting parties sent out both up and down the river, who examined both shores but without gaining any information, but whilst there are some apprehension on the part of the Major that we may be attacked, the boys laugh at the idea and say they only wish it were so and there is none but who say they would like to have an opportunity of sending a few shells into the midst of an army of secessionists. Well here I have gone on talking altogether upon probabilities and surmises and from which you might imagine we were in great danger and perhaps, by the time you get this, think that we may already have been driven out of house and home, but I must write about something and this is something.

Last evening we had another influx of visitors who have created quite a stir in our little garrison and which has had an agreeable effect in helping to drive away a little of the monotony which pervades us. There were a large number of the old citizens of Potts, who when we saw them, brought us strongly in remembrance of home and I think that a great interest must be felt towards us when so many persons visit us. They were very kindly rec'd by the Major and were shown into every nook and corner of Fort by him and the other officers, who took great care in describing and explaining everything of interest to them, showing them the magazines, the guns, canister and grape shot, the fuse and the manner of applying it in all of which they took much pleasure in examining -as it was new to most of them. They are still here and think it is pretty warm and the day I think seems long to some as they were routed, not out of their beds, but out of the bunks a little after four o'clock which is rather earlier rising than they are accustomed to, while I am writing they have gone out to collect a few specimens of shells and petrified wood which is found in great quantities around the Fort. They expect to leave here tomorrow morning. On the 3rd we had another lot of visitors but not such old folks. Mark Coho, Fred Brown and others who staid with us until the morning of the fifth -spending the fourth with us but it was a very quiet one, in fact it was the dullest day here yet as the Major would allow no one to leave the Fort for fear of the men becoming intoxicated and thereby have more trouble than he wished. The only thing which kept us in mind of the day was the firing of the national salute at noon which was indeed a salute, which made the hills far over in Virginia ring with the echo-. Nine of the heavy guns facing the river were each manned by its squad of men and were fired rapidly in succession and the reports were nearly deafening and many of the friends closed their ears to shut out the sound. In the evening we could distinctly see the rockets and other fireworks being set off in Washington and we by way of variety fired off a few shells and had a few fireworks of our own.

On last Sunday I did not feel well and was marked off duty for the day thinking that a day's rest would bring me all right again but on Monday I felt worse and was placed on the sick list and I was very sick and at times miserable. By dieting myself and taking medicine I was considered on the fourth well enough for duty. I am now in very good health and feel first rate.

I received your letter of the second and was pleased to hear from you as you write so seldom, but was rather astonished at the contents concerning my wish. It will require a great deal of trouble and time as well as expense to have the matter rightly attended to and it don't matter much to me whether I would get it or not. If I did, I don't think I would retain the position longer than for the war as I think I would not like it for a life-time as it is a life which cannot be otherwise than tedious and monotonous in time of peace, but still it would certainly be a honor to a young person like myself to be placed in that position. I rec'd a letter from Mr. Haywood the same day I rec'd yours and he said he would do anything for me he could but did not know what to do -as he had written several letters to Mr. Cameron to which he rec'd no answers, and said that Mr. Cake would be the best man I could find to work for me -but if he (Mr. Cake) has had a difficulty the matter must perhaps rest there. I will not be able I think to see the others as the rest of the regiment which left Washington are now on their way home by short advances. We are all anxiously awaiting our discharge which should be next Wednesday a week the 17th but we may be detained longer. There is a probability however of our leaving here before that time, but not go all the way home directly but perhaps remain along the road somewhere as guards and finally get home about the expiration of our time. No one knows when we will be discharged but all think that we will be in Pottsville by next Saturday week and the men are not at all sorry for that fact but are looking forward to their return home and some are getting ready so as to have everything all right at anytime we may be ordered away from here. I shall send what clothes I will not need in a box along with some others as I will be unable to carry all my trash on my back, particularly at this time of the year. I rec'd Tillies letter last night and all hands were sorry to hear of the accident which occurred at the firing of the cannon on the fourth. It is singular that such accidents still occur and it only through negligence on the part of the event holder that it does occur. Why I don't think such a thing ever occurs in the regular service, very rarely if ever, and I should think the accident, which happened to Ch. Krebs a few years ago would have been a warning to others in Potts. when firing the cannon. It is dreadfully hot this afternoon and I think it is the hottest day we had this season and the flies are so thick it is almost a torture to write yet I have gone on without knowing where and Mr. Bannon who has just returned from the woods just back of us said he thought he

would find a cool place there but he says the atmosphere is the same everywhere. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all the rest. Remember me to Eliza as well as all enquiring friends.

I remain your

Will

Write soon, tell Tillie not to wait until I write.

Fort Washington, Md.

July 14th, 1861

Dear Sister,

Perhaps for the last time I have just come off inspection at Fort Washington, at least our oft repeated Sunday inspection for before another Sunday comes around again we all expect to be in Pottsville and we now hold ourselves in readiness to march at any moment as the order for our removal may come tomorrow but not later than Wednesday. We have all our extra clothing already packed in boxes to be shipped home by Express when they will be opened by us when we arrive there. Of course you can judge of the liveliness of all occasioned by our speedy disbandment, assisted not a little by the result of a visit from the Army Pay Master who left in the hands of every soldiers the sum of twenty three dollars without saying anything about the amount rec'd by the officers, it being our pay etc. for one month & a half. The adjutant General with ladies visited us on Friday and remained a day. He was received by a salute of eleven guns to which he is entitled and reviewed us in the evening when he said that our order to proceed homeward would be made out in a day or two. We are to go to Harrisburg and he said we would be discharged there on the 17th perhaps a day later when we would be paid off and mustered out the service at the same time, of course, expressing a hope that we would remain in the service or at least re-enlist for the long period and expressed himself highly to our credit and complimented us on our appearance and drilling not a little. As far I can hear there is a part of one of the Rhode Island Regiments to take our places and I can say that if they remain here as long as we have they will be pretty well acquainted with Fort Washington by the time they leave.

We are in a state of uncertainty about taking our arms & equipment home we take them to Harrisburg and perhaps we may be able to obtain a loan of them for a few days. I think we would look bad enough to get in Potts - without guns & the Capt. will do all he can to borrow them. There is one thing certain however we won't go through Baltimore without them and you may rest assured that there will be very few unloaded as our first trip has taught us a lesson and secession sticks out yet even in Baltimore although surrounded by our troops and we will at any rate be prepared to give them a warm reply

to any insults or injury which they may attempt to inflict. There are many of our boys who are only too anxious to have a pop at some of those who had the game all on their side the 18th April and at this time I think it would not require much urging to get them to go through the motions of loading and firing.

We have had a great deal of rain the last few days and yesterday it rained all day and was quite cold and chilly making our overcoats rather a pleasant affair even in July. Today however it is clear and getting warmer and I suppose we will experience some hot weather on our way home. James H. Graeff and his brother in law are here having come yesterday. Their visit however has not occasioned a great deal of joy!! The fact is we have had too many visitors and now as everyone is getting ready to leave and there is such a running and packing of boxes that they have nothing else to think about and it is hard to write now on account of the noise created by them. As you can see I have written this in short order as I don't feel much in the humor of writing and then I hope to be home soon when I can tell you all. Give my love to all. Tell the boys we will be home next week. Love to Mother & all at home and I am your brother

Will

Fort Washington Md.

July 23, 1861

Dear Sister,

When I wrote to you on last Sunday a week I had thought it would be my last letter from here expecting as all did to leave that week, but we are here yet and do not know when we will be able to get away. We may have to remain here for a few weeks yet and perhaps only for a few days because the distracted condition of affairs will admit of no certainty as far as regards our movements. Last week was a long one, for everyone had reason to believe that we would be enroute for home as early as last Tuesday and the ramparts were never without a few faithful sentinels on the look out for a steamboat which was to convey our precious selves to Wash., and you can not imagine how slowly the time wore around, being constantly in expectation and at the same time doomed to disappointment. Every night upon going to bed all thought the steamer would be down in the morning but when the morning came the boat did not and thus the time dragged slowly along until Friday evening when an order came for our removal on Saturday but no conveyance was sent. On Sunday however from as early as four o'clock in the morning until evening we heard the cannonading and musketry on the other side of the river and from the incessant firing we knew that a heavy battle was being fought, but none of us thought for a moment or had the least doubt of the result never thinking but that our forces would be successful, but the fates had otherwise decreed and the grand army were routed and put to flight. I was on guard night before last when a steamer came down the river and stopping we were told to prepare and have everything in readiness for an attack that the confederates had defeated our forces and were marching on to Washington, the effect of which news produced not a little consternation amongst us. The men were supplied with extra cartridges, shells and shot were gotten ready and the guns were cleaned and loaded and everything prepared so that at least we could give them a very warm reception when they came. Yesterday in the midst of a heavy rain, we were active and on the alert and the excitement was augmented by a desire to know the true state of things. The river was full of war vessels and steamers going to defend the capitol and stop the enemy's passage over the river. I must say it was a day of excitement for we

did not know any particulars or as to the whereabouts of the enemy - and this place commanding as it does the entrance to Wash, the Major, as well as all, thought they would endeavor to take. We allow no vessel of any kind to pass without examination and we took possession of a small steamer "The Gipsey" which plies between the Fort & Alexandria running around to Pixataway, a small town in Maryland about a mile from here. She was sent to Washington in charge of some of the volunteers who returned last night in a rowboat. We have thus cut off our mail communication and I do not know how I shall send this but will have to watch for an opportunity. It is not necessary for me to attempt particulars as regards the battle of Bull Run and yesterday as your papers will inform you more than we know here but I am sorry that so great a victory has been gained over our forces as it can not but prolong the war and be the cause of greater bloodshed. It was terrible and it will have the effect of instigating both parties and the result must be fearful. We feel safe here and hope to be home before long but cannot say when, as it is mighty uncertain. Our boys do not want to leave here so long as they are needed and have made up our minds to be contented at least for the present. I am right well and I am satisfied to remain as long as I can be of any service. It is a lovely morning and quite cool and is quite a relief from the hot weather which we have had. The river is full of vessels of all kinds and there is great activity in transporting ammunition and stores. The Pawnee, the big Perry, the Pocahontas, Anacosta, Baltimore and other vessels of war are in sight of us, awaiting an opportunity to try their hands.

Love to Mother and all at home and I am your Bro

Will

You need not write unless of importance. I shall write when an opportunity occurs.

Will

Camp Stanton between Fort Richardson and Fort Scott Va

August 21st 1862

Dear Father,

I suppose no doubt you have wondered why I did not write before this, for to tell the truth I should have done so, but I have been kept so busy, kept going day and night that I did not at any time feel like writing a letter and now it is after the "Taps" or time for going to bed and every thing quiet so I thought I would take this opportunity. Well perhaps you want to know how we got here and where we are. We left Harrisburg on Saturday morning about nine o'clock en route for Washington. The men were placed on open trucks and the officers had a passenger car to themselves although I rode a portion of the way with my company it being a very fine day and more pleasant outside the car than inside. We arrived at Baltimore at six in the evening and you may rest assured our passage through the city was different from that of 18th April 1861. Our Regiment presented a very fine appearance the men being all newly clothed and not yet having been exposed to hardships or rough usage of any kind looked well and attracted a great deal of attention. Upon our arrival at the Washington depot we were quartered in the depot and were then waited upon by a committee from the "Union Relief Association" who told us that we should proceed to their rooms where a collation was served up sufficient for five hundred men at a time. Upon our arrival there we found every thing gotten up very nicely the tables being covered with clean white cloths and white dishes. There was a plentiful supply of boiled ham, bread and first rate coffee and, judging from the manner in which all of the men "went in" I would say they enjoyed it. The officers had separate apartments and with the addition of tea and butter to their bill of fare. After we were at Baltimore a few hours we again embarked the men in covered cars, en route for Washington City. We had a beautiful moonlight night about one half of which I enjoyed gazing at the passing scenery the other half I was in the land of Nod, sleeping soundly until we arrived at Washington, which was nearly two o'clock in the morning. The Regiment bivouacked in a field close by, while the Col, Lieut. Col, the Major and myself captured a passenger car standing on the track and occupied it until morning. Before we laid down however we again replenished the inner man from a huge lunch basket gotten

up for us by Brady of Harrisburg – after which we made our beds, using the seats of the cars and slept soundly until morning. The first streak of day light always brings a soldier from his half resting couch but on Sunday morning the boys were about even before day light not being used to the kind of bed upon which they had been sleeping. At and around the depot we found several Regiments from different states who had arrived the day and night previous lounging about promiscuously ignorant of and anxious to know their destination. By the by before we got in the car, of which I spoke, we looked in at a large building near the depot and saw over twelve hundred men all stretched out enjoying that great blessing, a good sleep, it was a strange sight the men lying as closely as possible and it was an acre of human beings and made one shudder, when he thought of the cause of their being there. We remained in the field where the men slept until eight o'clock when a breakfast was furnished but I must say far inferior to that rec'd at Baltimore many of the men could not eat it. At twelve o'clock M. we received marching orders. The sun was raging hot and the heat most oppressive and as for dust everyone knows that Washington City is well noted as blessed with a plentiful supply of the article. We marched through the city and halted at the Long Bridge for rest and water; in half hour we started and after a march of seven miles (when it should have been but a little over three) we arrived at our place of destination. It was a high rise of ground, with the Potomac and Washington City on our front, Arlington Heights on our left and Alexandria on our right. After a delay of a couple of hours, the teams came up and we pitched our tents and before dark were enjoying our tin cup of coffee and hard cracker. We remained there until yesterday when we moved to our present location about one mile further south in a more beautiful place and greater facilities for drills, having a large field in the neighborhood for Battalion movements. We are located on the line of the Hampshire and London R.R. about 3 miles from Alexandria and about four from Washington. We are surrounded on all sides by Forts and fortifications and the American flag can be seen floating in every direction. Shot and shell are being fired all day by the artillery men practicing. We have a splendid stream of water running past our camp called "The Four Mile Run", sufficiently large for bathing purposes and the boys are in all day long. It is a great blessing and affords all an opportunity to wash their duty duds. It is singular as the Col. says that we should be encamped here as we are only a short distance from where

the 96th was quartered all last winter. We have been brigaded with three other Penna. Regts. and our Col. has been constituted provisional Brig. Gen'l. and has command of the four Regts. There is only one Regt here at present besides ours but the others are only encamped a short distance off and will be here tomorrow. If the Col. is made permanent Brig. Gen'l. I will be in the staff, as he told me he would place me there in case he retains command. D.B. Green of Pottsville has been appointed adjutant of our Regt, but he has not been with the Regiment yet and I have been acting adjutant ever since the Regt. was formed. I have a large wall tent to myself and mess with the staff officers and have been living at a good table ever since we left Washington. My duties have been very arduous as the adjutant being the orderly sergeant of the Regt, everything has to be brought into ship shape. All the company and Regimental papers have to be made out and reports handed into Gen. Casey's office at Washington every morning and we all being somewhat ignorant of the forms and red tape business, it has created not a little trouble. I get one of the Field officers horses and generally go to town with the Col. and over such roads as we have here and SUCH hot weather horse back riding is not altogether very pleasant. When the adjutant arrives I of course resume my position in our company and in one way I will be glad of it, for I would like to be permanently fixed we have a fine set of Company Officers. The Regt being composed of five companies from Schuyl, four from Northhampton and one from Montgomery County, and there is no doubt but as long as we remain here we shall have a pleasant time of it. We do not know nor cannot surmise how long we shall remain here perhaps not long end perhaps for a couple of months, but as the government is so badly in want of men there is a strong probability we shall not remain here very long, but be pushed on towards the main army. This afternoon I heard there was actual necessity to have us in the field and I do not think the Gov't will hesitate long about sending us forward. I am well and have been so ever since I left home. It is now nearly eleven o' clock and my light is the only one not extinguished in the Camp and as I am pretty well worn out and a hard days work before me tomorrow I shall have to close. Have you settled with Mr. Schollenbyer yet? If not do so. I went there 3rd March. I have settled with Mr. Ward in our books up to the 1st July and owe him up to the time our company left Minersville. Send by express to Washington, with same direction as for letter, thirty dollars of it and I can get it there. Write soon give my love to

Mother, Tillie and all the little ones and tell them I often think of them. Tell Tim and the rest to take good care of "Dick". Remember me to Eliza and all my friends in the neighborhood and I remain your affectionate son

Will

When you write to John tell him I will write to him certainly when I have time. How is he and where is their Regt?

Lieut. Wm. W. Clemens

Co A, 129th Pa. Regt,

Col Frick II

"Camp Stanton" near Washington D.C.

Camp Va.
Aug. 23rd 1862

Dear Father,

I do not know what Camp to call ours where we now are, having been moved again, this making the third time we have struck and pitched our tents. We came here yesterday after a hot and dusty march of about six miles and are on the Line of the Alexandria and Manassas R.R. about four miles from Alexandria and about twenty seven from Manassas. We rec'd orders this morning to prepare immediately for a forward movement and will be on the road to reinforce Gen'l Pope this evening or tomorrow morning. We have been placed in Gen'l Tyler's Brigade composed of the 91st Penna, 2nd New York, 126th Penna and ours. The two first Regts. have been in the service over a year and are, as I suppose well drilled while the 126th and our Regt. are not by any means fit for service in the field, whilst none of us know anything of Battalion movements there are in fact seven-eighths of the men who never had a musket in their hands and there certainly must be something wrong that all the green regiments should immediately be sent into active service. From what we are able to learn here we believe that an overwhelming force has moved on to attack Pope and he not being able to withstand it has been compelled to fall back and hence the necessity of having every man in the field thrown forward to his assistance. McClennan's forces or part of them are now and still coming into Alexandria. More than Ten Regts. having come there up to last night and trains are passing our camp all day long and night loaded with troops enroute for Warrington. We are ordered to leave everything we have behind to take no baggage whatever and no supply trains allowed us, being compelled to carry our grub with us as no transportation will be furnished for anything but men. What I shall do, as well as others, with my clothes I do not know, but will try and have them sent to Alexandria to be stored if possible. The Col. is very much discouraged and can hardly realize the position in which we are placed, although none of us are afraid of a conflict, yet we should, for the sake of the reputation of our Regt. as well as ourselves, have had more time to prepare ourselves, as I said before we are not fit to encounter the enemy. Just think for a moment what there is at stake, we have a thousand men in our Regt., stout strong fellows able to perform any amount of hard work, yet knowing nothing of the movements to which they

may be subjected, not knowing how to form a line of battle or even what it is and from present accounts we shall be before the enemy before two days and there is no doubt we will have to perform some important and dangerous service, as our Gen'l Tyler is a bold and a fighting man, the same Tyler who commanded at the Battle of Winchester. He having been assigned other duty "Geary" was placed in command. From what I can understand Gen'l Tyler is much dissatisfied with having been assigned to this Brigade as he said we were not fit for service, but the government wants men now more than they ever did and it is a burning shame that there are so many men fit for duty who remain at home almost ignorant of the thousands who are now suffering for their country's sake and I believe that it will be only by a superhuman power that we will be able to save our Capitol, for from the information rec'd here, only from private sources, the Rebels have concentrated an immense army for the purpose of a bold and desperate movement on to Washington and unless they now be checked few days will roll around before they occupy the ground on which we are now encamped. My conjectures as to the future are based entirely upon all the information we have been able to receive. I may be wrong and I would hope to God I was. Possibly the government knows what it is about and accomplish what may put an end to this rebellion and I only hope it may be so. However from present appearances it looks as if we were expecting to do something. Do not send me anything at present either letters or articles of any kind. If you have sent me that money get it back again. Tell Mrs. Patterson I am obliged to her for her kindness in sending me those things and let her read this if she wishes. Give love to Mother, Tillie and kiss all the little ones for me and you should hear from me when ever an opportunity occurs. Remember me to Eliza and all my friends. I am well and can only hope in case we do get into an engagement that I may live through it. We will be provided with the small low shelter tents to be carried by the men all our fine accommodations must be left behind. The weather is very close and sultry. Write no letters or send anything to me until you hear from me again.

With much love to all and yourself

I am your Affec. Son

Will

Camp Armstrong Va.

August 25th 1862

Dear Father,

When I wrote you last I did not think I would write you again from this Camp, as our orders being so positive there was no doubt left about our leaving immediately. But we are still here and can not say when we will get off -although we are ordered to have three days cooked rations at all times on hand so that we can move at the shortest notice. We are surrounded on all sides by thousands and thousands of troops, old Regiments from McClellan's army of the Peninsula and the new Regts. just coming in and the old hills of Virginia as I write are in one great blaze of light arising from the Camp fires of the Brigades encamped in all directions. Train after train passes us loaded with troops enroute for the great conflict which must inevitably take place in a short time. Those Regts. which have been in the service look miserable enough, numbers reduced to nearly one half, with nothing but what they have on their backs, no tents or blankets to protect them at night and many times not anything to eat, and yet in spite of all their hardships, the men are in excellent health and spirits and wouldn't go home under any consideration. The 96th Col. Cake is encamped about a mile below us on the road to Alexandria, lying out in the open fields without tents or baggage of any kind and I can assure you they look rough enough. I have been down to see them and met all my friends who were glad enough to greet friends from Pottsville. Their officers have been up to see us and while I am writing Dock Bland is sitting aside me. The 96th boys are full of descriptions of brilliant exploits in which they took part or saw performed by others, and we of course lend a willing and open ear to everything they have to say. They are under marching orders and may, like us, move at anytime. It is the general opinion among those here who ought to know of the movements of our forces, that our army must succeed in the next battle although we will be outnumbered by the enemy -at any rate our whole force is now being concentrated as a matter of necessity and a hard blow will be struck this week if the Rebels do not withdraw.

As it is getting late and a large party in the Marquee it is difficult to write anything. Patterson is reading the Miners Journal to Dock Bland, Capt. Royer 96th and Adjutant Green and myself and under the circumstances I am unable to write anything. I

heard with the deepest regret this evening of the death of Mrs. Nice and I only regret that I did not see her before I left. I also saw the account of the drowning of Lieut. Gressang and could hardly believe it possible.

Write to me and direct your letters to 129th Regt. Penna Vols, Alexandria, Va. Do not send any money by mail or otherwise until I write again. I am well and in good spirits and we are enjoying the finest weather, a little warm through the day but cool and pleasant through the night. I sent part of my clothes to Alexandria and we expect to be able to carry one trunk for our company officers, if not will carry as much as we can. With much love to all at home I am your Affec Son

Will

As I finished this I understand that Mr. Rice, Chaplain of our Regiment intends visiting Pottsville and if he does I hope you will get to see him for I shall give a letter of introduction to you. You will find him a pleasant man.

Write soon

Will

You might send me thirty dolls. by the chaplain.

Camp of the 129th Regt. P.V.

Sept 3rd 1862

Dear Father,

I have just passed through one of the most eventful weeks of my life and have undergone all the hardships of a soldier and have witnessed all the horrors incident to war. And even now while I write am unable to say who we belong to or in whose hands we now are. Our Army again, (when will future ever turn the scale in our favor?) has been made to recoil, yes retreat, from the enemy and is now one mingled mass of men huddled together within the space of a few miles of country unable to say what they can expect although we feel safe in the position which we now occupy. That our army has again been found unable to cope with the enemy, is an undoubted fact – whether caused by superior numbers pitted against it or by want of confidence on the part of itself it matters not – yet, as I said, we have lost our prey and the anaconda has folded itself without encircling it. And nothing remains for us now, (if we are allowed to do so), but again to build up an army and start afresh, but judging from that which has already occurred we almost doubt an entire success in the end, although I for my part believe we must eventually succeed; yet for the present; we are acting, without doubt, on the defensive instead of, as formerly on the offensive. It seems to be one of the greatest mysteries why, after the lessons which the government has already learned, that everything should turn against us as it does; why, when a concentration of forces is attempted that it is not accomplished or carried out and that large bodies of troops should from one cause or another be compelled to remain inactive or not allowed to participate when their assistance would in all probability turn the tide in our favor and that we might for once cry victory. That while thousands of good men fight and many fall those who should come to their assistance and finish the work already commenced, are withheld, is a matter I am certainly unable to understand. When they tell us the cause of our defeat was the want of men, we must blame the government for with it lies the power to fill the fragments of Regiments who still cling to the name of a Regiment. For you will hardly believe when I tell you a Reg't which numbers three or four hundred men is accounted large – although they may have brought eight or nine hundred into the field - and now

after these battles which we have just had, their numbers have been considerable diminished and the government should without the least delay, proceed to use just such means as it may choose, no matter how it may suit some, to create such an army as may ride over the enemy and bring the country at last to peace. But here I have been encroaching upon your patience for I think you are more anxious to hear of facts and what I have been doing than what may be my ideas of the movements of our army.

On last Friday night I was awakened out of a sound sleep, having gone to bed very much fatigued, and told to prepare to march by three o'clock in the morning as companies A & K had been ordered to Bull Run Bridge to protect the workmen who were going up to rebuild it. Before three o'clock we were aboard the train and by daylight were at our destination, where we found the destruction occasioned by a collision of two trains on the road as well the ruins of the bridge which had been only a day or so previous by the Rebels. The ground we occupied was also the battleground of the Wednesday before when the 12th Pa. Cavalry as well as two or three other Regts. were so badly beaten and routed. The country is a wild, dreary and almost a desolate region all along the line of our route and where we were stationed was in a deep gorge or hollow surrounded on all sides by mountains and just such a place where we would be unable to protect ourselves in case of an attack. The workmen immediately went to work at the Bridge and clearing up the ruins. The cars which were smashed up had in the mean time been set on fire by the Rebels and completely destroyed. We had no tents with us of course but selected a piece of ground a short distance up one of the hills as a camping ground. Our boys as soon as they could commenced scouting the country in every direction irregardless of all danger, never thinking that the Rebels were very close to us and might easily capture them and in a short time became well acquainted with the neighborhood and principal localities, at the same time finding out the best places for foraging (per orders of Gen. Pope). I took a squad out and visited the vacated rebel fortifications and their old winter quarters which presented a sad appearance. Every where in that section of country the rebel fortifications cover every hill, showing that it would certainly have been a difficult matter to have beaten them while in their possession. As we did not take enough rations to last more than a day, when we should have taken enough for three, the boys commenced foraging and our company soon had two fine hogs slaughtered and cooked together with any

quantity of potatoes and corn as far as regards grub, we fared well enough. On the battleground and in the woods adjoining we found eight or ten dead bodies of federal soldiers which we buried. We found any quantity of guns, carbines, swords and accoutrements of all kinds which had been thrown away by our troops during the skeddaddle, and arm loads were brought into camp as relics. The first night we were there I was officer of Picket and went out a mile or so into the country. During the night it rained but not very hard but it was anything but comfortable nevertheless, just imagine the subscriber out in the woods with nothing but a gum blanket to cover him, with the ground for a bed and a soft stone for a pillow, not allowed to sleep and you may believe in the morning he felt pretty tired. We passed the night without much excitement, except the discovery of three men in the brush, belonging to one of our regiments, who delivered themselves up to our guard thinking we were rebels and if discovered they would be shot. The next day Sunday, it rained hard all day and we took possession of an old barn for shelter, close to which was a two story house which was used as a hospital for such stragglers who came along slightly wounded who came themselves or who had such assistance as to enable them to get there. During the day we sent nearly a hundred to Alexandria on the cars, many of whom had as yet no attendance to their wants. On Sunday evening the bridge builders, became frightened, hurried up their work, got aboard the train and were soon off for home, leaving a few men to lay the rails next morning. The next day three or four men came from Alexandria and told me if I would go with them they would show where two men lived who had been acting as spys and conveying intelligence to the enemy and who should be arrested. I soon got thirty of our boys together and went about four miles into the country found them at home and immediately placed them in charge of a guard and then searched the house and found a few suits of rebel clothing, caps, cartridges and a few other things of small account. After eating a lot of peaches the old lady of the house had just pared we started for home. Upon arriving there we found the place deserted, the workmen and the two companies had gone away but where they were we did not know but pretty soon came to the conclusion that they had not gone without orders or compelled to do so. Upon arriving at the barn, we found our 2nd Lieut who had remained to tell us to get out of the way as soon 1 could as a large body of rebels were moving on to the bride. We gathered up what traps were left and

under a scorching sun started for Fairfax station seven miles below. The station was a general hospital for the wounded during the battles then taking place. No one could describe the scenes at that station or no one could imagine what occurred except as an eye-witness. Here were all the different arms of the service in one confused mass - Cavalry, artillery with the teams of horses, long lines of infantry, provision trains and ambulances bringing in the wounded without an end. There was a complete chain formed by the ambulances reaching from the station to the different battle grounds and the wounded were brought in, not by hundreds, but by thousands and the operations there performed were horrible to witness yet of the many poor soldiers there suffering I never heard one utter a word of complaint or groan from pain. There were about a dozen surgeons in attendance and they worked faithfully and there was not a limb amputated except upon consultation and I only wish that all our wounded could receive the same attention. As soon as the wounds were dressed they were sent on to Washington or Alexandria. While we were at the station ten or twelve died who were buried on hill just back of the house wrapped only in a blanket and one common grave, without even a stone to mark the place. A short funeral service and a volley by a corporal's guard, completed the burial and thus many a poor boy, far from home perhaps a good one is consigned to grave which in short time can not be distinguished as such. At the station was an immense amount of stores which for fear of their falling into the hands of the rebels had been made ready to burn at the first approach of the enemy; however a greater part of the were shipped to a safe place the next day. On Monday evening it rained in torrents and here we were with nothing to protect us and all we had to do was to grin and bear it, and again it was my luck to be detailed on picket, so off I started with the guard up the R R to post them. The mud was ankle deep and still raining very heavily. It was a long and dreary night, being unable to lie or sit down where we were I became very tired. Sometime after midnight I found two fence rails and laying them about a foot apart I lie upon them and covered myself with my gum blanket with my head well under and was quite snug for a while listening to rain upon the roof -but I did remain long in that position before the rails parted gradually and whilst enjoying a good sleep was let down into a pool of water and that wasn't quite so nice, so I vacated my premises - shortly after it cleared up and became very cold. Our clothes being wet we felt it the more and were

glad when daylight came to be relieved. Our two companies remained at the station until about two o'clock when we found all leaving as well as the officer who had ordered us there. We concluded we had better be going as well, although not until all the organized bodies of troops had left and we skedaddled down the R R en route for our Regt. We had a pleasant afternoon not warm rather cool and after a walk of twenty miles we arrived at our old campground but found the Regt. had moved to where we are now near Fairfax Seminary and nearer Washington. We remained on the old ground all night and came here this morning. Many of our boys had sore feet and felt tired this morning but I had neither and could have gone over the same ground today. The 48th Regt is encamped about a mile from here and I was there and saw the most of my friends but John had gone to town and after waiting three or four hours for him did not get to see him although some of our Regt. who knew him saw him and say he looks very well indeed. He intended coming to our camp this afternoon but I suppose was unable, something preventing and will be here tomorrow no doubt. The 48th did well and lost considerable. Their loss in killed, wounded and missing is one hundred and fifty two which is certainly not so when the time they were in the fight is taken into consideration. While we were at Bull Run Bridge our Regt. marched to Centreville and back as guard to ammunition trains but did not get in the engagement.

This evening our Brigade was out, drilled and reviewed by Gen'l Tyler at the conclusion of which he made a short speech in which he said he expected much of us and if a chance is offered he will push us forward.

I received your letter through Mr. Rice as also the money which it contained. I did not examine the statement of account but will do so when I have more leisure. I am writing this at night and it is very late and as I have had no rest of any account for the last four or five days I feel pretty tired. Will Patterson sends his love to Tillie and all at home and is well and hearty. I myself am well in fact have not been sick since I left home.

I am glad to hear that Dick is deserving of a silver collar and tell the boys to take good care of him. How I would like to see Tim, Frank and Jim, as well as all of you. Tell the boys I often think of them and to be good boys. Remember me to all my friends; don't forget Eliza. Give my love to Mother Tillie and cousins Lou and Moll. With the wish that you will write soon ... Will

Camp Wade Near Alexandria

Sept 8th 1862

Dear Sister,

Enclosed you will find two card photographs of your humble servant. They are not good, being taken in a hurry and they are about the best I could get. You can select such one as you wish to keep and may give the other to Mrs. Jas. Patterson with my kindest regards. We are again under marching orders, three days rations in haversack, and no tents or baggage. It is now nine o'clock p.m. and we will in all probability move about midnight but where or in what direction am unable to say. I saw John yesterday, he was in our camp, he looks very well and is quite fat although he says he is not as fat as he was. He was with the 48th during the engagements and was in the Rebel lines under a flag of truce. They have moved their camp to within a half a mile of us and are, as I understood this evening, also under marching orders, but like we, do not know their destination. Excuse brevity and I will write again the first opportunity. With much love to Mother and all

I am your Affec. Bro.

Will

Camp Clayton near Washington D.C.

Sept. 1862

Dear Father,

I almost despair ever receiving a letter from home and unless a more prompt correspondence is kept up by some of you I shall neglect writing very soon. As you can see we have again changed our camp. We came here on Sunday, having left our old place about six o'clock in the morning and after we marched about fourteen miles we landed here only about seven miles from our last camping ground, we having mistaken the road and were compelled to retrace our steps. It was one of the hottest days we have had and the dust was almost enough to suffocate one -whilst many of the boys were stretched out along the road unable to go any further. We are now encamped in a most delightful location, being situated in a large peach orchard, with the Potomac and Washington City directly in our front. We are about 3 miles from the Capitol and it stands in full view and appears as though it were but a mile distant. How long we shall remain here it would be impossible to say, but probably we may remain here for some time as a defense to the Capitol. We are surrounded by Rifle Pits and we have been assigned our positions in order to be ready in case of an attack, which is considered not an improbability as under existing circumstances, no one knows what more may be attempted by the enemy. Our whole Brigade is stationed here and we have Brigade drills and reviews every day. All are in Tyler's Brigade, Sturgis' Division and Fitz John Porter's Army Corps. This afternoon we had a review, Gen'l Sturgis & staff being present. At dress parade this evening Secretary Seward was present and expressed himself (as usual) highly gratified etc. etc. I suppose the feeling in Penna. is being aroused by this time and the people are beginning to realize that we are really in the midst of war. It was high time that something was done to waken up the dormant population of the North and bring them to believe that there is danger, but I am afraid it will require a few raids upon their own homes by the Rebels and when they begin to see the destruction of what is most dear to them, their property, they will find how derelict they have been in their duties towards sustaining the government. What is the feeling at home? and what are the people doing? It is hardly worthwhile asking as I can hardly expect a letter from any of you for I have only received two since I have been away. Mr. Saul Morris of Pottsville was here this

afternoon and I had expected to send this by him but he went before I was finished. I gave him my watch to hand to you, I broke the crystal and I thought it would be best to send it home, See you get it from him and take good care of it, not letting the boys have it for if you do that will be the last of it. I sent my commission by mail. Did you receive it? As also the photographs? I wish Mother would have two undershirts and two pair of drawers made for me, out of some kind of dark gray woolen goods. Tell her not to make them too large but as near a fit as possible allowing for shrinkage. Send them to me the best way you can. Either in a box for others, by express, or by mail. If you can not find anyone else who is sending something, I think the best plan would be by express to Washington. I must have them and will run the risk of getting them. How are all the Boys, tell them I often think of them as well as all of you. I saw John only once his Regt having been moved away but can not find out where it has gone. The weather has been very fine but hot and we have thus far been fortunate in that respect. This evening as I write there are indications of rain and I hope it will. Well I had intended only to write a few lines and I have almost written a letter. Give my love to Mother and Tillie and kiss all the little boys for me. How are Frank & Jim? Do they go to school? If so tell them I want them to write me a letter and I will answer it. Remember me to Eliza & Clem and all the neighbors and I want all of you to write soon. Direct 129th Regt. Pa. Vols., Washington D.C. and

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Frederick City, Md.

Sept. 17th 1862

Dear Father,

After a very hard march of three and a half days we have, that is our Brigade arrived within two miles of this city where we are now encamped but I suppose only for the night. We left Virginia on Friday night, crossed the Potomac at night passing through Georgetown & Washington and encamped just outside of Washington until 3 o'clock Sunday morning when we started for this place. When we left Va. I was very unwell, but when we left Washington I walked although hardly fit to do so. We marched Sunday Monday & today and you can believe we are well used up. Lying in the open fields at night and starting at four o'clock in the morning with our rations on our backs and no change of clothing. The clothes I have on have been there two weeks and it is pretty near time to change but alas we have no change with us. I came to town in the ambulance to make a few purchases but the stores are well cleaned out and the store keepers have their stock of goods all in the pockets in the shape of Confederate notes of all amounts as the Rebels bought very freely with their scrip. This town is certainly Union, flags displayed everywhere and we have good news from the fighting now going on but nothing definite. I am much better now than I have been but not quite well. Cannot write more for want of time.

Love to all

Will

On the Banks of the Potomac

Sunday Morning

Sept 21st 1862

Dear Father,

Having a very few minutes to write I embrace the opportunity although I write under very great difficulties as our conveniences for writing are slim enough, for anyone who has seen an army on the march knows what little pleasure man or officer has. Well we arrived here opposite the village of Sheppardville about seven miles above Harpers Ferry with the Rebels in sight on the Virginia shore. We have been on their track for over a week but have not at anytime as yet been brought into action, except the batteries in our division who have been shelling the woods wherever we thought the Rebels might be. We have had a very long and tedious march going night and day and at times with nothing to eat for twenty four hours and our men in many instances were compelled to fallout of the ranks and find us again the best way we could. We were only twenty four hours behind those engaged in all the late battles and came up to the battle fields just after the engagements. The sights we have witnessed were horrible in the extreme especially that witnessed in the fields near Sharpsburg. We lie a few hours there, which gave us an opportunity to go well over the ground. There was a large cornfield on the outside of which was a narrow road in which the enemy had planted their batteries beyond which was a rolling and hilly open field over which our forces had crossed to attack them. It was the place where Meagher's Brigade made such a desperate charge though at a most severe loss to themselves yet they drove the enemy. The carnage was fearful for when we arrived there we found not less than four or five hundred dead Rebels lying everywhere. The road of which I spoke being literally laid full of them while some four thousand muskets belonging to the enemy were gathered on a pile. It was a complete victory for us at this point. In passing through the village of Sharpsburg there is not a house, which does not bear marks of the late engagement, some being completely riddled. I was told many of the Rebel soldiers were killed in the town while foraging from the citizens. Our wounded as well as those of the enemy fill every village and house for miles around the late fights and no one can imagine what things look like unless actually an eyewitness. So far we have had fine weather although it is very warm - but when we crossed the South

Mountain which was at night it rained and was very cold and that together with our being very tired was the most disagreeable part of our march. We came into Boonesville which was filled with wounded of both parties about daylight. There were a great number of Rebel prisoners at this place and many with whom I conversed said they were well satisfied with their change and were tired of the Southern Confederacy whilst all the officers and those occupying positions say they never will give up, but will fight as long as there is a man left - and I believe that just so long as their leaders can make any signs of resistance they will do so - and nothing can be effected until there is an extermination of them and that is next to an impossibility. Yesterday the 118th Pa. Regt. raised in Phila. and called the Corn Exchange Regt. crossed the river at this place along with two other Regts. when the enemy attacked them driving them back, an order being given to retreat which was heard and done promptly by the two Regts. but it seems the 118th did not understand the order until too late and before they crossed and while they were crossing they were completely cut to pieces many being killed or wounded and afterwards drowned in the water. We came there just afterward and when their company rolls were called they could not get more than three hundred men together out of over a thousand. It was a regular Bale's Bluff affair. Mr. Maingay who is a Sergeant in that Regt. escaped and I understood he shot a Rebel color bearer from the middle of the river. When our batteries arrived we shelled the woods but with what effect of course we do not know. There were plenty of other batteries however on the ground before we arrived. When we shall make an attempt to cross I can not tell but we must at sometime or other very soon. We are devoid of news here and know nothing of the movements of the other parts of the army only what we hear from stragglers which amounts to nothing. A harder rougher and dirtier looking set of men than the rebels I never saw. They look exactly like a man made of brick clay. Their clothes all of that dirty yellow whilst their complexion and even their hair seem to be the same. Their clothes are miserable whilst I did not see many bare footed yet they all had very poor shoes. You can not distinguish an officer even a Colonel, from the men except by a double row of buttons. Four or five of whom we found dead on our march. We have a great many prisoners I should judge from all accounts. We can get nothing to eat here for love or money except fat pork and crackers and we were without a good supply of them until this morning. We are lying out in the

open fields with nothing but the broad canopy of heaven to cover us. My clothes I have had on now nearly three weeks without change and I had got washed my hands and face for four days until this morning. I heard from John through an officer of his regiment since they were in the fight and he is well and safe. It must be a sad loss to the Martin's to lose their son the Major. His Mother having gone as far as Pooleville to see him and then had to return without. I understand from Will Patterson that you complain of my not writing. I have written two or three letters a week home ever since I left and can not understand why you did not receive them. Did you receive my commission and the photographs? Write to me oftener as I have only rec'd but two notes from home since I left and you or someone must write oftener. Direct to Washington, D.C. Give my love to Mother and all and

I am your Affec son

Will

I am well.

Camp "Tower"

September 25th 1862

Dear Father,

We are still in the same place as when I wrote you last, on the banks of the Potomac opposite "Sheppardstown", Va. There has been nothing of interest transpired since I wrote you on Sunday and no moves of our forces that I know of as yet. We are living a semi-barbarous life, having no comforts whatever and half of the time without the necessary amount of provisions. There has any amount of complaint on the part of the men on account of the scarcity of rations and it was not without cause for our Regt. has been without doubt treated shamefully in every instance by the officers of the Brigade by not giving us the proper amount of transportation or furnishing us anything to which we are entitled, whilst even while I write they are endeavoring to take away one of our two ambulances to complete the complement of another Regt. in the Brigade who lack one whilst we have no medicine or anything to which we are entitled. Col. Frick is becoming disgusted with our treatment and if such thing is possible I do not think we will remain long where we are, but be transferred to some other Brigade. We have had and are still having most excellent weather but I tell you it is very cold through the night and particularly towards morning and as we have nothing but a "fly" to protect us from the dew - we feel it the more. It is impossible to say how long we will remain here as we may move at any moment -being kept continually in suspense. We have had no mail for nearly three weeks and the anxiety, on the part of all, is intense, to hear from home. It seems as though we are completely isolated from the rest of the Army for we can get nothing to eat, except occasionally there is a (sutler) comes in camp when we can purchase a few cakes or a piece of cheese at almost fabulous prices. Their stock consisting chiefly of sugars, tobacco and canned fruits, which is not the thing when one is hungry. There have been a great many persons here visiting us from Minersville & Ash- land who are with the militia at Hagerstown and Greencastle all anxious to visit the battle grounds in this vicinity and to take home some trophy or other as a memento. I had expected that some of the Pottsville boys would have been here but as yet none of them have. The 126th Regt. of this Brigade are from the border counties of Penna. and on Sunday and Monday there was any number of wagon loads of good things brought to them by their friends and

they lived fine for a few days. The 48th Regt. lies about four miles from here farther down the river, some of our Regt. have been to see them and I had intended to go today but was prevented by being appointed officer of the guard and will not be relieved until tomorrow. If an opportunity is offered I shall go to see them. The enemy is still on the opposite side of the river but whether in force or not, am not able to say. Their Rickets can be seen occasionally whilst a man belonging to another Regt. who was on the river bank, day before yesterday was shot through the foot by one. How are all the boys? I am very anxious to hear how you all are. Tell the boys I often think of them and would like to see them very much. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all and remember me kindly to all my friends. Write soon directing to Washington, D.C. and I will rec'd your letters some time I expect

I am your Affect Son

Will

Did you ever have the shirts etc. made of which I wrote sometime since?

Soldier's letter

Col. I.G. Frick

129th Regt. P.V.

Minersville Px. Sep 29

Mr. Charles W. Clemens

Pottsville

Schuylkill County

Penna.

Camp Tower near Sharpsburg Md.

October 3rd 1862

Dear Father,

I was agreeably surprised this afternoon upon receiving a letter from you as well as one for John which were handed to me by Mrs. Russel who with her husband and Mr. & Mrs. Taylor paid a visit to our camp. I also rec'd the shirts etc. and I can assure you they come in season for I was about played out in clothing. The shirts are not exactly what I wrote for, but being situated as we now are they are what I wanted badly. I shall need soon, in fact when I write for them, undershirts and drawers made of some kind of woolen goods, the shirts which you sent me being outside shirts. I have with me a single blanket, gum blanket and an overcoat and have been pretty comfortable thus far. We had very warm weather all last week, but last evening it rained for a while and blew a perfect hurricane through the night and was very cool this morning, still continues so while I am writing. I think we shall have from this on cool weather and we will soon have to get some other kind of shelter from that which we now have. We are situated in a rather unhealthy location I think being just off the banks of the Potomac for in the morning the fog or mist is so thick that we can hardly see through it until about eight o'clock. We have a good many sick out of the Regt. but how many I can not tell, but some whereas over a hundred. They are not all here many having been left behind in the different hospitals on the road, some of whom no doubt have recovered and will join the Regt. as soon as they can get here. In our company alone there are fifteen not with us - and a few in the hospital here. There would not be one half the sickness if the men could have the proper attention, we have no medicine, but two or three articles, not having rec'd our medicine wagon which contains a full assortment of everything. There are a few who are dangerously ill but the rest are only slightly indisposed; suffering from the effects of a change of water and diet - but who may if they do not receive the proper remedies become worse. There have been four or five deaths out of the Regt. having occurred back in the hospitals but none have yet occurred in camp. We have at present plenty to eat, the men being well supplied with rations and the sutlers have been plenty for the last week or more, but the figure's asked for different things are large. We brought a colored boy with us from

Minersville to do our cooking, but as he was worth nothing we shipped him home again and have not yet got another to suit USJ consequently we have been compelled to cook our own mess which is not altogether the most pleasant thing, but I think we will be able to get another boy soon. My health has been excellent since I have been here and am well satisfied. I was astonished to find that John Curry had written home that I was not, for I never even intimated anything of the kind to him. John has been to see me he came in company with the Chaplain on horseback. He looks exceedingly well, being quite fat and looks rough from being exposed to the weather and he says he lives well having plenty to eat and his clothes with him. He is well situated where he now is and you may be easy that he is taking care of no one. I should have gone over to see him but could not obtain leave of absence from the Col. although there were others who did. I shall send your letter to him the first opportunity I get, maybe I shall go myself.

We had a grand review of our division by the President, Gen'ls McClellan, Porter and others; it was a very tiresome affair we being compelled to stand about three hours in the hot sun waiting for them. All the troops around were reviewed by them and the hills and fields were covered with soldiers in all directions who had turned out to receive the distinguished visitors. We know nothing of the whereabouts of the enemy, in fact we know nothing of the movements of our own troops. We can see the Rebel pickets on the banks of the river opposite, but as all firing by pickets has been by mutual agreement been stopped we have no fear of being molested when washing at the river. This afternoon while the Russels were here a large party of rebels passed the camp on their way across the river under a flag of truce carried by a cavalry officer ahead of the party. They were convalescent sick and wounded being sent home. As fast as the Rebel wounded are able to be moved they are sent across the river. There is a balloon close to our camp in which (I think it is) Prof Lowe makes four or five ascensions daily but we can gain no information as to what he sees. All our trunks and the men's knapsacks were sent to Washington placed under the charge of Capt. Hartz who had them stored for us and I think they are safe enough but that is not the thing as we should have them with us and certainly one trunk should be allowed to three officers. Our Quarter Master has I understand today made a requisition for them but whether he will be able to get them or not I can not say, as there has been some trouble concerning them at head quarters of

Brigade however we are trying to get them and can only hope we will succeed. I shall close this as it is getting late and I feel cool writing as you may say in the open air. It is a glorious night being almost like day as the moon is nearly full and shining without a cloud in the sky. Write often and with much love to Mother Tillie and all the boys, remembering me to all my friends.

I remain your Affec Son.

Will

Tell Mrs. Patterson I am often with Lt. John Scholl and he is well. We have had no mail since last Sunday which was the first we rec'd since we left Washington when I rec'd one letter from you dated Sept 12th I suppose the other is still on the road.

Near White Plains Va.

October 7th 1862

Dear Father,

We are now certainly in winter for whilst I am writing it is snowing quite hard and the weather is extremely cold. We left Snicker's Gap Wednesday morning marching due south encamping about fifteen miles distant. Yesterday morning we again took up our march stopping in Middleburg about 3 hours waiting for the train, to which our Regt for that day was to act as guard. We are encamped in a thick woods but not thick enough to keep out the cold for whilst I write I am compelled every few moments to blow my hands to keep them warm and if this weather should continue I do not see how the men will stand it. We have large fires built around which we stand melting on one side and freezing on the other. Provisions are plenty, our rations being given to us regularly and free license being given to forage all we can, sheep, pigs, calves chickens, turkeys and everything good must suffer in consequence. Whilst on this last two days march we captured about thirty (30) fine horses - just going into the stable or taking them out of the fields notwithstanding the protestations of their owners. I can not see why this was not done before for I think everything which can be of use to the Gov't should be taken. I can not say what is our destination nor when we will leave here perhaps this afternoon. Part of Franklins Corps in which is the 96th Regt. lies about a half a mile from us, some of the 96th have been to see us. It seems as though our whole army is marching towards Manassas & Bull Run which in all probability will be the scene of a third engagement in which I hope we may be successful. I shall have to close as my fingers are too cold to write. It is snowing harder and harder and everything is clothed in white. With much love to all

I am your affec. son

Will

I am well and enjoying good health

Camp near Warrington Va.

October 11th 1862

Dear Father,

When I last wrote to you it was during a very heavy snow storm and it was anything but pleasant to be encamped during such weather whilst now it is delightful being very pleasant during the day but cold mornings & evenings. We left our camp near White Plains on Friday and arrived at our present location on Sunday. We are delightfully situated in the woods close to the turnpike with water and wood convenient. Our regiment as well as our whole division is in splendid condition, having few sick owing no doubt to the weather being much cooler as men are less liable to disease than when it is so warm and roads so dusty when on the march. We are plentifully supplied with rations but the variety is nothing to brag of for they are confined to fat port & crackers with coffee and sugar - and when in camp as we now are it is cook, cook- all day and the fires are never left to burn idly for there is always some one who feels like having another cup of coffee - although it may be perhaps the sixth quart that day. We are still in ignorance as to our destination nor can we even surmise as to where we may go next ~s we are in total darkness here as far as our knowledge is concerned in regard to the movements of the troops or as to the whereabouts of the enemy. I have often wished I was home merely to get hold of the newspapers that I might know something of what is going on in the army for we here when we do get a paper it is generally a couple of days old and then the information seems of no acct. From what we can learn here, the enemy has been retreating towards Richmond and instead of having to fight on the ground over which we have marched we will be compelled to push further on and fight them well entrenched at or near Richmond. However I can not say where the Rebs are, but we do know they were here but are, not now. There are thousands and thousands of troops in and around this immediate vicinity and it seems as though we ought to be able to march over anything.

Yesterday all the troops were turned out for review in front of their respective camps along the road as McClellan passed he having been removed from command. It was a most beautiful morning and after we had been standing in line for over an hour the booming of cannon beyond Warrington gave warning of his approach and as he passed each command the batteries belched forth their salute. He was accompanied by a large

force of cavalry - he rode ahead with his hat in his Land, whilst behind him came officers on horseback. Majors & Brig. Gen'ls with all their staffs and retinues whilst the cavalry brought up the rear. It was a grand sight and I wished over and over again you were here to see it. Most of our noted Gen'ls were with him. Burnside, who now has command of the army of the Potomac, Siegel, Porter, Sumner, Sykes, with any number of Division and Brigade Commanders. It was a sorrowful sight if I may say so, to see McClellan leave us although there some who may be pleased with it, for my part I should a thousand times rather have had him still in command. Amongst the old Regts. who were with him on the Pennisula, you can not find a man who does not praise him and if anyone was to go amongst them and talk against him I'll warrant you he would not come away with a whole skin. Well he has been taken away and it only remains to be seen whether Burnside will accomplish more than he.

I rec'd your letter in which you mentioned sending my boots (just after I had written to you from White Plains) as well as the shirts and stockings, but the boots have not yet come to hand, I suppose they will next mail we receive. Write often and I shall do so whenever an opportunity offers. I never was in better health than I am now, having gained about fifteen pounds since I came in the service.

Give my love to all at home and I am your affec. son.

Will

Camp near Warrenton Va.

October 13th 1862

Dear Father,

I rec'd the boots, and as you said you expected they were too small. I could get them on my feet easily enough but were too tight to wear with comfort. I have sold them (payable next pay) and wish you would have another pair made for me. They should have been made much larger than the measure I desired. Have them made broader and a little longer in fact they should be made larger in every way. The money will be forthcoming as soon as we receive our pay. I have just come from Warrenton having ridden there on horseback and was much pleased with the place. The stores are all closed with the exception of here and there. One is occupied by a sutler who asks enormously for everything. Warrenton has been heretofore the southern Saratoga and contains many fine buildings, churches and hotels, at present however the town seems deserted by its original inhabitants and is crowded to overflowing with officers and troops from all the Regts. whilst the ever going army wagons block up the streets and everything seems to partake of military. Between here and Warrenton there are thousands upon thousands on both sides of the road as far as the eye can see and it was indeed a beautiful sight whilst passing along to see nearly every Regt. turned out for drill. When in the town I saw the wagons belonging to the 48th and young "Owens" who lived in Mahantarge St. who said they were encamped about 4 miles beyond the town and that John was well. He said the Regt. was rather short of provisions, but that must necessarily be the case when so large an army is concentrated as this now is so small an area of the country. When I wrote you last I mentioned our division was turned out to bid farewell to McClellan. Yesterday we were again out to pay our respects to Gen'l Porter who has been relieved of the Command of our Corps, Hooker or fighting Joe as they call him, having been placed in command. There is no use talking about helping matters or facilitating the movements of our army by removing McClellan as it is the impression here it will not and there is no use denying the fact that his removal has created in dissatisfaction amongst the officers and men in the old Regts. for I have not met one who since the occurrence does not wish he was out of the service. And who are the best judge of his fitness for the position than those very men who ha already risked their lives and are willing to risk them again under him? Burnside

may accomplish great ends, perhaps wonders, but then the men have unlimited confidence in McClellan whilst under Burnside that confidence must be won and there is the deepest regret, notwithstanding newspaper reports, in the old Regts. that their old commander was removed. This morning there were some of the soldiers, who served since the breaking out of the war, in our camp and they said that the proclamation of the President in regard the emancipation of slaves after the first of January next was a thing altogether unlooked for and had they known such proclamation would have been issued would never have enter the service, one even remarking that after the first of Jan he intended to go home as he would under no circumstances fight for the niggers. If, as a resident of Middleburg and a Secessionist, told me, if they would hang four or five of the ringleaders in the North and the same number in the South there would very soon be an end to all this unnecessary bloodshed - and things could be restored to their old condition but so long as this everlasting party feelings, in fact hatred, towards their peculiar institution was kept up just so long this fighting would continue and we might never look forward to an end.

This afternoon is a fine one and we now are enjoying the most delightful weather, warm through the day and cool mornings and evenings. This is I believe what we call Indian Summer at home. I had not intended to write so much but one thing brings on another. Don't forget my boots and you might put a couple of common handkerchiefs in with them as my clothes are still at Washington and there is no probability of our ever getting them until we get out of the service. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys who I suppose are all well. Tell the boys I think of them very often and wish I could see them. Remember me to Eliza and all my friends Write oftener and I am your Affec.
Son

Will

Camp Tower near Sharpsburg Md.

October 14th 1862

Dear Father,

With a most miserable pen to write with and I myself in about as good humour for writing, I shall attempt a letter although I am afraid it will not amount to much. I am sitting in my tent just after supper and the boys are outside smoking & talking at such furious rate that it almost impossible to collect ones ideas for I cannot but help stopping and listening to what they say. I said it is just after supper – I suppose you naturally wonder what we had for supper? Well of course we had coffee which is a standard dish, bread, butter, (good strong) molasses and crackers alias hard tack, fried in fat, after being soaked in water, so you see we did not fare so badly this evening. However we are living much better now than when we first came here as our facilities for getting things are much better and we have began to believe that we are almost permanently fixed although we do not know what minute we may move. Things move on regularly and smoothly in camp and our time is pretty well taken up with company and regimental drills, camp and individual duties in fact so much there is hardly any time left to us for our own use. Our Col. is strict in every particular and requires that everyone, officer and private shall perform his duty and makes no hesitation about telling an officer publicly of his faults or punishing a private before the whole regiment, yet as far I can judge he is well liked by all and is what could be called a good officer. We had another spell of cold weather with a little rain but today it was much warmer while tonight there is a fair prospect of having a comfortable nights rest which we do not have when it is colder. The Col. has sent a Lieut. from our Regt. to Washington to have all our baggage and men's knapsacks forwarded to us which when rec'd will add not a little to our personal comfort; one Lieut. went a couple of weeks ago on the same errand but came back to camp without them, how this one will succeed we do not know, but there is one thing certain the men should have their blankets and overcoats as it is very cold and damp through the night.

On last Saturday night we were awakened about ten o'clock to fall in line after which we were told get our haver sacks and canteens filled for a move immediately. About eleven o'clock the 91st and our Regt were enroute for Sharpsburg. We passed through the town and went out the Hagerstown road about three miles where we were

sent across the country as pickets. Our company was stationed on the Antietam Creek or rather about an eighth of a mile from the banks. We were in the open fields on rough ploughed ground just on the edge of a woods bordering the Antietam and the place where the hardest contested battle of the 17th was fought where Turner's Corps crossed and where Hooker was wounded and where every thing bore strong evidence of the bloody conflict which occurred here. It was midnight when we arrived on the ground and were told we were to prevent the crossing of Rebel Cavalry which was supposed would or might attempt a passage at this ford. The night was terribly cold and damp and not being of course allowed any fire it was a long a tedious night, however daylight came as usual and Sunday was spent watching the creek for an enemy who was already safe in his own country. We were relieved at nine o'clock Sunday night by another Regt and as soon as all our pickets were in we started back for Camp. As we started it commenced raining and the night was as dark as one could wish it and you can judge for yourself what a pleasant walk we had. It had rained just sufficiently to make the walking very slippery and it was almost impossible at times to get along. We arrived at Camp after ten and after satisfying a ravenous appetite we were soon wrapped in our blankets snug and free from the rain which at this time came down in torrents. On Sunday I had a good opportunity of rambling over this part of the battle ground and the sights still presented are awful as well as curious. Here we find the fence torn down and a well made road, made by the artillery here we find a dead horse, here equipments, then a part of a gun or a wheel belonging to it whilst the fences and trees are perforated with balls or torn to pieces by shell. At one place I found a tree at least three feet in diameter cut clean off near the ground and which in falling had fallen upon an artillery horse, whose body lay fast with the tree across its body. At another place we found where the Rebels had hastily buried their dead with scarcely enough dirt over them to cover them, having thrown in many instances as high as fifty or sixty into one hole - allowing the hands or feet to remain uncovered. Where our men are buried it has been done decently and nearly all, that is those who have been buried alone or in small parties, have head boards, with name and regiment either written or cut in the board. We passed a school house on the road which was completely riddled with balls- in fact you can see in every direction evidence of the fierceness of the battle. I passed a grave with this inscription on the head board. "T. Rush Zinn Co F. 130th Rgt.

P.V. " which I think is a Harrisburg Regt. Ask Miss Priscilla McGuines whether it is a friend of hers from Harrisburg. As I said we were sent out to prevent the Rebel Cavalry from crossing who were then already safe in Virginia - Ain't it mortifying to know that the enemy can go and come just where they please. That they can again invade Penna., carry off what they please and in returning can pass the whole of our army safely and without molestation? I should think it would make the cheeks of our Generals tingle with shame that such a thing could in any possibility occur and no number of victories hereafter attained can alleviate the mortification attendant upon this last most bold and daring move of the enemy. When it is taken into consideration that our commanders were notified by lightning that Stewart's Cavalry were coming from Penna through Maryland and almost the exact ford pointed out to them at which they would attempt a passage to Virginia, how is it possible that they could escape if the proper vigilance was exerted and the proper means used to prevent them? To use a common expression "there is a screw loose somewhere" and I think they might as well send us home as keep us here, for whilst we were almost sleeping they passed our who army, going through our lines, and taking breakfast not five miles from a portion of forces and then proceeding homeward well paid for their trip although it was at the expense of some of the Penna. farmers as well as the Government. I should not wonder but that some of these days they will visit the coal region to obtain a supply of that kind of fuel for some of them are rather fastidious in their tastes and perhaps will get tired of their old fashioned wood fires!!!!

It has caused the greatest mortification throughout the whole army and there is nothing talked of, but the cuteness of this last raid into Penna. in fact officers and men feel as though they were a useless piece of furniture and would perhaps do better somewhere else. But they, the Rebels, have accomplished what they desired and if they wish it could repeat the same thing tomorrow and would succeed just as well. Did you ever receive my watch from Mr. Morris? If not get it from him. Have those under clothes made for me and when an opportunity is offered send them. Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. and Miss Frick were here to see us, but I suppose they are home and you have heard the particulars of their visit, also Mrs. Tower and James McCool. The 48th Regiment has moved a few miles further down the river but I do not know where. I have forwarded your letter to John. He is well I heard from him a few days ago through Capt. Wren. I

also am well and in the best of spirits. It is getting late and I shall have to close. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys. Franky Patterson when here told me he would tell Timmy he has seen me. How are all the boys. Frank and Jimmy I suppose go to school and are right good boys. Tell Jim he must read my letters for I write them to him as well as the rest. Remember me to Eliza and my friends and I am your Affec. Son

Will

You can't write too often. Tell Mr. Strycker I rec'd his letter and was pleased to hear from him. Will answer in a few days.

Will

Camp Tower near Sharpsburg

October 18th 1862

Dear Father,

I write again although I have not heard from home for a long time, the last letter I rec'd from you being the one which was handed me by Mrs. Russell and I am of course anxious to hear how you all are at home. Our mails are still as irregular as at first and I can not understand why better arrangements could not be made for we have been located here long enough to have established a mail route to this place, however we must be satisfied with what few letters we may receive. We have been in close proximity to the enemy, in fact as close as I have any desire and do not wish to get any nearer if the fates would so decree - for we not only were compelled to do all we could to save ourselves from the enemy's shells but were compelled to retrace our steps with the fact staring us in the face that unless we did so the consequences would not be much as we could desire. On Wednesday night about eleven o'clock (of course it must be at night for when has a soldier the day -light to prepare for a march?) we were awakened and politely informed to have two days rations cooked immediately and the men to be ready in line to march by daylight. No one who has not seen a regiment of soldiers awakened out of a sound sleep and told to prepare for a move can judge of the number of imprecations cast upon the commanders or of the many long & doleful faces, but they are compelled to grin and bear it and the only alternative left is to make the best of it and provide such comforts for themselves as they can hastily get together and it was just so in our case. First of all the cooks must boil the port, make a cup of hot coffee - before starting and have the crackers ready to be given out - so there will be no delay when the men are ready with their haversacks. When awakened so early in the night all ideas of sleep afterwards are banished and as a consequence the men poke about until daylight and when we march have not had sufficient rest which has the effect of breaking down many of them before the day has passed. At daylight we were in line each one with his blanket, canteen of water and his haversack containing his crackers and slice of fat pork and each wondering and surmising what direction we would take this time. When ordered to move and with our noses turned towards the Potomac all doubts were set at rest and we concluded to prepare for a cool bath in the river before many minutes would elapse. So just as the sun had

made his appearance we reached the banks of the river - before getting however to the river we had to cross the canal which was about half full of water with over a foot of mud on the bottom. The scenes presented on the banks and in the canal and river were ludicrous as well as amusing and everyone was laughing at the other at his comical appearance -for each was eager to keep his clothes or as much of them as he could as dry as possible and it was certainly amusing to see thousands of soldiers with all the accoutrements and apparel wrapped around the body standing in their bare legs. We passed through the canal which was the worst of all on account of the mud and reached the river which are forded in grand style amidst the greatest noise and laughter. The water most of the way was knee deep or a little over but in some places much deeper. Upon arriving on the Virginia side we readjusted our clothes and were en route for the villages or towns of Shepards town road being one continuous hill as the town is situated on a high bluff. The people of the place were at the doors and in the streets when we passed through and insulted us in many ways the women particularly who held their noses on account of the smell coming from the Northern scum and spit into the street at us – whilst the men turned their backs and went into their houses. But it was just as we had expected for it is and always has been a strong secession place having sent two companies to the Rebel Army. There were a great many houses occupied as hospitals filled with their wounded in the late fights, whilst the streets were filled with straggling Rebel officer and soldiers who has been paroled. Our force consisted of two Brigades of Volunteers, two Battalions of Regulars, about three hundred cavalry and a Battery of Artillery in all about eight thousand men. We passed through the town and out the Bunker Hill road after we had proceeded about two miles out the road we halted and skirmishes were thrown out. Our company being accorded that honor with other companies from the Brigade. I of course had my share for the enemby. Towards noon we were ordered in and joining this position we marched over five miles. Through woods and brush, over stone fences and rail fences, over plough field until we were nearly exhausted. During this time our Artillery had been engaging the enemy, shelling the woods in which we though they were – but we did not draw their fire until about three o'clock when as we were passing through a cornfield the shells flew thick but too high to do any injury. After we had passed through these fields and had ascended a small rise of

ground which overlooked a great extent of country and being at halt a shell came whizzing and burst just before us not fifty yards from us when the Col. gave the order to lie down which order had hardly been given before our company that the pieces came near hitting some of us, one piece flying close by our Capt. And Col. We were then ordered forward into a woods just ahead where we lie concealed with the other Brigade about a hundred yards in front and the regulars in front of them. At this time the cannonading was very heavy, but the enemy's shot passed over us. Shortly afterwards the regulars opened with musketry which was kept up until a half an hour when the firing ceased. We were then ordered forward and found the enemy had retreated. Upon coming up to the Bal. & Ohio R. R. we found they had destroyed the R.R. for a considerable distance and had set fire to the sleepers. We followed them for a couple of miles when night coming on we retraced our steps going back about four miles where we bivouacked for the night in the midst of a heavy rain which continued until most day light. I along with some others managed to creep under a haystack where I enjoyed a good sound sleep, only awakening in the morning in time to fall in with the regiment. With the next day came repetition of the work of the day before, but it was not so hard, as we advanced more cautiously and slowly. In one of the fields we found three dead Rebels and places indicating where others had buried showing that our guns had not spoke without some effect. Towards noon we discovered the enemy be in force off to our right and it was deemed advisable to retrace our steps as quickly as possible, so at three o'clock we were again en route for the Potomac. The enemy knew our movements and when looking towards them, now on our left, we could see the long lines of bristling bayonets glistening in the sun although at great distance from us, but they kept us continually in mind of their near approach by sending a shell every few minutes after us, but falling short. Just as dark was coming on we reached Sheppardstown expecting every minute to receive a visit from the enemy for at one time we about faced and marched back a short distance, but our cavalry having engaged their advance and driven them back we were again on the road for home. Our march through the town was very slow, we moving, as you may say by inches, as the right of column was then crossing the river and we being on the left were the last to get through the town and over the river - which we accomplished safely and without accident - although the bed of the river is full of rocks

and the night very dark. We arrived at our camp about ten o'clock muddy and wet and you may believe pretty well tired out with our two day's trip. But a change of stockings and a good cup of hot coffee made one feel as though there were still some comforts left us. Our object in crossing into Va. was to reconnoiter and we came back satisfied it will require a larger force than we had to effect anything in that direction as Gen'ls Jackson & Hill are there with a large body of troops. We lost two or three killed and four wounded - but we may be thankful that we did not remain a few hours longer than we did for if we had they could have annihilated us whilst crossing the river - which was expected at any rate. I have understood since there has been a general move of our forces in different directions preparatory to an engagement which must necessarily ensue in a short time or the winter will come upon us when we will be unable to effect anything. This morning the different regiments of our Brigade were presented with our state flag having only rec'd the national colors at Harrisburg. They were presented to us by a Mr. Thomas (sent by the Governor) with remarks appropriate to the occasion. It is exceedingly cold this evening and as I write my hands are quite numb and I am sitting with my overcoat on and am still uncomfortable. As it is late and I feel tired I shall close for the night.

Sunday morning Oct. 19th 1862. It is a most beautiful morning and is warm; quite a contrast in comparison to the weather last night and early this morning when it was really cold. How is the weather at Pottsville? Is it still warm or has it been cold enough to warn you of the approach of winter? I do not think the 48th has moved yet at least I have not heard anything to that effect and have heard nothing from John since I wrote you last. When an opportunity offers have my underclothes ready to send and also a pair of boots. Have them made at Fred Foster's who has my measure for fine boots. I want them made much larger than the measure of good material, which will not be too stiff on my feet. Soles double and heavy and broad so that my feet will be comfortable in them, heels also broad and high in the leg but not tight coming as high as the knee. Have them made longer than my measure as I wear woolen stockings and want them for marching and general wear. Tell him I will send the money for them as soon as I receive my pay. You may also send a couple of pair of woolen stockings. There will in all probability be a large box of things sent to the Go. from Minersville in which you could send mine - if you have a chance to send them before by anyone , do so, as I want the articles badly.

There has been a good many visiting us from Minersville and you can find out more particulars from some of them as to our wants and condition. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all at home, remembering me to Eliza and my friends at Pottsville. I am very well and in the best health. Hoping to hear very soon from home I am your affec. son.

Will

Write soon.

"Camp Tower" near Sharpsburg Md.

Oct 29th 1862

Dear Father,

As Mr. Rigg is now here from Pottsville and will return home this afternoon I thought I would write a short letter to send by him, although he can give you all particulars concerning our present condition. As you see we have not yet been moved although we have been momentarily expecting an order to that effect and it is impossible to say when we will leave, but it is very probable we will move before long as the troops are being taken away from around us daily and being pushed on towards the main body of our army preparatory to an attack upon the enemy. Which direction we will take we can not imagine but can only wish we will not be compelled to cross the river again for there is not one man in the Regt. who does not dread another cold bath and would rather march a whole day than ford the river once. The weather for the last few days has been disagreeable and very cold - while today it is splendid and quite warm in the sun. At night it is very cold indeed and many of men certainly have not comfort enough in their small shelter tents to protect them from the cold, as very few have their overcoats, which were left behind with our baggage at Wash. Many have built quite snug houses of logs with the tents for roofs and have a place for five they however can keep warm enough but those who have nothing but their tents to cover them freeze badly enough. I have good snug quarters thanks to a little energy on the part of the Capt, Lieut and myself, for we have built a wall of logs about three feet high covered with boards nailed on the outside and our "fly" for a roof and having found the pieces of an old wood stove with considerable engineering we managed to put them together and we now have a good blazing fire in our tent at all times. It is the only stove in the Regt. and we congratulate ourselves upon having about the most comfortable establishment on the "patch" .We have taken a young man a son of Dan'l Ault of Minersville out of company to do our cooking and a very fine young man he is, clean and very industrious and as we are now situated so we can buy almost anything, even at exorbitant prices, we are living very well. We have a table and it seems almost like home when sitting down to meals. You might tell Eliza that I am afraid she could not content herself very well in my kitchen for that is the only room in the house and we use it for all purposes while I write the clothes line is stretched across the

room hanging full of clothes just out of the wash whilst Matthias is getting dinner ready and a crowd of boys are talking and smoking in one corner of the apartment and I think, if she were here some of them would have to jump. Perhaps you would like to know what we are going to have for dinner. Our principal dish today will be, what we call a stew made of fresh beef, potatoes at 4 cents a lb. & onions at 3 cents each - which being cooked together constitute a stew - not bad to take, tomatoes stewed, cold pork with the four seasons to make things more palatable - bread at 40 cents a loaf, butter 50 cents a lb. which with canned peaches and preserved black currants as dessert will make a pretty fair dinner. Whilst a good cup of coffee will finish the meal - which taken altogether is not so bad, but might be a great deal worse, don't you think so? I wish I could hear oftener from home. It has been a long time since I rec'd a letter from you and I shall not write again until I do receive one. I heard from the 48th through some of the Regt. and John is well. Have the things I ordered sent as soon as you can.

Oct. 30th 1862 I had intended yesterday to finish my letter and send it by Mr. Rigg who left here yesterday afternoon but before I had finished there was an arrival of visitors from Minersville with boxes of things for the boys and I was disappointed at not finding anything for myself, for there was a package for Col. Prick handed to the parties by Mrs. Frick.

Mr. Moorehead having been told to inform those in Pottsville who had anything to send to the Regt. that this party was now going on. Did he neglect to tell you? When you get the stockings get them long, as they are much warmer than socks - you might send a pair of gloves something to wear about camp - not military gloves, but such a pair as I would want at home and Tillie might knit me a smoking cap of worsted which makes an excellent night cap. There are a great many and are worn generally.

This is another beautiful day, but cooler than yesterday. We are expecting orders to move every minute yet we might not get away for some days yet. I thought we would have certainly moved this morning but I was mistaken and thus it is one continual suspense.

Mr. Weiser & Mr. Trayer from Minersville and Mr. Hodgson & Mr. Mortimer from Potts - are here. There are others who will be here this morning from Minersville and I hope they will bring my things. Give my love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys.

Does Jimmy read my letters to Tim & Frank as I want him? Tell him he must do so and also to write me a letter. How are Geo. & Charley do they go to school regularly? Dick I suppose is still in the land of the living. Remember me to Eliza & all and I am Your Affec. Son

Will

Since writing the letter those parties from Minersville have arrived bringing two large boxes full of things for the Company and it seems strange that my boots were not sent. I rec'd through the kindness of Mrs. Ward numerous jars of preserves, pickled cabbage cakes etc. and from Mrs. Robins, a sister of Mrs. W. a large pair of woolen stockings which were certainly very acceptable. We are now preparing to leave immediately, destination unknown.

Yours etc.

W.W.C

Send nothing unless brought by some one to camp.

Snicker's Gap, Va.

Nov. 4th 1862

Dear

Father,

After another long & tedious march we arrived here night before last and now occupy the heights overlooking the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah on the one side & pleasant val. on the other. We are just on the eve of a great battle if the Rebels stand and if everything moves as it should, I can not see why we will not be successful. They are in strong force in the valley below and we can see their batteries and men moving about whilst their camp fires illuminate the whole valley. They are on the other side of the river which is about two miles distant from this place and there are slight indications of an attempt on their part to get away as we are moving upon them on all sides. Charlestown lies up the valley to our right and Winchester straight before us to the west. On the march the weather was exceedingly hot but the night we came here it blew up cold and as we are situated on the top of a high mountain we were subjected to a perfect hurricane of wind until this morning when it is quite pleasant. Yesterday it was so cold it was almost an impossibility to keep warm as we are without any shelter but what we may make of out of trees and limbs. As regards rations we have been well off for confiscation is the word and the boys are continually bringing in beef, mutton, pork, veal and everything in abundance but our culinary apparatus is scant consisting only of a fork made of wood with which we toast our chops, steaks, etc. but when situated as we now are anything tastes good. I shall when an opportunity offers give you a fuller and more complete description of our march and things which may transpire as at present I must hurry with this or I will be unable to get it off. Send me nothing until I write again. Give much love to Mother and all. I am in the best of spirits and am your affect. son.

Will

I rec'd your letter dated Oct. 30th on Sunday whilst we were on the march.

Direct your letters to ensure receipt

129th Regt. P.V. (Pennsylvania Volunteers)

Tylers Brigade,

Humphrey Division

Porter's Corps

November 20th 1862

Dear Father,

I rec'd this morning your letter dated Nov 13th and was much pleased to hear again from home. I had hardly expected to have rec'd a letter until after we had reached Fredericksburg but was agreeably surprised to receive this one. We left our Camp near Warrenton on Monday in the midst of a light rain which continued off and on all day. We have marched a- bout fifteen miles a day up to last night. It was certainly hard work for we were at times hardly able to get along on account of the mud. It has been very disagreeable every day since we left Warrenton, whilst yesterday it rained hard all day, but we have had the comfort of a good shelter every night as our teams being ahead of our division they were on the ground in time to allow our tents to be put up when we encamped, which is not the case when they are in the rear for then they come up too late to be of benefit, when we are compelled to lie out in the open fields. When on the march we manage to lie down for rest about Nine p.m. and are awakened about 4 a.m. when we grope about in the dark, nearly smoking our eyes out in attempting to make a cup of coffee, about the time we have accomplished that luxury that never failing horn sounds attention and in a very few minutes we are again in ranks ready, willing or unwilling, for another tramp. At noon a half hour is allowed to make another cup of coffee before which is drunk we are again ordered to fall in and as the day begins to wear away a camping ground is selected and we turn in for another nights rest. The roads over which we have traveled the last three days were the worst we have experienced since we have been in the service as the main road, which itself is none of the best, was monopolized by the teams and artillery whilst we marched through the fields and woods just adjoining the main road and this together with the fact of the heavy rains, made the march a most difficult one. I have often read of the Virginia roads and that the wagons sunk in the mud as high as the hubs of the wheels but thought there was a little exaggeration in the statement but you may be assured if any teams follow us they will find the mud in many places considerably deeper. The ground seems to be of a very heavy clay like nature and every where which passes over the road cuts deeper into it and should many divisions have to follow us they would find themselves stuck before going far, and then again it is so difficult to walk as it slip, slip all day long and as a Major said, whilst on the march when

pointing to the road "this is why McClellan did not move last winter" .Just imagine for yourself a road of a soft unpacked clay ground saturated with rain and allow three or four hundred heavy teams and a half dozen batteries of artillery with all their adjuncts pass over it and you can easily surmise the condition of said road afterwards. We came here last night and are about six miles from Fredericksburg and would have gone on to that place yesterday but were ordered to remain here for the present as there are already so many troops in and around that place that a disposition must be made of them before we proceed farther -however I do not think we will remain here any longer than tomorrow if we do not move before. Fredericksburg as you are aware will be made our base of operations in order that we may receive our supplies by way of Acquia Creek - and from this point the move will be made in attempting to drive the Rebels from their Capitol but which will not be accomplished, if at all, without severe fighting. Everyone seems confident of success if the weather will only hold out good and I believe we have men enough if carefully handled to ensure it. As I believe I told you in my last we are with Hooker in the centre grand division with Sumner on our right and Franklin on the left.

I have written a couple of letters to you since I wrote from Snicker's Gap which I suppose you must have rec'd ere this. In one acknowledging the receipt of shirts etc. and the other the boots -which did not fit me and I sold them to Strange Palmer for seven dolls. payable next pay day. I also ordered another pair to be made larger in every way particularly broader in the sole which when made you can send by mail with cap, gloves, a couple of common handkerchiefs and a "plug of Jones & Son's Chewing tobacco" from Boyer's. It is cloudy today and looks as if it we would have more rain, but is blowing up colder.

I shall close with much love to Mother, Tillie, and the boys. Tell Tim I should like very much to see him in his new pants he must look well for he is a noble looking boy. Tell him only last night Capt. & I were talking about Dick as I got - from the Capt's sister in Minersville. You are mistaken about the Army molesting the property of private citizens for every house we pass is guarded to prevent any destruction only that on the other march horses were taken by authority of Gen'l by persons delegated for that purpose for which a receipt was given. Of course there are a few lucky ones manage to quarter a calf or bring into camp a few chickens or turkeys which of course is unknown to

the Commander. Remember me to all my friends in your neighborhood and don't forget the many ladies particularly Sallie Beck, Sallie Clayton & Priscilla McGinnis. Eliza must not be forgotten for I often think of her. Write often and I am your Affec.Son

Will

I am in good health & spirits and have gained about fifteen pounds.

Camp near "Falmouth" Va.

November 30th 1862

Dear Mother ,

I was agreeably surprised today upon receiving a visit from John, it being the first time he has been to see me since we came to this camp. He came this morning and took dinner with us, remaining part of the afternoon. He looks very well indeed and so far as his health is concerned, you need not be in the least alarmed, but, although he has made no complaints to me, I think he feels like ninety nine out of every hundred in the army, as though he would much prefer being home than where he is. For there are few amongst us who does not feel tired of this kind of life, being cut off, I may say, from every social enjoyment, having none of the many comforts which you at home enjoy and subjected to all kinds of usages while being compelled to withstand all kinds of weather and you can be certain that standing all day around a wood fire in the vain attempt to get warm at the risk of losing your eye-sight from the effect of the smoke is not one of the most pleasant things imaginable. But I hope you will not think me dissatisfied with my present condition or situation, far from it, for very well I knew, before I left home, to what I would be subjected as also that it needed the assistance of every young in the north to aid in crushing this rebellion and although we are compelled to endure many hardships, they would be considered as naught if our end, the reestablishment of our Union, would be accomplished. But where the end of all this will be found it is hard to conjecture for the more one ponders over this great catastrophe the more one is lost in the magnitude of the war and it has appeared, no doubt to others, as it has many times to me, like a dream, and although we may be able to drive the enemy before us by force of arms, yet the end will only be accomplished by the pen, showing how much mightier than the sword - and what a blessing it will be and how quickly the glad tidings will be exultingly sung throughout the length and breadth of the land when peace is declared. But I am perhaps going too far with the future for who, when looking at two vast armies of over a hundred thousand men each with only a few feet of water separating them, I say who can see any signs of such a thing as peace.

But the clash of arms must come soon and we only patiently await to hear the first boom which will inaugurate the great battle, but we have no fears, although some will pay dearly for it, yet we must conquer this time or our cause must necessarily suffer.

The other day I was over to see John and spent the greater part of the day with him. They were then opposite Fredericksburg supporting a battery bearing on the town, since then they have been removed and are now with their brigade only about two miles from our camp. The city of Fredericksburg is rather a pretty place, not quite as large as Pottsville, and when in the Camp of the 48th had a fair view of the Rebels, for their pickets extending all along the river, whilst in the town any number of them could be seen walking about the streets or loitering on the corners but without arms. Beyond the town and on the extreme right and left for miles the enemy could be seen in large bodies, busily at works on their fortifications, but why they were allowed to do so I could not understand and I have often thought in consequence that our forces do not intend to molest them in their present location but will move toward Richmond in another direction or why would they allow them to fortify themselves within sight of us? The weather has been splendid during the last week and I am surprised that we have such fine weather at this season of the year - but it is very cold at night and early in the morning in fact it is cold all the time, but particularly so at night and early in the morning. This morning everything was covered with a heavy frost and when I first poked my nose out the tent I thought it had snowed during the night.

When John was here he showed me a letter he had just rec'd from Pop in which he stated you were sick and I was extremely sorry to hear it and I hope that it will not be long before you will again be about and enjoy good health. He also said he had rec'd the things which were sent him.

I have just this moment rec'd a letter from Father dated 26th in which he stated you were getting better and I am indeed glad to hear it for I was extremely fearful lest you were dangerously ill and was much afraid that the consequence might be such as I would not like to hear - and I hope by the time this reaches you, you may again be restored. Tell Tim and Charley if they have lost "Dick" they must bear the consequences when I get home for I will not suffer them to lose him through negligence! ! ! I should like very much to have been home on Thanksgiving day and perhaps enjoyed a piece of

roast turkey but as it was I contented myself with a thought of home, whilst all day we were in the field subjected to a general inspection.

Tomorrow our Regt will go on picket and perform outpost duty for two days but in what direction I cannot say. We leave Camp equipage behind taking only our blankets and of course rations with us. John will write you he said tonight.

Send my things as soon as ready by mail as I think it is the best way. Tell the boys if they are right good and behave themselves well I will send them each a Christmas present if an opportunity offers - but not unless I have a good account of them. Give my love to all and with a wish that you are now well again

I am your Affect son

Will

Write soon and often

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

December 5th 1862

Dear Father,

It is a terrible night this and I can only be too thankful that I am as comfortably fixed as I am, for again thanks to a little perseverance on the part of the members of our mess we have what one would call during this storm, snug quarters. This morning early it commenced raining, continuing pretty severely, until the middle of the afternoon, when it changed to snow, covering everything in a coat of white and now whilst I am writing, it measures in depth about four inches; but I am afraid it will not lie long as I can hear the rain again pattering on our frail roof. It has indeed been a most disagreeable, in fact dismal day in camp as the men have only the small shelter tents and it is the next thing to an impossibility to keep comfortable in them the entire day. Some however, have in anticipation of this weather made very snug houses for themselves by logging up the sides and ends of their tents and, as in some cases, erected fire places for themselves, but the great majority are poorly provided for and against such a storm as this. For my part I am, under the circumstance, well off and have every reason to congratulate myself upon being so much better off than the others. We have erected a large chimney on the front of our tent, taking up one half of the front and have a fire place about three feet square into which we chuck the logs and soon have a good blazing fire and it is in reality a “Virginia fire place” of which we have so often read and seen, and all we want now is a couple of little niggers to creep in the corners to complete the scene. Our tent now has the appearance of some comfort – for whilst I am writing, the fire is in splendid order, and the Capt., Lieut & Matthias are in engaged in earnest conversation about occurrences at home and feel satisfied that a fire at home never felt better to them than ours does now. We are now able do all our cooking indoors and as the Brigade Commissary is pretty well supplied with rations we can buy almost anything want and at prices much lower than at home. We can have at all times fresh beef at seven cts., coffee 28¢, splendid brown sugar 11¢, Hard bread, commonly called hard tack, 5¢/lb., sperm candles 25¢, Molasses etc. at the same ratio. As the Q. Master is not allowed to charge any profit we buy all our things at Gov't prices.

We have not yet received any pay nor do we know when we will, but the paymaster has been engaged the last day or two paying off one of the Regt's in our Brigade, but as yet we have no intimation that he will pay our Regt. a visit.

It is impossible to say what we are going to do or what is intended to be done by the army now lying here idle, for my part I thought we would have been pushed forward long before this, but I think it will be almost an impossibility to move, should this storm continue, for even now the roads close our camp are knee-deep with mud and when they attempt to move artillery and loaded trains they will certainly find the road to Richmond a slow and tedious one. The R.R. to Falmouth is completed and provisions are now being sent in this direction as fast as possible, whilst the pontoon trains have arrived at different points on the Rappahannock and even a gun boat took a peep at the Rebs in and around Fred'burg which all goes to show that something is meant to be done but whether the ends will be accomplished or not, time will show.

Did you ever receive my watch which I sent home by Mr. Morris? As I had heard nothing about it I was a little uneasy about it.

Send on my boots etc. as soon as you get them as I want them now – don't forget to send a couple of common handkerchiefs.

With much love to all, I am your Affect. Son

Will

Write oftener as I always want to hear from home.

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

December 10th 1862

Dear Father,

I was daily expecting a letter from you as well as receiving the boots etc. of which I am so much in need, but have concluded that they will never come, as so long a time has elapsed since I wrote for them – do send them as soon as possible – if I had had the boots a week since I could have broken them in preparatory to going on a march.

Notwithstanding many thought it was hardly possible we would move from here when the weather was taken into consideration, yet we are now under marching orders and will leave our present location tomorrow. What is our destination or what may be expected of us, is hard to conjecture but I will be sadly mistaken if we will be able to move far. The roads are in horrible condition particularly during the middle of the day, whilst the weather a great portion of the twenty four hours is stinging cold and I would say if the men are compelled to lie out during such nights as we now have more than one poor soldier will be found frozen to death. The snow has not yet disappeared and when on the march we will have to bivouac the best place we can find and at the most will be compelled to sleep on the snow. From what we can understand here the whole army will be on the move in the course of a day or two. Three gun boats are now lying nearly opposite Fredericksburg to protect our crossing whilst I have heard that over fifteen thousand of our troops have already crossed the Rappahonock. Where we will cross is unknown to us – but that a movement on the enemy will be made immediately is certain. We are ordered, since I commenced writing this, to be ready by four o'clock this afternoon with three days' ration and sixty rounds of cartridges which betokens something like work and although I feel satisfied in pushing forward yet I can only hope I may come out safely. We certainly ought to have, men enough this time to overpower the enemy and with the combined movements in contemplation which if rightly carried out must ensure success and the rebellion, in a great measure, crushed. But time only will tell and until the conflict which if it does take place, is over, no one can foretell the result although we do not doubt our success in the end.

Whilst I write 11 a.m. the weather is quite pleasant and the sun is shining brightly in fact it seems almost like summer; as a consequence the ground and snow are thawing

rapidly converting everything into one grand slush – so between the mud during the middle of the day and the cold weather the rest I feel satisfied that our march will none of the most pleasant.

Having nothing much of news to communicate I shall close as so little transpires here in camp beyond the usual monotonous routine of duty. But the monotony would be broken if I would occasionally hear from home for you must understand I am exceedingly anxious at all times to receive a letter from one of you. Now it is nearly or over two weeks since I heard from you and I am anxious to know how Mother is getting and how all the boys are flourishing. Have they found Dick?

The paymaster has been here and paid the men their bounty of twenty seven dolls., but the officers or men have not yet paid their salaries. It was understood however we were to be paid this week but this movement will interfere for the present.

With much love to all I am your.....

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

December 21st 1862

Father,

We receive a mail every day and every day I am disappointed at not receiving a letter from home. Why is it? It seems strange that I cannot hear oftener from you if only a few lines and then I have almost given up hoping to receive my boots etc. If you do not send them on soon I shall be compelled to go bare foot for my shoes, which I now wear, have performed all the duty they are able and as we are not likely to get a supply of clothing at the Q.M. dept. for some time, I will be unable to get anything for love or money. I wish you would attend to it as soon as possible.

We are still in our old camp but expect to move in a day or two, somewhere in the neighborhood where we can have more shelter and wood more handy. Our Regt. at present is in deplorable condition as the great majority of the men are without blankets and tents and this in the face of the coldest weather we have had this winter. When we crossed the river to Fredericksburg our division took their knapsacks with them, when they should have been left behind but when we arrived in the town all the baggage was stored in a couple of rooms there before going into action, with the intention of course of getting them again – but we, that is our Regt. and another, recrossed the river without them when we had plenty of time to have gone and gotten them. As it is those, who have thus been deprived of what little comfort they did have, must weather it through the best way con no matter if it does kill a few of tem and you may be satisfied there would be fewer applications for Generalships if a General was compelled to stand out such nights as we are now having, almost smoked to death in the vain attempt to get warm around a wood fire. It is shameful and who to blame we don't know but I hope the person who is in reality in fault may be compelled to suffer a thousand times more than our men ar now suffering. It is bitter cold an even were we provided with all we are entitled to we would yet be uncomfortable. I of course have my tent which is hauled in the teams and as I carried my blankets with me I have lost nothing – but I can say this much that unless the men get blankets etc. very soon there will be more men killed & wounded in a weeks time than in a half dozen fights like the 13th. Yesterday morning Jos. H. Heisler a member of our Co. and a son of Mr. Heisler, Clerk in Com. Office – Pottsville died in

camp of yellow jaundice & fever. I had a box made for him and just at twilight last evening we buried him with such honors as he was entitled to. I saw John yesterday in their camp, he is well & rec'd your letter per Charley Evans. My health is remarkably good only that my hearing is getting bad again and if it continues so I shall endeavour to get out of the service rather than risk it altogether by lying around here in camp. Wouldn't you?

Love to all I am your Affect.

Will

I wish you all a Merry, Merry Christmas and am sorry that I cannot be able to be home on that day. Tell the boys they can have my share of the turkey.

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

December 30th 1862

Dear Father,

This afternoon I rec'd the boots etc. and although they were a long time coming yet they were indeed acceptable at this time when I stood so badly in need of them as my old governments were about "played out" having served me faithfully ever since I have been in the service. I had intended not to write home until I had rec'd word of some kind from you and you could hardly blame me if had neglected writing for I can not understand why some of you cannot write oftener. John complains very much of this neglect on your part and feels bad enough about it and feels as though he was forgotten by all of you, How can it be otherwise? When he sees others receiving missives from home regularly and finds himself excluded from the same enjoyment he certainly has cause to complain. And again whilst there are many different things at home to occupy ones mind and attract ones attention from the boys in the army, here we ever have home uppermost in our minds and indeed time seems long when all communication is cut off. Now I hope that hereafter, if only for John's sake, that you will all endeavor to be more prompt.

I have not been very well for the last few days but having taken very good care of myself I am much better and are again about for duty. My hearing is getting bad again and am afraid that this constant exposure to the weather and lying upon damp ground will not help it much and I sometimes think rather than be made to suffer a life time for a few months service, I shall endeavor to resign if I can get my resignation accepted. You might see Doc. Carpenter and question him about me and you might get a statement from him showing that he has attended me and knows my condition, that he knows that this kind of life will tend to destroy my hearing etc. I have spoken to the surgeon of our Regt. about it but he said he had no instrument to make an examination, and I told him that for the last few years my hearing has been good, but that I had been afflicted before at different periods in my life and that my present deafness was caused by my present mode of living. It makes me feel dumb enough at times, particularly when in charge of the Co, I am unable to hear commands and am thereby prevented from executing the movements promptly – to tell the truth it places us many ways in a bad position for I sometimes think

as cousin Harry Goyers, that somebody "fought a duel" whenever a party is talking together. What would you do were you in my place? I now have charge of the Company and as a consequence all the responsibilities and have now at this time my hands full, with making out mustering and pay rolls, clothing accounts, descriptive lists rendering accounts of everything pertaining to the Co. and you may be satisfied that there is any amount of trouble connected with them. Our company at present looks no more like the Co. we left home with than – I can make no comparison. With the men who have been absent for a long time sick, those detailed for different kinds of service and the big hole made into it at Fredericksburg, there are but few left to represent our Co. on drill or parade. Last evening at dress parade the Lieut was out and had fifteen men making sixteen with himself and I could hardly believe it was our Co.; but this of course is not our actual strength for there were more present but were on other kinds of duty. On similar occasions we could always turn out about sixty five men, thus showing how our regiments are so completely cut up in a short time and when the papers speak about our hundreds of thousands who are ready at this point or that they do not know the actual number but calculate their figures from the date of a Regt. entering the service. You would be astonished if you would see some organizations here who call themselves Regts. and have but a hundred or a few more men when they came into the service a thousand strong.

The weather for the last week or more has been more like summer than winter, but cool nights. The days have been beautiful, in fact warm and I could not help thinking, upon reading the Journal of last Saturday where it speaks of skating etc, of the comparison between the weather here and at home. The men have again been supplied with tents, blankets, etc. and have made themselves comfortable although our Hospital bears strong evidence of the exposure to which they were subjected. Notwithstanding yesterday a great many sick were sent from here to Washington. Our Hospitals are crowded and to tell the truth additions to them will have to be made to accommodate all, which they are doing daily.

John was here with me on Christmas day and spent the day with me. We did not roast turkey and plum pudding, but he cooked some beef steak & onions which with coffee and hard tack completed our Christmas dinner. We were alone as the Lieut. had

gone to visit some friends. Before he left I bought him some butter whilst he bought a lot of ginger cakes for himself by way of a luxury. We are again under marching orders, our commissary being ordered to have ten days rations on hand. We will move, I think in a very few days but in what direction I am unable to imagine for we know nothing here but hear a great deal. There are some rumors that Hookers grand division will move towards Washington but we know nothing for truth.

It rained slightly this afternoon but I do not think the rainy season has yet commenced although it is about time in this section.

With much love to all I am your Affect. Son

Will

The boots are large but fit well enough. Handkerchiefs very acceptable and thanks to the person who knit the cap.

Write soon.

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

January 11th 1863

Dear Father,

Although I shall attempt to write you a letter I am afraid I shall fall short of the mark for there is nothing of interest whatever to write about but thought you might at any rate be anxious to hear from me. We are as you see still in our old camp as usual "awaiting orders" but not wishing to receive any of course. We have been enjoying the finest of weather for a long time but yesterday we had a regular nor'easter which continued all day and part of the night whilst today it is cold and damp outdoors, with a fair prospect of a repetition of the storm today. I rec'd the butter and currant bread which you sent and making a division sent John his portion. Whilst eating the cake I could not help believing I was again at home for I must say I enjoyed it more than anything which I have eaten since I have been in the service - and if we could only be allowed to have Eliza here I would not be long about getting transportation for her and would have Dutch cake for every meal. Mr. Weiser came on from Minersville on Friday and brought over two thousand pounds of things for the boys in the company and although nothing was sent me, yet our mess was well supplied with sausage, roast chickens, bread, cake and other delicacies which were sent to Lieut Richards by his wife. As a consequence our men generally are having a feast, roast turkeys etc. being in abundance, but I am afraid unless they are prudent, many will no doubt in a few days, be on the sick list, as the contrast between hard tack and pork and their present stock is entirely too great.

Mr. Weiser is still with us and expects to remain a few days. He sleeps with us or rather tries to but says our bed is a little too hard and cold notwithstanding we literally penned him in with blankets – he says he can't sleep. To tell the truth our bed is not quite so good as those at home.

You have no doubt heard ere of the Capt's death as well as all particulars. From the first time I saw the Capt after he was wounded I felt satisfied (although I knew nothing about it myself but inferred from what I heard) he would not recover and was daily expecting to hear of his death. The ball perforated his lung which was not known until a few days before he died. His body was embalmed and sent home last Tuesday. I

suppose he was buried with military honors etc. the particulars of which we will receive in due time.

Young Rob Palmer is here on a visit to his Brother and was at the 48th where he saw John and he told me "John was the nicest and cleanest soldier there" – and you may depend upon it that if there is such a thing as a white collar to be had, he will get it – as for myself I would hardly know how to put one on as white collars are rare with us. By the by, you might send me by mail three (3) packs of 16in. sq. chokers paper. You can get them at Rich Miners – enclosed is one dollar for them. We have not yet rec'd any pay although we now have nearly five months due – and we all think it was about time the paymaster should pay us a visit. I am right well again but my hearing is not as good as it might be.

With much love to all. I am your Affect Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

January 17th 1863

We are again under marching orders and had supposed we would have been on the tramp this morning, but the order was countermanded and we think we will move tomorrow. Nearly all of our Regt. are on picket and have been for the last three days, but this morning we were ordered to send them one day's ration, which will necessarily compel us to await their return. I was at the 48th yesterday and saw John, he is well, they are also under marching orders, in fact there will be a general move of the whole army but in what direction is a matter of surmise, in fact we are kept in a uncomfortable suspense about it. I suppose the army is not suffering enough which accounts for our agin going on the march – but you may rest assured that the army will lose many a man if we move in such weather as we are now having, for it is bitter cold – and it is next to an impossibility to sleep out such nights. I am right well but hate mightily to move as it is a little too much and we can't see it. Tell Tillie I will write to her very soon as at present I am unable to take proper time and care to write to her. Give much love to Mother and all and I am you Affec. Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth Va.

Feb. 5th 1863

Dear Father,

I suppose whilst I am writing this you at home are all snug and warm in bed for it is only six o'clock a.m. – but you must not infer from this fact that I have become an early riser but that instead of being "snug and warm" in bed as you no doubt are I was so cold and uncomfortable on the ground that I was compelled to get up and move about in order to keep up a genial warmth in my veins. We are now in the midst of a severe Schuylkill County winter in fact we are now having the coldest weather for the season. For the last four days it has been bitter cold whilst this morning it has commenced snowing which promises fine sleighing to those who can raise the teams, in the face of the fact that it is so cold we now feel it so much the more as we are now located in our new camp and have not yet had sufficient time to make ourselves comfortable. We arrived here last Monday noon and of course all hands commenced getting the lumber necessary to build their huts and from that time until this the sound of the axes never ceases, the scarcity of tools compelling the boys to work the night and day shifts. Some have already finished their houses but the great majority are still unfinished, but all will be completed this week. We have a rather good location being in a thick woods which protects us much from the winds. Water is plenty but I am afraid we will soon be compelled to carry our wood as far as we did in the old camp as there are so many troops encamped in the neighborhood. I have rec'd an officers tent and we have erected a sort of heating apparatus out of a large iron kettle inverted, which is to serve as a drum as soon as we can get it to work properly although it does very well now. We intend to build a log hut just outside of our tent, to be used as cook house and eating room thereby reserving our tent only for sleeping and sitting in and I hope in a few days we will be very comfortably fixed. It is snowing harder and harder and everything is covered in a sheet of white whilst a feeling of dreariness pervades all and no one puts his nose outside unless compelled to do so.

We have just rec'd orders to be prepared for general inspection at 2 o'clock p.m.,

another specimen of red tape but I hope our Commanders still possess enough humanity to countermand the order in the interim. Our paymaster, although he has received his money over three weeks ago, has not yet made his appearance but we heard from him this morning, that he has been on a spree ever since and will pay no one until he is ready to do so – but promises to visit us next week. It is a gross outrage that such men should be permitted to hold offices of trust, particularly that of a paymaster, when there are hundreds of families suffering at home on account of the nonpayment of the troops. It is heartrending to read some letters which are rec'd by different ones, filled with nothing but requests for money and statements of sufferings and wants in consequence of their husbands & sons having rec'd no money. We have been nearly six months in the service and have not yet rec' d one cent of pay, excepting the bounty which was paid the men after they had been out over four months – and if this is the manner in which the Gov' expects to carry on the war I think it will be highly necessary that colored regiments should be sent into the field how can a man be expected to leave his home and family and to leave them without the means of sustenance? Every reg't in the division excepting ours has been paid and it is ill wonder that we become so much exasperated at our treatment.

Col Frick has been "Cashiered" and thereby ceases to be an officer in the service of the United States. He has gone to Washington and with the influence which he can bring to bear upon the Administration with the assistance of his friends who are there helping him we expect to have him again with us as he will in all probability be reinstated. From present appearance of matters we are sometimes led to believe that not only will he be reinstated but that a higher Commission will be tendered him and that those who have been so instrumental in his overthrow will not fare so well. But there is no saying what will be the termination of this affair as both parties are striving hard to maintain themselves. Col. Armstrong has been tried but we do not yet know the result, although we expect that the same fate awaits him as Col. Frick.

Did Tillie receive my letter written after the muddy tramp? Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys - and tell them it will not be long now before I will come home. I have not seen John since our last movement but presume he is well as I have seen others from his reg't and have heard nothing to the contrary. With the kindest regards to all my friends and with a hope that I may hear often from you. Will

Camp near Falmouth Va.

February 15th 1863

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter dated 10th this morning and as usual was much pleased to hear from home again as the last letter before this was dated January 25th rather long to be without some news from the family. I was not aware that John has rec'd furlough until the 48th was on the move, when I started to see him before he left for the new field of operations when I was told he had gone home. I was glad to hear it, for he was only too anxious to receive permission to visit you for a few days. To tell the truth you can find none who would not avail themselves of the same privilege, particularly those who are in the "three years line". I rec'd a letter from him at Washington dated 19th also in which he describes his visit home and relates the pleasures which he had whilst there. He expected to leave with the Col. the next day for Fortress Monroe and there rejoin his Regiment.

This is Sunday and a rainy one at that and whilst it is unpleasant and dreary out doors it is quite the reverse inside where as we have become comfortable fixed we can pass away the time by writing to our friends at home. There was to have been a grand review and inspection of our division this morning at eleven o'clock which would have consumed the entire day, but in consideration of the bad weather it was indefinitely postponed and I can assure you all hands were heartily glad of it; for if there is anything which the men hate and which is a perfect bore it is these inspections and reviews and although they are very essential and necessary the Boys can't see it. However I suppose we will have to undergo the hardship some day next week.

We were again on picket four days last week coming home Thursday evening. Three hundred and fifty men being detailed from our Reg't. Another Capt. and myself having charge. There were altogether out with us about two thousand men on post and in reserve at the points where we picketed. The weather was very warm the first two days, in fact it was too hot to lie exposed to the sun, but during the last two days it snowed and rained alternately all the time making it very disagreeable and adding about twelve more inches to the twenty four inches of mud already worked up.

You seem to have queer ideas of the difficulty which occurred in this Regiment. I

thought I had written to you the full particulars and stated implicitly how matters stood and it is a source of wonder to me how you can conjure up such awful ideas and what you suppose probable results. When you speak of mutiny I am almost compelled to laugh; but at the same time I am sorry that such an idea should pervade the minds of any at home. Gen'l Humphrey's to make bad matters worse would like to have substantiated the charge of mutiny, but he failed and as I before stated "there was not the least concert of action", notwithstanding troops were held (by his orders) in readiness to resist anything which might be attempted. Col. Frick was cashiered "disobedience of orders" and although, (we have long known it to be a fact) he can be restored to his command he is unwilling to serve under the man who has done all in his power to have him disgraced and were I in the same situation I do not think I would under any circumstances act otherwise. There is not an officer to be found, unless it be a personal enemy of the Col, who does not sympathize with him and would be glad to see him able to gain the ascendancy over Gen'l Humphreys. However we are daily expecting a settlement of this affair and that our Cols. Will again be with us if not under Humphreys somewhere else and as far as I am concerned rather somewhere else.

Again you have queer ideas of promotions etc. What promotions can be expected? None, except in case of vacancies and then only by right of seniority, and as far as our company is concerned I thought I had written to you in which I stated that as soon as I rec'd my commission I had the company reinstated and we now hold the position of 1st company. I saw Col. Frick during his confinement and he immediately gave me the old position, as he had never intended that the Co. should remain out of it and that the change was only temporary but that subsequent transactions prevented the change being made so soon as he had anticipated. You need not be afraid of me if there is any chance of my bettering myself in least you may rest assured I shall do so.

I, nor any of my mess are out of money at the present time nor have we been broke since we have been in the service – and although the Brigade or the U.S. Gov't, I don't know which, is kind enough to trust the officers to what they may need. I am happy to say that none of us have as yet availed ourselves of the inducement, neither have we been compelled to pawn pledge or sign over any money due us by U.S. Gov't but our pay for over six months now stands good in our favor on our company rolls. There has

been a rumor in camp during the week that the paymaster who was to pay us has been dismissed and another appointed to pay us but whether it be true or not I am unable to say but can only hope that he was here now to give us our just dues.

Lieut Schall is again in Camp, having arrived here night before last. He looks remarkably well although he has had a very sever time of it. I never like to write home concerning anyone who is sick for I think it only creates uneasiness with friends at home. He said he intended writing to his Aunt Mrs. Patterson today. Will Patterson left here yesterday for home and I suppose will be there before this reaches you.

I have not been very well during the last week but I am now first rate although I was afraid I would have a spell of sickness. Give much love to Mother & all the rest. Remember me to all my friends. Hoping to hear from you soon.

I am Your Affec. Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth Va.

February 21st 1863

Dear Father,

Enclosed herewith you will find four hundred and twenty (\$420) dollars which I send you to be disposed of as I shall direct. The means furnished us to send our money home are so few that it always has been a matter of speculation on the part of all hands after we have it how to get it to our friends. I propose enclosing mine in this and give it to the Sutler who goes to Washington in the morning where he will deposit it with the express agent to be sent to you and I can only hope that it may reach you safely. We were paid yesterday in full up to January 1st 1863 and I received five hundred and five dollars less seven dollars deducted as tax according to a late law to that effect and after paying off all my debts I still have seventy dollars besides what I send you which will be sufficient and more perhaps to meet all current demands during the balance of my term. I send "fifty" dollars to Mother, "fifty" dollars to Tillie and "fifty" dollars for yourself. "Ten" dollars to each of the boys and ten dollars to Eliza. Two hundred dollars I want deposited in some good place of your own selection in my name as I want to reserve that in order that I may have something to fall back upon in case I may meet with any misfortune or I would have given all to you. I owe Mr. Elliott Jeweller five dollars and Mr. F. Foster somewhere in the neighborhood of four dollars the remaining ten dollars is to pay them and do so at once. Well here I have gone on as though I were making my last will and testament and it seems to require great explanations in order that this immense amount might be disposed of in such a way as will cause no future law suit and difficulty. But enough I only hope you may receive it and enjoy what little benefit which may be derived from so small a gift.

We have had a beautiful day, but now this evening it is again cloudy with every indication of another storm; during the past week however we had very rough weather snowing and raining alternately making the roads in a more desperate condition; but I suppose we may expect bad weather for some weeks yet as the season, according the inhabitants in the neighborhood, is a late one.

Our Regiment or rather a great part of it was out on Picket again this week

returning this morning. I was not with them being on other duty at the time they started. They had a very hard time of it as you can judge.

I hardly know what else to say except to ask for the four hundred and tenth time, that I may hear oftener from home. I had expected to be home now but I am afraid I will be compelled to wait until Uncle Sam dismisses all the Regt. With much love to all I am your Affec Son.

Will

Camp near Falmouth Va

March 5th 1863

Dear Father,

I was glad to find upon opening your letter of the 27th which I rec'd last night, that you had received the money which I sent you. I did suppose for sometime back that I would pay you a visit this month but I am afraid that I will not be able to do so although I may possibly be fortunate enough yet to obtain a furlough, an application for which has already been handed to headquarters, so under existing circumstances you need not be expecting me, but you will see me soon enough if I once get into the old town of Pottsville. I have just finished my supper and having eaten so heartily I feel quite inadequate from laziness to the task of writing a letter. Since we have been in this camp we have been able to live well, plenty of it and no small variety. Our commissary is well supplied with everything whilst the bakeries which have been erected for the Brigade keep us supplied with first rate bread the Sutler furnishing butter at rather high prices. This evening our supper consisted of a first rate cup of tea - about two hundred fine oysters stewed, the remains of a meat pot pie from dinner with plenty of bread and butter so you see we are altogether without some luxuries. Oysters are plenty at Stoneman's Station on the RR (Rappahannock) about one mile from camp where we can get them fresh every morning at forty cents the solid quart which is cheaper than we can buy them at home. We have erected our extra tent or log hut for our cook and in which is erected a table, thus having a dining room which is a great comfort avoiding all the bother which occurs when only one tent is used for sleeping and eating purposes. We are again having cold weather but still fine - although we did have last week very bad weather indeed. Last week our pickets were driven in by Stuart who crossed the Rappahannock above us with considerable force and although we drove them across the river again causing them a loss yet it created a small scare and in a few hours the whole fifth Corps was on the move. Of course we were along after a march of a few miles through mud a foot deep we returned to Camp after dark not a little hungry I can assure you.

There is a little going on here in fact nothing of importance but I suppose as soon as the roads are navigable for the large vessels we will again be put on the tramp. I am glad that Tillie will make a visit Phila and hope she may enjoy herself. If I should get

home I will most certainly stop and see her there. Give much love to her and Mother and all the Boys. With kind remembrances to all my friends.

I am you Affec. Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

March 12th 1863

Dear Father,

I do not think I ought to write you now as I think you are largely indebted to me in letters but as I had nothing to do this evening which required especial attention, I thought I might at least write you informing you that I was still in the land of the living, for in fact there is hardly anything of importance going on here to form a basis for a good or interesting letter. The weather here has been very changeable indeed so much so that it makes one very uncomfortable. One day clear and mild and the next either very cold or heavy storms of rain and snow. I have again been on picket since I last wrote and a most miserable time we had; we left camp on Sunday morning and returned yesterday (Wednesday) morning. Picket in fine weather is a kind of relief from dull monotonous camp life and no one regrets when ordered for duty in that line, but when a hard rain has set in and with no prospects of its clearing up, every one leaves, with regrets his good comfortable quarters in Camp to take up his abode in some dreary woods for three or four days. During the entire time I was on post it was snowing and raining alternately and I was during the whole time nearly wet through and most frozen, besides we were kept in continual excitement on account of an expected attack from the Johnny Rebs who had crossed in considerable force above us and who, it was supposed, would attempt another of their bold raids upon our lines and outpost. I had command of the extreme left wing of pickets from our Division, joining Beldan's sharp shooters on our left, in which was the gate or entrance through which all communication between our forces and the outer world, passes and it was one unceasing trouble to examine passes etc. of those who were permitted to enjoy that liberty. Of course the only ones who passed in and out were those belonging to our forces Calvary men, scouts, messengers etc. It seems that we are still in danger of an attack in this quarter for last evening we were formed in line being held in readiness to move at a moment's notice and this afternoon the same thing is the program but I am under the impression that we have nothing to fear and I only wish they would have them on an equal footing and have no doubts about our succeeding in giving them another Antietam. But they will not send a large force to our front for it would be

impossible for them to move artillery or transport their teams on account of the bad roads but if they do attempt anything it will be with a very heavy force of Cavalry when they will endeavor to destroy the bridge over Potomac Creek on the R.R. leading to Acquia Creek and over which all our supplies are brought but I am afraid they would have a sorry time of it if they try it.

I suppose Tillie is at this time enjoying herself in the city where no doubt she will have a pleasant time and I hope she will stay long enough so that she will not regret going home too soon. I know she is there for Sergt. Heilner of my company who has returned to camp from a furlough home says he met her in the Cars and that she has spoken to him having as I suppose noticed the letter and numbers on his hat. He says he remained with her until she arrived in Phila where she was met by persons unknown to him of course. I had supposed he would have called on you whilst at home as I had requested him but he said his Mother compelled him to stay at home all the time as he would remain so short a time there.

It is very cold tonight and my feet feel quite cold whilst writing, it appears as though winter had just set in. Give much love to Mother and all the Boys and when you write to Tillie give my love to her and all the cousins.

I am in first rate health and spirits. Write to me oftener and I will not neglect writing home. With much love

I am you Affec. Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

Mar. 28th 1863

Dear Father,

I have just arrived and hasten to write you – although I hardly know what to write of interest. I arrived at Phila. in due time and immediately proceeded to Aunt Amanda's where I saw Tillie who was much better than when I saw her before and looks exceedingly well. I was very unwell when I was in the City as well as up to the present time and felt as though I would rather go any where else than towards the Regiment. I took a sleeping berth in – the cars and passed a very sleepless night as my head seemed ready to burst at every minute. Upon my arrival at Camp everything presented a dreary and dismal appearance for although our Regt. is at present out on picket yet all hold themselves in readiness for a move. As far as I can understand in the short time I have been in camp, it is intended to make a sudden move across the river, taking ammunition and other necessaries on the backs of mules, leaving all teams and even artillery behind in the attempt to accomplish something by such sudden movements. Transportation has been lessened and all the tents which the officers had, have been taken away and small ones furnished instead. So upon my arrival in Camp I did not have the old comfortable quarters to go to, but a small low arrangement where it is almost impossible to turn around in whilst everything about Camp seems to present such a dirty and forlorn appearance in comparison to the comforts of home that it is enough to disgust any one with a soldiers life and I have felt sorry that I was at home at all for I was contented before I left here. That this army will be sent somewhere is certain and that before long but where no one seems to know and it all ends in conjectures.

Sunday Morning 29th – I left off writing last night and will finish this morning. I feel very bad, my head still aches me, whilst our present mean uncomfortable quarters discourages me. It is very cold this morning and it blows a perfect hurricane and muddy roads must soon disappear with such a wind -when I suppose we may expect soon to be on the move.

I am in no humor for writing so you must excuse brevity. With much love to Mother and all

I am Your Affec. Son,

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

April 18th 1863

Dear Father,

The sutler of the Regiment leaves for Washington tomorrow morning and concluded to send my money with him to be expressed from there home. I rec'd two hundred and forty dollars pay which was not enough, the government still owing me difference between pay of Capt and 1 Lt for fifteen days. It will be accounted for next pay, and I send you "two hundred and thirty dollars" (\$230) which you may deposit with the other. I would have given you a certain portion but thought I would say that should you want any of it you might take it. However it would be necessary for me to retain some in case I should meet with any accident when you could use it for my benefit. But if you want any of it, take it and use it. We are still in the old camp and our regiment has returned from picket. Our eight days rations are still kept up and the indications are still such as to lead us to believe that a general move is intended. I mentioned in a former letter that all the cavalry had broken camp and left for somewhere and that the ninety first Regiment P.V. of our Brigade had left last Monday. The 91st with other troops but not many, are at United States Ford about ten miles up the river apparently guarding the ford. Every day there is a small detail of men from our Brigade, who go with the teams, as guard to take their day's ration to the boys. This evening when the detail returned to camp they brought with them two fine looking men rebels, from the 6th Virginia who deserted to our lines this morning by swimming the river, one of them nearly drowning in the attempt. Their clothing was good and as I said were fine looking fellows, but they gave a very doleful account of affairs in the rebel army, that they were not half fed and assert that if they were put on a long march could not hold out – and that thousands would desert if they only had the chance. Our boys are on the bank this side of the river at the ford and are having a gay time in conversation with the Rebels on the other side. Those who have been up at the ford say that the rebels can be seen all along the river but a few yards distant from each other, fishing, which may be sport with some and a necessity with others, whilst in the background heavy forces of the enemy can be seen

hard at work throwing up their great strength, the breastworks for miles. These deserters say they had expected an attack for the last eight days and have been fortifying themselves accordingly and that now they are able to resist an attack from far superior forces. But the question is, are we going to cross the river again in the face of their fortifications, are we going to try and draw them from them to meet them at an equal advantage by a move in another direction or are we going to move at all? As I said however there are every indication of move but no one can conjecture as to the manner or plan on which it is to be conducted. 'Tis true our time is short yet still a great deal can be done in even that time and sometimes think that the government will in all probability try to get as much service out of the Nine Months' Men as they can before their term of service expires. But then the question has arisen more than once as to whether the reliance and confidence can be placed in these men at the present time, is so great a measure as before – because many seem to think that they should not be pushed forward now, their time being so near an end – but I think when the order comes to move and we are ordered into an engagement the men will do as well as at any previous time, for my part I think my service is due the government to the last minute and until that time will perform my part as well as ever.

I received a letter this afternoon from Tillie dated 15th and was pleased to hear from her it being the first from her since she is in the city. She speaks of George coming there the next day and that she would go to Aunt Amanda's again and remain with him. Her letter was directed from Mrs. Hortons where she was then staying. I suppose no doubt she has been enjoying herself and I hope that George may also have a pleasant time and no doubt he will for at this season of the year there is so much to be seen. Tillie speaks of the death of Will Wayne sister of Sallie Wayne whom I visited whilst in the city. It must have been a sad loss for them for they spoke so highly of him whilst I was there. He was Sergeant Major of the Anderson Cavalry and came home sick with typhoid fever and died within a week after his arrival there. I saw a notice of his death in the paper before Tillie wrote.

I caught a slight cold a few days since and have somewhat of a cough which is rather annoying. My health generally is very good and am gaining in flesh, weighing heavier than I ever did.

I am afraid our mess will not fare so well from this out as the Brigade Commissary has quit selling and the bakeries have been torn down which will throw us again on hard tack and fat pork, but I think we can manage to get along well enough as we have not yet forgotten how to eat those things.

It is now getting late and I am getting spun out so I shall bring this to a close. Give much love to Mother and all the boys. You may take ten dolls. of my money and have a photograph taken of all of them as well as of Mother and yourself. They will cost a dollar for four _____. You need not send them to me but retain them and if I wish them will write for them. I send you also a picture each of Gen'l Hooker and Gen'l Tyler Comd'g our Brigade, they are both good likenesses. I would have sent one of Gen'l Humphreys but they were all sold. I expect to get one before long.

I think I forgot to mention that Cols. Frick & Armstrong are again with the Regt. With much love to all and hoping to hear very soon from you.

I am your affect. Son

Will

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

April 21, 1863

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter of last Sunday this afternoon & I now hasten to answer it although the mail closes in a very short time. As you see and as you supposed we are still in our old camp with less signs of moving than formerly, although I have not given up the idea that we will again be shoved forward. Our Regiment in picket starting this morning. I am again in camp, the two Lieuts. going out with the company. I did not feel very well and could not risk lying out in such weather, as it was raining hard when they started and continued nearly all day whilst tonight it is dark and cloudy threatening rain every minute. They are having a horrid time of it as there is so little protection from the weather when on duty on the outposts. The 91st Regiment of our Brigade which has been on guard at the forts ten and fourteen miles up the river, came back to camp tonight having been relieved by another regiment of our division. They had a lively time of it, in conversation with the rebs and were no doubt in great danger as they could have been all taken at any moment. Four men – two from our regiment were taken prisoners, the rebs coming across the river and capturing them whilst on post. This rain has again put the roads in a miserable condition. Those who came in from the fords tonight, say the mud is awful and all the little streams which cross the roads and whilst in ordinary times are hardly a foot deep are now waist deep whilst the river is swollen very much. Lo General Hooker if he intends a move, will have to wait a day or two again. There has been a general order read to every company in the service, in reference to reenlistments which refers to the nine months and two years given, stating in what manner it is to be done and granting thirty days furlough after their present time expires etc. and all were questioned as to whether they would reenlist or not. When our regiment was questioned not a man responded aye. But that does not signify that these men will not again come into the service but they want to go home at the expiration of their time free and unfettered and then reenlist at their own pleasure. No doubt two thirds of our regiment will reenlist. It seems strange it takes so long for my letters to reach you as yours come to hand in three

days. I wrote to John sometime since but rec'd no answer. Will write again soon. I sent you by express on last Monday from Washington two hundred and thirty dollars which I suppose you have rec'd ere this. We have good news generally in today's papers and hope it may be true. With much love to Mother & all. I am your Affect. son

Will

Excuse haste.

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

April 24th 1863

Dear Tillie,

I should have written to you long ere this but we have been kept so continually on the alert and making preparations for a move, that it has been deferred until the present time. For the last three weeks we have been expecting to move at a moments notice but as yet we are still in our old camp. Surplus baggage has long since been sent away, transportation reduced and the men have eight days rations at all times on hand, thus making a pack mule of every man but I am afraid that Gen'l Hooker will not move as rapidly as he may wish, when everyone is loaded down with rations as they now are. Over two weeks ago all the cavalry in this department broke camp and left for some point up the river, to make a grand raid into the enemy's country, preparatory to an advance of our whole army. They arrived some thirty miles above us, when a very heavy rain set in which deterred them from accomplishing their object – during the meantime were in one continued suspense not knowing what minute we would push on. One Regiment of our Brigade started shortly after the cavalry and was posted at the United States ford fourteen miles up the river, as a picket guard at that point. When they arrived at the ford the Rebels were on the opposite side of the river playing ball, but when they spied our boys, they dropped their game and immediately formed their lines of battle, expecting we would attempt a crossing, finding however that that was not our object on coming to the banks of the river, entered into a lively conversation with our boys. They know, and it seems singular it is so, all our movements and said they were prepared for us and would give us a warm reception when we visited them. They even asked our boys how they liked to carry eight days rations and said Burny had supplied them with clothes and hoped Hooker would come over and supply them with rations as they were very hard up for the latter – which is the case they being now, without doubt, fed on less than half rations. Last Saturday two of a North Carolina Regt. deserted and swimming the river came into our lines. They were fine looking fellows pretty well clothed but they said they were tired of the Confederacy as well as thousands more who would also desert if an

opportunity was offered, that the rebel army was only half fed and many were becoming disgusted with the leaders of the rebel lion. The Regt. spoken of returned to Camp last night having been relieved by another Regt. of our Division. They lost four men taken prisoner whilst in post having been surprised by a party which came over the river, surrounding them and capturing them before they could give the alarm. The surgeon of the Regt. a German from Phila, was also taken but they let him off, satisfied with his horse and accoutrements, telling him if he wished to get his horse again he should call upon Gen'l Lee just across the river and he no doubt would return it to him over the left.

What Gen'l Hooker intends to do is a mystery and all kinds of rumors are afloat as to the points to be attacked, whilst many are now under the impression that there will not be a general advance of this army for some time – but I think that we will move and that the Gov't will try to get as much use of us two years and nine months time as they can - but on the other hand the question arises can that same reliance and confidence be placed in these men when the shortness of the time they have yet to serve is taken into consideration and will they go as willingly as before into another engagement? The term of service of many regiments will expire from the 1st of May on to the middle of the month – and this is now the 24th April leaving but few days they have yet to serve and I have heard many that even should they not absolutely refuse to move forward, would manage to skulk out of it some how. I do not know how many regiments go home in May but it is a great many and will weaken the army of the Potomac (old name) considerably. For my part and as far as I am concerned, I think my service is due the Gov't up to the last minute and will perform my part willingly and faithfully up to that time, but after that – I want transportation to old Schuylkill, there to wait until I am again filled up with patriotism to such a degree that it will again be necessary to serve in the army, to work it off. For I tell you honestly that a few months service in the field and one engagement is sufficient to cool the ardor of a great many the majority - and the old songs concerning the "stars and stripes", "the home of the Free" etc. have not the same effect here upon one as at home in fact here we can't see it and can not cry as lustily as the home guards "go on with the war" - but if we are only spared we expect to join in the heavy chorus, in a few weeks and we will shout as loudly as any at the inactivity of the army etc. Another very heavy rain set in yesterday morning and is still raining hard today. The roads are again in

miserable condition and all the streams are rising rapidly whilst the Rappahonnock is very high, so if Gen'l Hooker will move he must wait a few more days. Our Regt. is now on picket and are having a sorry time of it, as there is little or no protection from the weather whilst on outpost duty. I did not go with them as I did not feel very well and rather run any risks lying out in such weather concluded to remain in camp - and I am glad I did. I am not unwell, but did have a slight cold which would not be assisted any by lying out soaking wet for three or four days. At present I feel first rate. I rec'd a letter from Father last evening, all well at home - and that George is now in the city. I hope you will try and make his visit a pleasant one. Give my love to Aunt Amanda Sally Wayne and all my cousins. Write soon and with much love

I am your Affec Bro

Will

Camp near Falmouth Va.

April 26th 1863

Dear Father

I shall write but a short letter, as there is little or nothing to write about. Still in the old camp and cannot say when we will leave it. There is nothing by which we might form a judgment as to the future movements of the Army. One moment it appears as though we would move almost immediately and then again it seems that we will remain here until our time is up - which is certainly coming near, this being the 26th April and many of the companies will have served nine months in fact all from the 10th to the 15th May. Our Regiment will be mustered out of service when the time of the last company expires. The feeling of the men generally is averse to being again put into action and I, as well as many others, think it would not be of great benefit for the Gov't if it is done. For at present over two thirds of men now composing the nine months reg't say they intend reenlisting, but if thrust into an engagement at this late day they will not only in all probability lose their present good names, but the recollections of the hardships and privations of a soldier will be so vivid in their memory, that their minds, as regards reenlistment, will be materially changed and I think that were the matter fairly considered we would not be pushed in the heat of an engagement now, but be allowed to go home and by the reenlistment of a portion of the men now in service the government would have good and effective men from the organization of the Regts and could perform more service and be of greater benefit than all will at the present time. However "let it slide" and time will show what will be the consequences, whether in a move or otherwise.

The weather has again become fine, but not as warm as it was a week or so ago. The roads in our immediate neighborhood are in fine condition but I understand a few miles above as they are hardly passable. As I said in a former letter the Rebs know all our orders and plans even before we - one method by which they obtained news for sometime past was discovered the other day. They had a submarine telegraph across the river at Falmouth leading into a basement of a house in the latter place. Is it any wonder that all our movements are frustrated.

Give one of my photographs to Elize and one to Miss Sallie Clayton. With much love to all and hoping to hear soon I am your Affec. Son

Will

Did you receive my money by express. Excuse this letter as it was written in a very great hurry.

Lexington, Ky.

June 7th, 1863

Dear Brother,

Yesterday morning Mr. Bosbyshell handed me your letter, I was both surprised and much pleased to hear from you, - glad to find you had escaped from the late battles on the Rappahannock. Father in his last letter gave me an account of your arrival. I wonder you did not march through Pottsville with your company, perhaps it was best you did not, as I see by the Journal that very few democrats "were allowed" to join in the reception. Soldiers had better return home quietly - without any reception, than be received exclusively by one political party. All soldiers are not of one party. You did not make much of a stay in Phila. but while you were there you no doubt had a pleasant time, I am glad Tillie is enjoying herself, she always does when she goes to the city. How very fortunate our Regt. has been, not to be moved from here, the 9th Army Corps have left Kentucky and gone to reinforce Gen. Grant at Vixburg, Four Regts of the Corps have been temporarily detached, for provost duty in Ky. We are one of the four. Our station is to be Lexington. How long a time we are to remain here I of course am unable to say, yet I think there is no doubt but we will remain here all summer. The citizens here are much pleased with us, and- that is a good sign that we do our duty. I am glad we were left behind. Vixburg is the last place in the whole south I would wish to go.

We are expecting our old band on every day, I wonder they don't come. If they don't come soon so we won't have them come at all. We are going to give them \$25. dollars a month clothes and board, and the leader \$50. dols. We will pay them out of the company and Regimental funds so you see the pay of the soldiers will not be taxed for their support. Capt. Bosbyshell starts for home Monday on a thirty day leave. He is to be married before he returns. We were payed last Friday, two months up to the 1st June. This is a pleasant city, and a fine country all around. I would not care to stay here until our term of service expires. I am stationed in the city with the Col. The Regt is just on the edge of town. I am having gay times, little to do good horses to ride, and 8 first rate boarding house. Our stay here is more to me like a visit of pleasure than soldiering. Your

Regt. saw some pretty ruff times for the short time you were in the service, but whenever it was called upon it done its duty faithfully. Schuyl County may well be proud of you. Don't forget the Blouse "I sold you, but never received the Rind" Please remit the amount sometime by mail when you feel "flush". Don't think hard of me, for the dun as money in a city is always acceptable. Hoping you are all well, and with much love to all at home, hoping I'll soon hear from you. I remain your Affect. Brother.

John

Pottsville
June 10th 1863

Dear Tillie,

I received your letter of Sunday last this morning and was pleased to hear from you as your letters are so few and far between, that it is almost a treat to receive one from you. Enclosed herewith you will find ten dollars which I presume will be sufficient for present purposes. In regard to the dress which you want Mother to send you, I can only say, that the material was ready to be made up at any time and if you had answered Father's letter which he wrote to you a couple of weeks ago and stated that you wanted it, it would have been ready now for you; but Mother says that at present she can not get a dress maker "for love nor money", consequently you will have to get along without it now. I thought I had told you that I had taken dinner with Sallie W. – as well as the number of times I had visited her. If I did not, no matter, but suffice it to say, I had that extreme pleasure – notwithstanding you were ignorant of the fact. We are all well at home and send much love to you and all. I see by the papers that the 9th Corps has been ordered from Kentucky to Vicksburg and I suppose the 48th is by this time on the road to the support of Gen'l Grant now besieging the Rebels at that place. I wonder how John likes the idea of leaving the good comfortable quarters they have been enjoying at Lexington? From the first, I did not think they would remain there long as "orders to move" come very unexpectedly in the Army, without much consideration for private interests or comforts. Tell Sallie B. I could not find in your letter what she sent me, but hope to receive it when she returns home. My love to her. Remember me to Sallie and Annie Wayne and give my love to them. As also Aunt Amanda and all the girls out Green Ln. Tell Louisa that I was glad to hear that she has become an Auntie. With love to Kate, Gerty and kind remembrances to Mr. Mc Neely. I am your Affec Bro.

Will

"Be a good Girl"

Continental Hotel

Philadelphia

Oct. 23rd 1863

Dear Father,

Upon my arrival in the city I called at Chas Stoke's to see about my clothes and found they had sent them to the Express Office this afternoon and we immediately went to the office to get them but they had been already sent to the depot and they can not be gotten out of the cars until tomorrow when Mr. Tayler will get them and Express them on to Washington so that I shall be able to get them on Monday next. I got my overcoat at the American Hotel but could not get the shirts as they knew nothing about it. It is now raining; will leave in one half hour. Yours affec..

Will

Washington
Oct 24th 1863

Dear Father,

I arrived safely here although it took us nearly eleven hours to come from Phila. Instead of arriving here at 6 this morning it was nearly 11. After getting my breakfast I went out to the signal camp and reported myself for duty. I was very kindly received by the officers who examined me and in answer to my enquiry as to when I should be ready for duty, said, I might have as much time as I wanted but they would rather that I would come to the camp immediately in order that I might not be behind my class, so this afternoon I shall take up my residence again in the field., The Major comd'g said he would have quarters prepared for me so that I could go on immediately with my studies, and that I would mess with him which is I think a general mess of the officers present. I hardly know how I shall get along without blankets but I think I can manage to get along until I find out what I absolutely want. It rained when we left Phila. and is still, and Washington is again one immense quagmire. To tell the truth the mud is over a foot deep on the road between Georgetown and the camp whilst in the city everything looks dirty enough. I shall write you immediately or soon after I am located at the Camp. With much love to all I am your affec. son

Will

Signal Camp Instruction Georgetown D.C.

Oct 26th 1863

Dear Father,

It is after 10 o'clock p.m. and as I am Officer of the day must remain up until after twelve so I thought I might pass away some of the time in writing to you. On Saturday last I wrote you a short letter stating I had arrived and reported as instructed which you no doubt recd ere this. I came out to the Camp Saturday towards evening in the midst of a heavy rain. Upon my arrival I was immediately assigned quarters, but having brought only one blanket I was at a loss to know how I would pass the night but I managed to borrow another and I got through safely. Today however I got two more from the Quarter M, so I shall be comfortable at least. Each of us has a separate officer's tent with fine board floors and each furnished with a stove and as much wood as I want. My quarters are fine. I have a cot to sleep upon and have wash stand, tables, chairs & everything necessary for comfort. We have a servant between us who blackens our shoes 'every morning, carries water, and makes up a fresh fire every morning so that we can turn out of our beds into a nice warm room. All the officers in Camp mess together & there being nine present it makes it a rather pleasant one. Our table is furnished as well as any in the town of Pottsville and we have a great variety of dishes. Roasts and all kinds of vegetables for dinner whilst for breakfast and tea we have generally two kinds of meat and always a glass of milk beside your plate. We have a first rate cook and one could not wish for better living for indeed it would be hard to beat it.

I must congratulate myself upon my appointment and the more I think of it I feel the more gratified. In our class which is called the "September Class" there are "six" who constitute the number who have passed the examination out of over "sixty" applicants who were examined by the board before which I had the honor to appear. Three of our class have just graduated in our best colleges whilst the fourth is a graduate of the best college in Germany besides having been an officer in the Army there, having resigned his position to take part in this rebellion. The fifth is a man who has just finished his education in the East having just returned from there. The sixth, I suppose

you know who he is. I have been busy at the “code” studying it at every opportunity and I can assure you it is no small task although I have no doubt but that it is simple enough when once understood.

Our daily exercises are at 8 o'clock a.m. We take a ride for two hours under the instruction of an officer for that purpose. At eleven we practice the “telegraph” with the instruments, which is also part of our duty in the field, at four o'clock we have recitations on the Signal Code and at five o'clock, dress parade.

It is almost impossible to get to Washington even when a necessity and must send for such things as we want, but it is right for it necessary that nothing in the least should interfere with our studies.

This morning was a beautiful one and at eight o'clock we were in our saddles and on the road for Prices' Mills coming home by way of Washington & Georgetown having ridden over eight miles. I have an excellent horse a sorrel of medium height and a good rider. I have concluded to keep him and shall do so until ordered away. Make as little mention of me as possible to the hell-hounds and fanatics of Pottsville for it might revive the feeling against for whilst they might not be able to oust me from my present position yet still they might likely give me trouble. The longer I stay here the safer I am for they would hardly dare to interfere with me after my having learned the Code. Even now I have all the instruction concerning it in my pocket. However I do not suspect any interference and feel contented I can retain my position for there is not a man living who can swear that I ever said or did one thing which would warrant them to do as they wished. But enough- say nothing about me at present and I am satisfied that all will blow over soon if it has not already done so. Hoping to hear soon from you and with much love to all at home. I am your Affec. Son

Will

Signal Camp Georgetown D.C.

Nov 2, 1863

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter a few days ago concerning a "descriptive list" of a man named Zane, as you have discovered I had no such man in my company and shall write to the parties to that effect. I have again become pretty well accustomed to camp life although we here are endowed with more comforts than those in the field, as usual, the change of living and particularly the change of water has had its effects upon me. During the past week I have been suffering with a severe cold in my head, my "game ear" as I call it being very sore and painful whilst I have had another huge boil on my face. I am now much better but by no means well and have still a great deal of pain on the right side of my head and in my right ear. As I said it is always the case incident to a change in my mode of living that these sundry ills and troubles take place, and they have almost uninterrupted good health afterward. I did not get my uniform until last Friday and was not a little worried at the delay for whilst all in camp were fully equipped I was merely a citizen amongst them. My uniform is a good one and suits elegantly I purchased a sabre at the arsenal and am now ready for any duty. We are progressing slowly in the code and exercise daily with: the flags. We officers generally pair off standing about five hundred yards apart and then communicate with each other. Although we have the alphabet committed to memory and know the signs and motions requisite to make each one and can form them ourselves very quickly yet we find it difficult to read their motions with the same facility; but it only requires time and practice to accomplish all. We expect in a week or so to be stationed on some of the most prominent points in this neighborhood, distant from each other, six or seven miles and then with the aid of glasses communicate one with the other. Just imagine the subscriber on the dome of the Capitol signaling to his friend on the hill top back of our camp!!! It being a distance of about seven miles although when looking at the Capitol from here, the building being so large, it does not appear more than half that distance. I was in the City all day yesterday although I felt anything but comfortable as my face pained me considerably. It was a lovely day, as is

today, and the streets as usual were filled with people promenading. For as you can judge during these times Washington is crowded with strangers and soldiers. I met young Peter Keyser in the street. He is clerking in one of the depts here and I thought he looked a little on the "seedy order".

From what I can Understand here there is a probability when I am ordered from here, that I may be compelled to take little or no baggage with me according to the station to which I may be ordered, as was the last class in which Carpenter is, they being obliged to leave all their things behind in camp where they are taken care of until such time as they may send for them. Therefore I want you to have that leather hand trunk fixed up, have straps put on it and send it to me. If you can get the rim of my watch fixed do so and send it also as I stand very much in need of it. I wish you could buy a silk sash for me in Pottsville, you might possibly be able to buy a good second hand one cheaper than a new one which would answer the same purpose. If not let Joe Paullen Baggage Master on the Ridge Rd. purchase one for me in the city. A year ago a very fine one could be bought for ten or twelve dollars. If you get him to purchase one let him also go to Eisenbrey's corner of 5th & race and get me two out-side woolen shirts, the same as I brought with me from Phila – costing \$3.25 each. One of the drab and one darker color. Also get Fred Foster to make me a pair of boots immediately – double soles and double uppers high in the legs, in fact a regular Cavalry boot. Let him make them over my last measure only that they must be much larger and longer than the fine ones he made me because I am now wearing thick woolen stockings and I want the boots for comfort. I want the tops made so that I can cover my knees or at least the front part. However he ought to know what I want. Let him read the description. I want also all the letters and papers which were in the valise at the time I left home sent with it. Attend to these requests immediately so that I may receive the things as soon as possible. See if you can't buy me a sash in Pottsville enquire amongst some of those who have been in the service and maybe someone would be willing to sell his sash. I think you will find in the Farmers Bk, one hundred & five dolls. to my credit and I send you a chk. to draw it. Use the money to pay for what I want and reserve some for yourself if you need it and send the balance to me in the valise. Direct by Express to W.W.C. Signal Camp, Georgetown D.C. I have no revenue stamp; put one on and put my initials W.W.C. on yourself. Write

me immediately of the receipt of this. 11/2/63. Also send me occasionally a Phila. paper as I do not know what is going on. With much love to Mother & all. I am you affec. son

Will

See first if the above amount is what stands to my credit, however I think it is correct. Tell Mr. Foster I will send him the money for my other boots very soon but pay him for the new ones.

Will

Signal Camp Georgetown D.C

November 6th 1863

Dear Father,

I have just this moment 10 a.m. recd your letter of yesterday and although loaded down with work and study now before me on my desk, I must lay it aside for a few moments to write this. If you think that the sash is worth \$12. and that it is not spoiled, pay that amount for it, if you can not get it for less. Sashes (silk) are certainly very high in price, whether they are worth it or not, and I think it would be better for you to purchase that one of Capt. Smith than to run the risk of getting one from the city. In addition to what I have requested to be sent, you may send me - one or two good razors, soap, brush, strap etc, a box of seidlitz powders, about 50 paper collars (the best kind) square chokers, 15 in size, a pair of slippers, not very heavy, but light and not very large - get them at Foster's two pair of good woolen socks. There may be other things I need but I can not think of them at present. I have been very unwell ever since I have been in camp and have suffered a great deal of pain - in my right ear - earache all the time without any cessation; last night I applied a hot linseed poultice and laudanum and I feel much better today al- though far from being free from pain. In addition to which I 'am still troubled with boils on my body but hope in a few days to be all right again. You

need give yourselves no uneasiness for although I feel anything but like myself, I am still comfortably located and am as snugly situated as though I were at home. I had fully intended to write to Charly Bennet long before this, but having so much to do and being so unwell it was deferred. I will however, in a few days write to him. Then you next write give me John's directions and I will write to him. They are certainly having a very rough time. I see by the papers Hooker has been trying to immortalize him again but not so extensively as at Chancellersville and that Geary and all his staff have been captured, rather mortifying I should think to them.. I can not say how long we will remain here but all think for some time yet as we certainly are unfit for the field as yet. I think in all probability we will be here a month or more, but no one knows as there may be call at any moment for Signal officers when we will have to jump without much ceremony in preparation. The weather has been delicious (if I may use the expression) during the past week. In fact just like the beginning of summer. This morn however it is very windy and my old tent rattles as though it would come down every minute. Will has not been to see me yet. With much love to Mother & all at home.

I am you aff. Son Will

Signal Camp Georgetown D.C.

Sunday eve. Nov. 16th 1863

Dear Father,

I received your letter of the 12th as also the valise containing all you mentioned as having been sent. The boots might have been made somewhat smaller and thereby would have been again to the maker of so much leather for there is certainly a superabundance of it in this pair. It seems strange that Pottsville is so much behind the rest of the world in fashion for Mr. Foster certainly has trade enough to warrant his adhering to style even though it may not please some and here instead of making these square toed and somewhat hearer the measure which was taken from my foot he makes a regular miner shape and miner size - however I shall make them answer my purpose and just imagine that they are all o.k. They are certainly a good serviceable pair of boots and will serve capitally in the field. The sash is a fine one and if all silk is cheap at the price you gave for it. I shaved myself this morning with the razor sent and you may rest assured it was rather a pulling affair as I think I am a most miserable hand at that kind of work. The rest of the things were altogether satisfactory. The watch is very acceptable as it is absolutely necessary for one in my position to have one.

The money was all right. I hardly know what to write about - oh - I almost forgot. When I spoke of sending me the papers etc. which were in the valise I was under the impression that there was another batch of letters and some photographs in it which were, the very articles I wanted and not those which I rec'd and as there was nothing of interest in those you sent I destroyed them at once. Have those things not been discovered in my drawer and if so why were they not sent? It is too bad to have all my correspondence lying about for everybody's criticism and perusal!!!! Last evening it commenced raining and we had a very heavy storm of wind and rain continuing until nine o'clock 'this morning when it almost in an instant stopped and cleared up beautifully but colder, where upon I had my horse saddled and went to the city for a few hours. As I was coming up the avenue I met Mr. Fred Foster who was hurrying to the depot I had but a moment's conversation with him. He came from Balt. yesterday and was going there this evening,

his wife being there. I also saw Hartz and Dan Christ and both agree in saying there is not place like old Pottsville after all.

We are being kept very busy indeed during the past week and expect it will be so until we are ordered from here. Every morning we are divided into three parties and establish three stations, one at the camp being the central or repeating station and the others about four miles off on either side. The distant stations communication, through the central station with each other. One day this week we had a station across the East Branch about seven miles distant but were unable to communicate on acc't of the heavy fog which hung over the river all day although we in camp saw those on that station yet they could not see us. We are beginning to read the motions of the flag quite easily and are only bothered when we can hardly see the flag on account of the changes in the atmosphere. Sometimes, when at a considerable distance, the flag appears just like a black speck upon the horizon and although a circle of over twenty four feet in diameter is made by the flag it will appear to another station as though it were but that many inches. We are however assisted by very good marine and field glasses which are furnished to each officer by the government. Next week we will establish a station on the dome of the Capitol for practice. Major Nicodemus who was in command of the Camp left us on Friday to take charge of the office in the city and Lt. Thayer who was on the examining board has taken his place. We all regretted exceedingly that the Major should leave us for he was much liked by all. Mr. Thayer however is a very fine man and no doubt - it will be just as pleasant for all.

I expect to write to John in a very few days. I think they have been having rather a singular as well rough time in East Tennessee and from what I can understand are not altogether in the safest position, but we must hope for the best. I am exceedingly sorry to hear that Mother and Charley were sick and hope by this time they are again about and entirely well. I rec'd cards (from Miss Eva B. I think) of rates and imagine you will acknowledge the receipt of them.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and remember me to Eliza. I am your Affec. Son

Will

Tell Tim to take good care of Dick.

Signal Camp Georgetown D.C.

November 18th 1863

Dear Father

I have very little material wherewith to build a letter, but I thought I would write to you even though it were but a very few lines. Things are moving on as usual here in camp the usual routine of duty must be gone through daily and we are slowly perfecting ourselves for the more important duties for which we have been appointed. This morning we had a delightful ride into the country and as I have a fine animal I am always anxious for those little trips. This morning Pres. Carpenter and three other officers returned to camp from the Army of the Potomac, perhaps I told you the last class was ordered to the front rather prematurely at the request of Genl Meade for more signal officers, but after over six weeks of idleness this portion has been ordered back again, there being nothing for them to do. They are here of course subject to orders to any part of the States. This afternoon Maj. Nicodemus was in camp and he told Mr. Thayer that in a few days an order would come for four officers who were to go into the field somewhere not yet designated. Mr. Thayer told me I was to be one of the four and that he expects the order day after tomorrow. It may not come however, but from present appearances it is altogether probable. I am myself somewhat anxious to know our destination but of course can have no idea. I would not mind going to Texas or New Orleans for the winter, but almost any where but the Army of the Potomac. I think it is very likely we will be sent to the Army of the Southwest. I shall write you immediately upon the receipt of orders.

Will Vonte was again in the city but I did not get to see him. It is queer he did not come out to see me as our Camp is so easy of access. I wrote you upon the receipt of the valise, which letter I suppose you have rec'd. With much love to Mother and all and with the hope you are all well I am you aff. son

Will

Write soon & remember me to the Conrads and tell Mrs. Conrad I think I will forget all my German here in the Army.

Signal Camp Georgetown D.C.

November 22, 1863

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter dated only yesterday this morning & of course was glad to hear from home again. I was reminded upon looking at the date of it that it was my birthday which significant fact had never occurred to me and I can now hardly realize that such is the fact, that another year has again passed away and that my position and circumstances in life are no further advanced than one year ago. But enough I have started on my twenty sixth year and to tell the truth I really began to feel old.

I had supposed to have surprised you last evening by popping in upon you and remaining with you a few days but on the contrary I am still in Camp although I may still may have that pleasure soon. On last Thursday (of which I wrote you) it was supposed four of us would be ordered away, but where no one knew and many were the conjectures as to our destination. I was spoken of as one who would have to take up his bed and walk. Later in the day an order was sent from the Signal office to the War dept. for approval. The order made a change in the persons to be sent but I was still named as one. To come to the point we are ordered to report at South Carolina to the chief signal officer. We had expected to have the order approved as early as last Friday but there is such a pressure of business at the War dept that it has not up to this time been reached. We are h01Never expecting them every hour and have our things ready so as to move at a moments notice. From what we have been able to learn the Steamship Arago sails from New York on Wednesday next and 'I thought, had we received our orders yesterday or the day before I would curl up to Pottsville for a day or two. Our only hope is not that our orders will not come until too late for the next Steamer when we will be obliged to wait until the one after that which will give us a few days to ourselves. If the orders come tomorrow, as they may, I will be unable .to get home but will have to proceed immediately to New York which fact I regret as I want to purchase some things for mess etc from which I may be prevented from want of time.

All here seem to think we have been fortunate to have been ordered to the Dept of South Carolina as they say it is a delightful place and a good one for signal officers. At any rate this is a fine time of the year to go there and we hope to have become acclimated by the time the warm weather comes again. To what duties or kind of duty we will be put is uncertain we may have land service or we may be ordered aboard a gun boat just as it happens. It matters little to me where I go so long as I am in good health. I am myself delighted at our destination and am thankful I was not ordered to the Army of the Potomac of which I have long since had a surfeit. If I am ordered away without being able to get home I will certainly write to you either from here or from N. York and you do not write until I tell you for I don't know when I would get your letters. Do not say anything in town about my going until I am either off or say so myself in Pottsville. This is a lovely night and as bright as day out and I hope will have as fine weather on our trip to Charlestown, for it certainly must be lovely at sea during such moon- light as we are now having. With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and with the hope that you are all satisfied with the order south. I am your Affect. son

Will

New York
November 27 1863

Dear Father,

I arrived here last night about ten o'clock after a rather tiresome ride. I went early this morning to the Chief Q. Master and obtained my transportation which I would not have had time to get had I left home today. The Steamer Fulton sails tomorrow morning between 9 and 12 o'clock but we must be aboard at 9 as she may sail at any moment afterward. I have met one of the young men who. goes with us and have heard from the rest. This has been a beautiful day and if you could ever call New York crowded I think it was today. Where all the people come from and where they all are going is certainly a subject for contemplation and wonderment and it seems the Doesticks' theory is correct that "all the downtown people are going up town and all the uptown people are going down town." But suffice it to say this city is certainly huge.

I went to a photographer today and sat for a picture. I paid for a dozen which when finished will be sent to me when I shall send home one. Enclosed herewith I have a proof which is an unfinished picture and will not stand the light. I send it as a sample. I think it good. I shall write immediately upon my arrival at S.C. With love to all I am

Will.

Hd Qtrs Dept South Folly Island S.C.

December 4th 1863

Dear Father,

I can not now write you such a letter as I wish to as I am only staying in my present location and have no home I can call my own, writing as I am in a strange tent and with borrowed materials with any number of persons around. Makes it rather more unpleasant than otherwise. I should like to give you full particulars of my voyage here by sea as there were many incidents of note which would prove interesting to you - but as the steamer leaves tomorrow for the North I shall be obliged to curtail this. I went aboard the steamer Fulton at New York on Saturday morning last, but owing to the dense fog we were compelled to lie out in the stream until noon on Sunday when we headed out to sea. The Steamer upon which we came is a side wheeler of twenty three hundred tons and is a first class vessel of the N.Y. & Harve line, she is fitted with all the improvements necessary to comfort and we had everything as comfortable as though we were in a parlor at home. We had about two hundred passengers mostly officers and of course we were not crowded. I had a fine stateroom and as you will directly see I made good use of it. As a matter of course this my first trip on the ocean was a great novelty to me and enjoyed the beginning very much. After we had however gotten out to sea and when the ship began to succumb to the waves and when I found that it was not as easy to walk upon deck as upon dry land and when I found myself at one moment going down and at the next going up I can assure you a certain feeling of unpleasantness came over me which is better now to speak of than to realize, to tell the truth I became very sea sick and soon made tracks for my aforesaid stateroom where I lie off and on for over twenty four hours the most wretched and forlorn individual you ever saw. I have read often over and over again of others' experience but now I have realized it myself and I must say that all the sick headaches, earaches and all the other aches put together will not amount to as much as one days seasickness. After I recovered my appetite increased and I enjoyed the balance of my trip very much I found many congenial officers aboard and we whiled away the time at euchre, chess, checkers, etc. The only rough weather we experienced on the whole trip was when we passed Hatteras which was during the night and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could keep in our berths on account of the rolling of the

ship. The rest of the trip we had very pleasant weather but cold. As I said we sailed from N.Y. on Sunday last about noon and arrived at Hilton Head yesterday morning at ten o'clock. Hilton Head is about sixty miles below Charleston and is the only port here with which a large vessel can enter. As we passed Charleston Harbor we could see Fort Sumpter plainly as well as the firing from our batteries to it and Sullivans Island. Sumpter from the sea does not appear to be much injured but in the direction of our batteries is all knocked to pieces. Naval vessels of all sized & descriptions are to be seen every where in the vicinity of the entrance to the harbor. Upon my arrival at Port Royal I had my baggage transferred to another steamer and at twelve o'clock last night we started for this point going over the same water we did yesterday, that is we came back to within six miles of Charleston where we now are. I found the signal officers here very gentlemanly and they showed us any amt. of favors taking us right into their mess and giving us good quarters. We are her at Gen'l Gillmores Hd Qtrs. and are surrounded on all sides with officers connected with the dept. All this evening, the band of the 103rd N.Y. has been serenading the Gen'l and finer music I never heard and could only wish you could hear it. My tent in which I am now writing is not more than a hundred feet from the shore and there is one continual roar as the wave:~ come over the breakers. I have just rec'd orders to go on a station on a new line just established between here and Hilton Hd. I suppose I may prepare myself as though I was to serve out a certain time in prison as to go on one of the stations here. However I suppose it will be all pleasant enough after while. I shall be compelled to close this what I call a miserable letter and am sorry I did not have the time and facility for writing a much more interesting one when I have so much of interest to write you I shall in my next give you full particulars of everything. Direct your letters to Lt. W.W.C. Signal Officers - Port Royal, South Carolina, via New York.

Don't forget to send me papers & write by every steamer which leaves N. York every seven or eight days. I am in first rate health. With much love to all I am you affection
son

Will

I am ordered to take charge of the station on Kiawha Island and leave here this morning. It is one of the stations on the line between here and the head. W

Sterno Inlet S.C. (Folly Island)

December 12th 1863

Dear Father,

I wrote you by last steamer which letter I suppose you have rec'd ere this. Ever since my arrival in this Dept. I have been shoved about from one place to another without having any fixed location where I might arrive at some degree of comfort. We are about establishing a new line of signal communication between Gen'l Gillmore's Hd Qtrs here upon Folly Island and Hilton Head a distance of over sixty miles and it is from this cause I have been here and there attempting and trying the best location for a station in this neighborhood. The stations on this line are erected on or near the sea coast and the building of which has been fraught with a great deal of labor and not a little danger, many of which are from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet high; to the tops of which officers and men are compelled to climb, by means of ladders, many times during the day and night. You will easily perceive how those on the tops of the stations get full benefit of any stray breeze, which, here in this locality and at this time of the year, are having, as I may say, it all to themselves. The line has not yet been opened for the transaction of business, but we have already sent messages through from Hd Qtrs. This is the most forlorn and God forsaken country I ever wish to be in and have wished myself a thousand times back to old Army of the Potomac notwithstanding the reverses and hardships to which that Army is being continually subjected. There is in fact nothing but sand and plenty of wind to keep it in motion. Land everywhere, sand in everything and sand on all things you eat. There is not a stone to be found nor has there ever been one found on this Island and no matter how deep down you may dig it is the same as upon the surface and yet notwithstanding this fact vegetation thrives and we have fire woods of live oak, pine and the much talked of and most miserable looking palmetto trees scattered around everywhere. Gen'l Gillmore has his Hd Qtrs on Folly Island about three miles from Sterno Inlet and about fourteen from our batteries on Morris Island, which latter island lies north of us and separated from us by Light House inlet. We have signal communication as well as telegraph from the front to Hd Qtrs. We can distinctly hear the firing on and from the Rebels every day, shots being exchanged every ten or fifteen minutes by way of diversion. I believe I wrote you that upon passing Charleston Harbor

we could distinctly see the city, Fort Sumpter, the Rebel batteries on James Island and ours on Morris. It is the general impression here that nothing will be done by our forces here for sometime & it is of the opinion amongst many that our force is inadequate for the reduction of the Rebel fortifications and to hold Charleston. However I heard yesterday that Fort Sumpter or a great part of it had been blown up, but whether by the Rebels or our guns am unable to say nor can I vouch further truth of the story. You will hear anything which transpires in this section sooner by the papers than you will by letters. I got hold of a Herald of the 6th yesterday and of course was delighted to hear once from the civilized world. I see that Burnside has been having a hard time and that after being compelled to fall back was being besieged at the latest accounts but I hope by this time he has either been reinforced or has been able to maintain his position. The 48th has been again engaged and I see that a couple whom I knew have been killed or wounded. Have you heard lately from John? How is he?

During the first week of the month the Wehauken, U.S. Gunboat, as you no doubt have seen by the papers, sunk off Charleston Harbor during those heavy storms and thirty lives lost. The storm was a severe one and great anxiety was manifested for the safety of many of the vessels of the fleet. During the last few days and now whilst I am writing it is raining very hard and it is dreadful out doors being as dark as it could be and pouring down. I am at Sterno Inlet and am in a strange tent and have nothing but my blankets with me my baggage being up the beach about a mile where I had put up temporary quarters a few days since. The reason of my being here is that we have a look out on the top of one of the government buildings here which is not altogether very pleasant, that ~s climbing up a ladder and sitting cross legged on the top of the roof - which to me is rather hard, for you know I am not much of a climber. Even now in this storm I have a man there on the lookout and I certainly pity him that it is necessary for him to be there. Since I have been on the island it has been as though I had no home and have eaten at no time, more than two meals a day and most of the time only one and I tell you I am getting tired of it and if I don't soon become better situated shall make complaint for I think my situation is not considered by the chief signal officer who is acting with little forethought although he sees me every day. He seems to be so interested in the completion of this new line that he thinks of nothing else. The other officers who came down with me have

been ordered and are now on the different stations along the line in most lonesome and unpleasant places whilst I was retained here, as I call it, for an emergency man, I hope however that in a few days it will be much better for me.

Being situated as we are here right on the coast we have any quantity of wind and this drifts the sand about that we are during snow storms (of sand) all the time - and we are covered with it, sometimes enough to blind one.

There are two steamers running between Hilton Head & New York, which carry the mail - one being due at either port every eight days. You will see in the papers the arrival of each steamer and you can write immediately as it lies in N.Y. about four days after its arrival, you can however write at anytime and it don't matter how old the letter is only so I hear from home. If any of my friends want to know why I don't write tell them I have no time or facilities just now but that they shall write to me and I will answer soon. You give them the directions. With much love to all at home and with the hope that the next steamers bring me letters & papers. I am your affectionate son

Will.

Direct Lt. W.W.C.
Signal Corps, U.S.A.
Port Royal, S.C. via N.Y.

“Steno” Folly Island S.C

January 12th 1864

Dear Father,

I received your letter of the 5th this morning and answer now in order to have it ready to send to H. Head by steamer tomorrow. As usual I was very glad to hear from home again but am sorry Mother has been so poorly and hope that she is by this time well again and about as usual. I received all the letters you wrote, I think, as well as any number of papers, but they missed the regular steamer and they were accidentally brought here by an extra mail several days since. The papers were certainly acceptable being a file of so many dates. We here get the papers but only the issue of that day on which the steamer sails. I, however, have the opportunity of reading all the issues of the Herald as one of Capt. Atwood's clerks is the newspaper agent and he has them sent to him. You need not send the Herald or any of the N. Y. papers only the Journal & Phila.

There is little or nothing going on here to write about which would prove interesting, for we are doing nothing towards a forward movement, at least, there have been no signs come under my observation; nor do I think it likely that anything will be attempted; nor do I think anything can be effected towards the reduction of Charleston, at present with the force now here. Cannonading is still keeping up in the neighborhood of the city, at intervals every day, the booming of the guns being instantly heard at this point. While I am writing there is very heavy firing indeed, somewhere but I can not tell where it is, most likely the rebels shelling one of our boats in one of the inland streams.

I have met several rebels lately who deserted and I had a good deal of conversation with them about different matters. They all however give the same acts destitution, poverty, etc, but that many of them think they will be able to hold out against us until they will finally establish for themselves what they have attempted, namely a separate government: but I think differently and believe, although it may require sometime, that they must ultimately from sheer exhaustion, if I may use the expression, give up and acknowledge the superiority of the North. On Coles Island about 2 miles from this point our pickets meet and have been and are still in the habit of exchanging papers. A Rebel who had made many such exchanges came over the other night or day for the Presidents proclamation and being detained so long by our boys in their quarters

found, upon his arrival at the outer picket posts, his officers visiting their line and of course they having discovered his absence it would be death for him to return; so making a virtue of necessity remained with us to be sent North. He said he was in Charleston the first of this month and says our shells are not doing a great deal of damage. Upon answering the question as to whether there were any ladies or children in the city, replied "nothing else". Another incident showing the feeling of the rebs is worth relating. Some boxes & letters for a lady in Savannah were sent here by order of War Dep't to be forwarded across the lines. So under a flag of truce for or five of our officers went to a rebel officer's quarters where the things were being handed over. The rebel officers were finely dressed in plain grey without any marks as to rank or position whilst ours were of course "rigged" in their shoulder straps - and one of the number wore a pair of kid gloves. Whilst the necessary papers were being made out and they were conversing in a rather cool and distant manner - one of the rebs espied the "kids" but without allowing that fact to be known by sign or work, in the easiest and most unconcerned manner, quietly put his hands into his coat pocket and drew from them a pair of kid gloves, which after carefully dusting on one hand, coolly began to put them on which he did with the air and ease of one who was no stranger to their use - "Actions speak louder than words" which was verified in this case. "Confound him" said our officer "I could not get ahead of him any way". It was an exceedingly good joke on this officer who is on Genl Gillmores staff. I have plagued him about it and he acknowledged himself "sold" and that by a reb.

The weather here has been very changeable and we have had a great deal of rain. We are aware that it is winter for we have had and are still having very cold weather - sufficiently cold to freeze the water in my tent in the bucket not on the top but solid. You no doubt think it adds much to comfort to have a stove but I tell you there is little use for one without pipe to carry away the smoke, so I am situated pt present for the other night whilst in bed I was awakened by a heavy jerk at the stove pipe on the out~ side of the tent and got up just in time to see it disappearing through the canvass. Of course it flew as if on wings and that is the last of it. It is not a singular occurrence for we are surrounded by thieves who would take up your floor while you are asleep if they thought they would not waken you. Nothing is allowed to lie around loose for it immediately confiscated by those villains. We have a couple of hundred laborers here, the off scouring of New York

City and you can trust nothing near them. I shall however in a few days get some pipe from the Head and shall take it in every night merely in order to remove the temptation. I believe I told you I was in Capt. Atwood's mess and it is a good one. I wish you knew him or that he would come to Pottsville. He is as you are aware post Q. master and has all the business of this end of the island under his charge. He is a splendid looking man a few years older than I and is one of the finest men I ever met and am satisfied if he were to show himself in Pottsville would set half the girls crazy after him if they once knew him. I am with him a great deal and at night when I sometimes want to be alone to write or read in my tent he comes and takes me to his office notwithstanding I was there nearly the whole day and says I must keep him company or play a game of whist. He's a strictly temperate man which has its influence over those with whom he associates not excepting myself and he is liked by everybody. I can not help but speak of him being as I am so much in intercourse with him - and am glad I was able to have him as an associate as I said I only wish I could get him to go to Pottsville but I am afraid that is one of the impossibilities. I am so glad to hear my boy Tim is getting to be so much of a man and am satisfied if he lives will make a high mark for himself. Tell him to be a good boy and that I often think of him as well as all at home. No doubt the boys all are enjoying themselves in the snow or on the ice, the latter especially as they are so well provided with skates. How is George coming on at school? Tell him he should study hard while he has a chance and improve every moment by reading for now he has the opportunities which he may never get again. Whilst I look back it pains me to think how many hours I wasted which might have been devoted to my benefit and I now am enjoying the results. Tell him to write to me and I will answer him promptly. I wish he would write to me as he would thereby improve himself much and would give him a practice in letter writing, which would be with a great deal to him hereafter. He can write to me without any fears of errors etc. and I would gladly correct him in them if necessary. Urge it upon him. Tell Tillie I am anxiously awaiting a letter from her and that I was glad to hear she was favoured with a serenade - even though all the circumstances were taken into consideration. I thought the young ladies were enjoying themselves at parties etc. as usual and Pottsville I suppose is as gay as ever. Never mind - we expect to do the same thing at some future time - but how future is the question. I often think how long will it

be before I get home again even though I remain in good health and feel that it will be a long time indeed unless the war ends. For it is exceedingly difficult for any officer to get a furlough and doubly difficult in our corps as there are so far - The balance of my class arrived here on last Fulton & have already been assigned to duty. I was exceedingly surprised and pleased also, to see them walk into my tent. You can imagine my surprise. We now have the whole class here. I must stop or else I shall tire you. Remember me kindly to all my friends. To the Conrads & Mrs. ??? Don't forget Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson and Eliza must also come in for a share - and tell her the boy is comfortably located and eats off of white dishes - no more tin cups & fat port. At least at present. Remember me also to Mr. Brown and his folks. With much love to Mother, Tillie & all the boys and with the hope that every steamer brings me letters I am you Affec Son

Will

I am in good health and have gained 8 or 10 pounds since I came here. Remember me to Uncle James & Aunt Maria and tell him I am often reminded of his business here.

Off "Fort Fisher" New Inlet N.C.

January 13th 1864

Dear Father,

It is now nearly nine p.m. and I feel tired and worn out after another day of excitement and fighting, a repetition of our work of the 24th and 25th of last month. As you may have supposed we would, we left Beaufort yesterday morning and arrived here yesterday afternoon, when we thought we would have been able to land the troops before night but we were unable to do so and the disembarkation did not commence until this morning. We are accompanied this time by Maj. Gen. Terry in command of the troops and not by the Beash, as the rebels call him, and who is now per orders of President rusticating at Lowell, Mass., and our hopes are that this time our operations may meet with success. As I said we commenced landing the troops at daylight this morning and no one can conceive a finer day and a smoother sea than we have had everything operating most favorably and as far as we have gone augers well for favorable results. The positions taken by the different vessels of the Fleet and the place of landing were the same as on the first occasion, except that the vessels took a closer position to the Fort. Whilst the troops were landing the Monitors and the Ironsides moved slowly up and lay close under the Fort (?) from which point they opened fire keeping it up all day, the balance of the Fleet or a portion of them opened on the woods along the beach between the Fort and the troops. We met with no opposition in landing and captured about fifty head of cattle off of which many a poor soldier made his supper this evening. At noon or rather about three o'clock all the Fleet steamed slowly on towards the Fort and took their positions opening upon it about four & half. In the mean time the troops were being organized and marched slowly down the beach. Our firing was a repetition of the last attack and the sight was sublime as well as terrific and it was kept up until dark when all the vessels withdrew for safe anchorage for the night and to renew the attack at day-light tomorrow. It was thought that the assault would have been made today, but everything not being ready it was not attempted but the morrow will usher in on scenes of slaughter, for I think that the Fort cannot be gained by assault without great destruction of life. All

here seem confident in our ability to capture it and look upon it as a fixed fact and will admit of nothing but success, at any rate we have a General (Terry) who will at least make the attempt and who is determined to succeed if it is possible. The General is the same with whom I was last summer, and when he came aboard here, greeted me very cordially and I had a long walk with him here as well as on his vessel. As usual the Admiral goes everywhere in this frail vessel of his, one time in the very front and the next moment at the rear, never idle but under steam all the time. He is certainly an energetic man and although cool at all times yet is enthusiastic in all he undertakes, acts suddenly but all his actions are accompanied with force and the Commodore receives the same treatment at his hands as the Ensign commanding a tug boat, there is no distinction made with him and he compels each and everyone to perform his duty and if any fail or neglect to perform it, he has no hesitancy about inflicting punishment upon the offender. I like him and have thus far gotten along admirably with him, as well as all who are with him, and whilst for our country's sake I wish that we may be successful here, I also desire it for the Admiral's sake for I know he has done all in his power to render it a success on his part and the world should know that the Navy during the last expedition did all that could be expected of it and our object would have been accomplished then if it had not been for the (I don't know what) of Butler. But you can hardly imagine the delight of all here when the news came of his removal and the only regret is that it was not done long ago. As I said in the beginning of this I am tired and have been on my feet all day, sending & receiving messages and the excitement incident the occasion has almost played me out. Our firing today was not quite as heavy as before nor was it of so long duration, but it certainly was hot enough for those inside the Fort. At daylight it commences again and indeed I heartily wish it was over, for it is certainly not one of, the most pleasant amusements to be banging at others and being banged at by them for a whole day through. I dare not hear what our losses are but they are not heavy. Again I have to record the bursting of more guns, but not Parrot Rifles as before, but two fifteen inch guns one in: the monitor Sanonicus (?) & the other in the Mahopac. There were several wounded in each turret, but have heard of none killed. Several of the vessels were struck but have not heard of the losses, if any. The troops did not engage the enemy but have taken their positions, preparatory to the assault tomorrow. You will probably hear news

per the papers ere you receive this as letters are generally delayed on the road. I received your letter of the 9th yesterday whilst at sea, a vessel meeting us, which had just come down from Fortress Monroe with the mail. I was indeed glad to hear from you as some time had elapsed between your letters and I was also glad to hear that our land out west may prove valuable and turn out good oil territory and sell when a good round sum is offered. I should indeed like to be able to obtain employment or become interested in some way in that business for I think that it was about time to be able to accumulate something and I would soon leave this service for a lucrative position in civil life and you may depend upon it that if an opportunity is offered I shall avail myself of it without hesitation. Not that I am dissatisfied where I am, but I think I am losing much valuable time and that if I remain here much longer, I will hardly deem myself fit for any civil pursuits and will of necessity have to remain a soldier for occupation, which is a position that after the war, I do not desire.

I am exceedingly sorry that John met with such bad treatment at the hands of Mr. Hughes and I think it strange that after promising so faithfully to give him employment and keeping him so long from seeking any other, that he should have turned him off so suddenly, but we must hope that he may soon obtain an agreeable and profitable situation. I am enjoying first rate health and have been more kindly treated by the sea lately, having thus far escaped sea sickness, although I must confess that at times I do not feel as though I was on as sure footing as when on dry land and there is at times a slight tendency towards squeamishness, but I begin to feel as though I am being accustomed to the rolling of the ship and will soon get over those early feelings although there are many old officers in the Navy who get sick every time they go to sea.

I shall close as it is getting late and I am very tired as I was up nearly all last night and in all probability will be called up during this night to communicate with the Gen. who is ashore.

I will write you again the first opportunity but our mails for the present will be somewhat irregular. A steamer leaves tomorrow for the North and I write this to have it ready in time.

Do not neglect writing to me often and I will write whenever an opportunity offers. With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and with kind regards to all friends I am you Affectionate son,

Will

1 a.m. 14th Jan.

As I predicted, I have been kept busy all night sending messages in regard to movements tomorrow etc. I shall I suppose, get little rest although I am tired enough. It is a beautiful night or rather morning bright as day and quite pleasant.

Will

Steno Folly Island, S.C.

January 31, 1864

Dear Father,

As usual, in order that you may receive a letter from me upon the arrival of each steamer, I write this although I intend not to make it anything but a note to let you know I am still in the land of the living and am in good health. There is very little going on here of interest and since last writing nothing has transpired of importance. Though I almost forgot - Gen. Gilmore has moved his Head Quarters to Hilton Head and it seems now as though we here were left "Out in the cold" and all the "importance" which has heretofore been attached to this island has as it were vanished. His removal of course takes with it all the "heads" of the different departments and instead of this being the place for the transaction of all the business of the dept. and turning great numbers here at all times, thus making a lively appearance and constant show of activity, we now in a turn must go to Hilton Head. Signal Hd. Qts. have also gone and now my station is the terminus of the line, communicating with the upper end of this island & Morris by electric telegraph. Lt. Andrews an old signal officer has been ordered to this point with me. I can not say how we will get along together for to begin with I don't like his appearance or "looks" if I may call it. Besides which although he is fully aware of my seniority by virtue of appointment, (He being as all the others only an acting signal off.) yet still he seems unwilling to resign the command of the station to me and feels as though he should be the head. But "if the court knows itself" and I presume it does, so long as he and I are together there shall be only one in command and it is very probable it won't be he. He has been in the Corps for two years and is a young man of good education and no doubt of very fine family and would be good looking if it were not for the fact that he has a white beard allover his face and looks as though he might be fifty years of age. He comes well prepared in the way of tents etc. having quite as extensive quarters as a Brigadier. I may out of courtesy be compelled to mess with him which I regret somewhat as our mess at present is all I can desire. You may rest assured however that I will have no difficulty with him for as I said he is fully aware of my seniority. Lt. Town who has

been chr. Signal officer in this dept. has been made a Capt. in the Signal Corps U.S.A. and has been relieved of this command & will go north. Cpt. Clumm now in the north has been ordered to succeed him. I suppose we may anticipate any number of changes always incident to a change in the command. Since last writing we have had very disagreeable weather raining one day and bitter cold the next. While I am writing 9 p.m. it is nearly as bright as day out and cold. I suppose you have had any quantity of sleighing & skating. I received no letters or papers by this Fulton. They may however be still at the Head although all the others here have rec'd their mail yesterday. You must excuse this scrawl as I have written it in about five minutes - not intending in the first place to write much - but merely as I said to let you know I was well. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and with remembrances to all my friends.

I am your Aff. Son

Will

" Steno" Folly Island, S.C.

Feb. 5, 1864

Dear Tillie,

To tell the truth now that I have sat down to write, I hardly know what to write about or even how to begin - for the dull monotonous life which we are leading here affords so little matter wherewith to write an interesting letter. When I last wrote you I believe I told you I had just returned from a visit to Gregg and Wagner and that I would give you particulars in this. Whilst there I saw much all of which I had intended to write you and give you all the minutest particulars, but now since I have began to attempt it my abilities fail me. However to begin in the morning about eight o'clock Capt Atwood had the ambulance ready and we started first taking in two others, up the beach. It was a lovely morning but a little misty which augured bad for our prospects in seeing Charleston but the clerk of the weather favored us for in a couple of hours it cleared up beautifully. As I said we started up the beach going about eight miles when we arrived at the north end of this island which as I said before is divided from Morris Island by Light House Inlet. The ferry boat was then at the dock and we drove immediately aboard to be taken to the other side. The Capt. of the vessel having found that we had left home without any provision for the inner man immediately had a fine lunch put up for us, and I can assure he rec'd the hearty thanks of the party that day for his kind consideration, for being gone all day you may w811 suppose we needed something to eat but were not thoughtful enough to provide for ourselves. After landing safely on Morris we again drove up the beach. Before starting from home we had heard that our batteries were going to open on Sumpter and along the road we could hear the shells whizzing & bursting and we were all the more impatient to get then in order to see the effects on Morris Island is, as this, one bed of sand and is a more forlorn place on acct of the very little shrubbery of any kind. We arrived first at Fort Wagner where so many valuable lives were lost in the different attempts to take it from the enemy. The surface of the Country around is, I may say, nothing but & desert and as I stood looking at it & saw .the manner in which our troops worked themselves up to the very walls of the Fort, I was lost in wonderment as to how it

was possible for them to do it and how anyone could live in the trenches which our troops threw up to cover themselves. But they succeeded and threw up those parallels to within fifty feet of the Fort when they made the assault with the success so well known. The ground in every direction lies strewn with pieces of shell, grape canisters & pieces of iron of all sizes and shapes which were used by the Rebels during that assault. The Fort since it came into our possession has been beautifully built and mounted with the finest guns we have one and two hundred pounders. It is certainly a magnificent piece work and will repay anyone to visit it. The magazines and bomb proof shelters for the men and strongly built & one feels as safe in the latter as at home in Pottsville. From the parapets of this Fort we could distinctly see, all the batteries as Sullivan's Island, Castle Pinckney, Forts Johnson (the strongest Fort they have) and Simpkins on James Island whilst Sumpter stood up before us as though it were but a few yards from us and the City of Charleston in the distance though magnificently grand and somber in appearance reminded one of the "deserted village" for we could see no one but the sentries on the wharf. After seeing all in Wagner we went to Gregg about a quarter of a mile further up. Gregg is a battery mounting six guns and is right on the sea shore at the extreme northern end of Morris Island. Sumpter lies directly in front of it and certainly does not appear to be more than a hundred yards distant. It is now nothing more than a mass of ruins, a pile of bricks and mortar, yet the Rebel flag floats from the staff high above the ruins. Not a man or any sign of living thing could be seen in the fort but if the flag staff would have been shot down I suppose there would have been someone to replace it, which we supposed would occur whilst we were there for many of the shots came so close we hardly thought it was possible to miss it. It was a beautiful sight standing upon the parapets of Gregg - to view the scenes around - standing with my face to Sumpter I could see Sullivan's Island dotted all along the beach with the summer residences of the Charlestonians and with the immense earthworks looming up the distance and all sides. On my left lie the City and the Forts on James Island whilst on my right which let out the harbor lie the fleet quietly awaiting, macabre like, for something to turn up. I could not help but admire the impudence if I may call it, of one little Monitor looking like a cheese box, while being on picket, lie almost under the very walls of Sumpter. As I said the weather was fine in fact it was hot during the middle of the day and we had a very pleasant time indeed and I saw,

that which I desired even since the war began, the locality where the rebellion was opened. I wish you had been here to go along, but I am afraid you might have felt somewhat uneasy when you saw the rebel's guns pointed at you although they did not fire. I paid a visit of two days this week to the officer on the station on Kiawah which is the first station from mine. I had a delightful time but came away satisfied I would not change places with him as there is no one near him but those employed in the Station. Rather lonesome - don't you think so? But then he is favored in a measure, as Ducks & game of all kinds are in abundance whilst he can gather as many clams and oysters as he wishes. Clam chowders, oyster patties and Georges' favorite dish, oyster pie are always to be found on the bill of fare. We have any quantity of oysters and clams here although they are not quite as fine as those lower down the line. Are you still having cold weather at home? and it is still winter with you? Here we have had little to remind us of the season of the year. For although we did have some very cold days, yet the weather has been delightful and many days so hot as to make one uncomfortably lazy. Upon reading papers from the North we can hardly realize that you are having snow storms and rivers frozen over whilst here it is so warm and the air is filled with the music of birds of all kinds that we can not believe but that summer is already upon us. I sent you last mail some photographs which I think are very poor - did you receive them or the books which I sent to George. I send him this mail "the woman in white" which you may have read and so have I my reason for sending it. When you write or have an opportunity to mention to the lady who wrote to you from New York ask her if she rec'd my letter and that I am anxiously awaiting an answer to it. I send herewith check on Asst. Treas. U.S. for one hundred dollars drawn to Mother's order. Eighty dolls. for herself and twenty for you. I rec'd pay for only two months and that is nearly half, accept it as I don't want it. I also send enclosed a note which you will divide amongst the boys for their own benefit as I can not give them any small change. I will keep them in this way in pennies. Use the money which I send you for your own benefit and to best advantage. It is not a great deal but all I can spare at present. I rec'd another lot of papers a few days ago although they were a long time in coming. I suppose I have received all which have been sent me and hope you have received all my letters.

Remember me kindly to Sallie Beck and give her my love and ask if she would like a correspondent from this neighborhood and that I would be most happy to write to one who has been as kind friend as she. Don't forget Mrs. Jas. Patterson and tell her I often think of her and the children and would have written to her if I had thought there would be no impropriety in so doing. Give my love to Mrs. Bergman and Eva and to all my lady friends. Tell Eliza I am living a very easy and I may say lazy life and have had thus far very little to encounter in the way of hardships. My health is excellent and am having a good time generally although I would much prefer being nearer home where our mail facilities would be better and could hear oftener from home. I have waited for mail from N.Y.C. and it has not yet come. I must send this off now before I get letters from home.

With love to all I am your Affec. Bro.

Will

Folly Island, S.C

February 6, 1864

Dear Father,

I wrote to Tillie yesterday and intended keeping the letter open until I rec'd news from home but as no steamer arrived from the Head with the mail I was compelled to send It by hand this morning by a person who was going to Port Royal. However this evening the mail arrived and I rec'd your letter of the 27th and I write this in answer expecting to get It to the Head by a steamer which leaves tonight at twelve o'clock when it will be in time for the next mail north. The letter which I sent to Tillie contains a draft from pay master Freeman on Asst. Treas. N.Y. for one hundred dollars. I intended sending it by mail, but the officer to whom I gave it took it to the express office and has returned me the receipt. There was no necessity for so doing as it might just as well have gone by mail - but there is no harm done and all I hope is that it gets home safely. As I stated in her letter I send eighty dolls. to Mother and twenty for herself with the other small amount to be divided amongst the boys. The mail arrived from the north three days ago but they were short of steamers and could not send it here before this evening. In my previous letters I mentioned that there were strong indications of a move. Last night the expedition left Hilton Head in vessels destination however unknown. Over ten thousand men composed the expedition and all kinds of speculations are rife as to the point to be attacked - however in a few days we will hear and know with what success they have been favored. We have been having splendid weather more like summer than winter. I believe I wrote of it to Tillie. Tell Tim I rec'd his valentine for I think he sent one and say to Frank & Tim I can not tell who sent the other but suppose one of them did. "Mock" has left me and gone home to his parents at Hilton Head but if Tim wants me to bring or send a black boy home who can sing & dance like a good fellow I have such a one now named Cornelius - who is very little bigger than Tim - but quite as bright and more intelligent than any I have seen.

What a rebuke to the brave Col. to find the very small space allotted to him in the estimation of the government!!! The very man on whom he has tried to use his influence laughs in his face and coolly puts another star in his shoulder strap by order of the very authorities, with whom the brave Col. thinks he has so much influence. And then he tries

to vent his spleen upon me! Shades of the mighty how ye have fallen!! Never mind he will hear more if he lives long enough for I am not the only one who has the gentleman under consideration and if he has a particular fondness in seeing his name in print, I think he will have his vanity gratified by certain publications which will be scattered broadcast ere long.

I intended writing but a few lines merely to say I had written to Tillie and mention what I had sent. You can see that I have written this in a very few minutes as I have but little time before the steamer starts. Hoping to hear soon and all are well at home - I am Affect.

Love to all.

Will

"Steno" Folly Island, S.C.

Feb. 14, 1864

Dear Father,

I rec'd your letter of the 5th yesterday morning and also one from Mr. Brown dated the 1st - which you will please acknowledge to him and that I will answer it soon. I am almost afraid I am too late to get this off by this steamer as the mail left here last night for Hilton Head and there is little certainty of another leaving here in time to catch the first steamer north - however I write this and watch for an opportunity.

There has been considerable activity in this department for the last couple of weeks. As I already told you that a great number of troops were being moved from this island and being sent to H.H. preparatory to going on some expedition. That expedition, as you no doubt have seen by the papers, has left H.H. and have landed at Jacksonville, Florida, from which point a move will be made. The troops are under the command of Gen. Seymour although Gen. Gilmore has been there most of the time. Simultaneously with that expedition from four to five thousand infantry with artillery left "steno" and crossed to Kiawah Island marching the whole length of the island without meeting any signs of the enemy until they were about crossing to John's island where they had some pretty severe skirmishing driving the enemy, killing and wounding quite a number and capturing several prisoners. The first of the rebs whom they met was about two hundred cavalry commanded by a captain who was the owner of the plantation on which they fought. A chaplain who witnessed the fight said he never saw a braver man and all fought desperately until the Capt. fell dead pierced with half a dozen balls, when the others broke and fled. We lost a few killed and several wounded who were brought to this point when I saw again the horrors of war but not on so large a scale as in Va. last winter. The troops have returned, coming back Friday afternoon after accomplishing as they say, all they wanted.

To show how the enemy is continually and in every particular on the alert and how they take advantage of everything is shown by the following. In that raid several horses were captured and in a saddle bag on one of them, was found a book containing word for word every message which we sent over the line from day to day. The book had been kept and the messages read by a signal officer in the Confederate Army who was

stationed near our Botany Bay station where he could with ease read all messages sent. From the different marks of his, we could see what messages he had forwarded to his Comdg. Officers and those to which there was no importance attached he did not send. The book was nicely kept, and very neatly written. The Reb officer's name was "Mills" but we could not find out his rank. Don't you think it a pretty good joke on us? I always felt satisfied that the enemy would take advantage of our high towers and be able to read messages sent them from a great distance. There are now eight rebel prisoners including a Lt. in the guard house here and a harder looking set of men would be hard to find and I only wonder how it is that these men without a sufficient supply of the necessaries of life and so poorly clad, can hold out against us in the manner in which they have – but I think they can not do so much longer and will be compelled as I said before to give up and acknowledge the superiority of the north - and the power of the government. A rebel shoe was exhibited here the other day made of heavy pieces of leather roughly sewed together for the tops and nailed on to a wooden sole over an inch thick. The sole itself had a piece of iron fastened all around it which very like a heavy horse shoe. I can't say how such a covering for the foot would wear but it certainly would be a load for anyone to carry.

The weather here has been very mild and pleasant though we have not yet, as you imagine, any vegetables of this years growth - nor is there much likelihood of our getting any here in this locality. I am sorry to find that certain parties in Pottsville still allow their feelings to overcome their better judgment and stoop to as low and mean actions as in the case of that person of whom you wrote. I should think that such men should be kindly remembered and the day might come when they will feel ashamed of themselves. Has that man whom Mrs. P. suspects sent one of his two sons in the Army or will he ever allow them to go and assist the government to which he professes so much loyalty? No! When he does that, others will think him to be what he thinks he is now. I cannot understand how such men holding such positions in society and who are supposed to possess at least some common sense can act in such a manner.

I think Tillie was very fortunate to escape serious injury or (might be) burned to death - no doubt she must have been considerably alarmed. I suppose by this time you have rec'd the money which I sent Mother by express. No news here and I feel very little

in the humor for writing and this no doubt is a rather disconnected affair - but excuse it if necessary. With much love to Mother & all at home

I am your affect. son

Will

Give my love to Louisa Clemens & remember me to Mrs. Patterson

I have concluded not to send money in this letter but will send it by express next steamer as I was afraid of losing it if I sent by mail. I want you to buy the following articles and send me by express taking first the precaution of paying all expenses in order that the box may not be held in any offices for neglect of payment due.

Good Sack Coat - with staff buttons. Stokes has my measure but think you might get a better and maybe cheaper one from D. Smith. If you get Smith to make it let him be sure to make it large enough and fashionable. To cost from \$15. to \$20. but he ought to make a good one for the lesser sum. It must be larger than the measure which Smith has for my uniform coat.

1 Box (100) paper collars 15 square chockers (good)

1 hair comb & 1 fine comb

Castile soap (good) three lbs.

white cotton socks, which I left; about ½ dozen

Bottle Ess. ginger

2 cravats or neckties, narrow & black or dark col.

2 white pillow cases - about twenty four inches long and twelve in. wide for pillow which Mother made.

2 white sheets - size of army blanket - but not quite so wide. If Mother thinks I ought to have more than two send them. I think two would be sufficient, don't you?

1 pr. scissors - small

1 1/4 gross Anderson's Solace chewing tobacco good smoking tobacco

If Mother has a "light & small quilt" send it even though it be a poor one, most anything will do here.

Gold cord enough for 1 pro pants

Anything else you may choose to send, but nothing perishable as we have everything to eat here we wish.

Be sure and get receipt from express co. so that in case the box should get lost you may recover the value and enquire whether after it leaves Pottsville, it will be sent through without detention in New York for any amount which may be due other Express Companies.

Direct: Lt. W.W.C.
Signal Corps U.S.A.
Hilton Head, S.C.

To Chas. W. Clemens Esq.
Pottsville, Penna.

Steno Folly Island, S.C.

February 20, 1864

Dear Father,

Enclosed herewith you will find "Forty (40) dollars" with which I want you to purchase the articles for which I wrote last mail. I send it by express rather than trust it by letters as the mail goes through so many hands here there is danger of its being lost. Get the things ready and send as soon as you can and inquire particularly if you can not pay all expenses from Pottsville to Hilton Head. Send in addition to other things if they are not yet sent, 1 bot. "Jockey Club" good and 1 bot. hair pomade, small clothes brush, 2 packs good playing cards - (not for gambling)!!! The mail has not yet arrived here but think it is at Hilton Head. I will write you another letter in time for mail but must get this ready beforehand in order to have it at the express office in time, the office being several miles from here. Hoping all are well and that if I have not sent sufficient money let me know and I will send what may be due.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Steno Folly Island, S.C.

March 1, 1864

Dear Father,

I have very little indeed to write about as there is little or nothing going on here. I wrote as usual by last steamer but it is rumored here that no mail went north by last steamer on account of the bad news which had just been received from Florida. I am somewhat anxious to hear from home as I have rec'd nothing from you for the last two mails and am exceedingly anxious to hear whether you have received the money which I sent, One hundred dolls. first time and forty the second, the latter to purchase the different articles for which I had written. If you have received my letters etc. you are no doubt getting the things ready or perhaps you have already sent them. I am satisfied you have written to me regularly and that the letters have been mislaid and it is a pity it is so.

There is now with me on this station another Lt., one of the party who came with me on the Fulton. Mr. Andrews has left this station. We have first rate quarters three wall tents put together, floored and everything comfortable and I am writing this on an elegant mahogany centre table which was captured on the late raid to Johns Island. We have broken up our old mess and now have a man who has opened a kind of hotel and we board with him. We commenced on last Sunday and thus far we are much pleased with our fare. You can judge for yourself whether we do not live very well for soldiers. At breakfast this A.M. I had Broiled beef steak, potatoes, codfish cakes and splendid buckwheat cakes with good butter and nice cup of coffee. At dinner we have two or three courses winding up course with pastry of some kind. I would certainly be contented to remain here all summer as I certainly can not get to a better place, but I have already made application to the Chief Signal officer to be removed from this district for reasons that may seem trivial to some, namely, that an officer has been appointed chief signal officer of this district to whom I am senior. Another officer has also made application to be transferred on the same grounds as I. You must bear in mind that no matter how much we may dislike a party yet if he be our senior, we obey without complaint, but if an officer is placed over us who is our junior we certainly protest against it. It is never attempted nor is it permitted by the regulations. Congress passed an act which allowed the President of the United States, when the exigencies of the case demand it, to place an

officer of the same grade over others even though he be junior. You thus see that only the President of the United States can have that power and then only when the "exigencies of case" demand it. Capt. Clum the Ch. Signal officer in this department knew that the officer whom he has appointed over us, is an acting signal officer whilst we have our appointment from the President and are recognized as and are to be relieved in the same manner as the regular army and the regulations specifically state, "that officers serving by commission from any state, take rank next after those serving by commission from the United States", and why Capt. Clum made the appointment knowing this fact I can not understand for he must have known that it would meet with a protest from us. What he will do in the matter I can not tell as our applications have just been sent to him.

We had quite a gay time here for a few days this week, the signal officers on the four stations from here came up to Steno preparatory to going to Hilton Head where a signal camp is to be established. Some of them I had not met before and was pleased with them, for the corps here is certainly composed of as fine officers I ever met.

We have been having very hot weather for the last few days in fact it was little uncomfortable and inclined one towards laziness, but this evening it is quite cool and windy and cold without fire.

No mail came yesterday for the signal corps from Hilton Head and I think it was detained at signal Hd. Qtrs. there and expect it in a day or two perhaps there are letters for me at least I hope so. Send my things as soon as possible as I want them very much. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and remember me to Mr. & Mrs. James Patterson & family. With the hope that you are all well and that I may soon hear from you.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Remember me to John when you write. How is he getting along with the new regiment.

Folly Island, S.C.

March 9, 1864

Dear Father,

It is now two o'clock a.m. and have just been routed out of my good warm bed with orders to be ready to leave here on board the good ship Nelly Baker at four o'clock with two day's rations. These orders were not unexpected for it was known that an expedition would leave here at daylight. We are going somewhere up the coast but how far and where it is impossible to say but I think, and may not be wrong, that the move is intended as a first in order to mislead the enemy. The fleet will consist of several steam transports loaded with troops attended, as they say, with quite a number of the gun boats from the navy. I go with the commander of the expedition and of course remain with him in order to transmit all messages he may have to send. The probabilities are, that no landing will be made, but it may possibly be necessary to do so; if we do land the troops it will not be with the intention of remaining. As I said the move looks like trying to draw the attention of the enemy to a particular point without intending to perform any real work. I am glad I was ordered to go for I was becoming pretty tired of the dull life which I have been leading here on this station. The only thing I fear is sea-sickness for as soon as I get on rough water I am sure to care. I received you letter of the 29th this morning. The things which you have sent I have not yet received but expect will get them next steamer. What kind of weather have you been having? I suppose blustering March is with you whilst we here are enjoying the most delightful weather, warm even hot, during a portion of the day whilst we have had no rain for over eight weeks. You must excuse my not writing much this time as I am writing this in a great hurry and under rather disadvantageous circumstances as there are two or three signal officers now in my quarters and it is difficult to talk to them and write at the same time. Tell Tim I have not had a dream about him but that I think of him every day as well as all the boys. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all and with the hope I hear soon again from home.

I am your Affec. Son

Will

Enclosed you will find five dollars which I sent to cover balance of expense for the things which you have sent. Remember me kindly to Mrs. Jas. Patterson as well as all my friends.

South End Folly Island, S.C.

March 15th 1864

Dear Tillie,

In anticipation of the next mail, which we hope to receive in a day or two, I commence this in order to have it ready to send first opportunity. When I first came here Gen'l Gilmore's Head Quarters were on this island and we had steamers going and coming from Hilton Head daily, but since he has moved and the scene of active operations been transferred to Florida our communications with the rest of the departments is not so frequent and thus in order to ensure certainty in getting our letters North it is better that we send them even though it be a day or two ahead. I may however not send this immediately but keep it open until I receive letters by the steamer, which is due at the Head today. Last mail I only wrote a short letter, as I was ordered away very suddenly at night and had only a few moments to spare, which I devoted to telling you where I was going and that I still was numbered among the living. About one o'clock on the morning of the 9th I received orders to get ready to go on expedition and report on board the steamer "Nelly Baker", which was then lying in the inlet, to Col. Gurney and take charge of the Signal Detachment - and to be on board not later than four o'clock. It took of course considerable time to get my traps & equipments ready which done I started to go aboard. The night was extremely dark and after awakening a half dozen boats crews I succeeded in getting two contrabands, to understand that they must get up and put me aboard the steamer which was then lying somewhere in the harbor but where was the question. However the only way to solve it was by going out and hunting for her. The tide was running in very strong and as I said the night extremely dark which under any circumstance is a great deal to contend with; but these niggers got a boat without a rudder and they themselves were very inexperienced, so that when we pushed out into the stream we found it almost impossible to navigate at all, however after thumping and knocking about for nearly an hour and after hailing nearly all the vessels we finally found the one we wanted. After getting aboard I found the decks covered with soldiers asleep and had no little difficulty in getting over them, which feat was not accomplished until after I had tread upon several of them which tended considerably to rouse their anger and

I, the unknown to them, no doubt received several blessings from them, finally I reached the cabin where I found every spot covered with the officers sleeping, they having gone aboard earlier in the night. So as there was no sleeping room for me I got a chair, with the determination to sit it out until daylight, in the meantime ruminating over the object of the expedition and the results which would follow. The object I knew to be this, to draw the attention of the enemy to Bulls Island (which is north of Charleston about twenty or twenty five miles) in order to prevent or deter them from sending troops to the southward, whilst something was to be attempted there. Of course we were to make as great a show as possible both in regard to number of vessels and men. There were seven or eight transports each having about seventy five to one hundred men aboard who, when in going up the coast and passing Charleston, were kept on the upper decks exposed as much as possible in order to lead the enemy to believe it was a very heavy force. At daylight we started our vessel taking the lead, the others following immediately afterward. When we started there was a heavy "Nor Easter" blowing, as the sailors term it, and our Captain thought it would be too rough outside for the small boats which composed our fleet, however it was not as rough as expected but still rough enough to fulfill all my anticipations as regards to my physical condition to withstand it, for I had not been out at sea more than one hour before I was even in worse condition than when I came down here on the Fulton, so making a virtue of necessity I took up my quarters in the cabin where I remained until we arrived off Bulls Island which was about one o'clock noon. Upon our arrival there we found the Navy fleet of six or seven gunboats awaiting us. At this time there was a very heavy sea running and it was almost impossible to keep our feet without holding on to something. After taking the Pilots aboard we pushed on in the wake of the gunboats which when we arrived close into shore opened with their guns, but discovering nothing soon ceased and we commenced to disembark the troops. I remained on board the steamer with the Col. Comd's and the other signal officer went ashore and established his station. All this time the subscriber was in a helpless condition with not the least chance or sign of any improvement for instead of the sea becoming smoother it was getting rougher every moment so much so that at five o'clock that same day we were unable to send a boat ashore, for the last boat attempted to be sent containing about fifty men was nearly lost; for after being nearly tossed to pieces in the

breakers, she was driven out towards the sea and was only saved by a Navy tug which was sent to its assistance. When our troops landed they were immediately deployed and sent forward as skirmished, through one of the roughest and most forlorn islands on the coast. It was impossible in many places to get through the thick underbrush and swamps, whilst the island abounded in all sorts of wild game, crows, possums, wild hogs and as I heard many over, they saw any number of alligators but whether the latter were seen on the trees or on the ground I am unable to say!!!

Our troops discovered a rebel fort about four miles from (where) they landed with rebels on guard, but they retired as night came on with the intention of reconnoitering the next morning. During the night a heavy thunder storm came up the first rain we have had since the first week of January. Notwithstanding my almost helpless condition, I was kept pretty busy during the night signaling to the shore. The next morning we changed our anchorage and moved about a mile farther up the island for a better harbor which we found in Bulls' Bay. The troops again moved down the island and discovered that the rebels had increased their force during the night which was the object for which we had gone. At noon the troops returned & commenced to reembark and we intended to leave immediately, but as the sea was very rough and signs of a heavy storm it was concluded to remain there until the next morning, when at daybreak we started homeward. Anyone who knew nothing of the sea could easily perceive that we would have a rough time then and all wondered that we started when we did, for heavy black clouds were coming up making it almost as dark as night whilst the air was filled with lightning and one continued roll of thunder. All knew it must come and awaited it almost impatiently, our little river boat went down down down and up up up, creaking and cracking at every motion until we thought she would break into pieces. At times we would almost stand still and the immense wheels of the vessel seem powerless whilst again one would be completely out of the water and would whirl around with terrible velocity until again brought to a stand still when the boat careened and it again touched the water. Thus after tugging away for about an hour in what the sailors called a chop sea, the rain fell in torrents which allayed the roughness of the surface of the water but we encountered, that which is dreaded by all persons who become like myself so sick, a heavy swell and it seemed as if the whole body of the ocean was moving at once. The storm continued

about an hour and a half when it cleared off overhead, but with a very heavy sea still running. During all the time from the time we left Steno until we returned, this individual was in a beautiful condition. At times I felt pretty well and thought I would get over it but then a heavy rolling of the vessel would soon compel me to find some place to lie down. I took no rations with me and during all the time I was away ate nothing but one breakfast the morning we started home - although there was an elegant table spread every meal time, at which a portion of the fortunate officers enjoyed themselves, whilst the rest of us looked on in wonderment as to how in times like these anyone could think of eating.

The storm was a more severe one than I had imagined for on our return, all said they expected to hear of all hands having gone down. It is certainly astonishing what changes war makes in all things. Ten years ago no one would have dreamed of going to sea in such boats as are here used for the transportation of troops, built as they are for our inland rivers without the least intention of ever being sent to sea- and here we encounter a heavy storm in one of them loaded down with human freight. But what do people come to war for if they do not expect to run any risks? For my part I can go where any of the others go and of course are willing to run the same risk but I must say that during our late trip visions of "Davy's Locker" loomed up before many in the fleet. One conclusion I have come to is that I was never made for a sailor and although I have at all times a desire to go to sea yet I invariably get sick and can a man be in a more forlorn condition? You must excuse the length to which I have gone in giving you this account, but then there is so little to write about that I thought it might be interesting to read the particulars of our trip - which was certainly a relief from the monotonous life we are leading here.

March 16th 1864

I wrote the foregoing yesterday and kept the letter open in order to acknowledge receipt of any letters from home. The "Arago" the regular mail steamer did not leave New York at her regular time but was detained there and a small mail was sent on another vessel which arrived at the Head yesterday and we received our mail today. The Arago it was expected would be sent to New Orleans, but it is now reported that she passed here this morning on her way to Port Royal and she no doubt has mail and I hope she has some for

me as I got no letters from home today but received three papers of the 3rd which is better than nothing at all. I expect however to get letters tomorrow - till then remain content in anticipation. I have not yet received the box but expect it also tomorrow if the Arago arrived. There is a Signal Officer from here now at the Head who will bring it up for me if it is there.

What kind of weather are you having North? Is it cold and blustering? We here have had elegant weather warm and summer like, but for the last few days it has been quite cool, that is it is windy but then the sun is warm. In conversation with an officer who just returned from Florida today - he said, the weather was lovely there and everything out in full bloom and that the orange groves were literally breaking down with the fruit. He had with him one branch on which were over sixty large ripe oranges. Vegetables were there also in abundance. I shall make application in a few days for a leave of absence in order to visit Fernandina & Jacksonville and think a leave will be granted me. I can at least go to the Head. I want to go somewhere as I have been kept very close for nearly four months on this station. I believe I told you I had very fine quarters, as fine any Brigadier Genl. had whilst I was in the Army of the Potomac, for I have a sitting room, bedroom and office and as I mess away from my quarters there is none of that dirt and bother and everything is as clean as a new pin. I have cane seated chairs, mahogany centre table and a cottage bedstead all captured on the late raid to John's Island, so whilst here I see little of the hardships of a soldier. Indeed you would be astonished to see how comfortably all, men & officers, are situated, in this district - for having remained so long in one place the men have accumulated all these comforts & live like men. There have been great numbers reenlisting in this department which is the case I find in the whole Army and it is a most significant fact that the men who having already experienced the sufferings and hardships of a soldiers' life and knowing the dangers which they have to encounter, that they should be again willing to serve three years more if necessary to sustain the government and can too much praise be given those men and are they not examples which should be kept before the eyes of those who do nothing at all and are unwilling to assist in any manner? Talking of reenlistments reminds me that in a letter I rec'd I find that Mark Coho has joined the 7th Pa. Cavalry. Has he enlisted or has he been given a commission? I thought he could not remain long at home for he

always showed the greatest desire to be in the Army, at least whilst the war is going on. If you should happen to see him remember me to him.

I see by the papers that Lt. Bartley Signal Officer, who was at Georgetown with me, was taken prisoner on Kilpatrick's late raid and that all the officers taken on that raid were to be placed in irons. Fine prospects for the coming warm weather. How are you Libby? I suppose you read the accounts of the death of Col. Dahlgren and also what the rebel papers call his "dog's burial". Was it not disgraceful and should not there be an end put to such atrocities? But then they say we are vandals etc. and they are only retaliating!!!! Col. Dahlgren was here with his Father the Admiral last December and was a very fine looking man, tall and slender.

I think I had better stop at once or perhaps I will not be able and you are no doubt tired out reading this, and if you are I don't care for I think you ought to be punished for neglecting to write to me. However Father says I must take his letters as answer to mine to you. I have done so. I hope however I may hear from you soon at least not later than next July. Did you ever receive the books which I sent? I also sent forty dollars by express and the next mail five dolls. to pay for the things which I wrote for. Did you receive them? If so please acknowledge the receipt when next you write - no, when Father writes for - that would be sooner!

I've much love to Mother, the boys and remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Patterson and all my friends. Kiss Tim for me and tell him I suppose he is getting to be quite a man from what I hear. Tell Jim & Frank I often think of them. Write soon and

I am your Affec. Bro

Will

Folly Island, S.C.

April 1, 1864

My dear Mother,

It is now nearly eleven o'clock p.m. and having just learned that a steamer will leave early in the morning for Hilton Head with the mail for the Arago which sails Monday next, and as there may in all probability be no other chance to send a letter in time, concluded to write tonight. The mail has arrived here but has not yet been distributed at Head Quarters and consequently can not acknowledge receipt of any letters from home. We expect to get our mail in the morning, t so, I will acknowledge what I may receive (provided I get anything) before I send this off. We are moving along slowly in the "even term of our way" with very little to vary the monotony of our daily duty - which duty at the present time is hardly worthy of the name - for we are having very little to do indeed. Since the line of signal communication between here and Hilton Head has been broken up, we have been in communication with only one other station (on Kiawha Island) and we have but few messages to send daily. It is absolutely necessary that signal officers should be kept here in order to be ready for any emergency and at the same time give them some employment in the interim. I feel perfectly satisfied if they would keep us here all the time for we are so comfortably located and have everything we could wish for.

I have a stable and two horses here and take rides daily along the beach which is indeed grand and how often have I wished that you were here and could enjoy it with me. This morning in the midst of a heavy rain storm an officer came into my quarters and invited me to go with him on a tour of inspection of the fortifications on Coles Island which is one of the adjacent islands. I had my horse saddled and was soon aboard the steamer enroute for a visit to the outer pickets. When we arrived at Coles Island we dismounted and made the tour afoot. I tramped around with him all day until I was completely tired out and got back home at dark. Whilst there I had another fine view of the Johnny Rebs who are doing picket duty within stone's throw of our men.

Pop says in his last letter that he paid four 50/100 dollars express for the box which he sent me and I was surprised as well as he at the exorbitant price. I saw the express agent here the other day and told him about it and he said it was a mistake that

the company charged no such prices - to prove which he showed me boxes larger and twice as heavy as mine from Phila on which was paid not more than \$3 (three) whilst others from the western part of Penna also larger, same price and less. He showed me one from Boston very little smaller on which the charge was but \$1.50 and he said I should get Father to see the Express agent and ask him if he did not make a mistake in his charges.

The sheets which you sent me might have been longer, but answer very well and I only wish you could see what a comfortable looking bed I have for a soldier. Enclosed herewith I send you a check on Asst. Treas. N.Y. for Fifty dollars which I wish you would accept and use as you see fit. It is not much but I want you to have it for I feel as though any amount would be insufficient to repay you for all I am indebted to you. How are all the Boys? Tim, Frank & Jim, I suppose are the same as ever. Give them all much love and tell them I often wish I could see them. I suppose they all go to school regularly and tell Tim I expect it will not be long before he will write to me - as I hear he is getting along so finely. I hope he and Charly have both recovered from their indisposition of which Pop spoke in his last letter. Remember me kindly to Mr. & Mr. Jas. Patterson and all my friends and with much love to all at home.

I am your Affect Son

Will

Did you get the five dolls. which I sent in a letter a few - weeks since? Write soon.

Port Royal, S.C.

April 2, 1864

Dear Father,

You may be somewhat surprised to receive two letters per one mail. One from Stone and the other from here. I rec'd my leave this morning and immediately went aboard the Cosmopolitan Hospital steamer and arrived here at 10 this p.m. I did not get very sick on the way down as I went to bed as soon as I got aboard and remained there until I arrived here. My leave is for five days, I may stay longer and may go back before. I wrote to Mother last night in which I enclosed a check on the Asst. Treasurer New York for fifty dollars which I hope will come safely to hand.

How is it I received no letters at all this mail and none from you for the last two mails. If you write which I suppose you do it seems strange that the letters do not reach me. The steamer Arago sails tomorrow a.m. and I thought I would send this short note to let you know that I had arrived here. Possibly I may go to Florida but it may be that I will be unable to get permission. I shall however try to go there.

As you no doubt have seen by the papers Gen. Seymour has been superseded in Florida by Gen. Hatch. It is now nearly twelve o'clock and shall close with much love to all at home and with the expectation of receiving some news from home next mail.

I am you Affect. Son

Will

Hilton Head, S.C.

April 17, 1864

Dear Father,

I have but a few moments to spare to write but thought I had better let you know that my connection with the Dept. of the South is about being brought to an end. I have rec'd orders to go north with eight other officers and complement of men. We sail tonight on the "Northern Light" for Fortress Monroe to join the Army of the Potomac in the coming struggle for the capitol of rebeldom. Nearly all the white troops are leaving this dept. and some colored troops are being sent to hold these places. Gen. Gilmore goes with us to command what will be the 10th Corps. I suppose our operations will be open the Peninsula in Butler's dept. and we will be under the immediate command of Gen. Smith. I left Folly Island last night and arrived here this morning at day light. Did not get sick - but anticipate that pleasure on the trip to Fort Monroe. Our baggage has been cut down and I send you my trunk by Express. Anything you can use at home you can take but I want my papers official to be preserved. I like the idea and then I don't like it that we are going north - for we had it so comfortable here that it seemed a pity to be sent into the field to rough it - but then we will see more activity and be nearer civilization.

This afternoon and while I am writing and within sight of this office, two men deserters are being taken out to be shot to death and all the troops are in attendance by order. These men were convicted of desertion and after conviction deserted twice and both times were recaptured in the enemy's lines. Ain't it dreadful? I write you last from this place. I remained in this neighborhood a week visiting St. Helena, Beaufort and was out at Popes & Jenkin's plantation and at Seabrook where I spent a pleasant day with Chas. Brown QM & Mrs. Brown - saw Will Moorehead there. At Beaufort saw Geo. Hill confined to his room by sickness but was just getting about again and recovering. The weather is lovely but not warm. I suppose summer is showing itself with you. I rec'd your letters of the 4th and 6th as also Mary Ann Weaver's cards. Do not write me again until you hear from me when I will be able to send directions. With much love to all at home and with the hope that all are well.

I am your affect. Son,

Will

I am glad to know that John is as comfortably situated as he is and hope that it may be so until the expiration of his term of service.

I send enclosed key to trunk - as the express office is closed today. I have left five dollars with Mr. Brodie who will pay all expenses and send balance with receipt to you.

Office of the Signal Officer

Hilton Head, S.C.

April 18th 1864

Sir,

Were we all in civil life - you might very naturally be surprised, if not indignant at what might appear to be an unwarrantable interference in your private affairs - but it so happens that, situated as your good son and myself are at present we are often called upon to do many strange things. Among them, to write to each others friends, when occasion requires it no matter whether we have ever known these friends or not. However delicate you at home may be in these matters, circumstances compel us to feel none of it - and we do not therefore hesitate to say to one another when called away to other fields of action - unexpectedly and suddenly - "I have no time to write to my folks at home before I go. I wish I could do so. Will you please write them for me? Tell them where I am going, how I am, and how to address my letters?" Of course such a request is never refused. This, I trust, will be sufficient excuse for my troubling you at this time, as I do so at Mr. Clemens request, and having as much genuine respect as I have for him, the task is one of pleasure to me. Mr. Clemens, in company with eight other signal officers left this department this morning on the steamer "Northern Light" en route to Fortress Munroe. The order to go north was quite unexpected and as he left almost immediately, he had no opportunity to write home, nor did he know whether he could do so upon his arrival at Fortress Munroe. He left the following memorandum which I give you as it is written. "Tell my Father to let me know if he received a check for fifty dollars, which I sent to order of mother" (Signed) "Clemens.

He was quite well and hearty when he left here. A going to Fortress Munroe - His address is Head Qrs. 10th Army Corps via Fortress Munroe.

An acknowledgement of this communication will give me great pleasure. When you write to Mr. Clemens, I would trouble you to present him my very kindest and heartiest regards.

With best wishes, sir, for you and yours - I am your very humble servant

Paul Brodie
1st Lieut. Signal Corps -U.S.A
Hilton Head, S.C.

To Mr. Chas. W. Clemens
Pottsville
Sch. Co., Pa.

On Board Steamer "Northern Light"

Off Gloucester Point, Va.

April 21, 1864

Dear Father,

I wrote you last Sunday from Hilton Head just previous to my leaving for this point. We went aboard the Steamer on Sunday afternoon and sailed Monday morning. We had on board the 7th N.H. - 47th & 115th N.Y. Regiments together with our signal detachment in all officers and men about eighteen hundred tons. The vessel is a first class steamer equal in size and accommodation to the Arago and Fulton and was formerly one of the line of steamers running between New York and Aspinwall. We, that is the officers, had state rooms and were comfortably fixed but the table was the meanest I ever had the misfortune to sit down to. It is the rule when going on a voyage of this kind for the officers to be furnished with state rooms and they are then charged a certain sum for board, which in this case was five dollars for the trip and instead of their giving us three meals a day gave us only two and they of the poorest kind. We left Hilton Head in the face of a storm and we had a very rough passage - and contrary to all my expectations I did not get seasick and am at a loss to account for it. Heretofore I could not remain on board a steamer when fastened to the dock without feeling the least motion and making me sick, but on this trip I was the most fortunate of individuals for there were but few indeed who were not sick during most of the passage. Officers who have heretofore never been sick were laid prostrate and the second day out there were but a few who showed themselves at the table - and it was only this morning (Thursday) that the majority made the appearance upon deck. As I said we had a rough passage and during the second day out we did not make two miles an hour on account of head winds and heavy sea. The vessel plunged fearfully and it was with the greatest difficulty that one could keep his feet. As you can imagine we were crowded and all the decks and holds were filled with troops lying around - and when you take into consideration the fact that three fourths were sick you can surmise as to the pleasantness of the voyage. We left Hilton Head on Monday morning and should have been here Wednesday but the bad weather prevented and we did not arrive at Fortress Monroe until this a.m. when after Gen. Terry had reported we were ordered to Gloucester Point directly opposite

Yorktown on the York River. The troops have all disembarked with the exception of Gen. Terry and staff and our signal detachment. We will remain on board until the morning. I can not tell what is the order of things as yet but all the troops from the Dept South who will constitute the 10th army corps, are coming here and will be reorganized preparatory to a move on to Richmond from this point. I do not think I will have much to do for the present but there is no telling. I was unable to take all my baggage and I left my trunk at the Head (with five dolls.) to be sent to you by express by Lt. Brodie which I suppose you will get in due time.

It seems as though we getting nearer civilization now, for we here get a daily mail. This morning I had the pleasure of reading yesterday's Herald which certainly makes us feel nearer home. Did you get check for Fifty dolls. which I sent to Mother some time since? Let me know if you rec'd it. You must excuse this patched up letter as I am writing this in the saloon of the vessel and am writing under considerable difficulty being interrupted almost at every moment. Give much love to all at home and with the expectation of hearing oftener now from home.

I am your Affect. Son
Will

Direct your letters

Lt

Head Quarters 10th Army Corps

via Fortress Monroe. Va.

Gloucester Point, Va.

April 25, 1864

Dear Father,

There is some irregularity in regard to letters going north from this dept. notwithstanding which I write this with the hope that there is no detention of the mail at Fortress Monroe, all reports to the contrary. It is not in the least surprising that our letters should be withheld whilst this present concentration of troops is being made preparatory to a move towards Richmond, which is all probability be made over the same ground made famous by McClellan, namely the Peninsula. I wrote you last whilst on board the steamer the night before we disembarked which letter I hope you have received ere this. The next morning after writing we landed and moved to our present camp where contrary to all expectations we are most comfortably located on a high bluff overlooking the York River in both directions and with a fine view of the country on all sides. We are as I wrote you directly opposite Yorktown - that Yorktown made famous by the surrender of the British forces which terminated the Revolution of '76 and where, as those not having a very high regard for McClellan say he failed to finish the revolution of '61 - but enough if he failed when he should have succeeded let the matter rest and let others make the attempt - and I only hope that Gen. Smith who has been sent here by Grant not only because he is a good soldier but one in whom he (Grant) can feel assured of his ability to handle this large army which is to take part in the coming struggle for capitol of the confederacy will succeed. I said large army for I believe it is to be a large one, of course we subordinates are not supposed to know, nor can we know, the exact number of our force here - but I may say that it has been estimated by those who can gain some clue to it that it will consist of from fifty to seventy five thousand men. Only a portion of the troops are here now but they are arriving constantly and if they continue to come in such numbers for a week or more as they have been for the last week, I think the number will nearly reach the highest estimate. The country back of us for a mile is level as a floor and is now being rapidly covered with tents. Beyond we have woods and plantations still in good condition with the families still remaining but intensely secest. This neck of land is situated between the York and I believe what is called the Severn River. It is the wish of many that we move up from here as no doubt it would be a good country to forage in as I

understand our troops have not been through it but it seems to be the general impression that the move will again be made up the Peninsula, the forces on this side crossing at this point - but of course no reliance can be placed upon any suppositions as to our future movements as there are hourly editions of reports etc. gotten up to suit the wishes of everybody and which we here, in the army call "choir music" but what we know to be a fact is that immense numbers of troops are being concentrated at this point and they certainly are here for some purpose which time only will explain to the anxious and enquiring minds of all. But let me here add my wishes and hopes that we may not usher in upon us, with this great labor, the suppression of the rebellion, still before us. As may be naturally supposed we are in the midst of excitement and bustle, caused by the constant arrival of troops and the drills, inspections, reviews etc. of those who are already encamped. This afternoon I strolled around amongst the different regiments and witnessed the dress parades of several - which brought so forcibly to my mind the recollections of the times when I was one who took his part in the same exercises and I could not help but congratulate myself that I was in so much better position where I can have so many comforts from which an officer in the line is debarred so great a portion of the time. The troops here now are comfortably located in good tents, but an order has been issued to turn in all of them and requisitions have already been made for shelter or dogtents for officers and men and that only one team will be allowed to a regiment, thus compelling officers to carry all extra change of clothing on their backs, which seems to indicate that the move when once commenced is to be made as rapidly as possible. When we left Hilton Head we brought with us five new wall tents for the officers (nine) and plenty A tents for the men thirty six. As our good fortune would have it a battery of artillery which was encamped close by us received orders to move the day we arrived and they were compelled to leave behind them an immense quantity of lumber with they had erected their winter quarters for which Gen. Terry gave us an order to take possession of for our own use. We were not only supplied with sufficient lumber to floor all the tents of officers and men, but with tables, chairs, benches and beds - together with two nice frame houses (one of which we are using for cook and mess house and the other is used by the men for the same purpose) - and good stable accommodations for a hundred horses. We have already gotten up a very good mess and are living sumptuously in

comparison to the officers around us who have, except in very few instances, not brought any cooking utensils with them and who at present are living on just what they can get hold of - not that there is a scarcity of anything to eat but that they are so poorly prepared to render them edible. There are any number of sutters here well stocked but at prices which you at home even at the present rate of provisions would consider "rather salty" but as price here is of little object only so that the different articles can be obtained you may rest assured that they are doing a thriving business and make much "monish", besides the sutters we have a great many schooners coming here every morning loaded with fish, which with the exception of shad, are sold very cheap. The latter retailing for fifty cents a piece. Oysters are also plenty not very cheap but very fine and large. A man who has oyster beds promised to bring our mess a barrel in the morning and I anticipate a good feast of them. Being so near Baltimore and in daily communication with that city we have plenty of eggs and butter but also at villainous prices. Taking into consideration our present comfortable position I feel satisfied to remain here during the summer but then work is expected from us and we are certainly will to have his picture as well as pictures of all at home - and I shall expect to receive them. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys - remember me to Eliza. Also Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson and say to Mrs. Patterson I was happy to hear that none of her family were in her carriage at the time of the run away. Write soon and now that I am so much nearer you can write oftener. I am your Affect. Son.

Will

It is now midnight.

Gloucester Point, Va.

April 30, 1864

Dear Father,

I have just rec'd your letter of the 25th and was glad to find you had rec'd my letters from this point. Very unexpectedly one Brigade rec'd orders this afternoon to move and I am ordered to go with it. The troops are now embarking and I have packed my things in about one tenth of the time which is even allotted to a soldier. No one knows where we are going and of course there are all kinds of conjectures. I thought I would write this to let you know of the change. The rest of the troops are to follow us immediately when the other signal officers will join me. If you get no letter soon from me, it will be because of no facilities for writing.

Am glad to hear that John was home again. What does he expect to do? Go in the ranks? With much love to all & write soon.

Will