

jsc-6201.05

Camp Pierpont Va
Near Washington D.C. 5 Jan 1862

My Dear wife,

I am beginning to feel anxious to hear something of you, as it is almost a week since I left you & have heard "never a word" since. Everything is quiet here still and I presume no movement will be made by either side while it remains so cold.

I wrote you on Thursday that the weather was real cold. Since that it has been colder, and yesterday & last night was about as cold as we have it in Penna. as a general thing although we have sometimes colder days there as there probably are here, but they are few in number. Today the sun shone out brightly and the day was not quite so cold, but the air was frosty. About sundown it became very cold and I thought we were going to have a still colder night, but the wind soon changed to East and the temperature has moderated somewhat. Should not be surprised if we should have snow tonight or tomorrow.

If I had good wood I would have no difficulty in making myself comfortable. As it is I can succeed but it is troublesome. We have nothing but green pine & green chestnut which is much inferior to green oak as the latter is to dry oak. If we had plenty of green white or black oak we would think ourselves fortunate in that respect.

Now more trouble about the box. In addition to what I wrote I would thank you to send me a small piece of canvas or heavy drilling about a foot & an inch wide & about two inches more than a half yard long. If you could get the stuff they have for bagging it would answer first rate. It is for the seat of my camp stool which - the seat is worn out. The old one is a piece of cotton drilling split in the middle and hemmed on the cut side. It must be heavy or it will not hold the nails at the end. I would also like to have a small tin pepper box.

I understand Mr. Sharpe has gone home on leave. I do not know whether it is true, but presume it is. W.M. Penrose is spoken of very disparagingly through the whole army as far as I hear his name mentioned. Mr. Todd is sick again I hear. Suppose he will get leave again if he does not get better.

I hope you and the children are getting along as well as usual. Make Nan & John get their lessons at home every day & they will get along much easier in school. It was sleeting quite fast since I commenced writing but has ceased now. I suppose the ale is all done. It was very near out when I left. I would be exceedingly glad to drink a glass with you.

I remain your devoted husband
James

6th. It snowed two or three inches last night.

jsc-6201.07
(This letter was dated
7 Dec 61, but should have
been dated 7 Jan 62.)

Camp Pierpont Va
Near Washington D.C. 7 Dec /61
(JAN)

My Dear Wife,

I do not know when I was more joyed at the receipt of a letter than I was at the receipt of yours of the 4th inst. It seemed so long from the time I had seen you or heard from you. Even now it seems almost as long since I saw you as it did before I paid my visit.

You misunderstood me if you thought I carried my carpet bag from the chain bridge. Fortunately I came up with an express wagon just at this end of the bridge which took my carpet bag and carried it to the 3rd Regt. only two or three hundred yards from ours. The wagon was so full of boxes that there was no room for one to ride inside. The driver had to walk himself. I do not remember when I was so tired walking such a short distance. It was probably because I was walking away from home with a heavy heart.

I am much obliged for your kind offer to send me a buffalo robe, but I can do very well without it. I know how comfortable it would be and in the fall thought of getting one.. In fact I spoke to Mr. Ensminger of Carlisle when he was here. He said a good one would cost ten dollars. It being so uncertain how long we would remain here and very probably I would have to throw it away when we left I concluded not to get one. Besides sometimes the wool or hair comes out and spoils everything it touches.

I do very well as I am. The feet bag you made answers admirably. My feet have been very warm at night ever since my return. And my feet were always most difficult to keep warm. The first night it slipped off me feet several times while I was asleep. I remedied that by taking a piece of twine and tying the two ends to the strings you sewed on the sack & by slipping the loop over my shoulders the bag is kept on my feet.

It is a little singular that Mr. Sharpe & Mr. Penrose are such devoted friends. They love each other as the wolf loves a sheep or a cat a mouse.

I cannot imagine what induced Mrs. Ege to treat you as she has done by not inviting "our house". Do you mean by "our house," just yourself or does it include Minnie & Mrs. McClure etc. ? Something must be wrong. I saw Galbraith at Harrisburg as I came on here and he appeared very friendly.

We have had very cold weather here for some days. It seems a little milder tonight, but it is still cold. We have had no snow since the night I last wrote you when it snowed a little.

Remember me to the children and to Libby & Minnie & all friends who inquire.

Very truly your devoted husband James

jsc-6201.12*

Camp Pierpont Va
12 Jany. 1862

My Dear Wife,

Yours of the 9th announcing the departure of the box was received yesterday evening, and I feel under great obligation for the promptness in getting it ready & for the trouble I know you must have had with it. Unfortunately the sutler did not call at the express office yesterday as he generally does every day. Consequently I did not receive the box. He says he will call tomorrow. And if it has arrived I have no doubt but that I will get it tomorrow evening. If you had only kept the old cushion at home it might have served some good purpose. I do not know any use I can put it to here. But I know you did it through the kindest motives and I appreciate them.

There was a review of the division yesterday and a presentation of the flags of the Regiments which were in the Drainsville fight, with Drainsville Dec. 20th 1861 printed on them. We had a long stand in the mud - for the field was very muddy - waiting for the coming of the flags & the orator who was to present them. I suppose you will learn all about it by tomorrow's papers & see the speeches of which I could not hear one word. While we were standing there I saw a carriage coming down the hill towards us with a lady sitting on the box with the driver who I thought looked very much like Mrs. Wm. Watts. But I did not suppose it was her and I thought no more about it. After some time I saw a lady sitting on the box of another carriage & I thought she resembles Mrs. Judge Watts very much. But not dreaming that it was her I directed my attention to other sights. After some the 1st Sergeant says to me Dont that lady in such a carriage look like Mrs. Watts - meaning Mrs. Judge Watts. I replied I had just been noticing the likeness but that it could not be her and he said of course not. We were some considerable distance off at that time.

Afterwards when we marched past in review I discovered that they were the two Mrs. Wattses. I could not leave the ranks to speak to them, but you may if you please say to them that I think they might have called to see me, as they were scarcely two hundred yards from our camp. I would have gone to see them but did not know where to go. I learned today that they went with Mr. Sharpe to Genl. Ord's quarters.

I had intended to write to Nan & John today but the day slipped away without & now it is too late. This was another April day abundantly warm without fire too warm with it. I presume it will not continue long. There are some rumors of our moving soon. Cannot say what truth is in them.

Give my kindest regards to Libby & Minnie. I remain your
most devoted husband

James

jsc-6201.17

17th Jany. 1862

My Dear Wife,

I wrote you last night but the mail left this morning before I got your letter to the post office. I have nothing additional to write you. Capt. Henderson arrived this afternoon but brought no letter from you. However the mail brought one which made it all right.

This was a soft day and the roads are very muddy - our camp is shockingly muddy. I suppose you have pretty much the same kind of weather & same kind of roads. I hope I will get this in the mail in time tomorrow morning.

won The Drinker - see Gibson 14.
Wm. Watts has received an appointment as 2nd Lieut. in the Regular army, 3rd Artillery. So rumor says & I presume it is true. I am truly glad you have all got well & are enjoying yourselves. As I will be on guard tomorrow & of course have to be up for 24 hours I will close & retire as it is 10 o'clock.

Most truly
your devoted
husband
James

jsc-6201.19

Camp Pierpont Va
19 Jany. 1862

My Dear Annie,

I intended to write a letter to John as well as Nan but it is too late as I was up last night on guard. And such a night. It rained almost incessantly from about midnight and the greater part of today. We have nothing but mud all around here. We could hardly move now if such were the intention.

Several officers have been sent from this regiment to Pennsylvania to recruit, among them Sergeant Harper Rev. Mr. Harper's son of Shippensburg. That does not look as if they expected to be done with us very soon.

We had the turkey for dinner today. It was not very fat but it was most excellent. I sent you a letter yesterday which I presume you will get tomorrow. I also expect to receive one from you tomorrow.

Truly your
devoted husband
James

jsc-6201.19n
(This letter is printed.)

Camp Pierpont Va.
19th January 1862

My dear little
daughter Nan,

It is almost three weeks since I saw your bright little eyes. How I would like to be where I could see them now. Because I love my little daughter and because then I could see Mama and brothers and sister too.

I hope you learn your les(sons) well and go to school ev(ery) day. Try and learn fast _____ and when you can write _____ will send you letters _____ (of)ten. Do all your teac(her) tells you, and be a g(ood) girl _____ love you. Tell John I will write to him some day soon.

You write to me and tell me what words are spelled wrong in this letter. Kiss Mama for me.

Your affectionate
father
J.S. Colwell

jsc-6201.21

Camp Pierpont Va.
21st January 1862

My Dear Wife,

I received yours of the 17th inst. yesterday evening. You are becoming so very flattering in your letters of late that I begin to think you are trying to throw dust in my eyes.

It has rained here every day since last Friday and as the roads were bad before they are in an awful condition now. It rained last night & today almost constantly till this evening about dark when it commenced snowing. It is still snowing 10 o'clock at night but it melts nearly as fast as it falls. I have been out on picket many inclement nights but I think I never was out so bad a night as this.

If we remain here we will have only four times to go on picket till after the middle of April as we go on about every 20 days. The news from Kentucky today is very favorable if true. It is also reported that the rebels have fallen back from Manassas. If this last is true we may move from this before a great while.

The roads are so bad that probably no mail will go in tomorrow morning. But I thought I would write a few lines to accompany John's letter should the mail go.

With the greatest devotion
your loving husband

Mrs. J.S. Colwell

James

jsc-6201.23

Camp Pierpont Va
23 Jany. 1862

My Dear Wife,

I will write only a short note tonight as I have a headache & need some sleep. Little as I expected it when I wrote to you & John night before last the next morning I was detailed to go on picket to take command of another company whose officers are absent. On my return today I received yours of the 20th which came yesterday evening to camp during my absence. I(t?) contained a little more flattery of which I spoke in one of my last letters.

I must say I do not understand to what you allude when you speak of my being satirical and increasing your love by your appetite. As to the metallic vests I saw a notice of them in the newspapers but I presume there are none in market and if there were I presume the price would be very high at first, and besides the account did not say they would resist rifle balls - only that they were tried with pistol balls and they intended to test them with rifles. However it will be some months I presume before many of them are in market.

I suppose poor old Aunt Miller will feel very badly being the only sister left except perhaps for one whom she can hardly hope to see again. I am sorry your funds are getting so low. I do not know when I will have an opportunity of sending you some but hope to before long. I presume Mr. McCleaf forgot about the buckwheat, or it might have been lost on the road. I think you better write him a note inquiring whether he forwarded it and that you did not receive it and to let you know. I had a bag of chicken feed lost on the way for two or three months. I would ask him to write whether he has sent it, and whether it had left the Newbury(?) warehouse. If it has send to Rhoads' if it was him brought it, to inquire after it. If Mr. McCleaf forgot to send it tell him it is not worthwhile to send it now as you can get it in Carlisle.

Truly you affte.
husband James

jsc-6201.24

Camp Pierpont Va
24 Jany. 1862

My dear Annie,

I wrote you a few lines last night intending to send them this morning but failed. While eating breakfast my stove commenced smoking terribly, so much so that I had it carried out. On examination I found the flue closed. And after getting it cleaned & put up again, I forgot the letter till the mail had left. I write a few lines now to inform you why you did not receive the letter this week.

I have just returned from school. We have recitations twice a week in tactics at which all the officers are required to attend commencing at 7 o'clock P.M. We have had but two meetings yet.

It seems as if we are to have more unpleasant weather. About dark it commenced to sleet and after some time changed to rain, then to sleet again and then to snow. And now since commencing to write it has returned to rain & sleet. I can easily know by the sound of the pattering on my tent. I presume that with you it will all be snow and sleet.

I believe I will close for tonight. Perhaps I may write a little more in the morning and give you a further account of the weather as nearly the whole of this letter is occupied with that very interesting subject.

Most truly your
devoted husband
James

25th Jany. /61
(should be 62)

It has been sleeting & drizzling all night and still is drizzling and freezing as it falls. The top and sides of my tent is covered with ice. I can scarcely get out and into it. If this weather continues long, the roads will become almost impossible. It takes six horses now to haul a half cord of wood.

As I write I hear the news boy crying the morning's paper and another great battle & union victory in Kentucky. I may not be true, as the boys sometimes take that way to sell papers. We get the Washington papers here early in the morning and the Philadelphia papers about 11 o'clock A.M. so that we have them several hours before you.

Give my love to all friends and believe me your faithful

husband
James

jsc-6201.27

Camp Pierpont Va
27th Jany. 1862

My Dear Wife,

About dark this evening I was sitting in my tent thinking about (you when?) yours of the 24th was handed to me. I was quite glad to receive it as I had not heard from you for several days. In a former letter you express apprehension that I may be annoyed by your numerous letters. Dismiss all such fears. I shall not be the least troubled if you write a half dozen every day. Perhaps I have been trespassing on your patience as I wrote you on the 19th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, & 25th besides one to Nan & John each in the same time, making seven a week. You stated John was incensed at being asked to look for the badly spelled words but you did not say whether he could find the words.

Will(?) McClure must have a pleasant time beaung sister Libby. I suppose he wishes sometimes she was in Dixie's land or some other place than Carlisle. I have heard nothing of Major Todd's resignation. I have not seen Mrs. Beatty. She did not come over the river but remained in Washington. I have not seen Mr. Beatty for a week & do not know whether she has returned home or not. So far from having eaten all the provisions you sent, I have not tasted the sausage & have eaten only one pound of butter. Capt Henderson brought a servant & a box of provisions also or rather had one expressed & we have been working mostly on that.

I have heard of no smallpox in the camps. Mrs. Tustin was out here last week. She was a Miss Nevin of Shippensburg & has a brother in our company. She told me the snallpox was prevailing in Washington to a considerably extent but that it was not among the soldiers. Our regiment were all vaccinated at Camp Wayne I among them, and I think it probable that most if not all the regiments have been. I am grateful for your offer to nurse me but I hope I will never have occasion for your services here in the capacity of nurse, and I do not think a camp full of soldiers with smallpox would be a very pleasant place for you to be. No news yet of the Burnside expedition. It has been very stormy down south & it may have met with some disaster.

We were on picket last night & yesterday. I do not think there has been a pleasanter day & night here since New Year day. It was frozen enough to make the mud hard going out yesterday & coming home this morning. And it was not cold. It has rained a little tonight & is very cloudy. Tomorrow I go on guard & will have to remain up tomorrow night. I hope it will not rain.

I intended to enclose you a ten dollar note in this as I suppose you are nearly out of money but Mr. Kenyon arrived here this evening & will leave for home in a few days & I presume will take some money up with him.

Most truly your affecte. husband
James

I received the Carlisle Herald you sent.

jsc-6201.30

Camp Pierpont Va
30th Jany. 1862

My Dear Wife,

I wrote you on the 28th by Esquire Kenyon enclosing \$180. He left yesterday morning intended to spend the day in Washington and leave there for home today. I hope he succeeded & delivered you the money all safe. If so you will have a good deal of money in the house and will have to be careful that somebody does not slip it or some of it away.

By some means I lost your last note with John's and Nan's letters. I was on guard that night and I looked over them hastily without making them all out, thinking I would read them again. I enclosed them in the envelope and put it in the side pocket of my coat. After I wrote my letter to you that night I felt for the letter. It was not there. I never saw it again. I was quite sorry for I wished to read them all a second time.

It rained again today nearly all day. We will be swamped if it does not clear off soon.

There is no truth in the report you perhaps saw noticed in the Inquirer that an attack was expected any day on McCall's division. It is nonsense. In another part of the same paper it was stated that the roads are so bad that an advance by either army is impossible. I observe today that the Inquirer contradicts the report itself. *Jesse?*

We have sauerkraut for dinner yesterday & today. Capt Henderson received a lot of it from home. We have been living too well the last two or three weeks. Sam our servant is worth a dozen of Lesse this far. Perhaps it is "a new broom." There is nothing new here to communicate to you. It was so wet today that I scarcely got outside of my tent.

The Burnside expedition met with very stormy weather, but it seems that the disasters were not so great (as) was feared at first. There is great anxiety to know where it is going to strike and how it will succeed.

I think we are here fixed till the roads dry off or freeze up.

I presume Mr. Kenyon gave or will when he arrives give you a full account of things here. He would learn more in a day than I would in a month. He is an incessant talker in a loud tone, with no end to his questions. He started before daylight yesterday morning, and (I) could hear his tongue running when he was away off a considerable distance, talking to the driver.

Kindest regards to all the friends and love to you
my dear wife
J.S. Colwell

ahc-6201.01

Carlisle Feb 1st /62

My dearest husband,

My anxiety & fears on your behalf were all dispelled by the arrival of your two letters yesterday by Mr. Kenyon, & I write a hasty acknowledgement this morning knowing that you will be anxious to hear about the money. This \$1x80 came safely & I think Mr. Kenyon is very particular about the trust reposed in him. I was out when he called yesterday so he refused giving it to the servants & told them he would leave it either with Mr. Penrose or Judge Watts. However I returned just as he was leaving our door so he came in & gave me all the particulars of his visit to camp, & in appreciation of his communications I invited him to dine with us which he declined.

I called to pay Eby being the largest bill but it was not made out. Whenever I get them all paid I will give you a detailed account. I had contracted a few amounting to \$5.00 which with Vienna's back wages \$5.00 more. I intend dealing in groceries with the little man in the little store across the st - as he is more reasonable & just as good as the store down st.

Snowing away this morning as fast as possible & promises to be quite a storm. I am writing in my nightgown before breakfast so I must be brief. Last night the baby was sick & fretful & would not let me write. He seems pretty well this morning. Nan, John & Daisy are very well. Sister Libby & I had a pleasant walk yesterday after being housed so long.

Write as often as possible. You never can write too many for me not to take pleasure in reading.

Good bye. Always your affecate. wife
Annie

Camp Pierpont Va.
2 Feby. 1862

My Dear wife,

I received yours of the 31st ult. yesterday afternoon. I did not reply instantly because as no mail goes from the camp on Sundays my letter could not leave till tomorrow morning, and besides I wrote by Mr. Kenyon who left on Wenesday & expected to be in Carlisle on Thursday but it seems he did not. I presume he arrived on Friday. I hope he did and that you received the money I sent all safe. I feel a little uneasy about it as he poked the letter in his carpet bag and had no key to lock it. I wrote you also on Thursday night. I trust you will receive that letter tomorrow if you did not get it yesterday.

I am glad Mr. Spahr is getting shutters on the balcony if it makes you feel safer. But my dear Annie I do hope you will not make yourself miserable without cause. It was only three days since you had heard from me and many things might occur either to prevent my writing for a much longer period or if I did write one or two letters might be delayed on the way or miscarried. If you feel lonely or nervous why dont you get Sister Libby to stay with you at night.

So it turns out after all that you did not intend to flatter me, but were only making fun of me. Well we'll let it rest at that.

Hancock's brigade which joins us expects to leave soon for the South. They have all been furnished with new clothes & the little tents which men carry on their backs. "Ike" Parker is in this brigade. I don't think with you that the news from the Burnside (expedition) is depressing. It encountered a terrible storm and met with some loss, but under the circumstances less than might have been expected. And it remains yet to be seen whether the storm and wet weather have not injured the rebels more than they have us.

We had a considerable fall of snow on Friday night, but it nearly all disappeared on Saturday and last night it cleared and froze some. Today it thawed and is as muddy as ever. The day was mild & mostly clear sometimes cloudy. Tonight it has clouded over again.

I received the Carlisle Herald you sent some days ago. I presume you intended I should have the benefit of the article on husbands - We are even now.

I think I will soon send for another box unless a prospect of a move soon. We are nearly eaten out except butter. I have all you sent yet except one pound. I am in hopes of hearing some good news from the fleet soon - may be disappointed.

I remain your faithful
& loving husband
James

Camp Pierpont Va
4 Feby. 1862

My Dear Annie,

I received yours of the 1st inst yesterday evening. I thought you would mail another yesterday morning which I would receive this evening whereat I was somewhat disappointed. I will hope for it tomorrow evening.

I was glad to hear that you received the letter with the money. I suppose the letter was cause of great anxiety to Mr. Kenyon.

I sometimes feel uneasy about James. I fear you give him too much rich food. You know (how) very particular I was with the other children in that respect. My faith is strong in that matter. If you want to have healthy sons & daughters, you must rear them on plain food. Their stomachs as a general thing cannot bear strong diet. And if you destroy the vigor of their stomachs when small; it can never be fully restored.

I suppose I must give you a slight animadversion to that inexhaustable subject, in my letters of late, the weather. Well on the night I last wrote you (Sunday night) the ground froze just middling hard, and yesterday morning it commenced snowing, & snowed all day, not getting very deep however. At night it turned to raining and sleeted & rained pretty hard the greater part of the night ending with a slight fall of snow. Today has been a bright sunshiny day, melting the roads into mud but a right sharp air notwithstanding. Tonight this far it is clear calm & cold and I think will freeze pretty tight.

All we have to do now is two recitations a week in military tactics, and target shooting every (day) that is fit. For this last purpose we have to go over a mile which is not remarkably pleasant this muddy weather.

The Henderson's have received two or three boxes of eggs, pies, chicken, currant jelly, cranberry sauce etc.

I suppose if we are likely to remain here for sometime I will write in a few days for another box. And I don't think there is much probability of our moving till the roads improve. Still our moving may depend on contingencies independent of the condition of the roads or weather.

I wish you would enclose me a dollar note in each of your next letters. I will enclose you a V or X instead some of these times.

I have not been in Washington since Genl. Gibson's death except as I passed through on my way home & return in December. It is so muddy that (I) don't care about going although I need a new cap & some other things.

As I write I can hear the mice skipping about through my tent at a rapid rate. They are become very numerous and seem to enjoy themselves hugely. My stove is so warm that I am all over in a perspiration

I remain your devoted husband

James

X jsc-6202.09

Camp Pierpont Va
9th Feby 1862

My dear Wife,

I received yours of the 5th inst. yesterday evening. I wrote you on the 6th enclosing ten dollars, which I hope you have received. Your dollar note came safely for which I am much obliged.

I hardly know what to tell you to send in the box, but I suppose some sausages & puddings, butter etc. would be best. I presume there are no new smoked hams cured this winter. If there were I would like to have a small one of 10 to 12 ~~or~~ 14 lbs not any larger. About 10 lbs sausages & 5 of puddings. If you get a ham then not so much sausage & pudding. Do not give yourself any trouble to get a ham for I do not care much about it, I only mentioned in case you have one.

You might send some pies. I know you can make as good ones as Mrs. Henderson, & two or three quarts of cranberries, good sound ones. I think we can cook them here every week. We have a pretty good cook. You might send a turkey not a large one but I don't care how fat so that it is not too poor, also a couple of chickens if you can get fat ones, but no poor ones or Shanghies. That will be enough to send. I rather think too much. If you could get small wooden boxes to put each thing in separately and enclose the whole tightly in one larger box it would answer. The tin things are very good but rather expensive. Then the small boxes should not be pine or things will taste of it. I hardly know how you can fix pies that they will not break without going to too much expense, and we must keep an eye on that.

Every pound of butter ought to be wrapped in a cloth. The butter you sent rusted the bucket wherever it touched. I suppose the salt in the butter was the cause. It did not damage it much but made it look to disadvantage. We had only shaved off a very thin slice.

As you cannot get ready to seal the box till after next Saturday morning's market, before that I will write you again.

I know the getting the boxes & packing and marking is a great trouble having no man about. The last one was not very distinctly marked. The boards ought to be planed off before marking. When the last one came, a number of other ones came with it and the man turned it over several times looking at the directions and said there was none for me.

I guess you better not trouble yourself about a ham, or if you do let the turkey & chickens go. Cook all except cranberries. It will be early enough to send the things Monday week.

I remain your affect & troublesome husband

James

jsc-6202.13

Camp Pierpont Va
13th Feby 1862

My dear wife,

I was glad to receive yours of the 10th inst. yesterday evening, as I had begun to think perhaps mine of the 6th inst might have miscarried or been purloined. I have nothing additional to add in respect of the box except that I am beginning to think that matters may transpire that we will be ordered to move before I receive it or before we can consume its contents. I said not to pack before Monday in my last I believe. The reason is that the weather might be pretty warm and it would be better to be packed up as short a time as possible.

Yesterday and today have been delightful and warm here. The bluebirds - the harbingers of spring were singing today.

I heard the story of the colored man being bled to death but of course I didn't believe any such stuff. A great many stories are started and circulated through the camps and no matter how absurd they are, they always find somebody to believe them.

There have been one or two cases of smallpox I believe, but it was some time ago. I have heard nothing of it lately. All of our regiment were re-vaccinated last week. It was left optional with the officers to be vaccinated or not. I declined as I do not like to try it so often, having been vaccinated at Camp Wayne.

The news has been quite favorable from the South for a few days. If it continues a few days I presume the Baltimore friends will begin to think we have done something more than take "a few plantations." If we don't meet with some very serious reverses, I think the war will be over before the end of the year from the time we started.

Poor Mrs. Gould I suppose is uneasy about her son and afraid she will not have much comfort with him as she says. I rather reckon she hadn't very much comfort with him before he left home. If there is any change he is a better boy now than when he left her.

How would you like to live in Mr. Shrom's house? Would you like it better than Spahr's?

I am not certain whether I wrote you anything about the gas. I intended to but may have forgotten. I would rather they didn't put it in now as people complain of the bills. The coal oil is nearly as good and not more than quarter as dear.

Give my love to all friends that you think ought to have it.

I remain your truly devoted husband

James

jsc-6202.18

Camp Pierpont Va
18 Feby 1862

Dear wife,

I received your favor enclosing rect. for box sent by express, but I cannot express my thanks for the same. I will hardly receive the box till day after tomorrow. Yours contained no \$1 this time.

We returned from picket yesterday about 10 o'clock A.M. And a good wet time we had from about daylight till that time. Sunday was a fine day but it clouded over and commenced raining about 2 A.M. Monday.

I suppose the ham is in the box. I wish it was the pies & cake left out instead as the ham will not be appreciated. Old last year hams "are played out" as the saying here is.

Tonight I am officer of the guard and have to remain up all night. It is mild out but cloudy and foggy causing almost Cimerian darkness and the mud is awful. I pulled my boot off this evening by sticking it into the mud. It is now nearly eleven o'clock and I am expecting the moon soon to shed a little light around although it is cloudy.

The news from the south is better almost than could have been expected almost too good to continue all the time. Wonder if the Baltimore friends think the north has accomplished anything yet besides taking a few plantations of no account.

It is almost time for me to go to relieve the guard & I must close.

Most sincerely
your truly devoted
husband
James

Camp Pierpont Va.
20th Feby 1862

My Dear Dear Wife,

I wrote you the night of the 18th the night I was on guard, although it was very muddy & dark till the moon rose. I fortunately escaped a complete drenching, which I would have got had I been on the next day. A few minutes before I got off it commenced to rain and it did rain tremendously the whole day yesterday and last night till after I went to sleep. This morning before daylight it cleared and commenced blowing a strong gale all day. The box has just arrived and Sam is opening it. It has been here since day before yesterday - the day I received your letter notifying me you had started it. I did not suppose it would get here so soon and did not send to enquire. Yesterday it rained so the sutler's wagon did not go into the city. So I did not send for it till this evening. I have unpacked the box and everything is safe and sound including the numerous packages of dried apples.

I don't know whether we will get an opportunity to eat all the good things we have now. A dispatch came out this evening from General McClellan to get ready to meet the enemy. That he has information that the rebels intend to come out from Manassas and attack us on the 22nd Saturday. If that was their intention I think yesterday's rain would put a stop to it. Still it is better to be ready.

The news from the south continues favorable. I think Miss Martha will lose the hat.

Poor Mog(?) Blaney will be very much grieved at the loss of her son. I think she thought more of him than her other children. However he was a secessionist and I do not like that class. The union army was no place for him.

I don't know how it happens that Mrs. Sharpe can rent her house for such a large sum - \$350 a year for that little bit of a house. I wonder why Mrs. Bidwell did not rent Shapley's house if it is so elegant, and it could be got so low. You may depend on it wife, that, that is not a pleasant house to live in.

I would not use etherial oil when coal oil is so cheap.

If little James is so affectionate as you represent and loves his mother it must be because he takes after the old James who is so affectionate and loves his wife too much.

I commenced this letter soon after dark but the box came and I laid the letter aside to unpack the box. Then Mr. Harkness - who has been here some days - came in and it got late. And I must close.

I remain
Your devoted Husband
James

JSC-6202.23

Camp Pierpont Va.
23rd Feby 1862

My dear wife,

Yours of the 20th reached me yesterday evening. You will have learned from my last that the box reached me all right. We will drop the ham subject. I have no doubt it is very nice. I have not cut it yet. It would be a good joke for me to express it back again. I believe I shall not perpetrate it. We had the turkey today for dinner with cranberries, etc. Eggs for breakfast, - tea-store tea none of your garden stuff - for supper. We will have good living for a while if we are not ordered away.

Yesterday the 22nd we celebrated the day by firing a national salute, reading Washington's farewell address, drinking champagne etc.

The southern news still favorable, but rumor says the great final battle is to be fought in Virginia. That may be so but I think that depends on circumstances. I do not believe that it is now the intention of Genl. McClellan to attack Manassas, but that may become a necessity in the passage of events. But I think it is pretty nearly certain that Miss Martha will lose her bet with Mr. Woodward.

I have no objection to Libby using the majors, but I am opposed to your entertaining majors in the same way. You understand.

Who is Mrs. Miller that gave the splendid party. Is it Galbraith Miller's wife.

Major Todd has sent in his resignation I have heard, but I do not know whether it has been accepted.

Give my regards to Mrs. McClure and tell her I am very much obliged for the bottle of catsup. I have not opened it, but I dare say it very nice. We have some on hand. As soon as that is out I will try hers.

It rained again last night, and has been cloudy and damp all day, & drizzling a little at night. David Nevin left the company yesterday for Shippensburg. He has been appointed a 1st Lieut. I have not heard of the confirmation of Will Watts' appointment. I presume it will be.

Your devoted husband

James

jsc-6202.25

Camp Pierpont Va
25th Feby 1862

My Dear wife,

I was disappointed this evening at not receiving a letter from you; as the letters mailed yesterday arrived here this evening. I have commenced writing to you but I believe I will not mail it to you till I hear from you.

Rumors are quite current that we will have orders to move at an early day, and I have no doubt that we will leave this at any rate during the month of March if the weather permits, but whether it will be in the beginning or toward the end of the month I do not think so certain. Nor do I think that Genl. McClellan has yet determined on the time. But it may be determined very soon.

I believe I shall send my trunk to Mr. Walters near Langley, where Mrs. Beatty boards.

I hope we will have pleasanter weather than we have had for the past two months. Yesterday forenoon it commenced to blow and blew tremendously all day. I was obliged to get out of my tent fearing it would be blown down. All who had what is called flies over their tents had to take them off. By that means they were probably saved. A number of the men's tents were blown down and some of them badly acut. It grew colder as it blew and being afraid of my tent blowing down I remained out. Altogether I think it was the most unpleasant day I have spent in camp when not on duty. It continued to blow after night, but I determined to risk the inside. Got a fire made and sat inside till I retired. And although the wind stormed furiously, I fell asleep immediately, having become sleepy by being in the wind all day. The tents were thrown down more or less in all the regiments. In the third a tree was blown down which fell on three men who were sitting in their tent and injured them - two of them seriously. It was reported that one of them was dead, but it has since been reported that both will recover.

I shall now wait till I hear from you 26 Feby. I was very much disappointed at not hearing from you this evening. I would not close this letter till hearing from you, had we not received orders this afternoon to be ready to march on five minutes notice with three days rations in haversacks. I think we will move now very soon.

It is raining very hard now & has been raining for several hours which may delay us a few days. I have been packing my trunk tonight. I do not know whether I will send it home or send it to Mr. Walters' near Langley. I have still hopes that I shall hear from you by Lieut. Adair who was expected to arrive this evening but has not, that I have heard of. If I don't get a letter when he comes I shall be uneasy lest something is the matter.

My Dear wife,

Your long delayed and long looked for letter of the 25th ult. came to hand on Thursday evening. Only one letter this week, five whole days intervening between your two last. And I writing every other day. And here I am writing again, to my neglectful, and I fear too much loved, puss of a wife, although her last letter was answered before it was received. As tomorrow will be Sunday we will have no mail to the city on that day so you cannot receive this before Wednesday.

I stated in my last that we had marching orders. It produced a great excitement in camp. Everybody packing up every thing they could not carry with them & sending it home. Nearly all the men sent one blanket home. Yesterday & day before we had all sorts of rumors. First that Banks had crossed the Potomac and marched to Winchester where he met the rebels and was whipped and driven back. And then that he had not been able to cross the river at all, having been repulsed in the attempt to cross. Today all these stories have been contradicted and we are fast relapsing into our former quietude. Yet we are still under marching orders.

Whether it was really intended that we should move when the orders were given and prevented from being executed by the heavy rains & high winds and extreme cold afterwards or other unforeseen circumstances, or whether it was a feint to deceive the enemy of course I cannot say. I am inclined to the opinion that the latter was the object, for reasons that I need not state.

Yesterday we had a high cold northwestern wind which lasted all day & night, and yesterday afternoon & night was I think the coldest weather we have had here this winter. I suppose from your account of the illumination that you had no illumination at home as you were all around the town. Probably there was no illumination in Pitt St. I judge Mrs. Penrose has not forgotten that her parlors were brilliant and her windows open as you seem to think. On the contrary her costume, head gear, and posted where she was with bright lights convinces me that it was intentional to show her utter contempt for the whole affair. I'll venture to say that you may walk down street any other night and you will not see her in the same place and plight with a full head of gas on.

I learn by several of your letters that you have James taught to get up when he gets awake at night and make you hold him. That is not the way we used to do with the others.

As this letter cannot leave till Monday morning I will leave space for a few lines to give you the latest news, should there be any of our movements.

I enclosed a note to Sister Libby in my last which I presume you handed over. Tell her I want her to write to me.

2nd March. Last night was calm but it froze hard. Today it moderated and this afternoon it snowed very fast for a couple of hours. And now it is cloudy with a heavy mist falling.

Mr. Haverstick is here now and expects to leave for home tomorrow afternoon. I had some intention of sending this by him, as you might get it a little earlier. But lest something might detain him another day I have concluded to forward by mail.

It seems to be fixed today that Genl Banks has crossed the river with at least a part of his division if not the whole of it. There was no fighting however, the enemy retiring as he crossed. Of course we know nothing as to the time we will move, and do not expect to know until a very short time previous thereto.

Major Todd has withdrawn his resignation and intends to remain with his regiment, so the example he sets and with which you were so much delighted turns out bad instead of good.

We stewed the peaches today & had some for dinner. The ducks & chickens are done; we have sausage yet. The eggs are also done, a number of them were broken, but not many lost as we could fry the broken ones. We can get no more boxes from home I presume as we might leave before they could arrive. We have still plenty of butter, I have all that you sent & Capt Henderson has some. I have not cut the ham yet so we will not starve for a few days yet if we remain here.

I remain your affecte husband
James

jsc-6203.05

Camp Pierpont Va
5 March 1862

My dear Annie,

I received yours of the 4th inst. this evening, and I now proceed to reply to it, although it is my bed time, being almost 11 o'clock P.M.

6th March. Just as I finished the above sentence it occurred to me that I had sent a letter yesterday morning written the evening before, so I concluded to postpone writing till this evening.

I received yours dated the 5th inst this evening, but as you speak of having received mine the same evening, I conclude the date is a mistake, as if it had been written the evening of the 5th it could not have got here this evening.

I feel sorry that you made yourself so uncomfortable on account of imaging evils. You see how useless it is to make yourself so uneasy on the basis of mere rumors. I know that it is human nature and one of its bright phases to be concerned for the safety of our friends when possibly in danger and more especially when we love those friends. Still we should not give way too much to such feelings.

I am glad to learn that you and the children are still in enjoyment of your health.

I know the General Bowerman(?) you speak of by reputation if he is from Bedford. He will be no great acquisition I judge. If you had him in Pitt street he could supply gas for the whole street.

I beg you not disturb yourself about the evil of inflicting too long a letter on me. You cannot possibly make one too long nor repeat it too often to me, whatever it might be to "the handsomest man in town."

Capt Henderson has not been promoted to major. His appointment to the post was only temporary. He may be _____ when we move if our major is absent at the time as he is now on other duty. In such case I would be acting captain and Will Henderson acting Lieut.

We marched to the chain bridge yesterday. Today we took the other direction and marched to difficult creek. We found the roads not near so muddy but the distance is considerably greater.

We are still here as you have seen by this. We have no information as to when we will leave, but are expecting orders to arrive at any time.

It is just tatoo and the drums are beating and the bands playing all around. It would please John very much to be here a day or two. Indeed I wish you could all be here for a half dozen

hours if the weather was pleasant. I think you would enjoy yourselves very much. But I have no hopes of ever seeing you all here. I hope to receive another letter from you by Saturday evening.

Your devoted husband
James

Camp Pierpont Va.
9th March 1862

My Dear wife,

I received yours of the 6th yesterday evening at which I was very much gratified. You have been very prompt in writing last week, for which please accept my thanks.

We are still here as you perceive but we are expecting orders all the time. Every preparation is making to leave, and I think we will hardly remain here much longer; still I think it depends on movements at other points which are now making or soon will be. Leesburg has been taken and occupied by our troops as you will learn by the papers tomorrow before you receive this.

I received the gold \$1. I would rather you had kept it as specie may get scarce with you after a while. I have about \$30 in gold & silver, and \$20 in paper. It will take \$12 or \$15 of the latter to pay Sam, but I can get along a while without more so you need not send any more till I let you know.

Sam is going to leave us when we move. He is not disposed to go any farther. I am sorry he is going. I hardly know how we will get along without him. If Vienna gets married I presume she will leave you and you will not easily get as good a servant although she has her faults and considerable ones too. I hope however she will remain with you a few months at any rate if she does get married.

I am glad you have planted tomatoes. I hope I will be at home to help you to eat them. I am not so infatuated with army life as you seem to suppose. On the contrary I do not like it and I sincerely wish the war was at an end and I was at home with her I love above all others.

I am glad to know that you are growing fat. It assures me that grief does not sit heavy on you. But I notice you speak only of being fat in the face. Does that mean that you are fat only in that part, the remainder lean. I trust you will get tolerably fat all over but I would not wish you to be some overgrown with fat.

This has been a beautiful day, but the wind tonight indicates rain and I fear we will have it before 24 hours. I regret this the more as we have to go on picket tomorrow. If the weather was pleasant I would prefer going on picket to making these marches every day.

Mr. Swanzey was here this afternoon. He says the report in Washington is that we will move within 48 hours, but of course report knows nothing about it. We have just to wait for orders & then obey. Almost everyone professes to be weary of remaining here & wishes to move.

Don't forget to write often like a good wife.

I remain your sincerely attached husband, James

Hunters Mills Va. 13 March 1862

I wrote* to you day before yesterday from this place. I have not received a letter from you since but I received one from Sister Libby this evening. She tells me she intends to go to Shippensburg Saturday or Monday. She will return again if you desire it. I think she would be company for you at night.

We have been doing nothing here except drilling and repairing the railroad. The Alexander Loudon & Hampshire railroad runs close by our camp. The rebels destroyed it as much as they well could. It will be finished to this place tomorrow when I presume we will have a mail every day as long as we remain. How long that will be I have no idea.

We are not very comfortably fixed here as we have no tents. The captain & I have our gum blankets stretched overhead & cedar and pine for the ends. We have no rain yet so I cannot say how it will answer should a continual rain visit us. I think however we can get along tolerably.

We get the papers here now daily. The Enquirer 10 cents apiece. From all accounts we are farther now from the enemy now than we were all winter, as they were all around us almost at Leesburg, Goose Creek, Winchester, Centreville, & Manassas. We are now within five or six miles of Centreville and the enemy is said to be some fifty or sixty miles away. We marched some 14 miles coming to this camp still it said we are not more than six or seven miles from Camp Pierpont.

This is a completely poverty stricken country. Almost no fences, the most miserable houses & no barns. If this is a specimen of the "sacred soil" I never desire to have my residence on it. And still I think it might be made middling good if properly cultivated. I think they are a shiftless set as the New England aunt in Uncle Tom's cabin observes.

There is a report in camp tonight that Burnside is in Richmond. I think it can hardly be true. Such rumors are often started in camp. I never put faith in them unless I know the authority. Wonder if the Baltimore friends think that the United States government have accomplished anything yet, besides taking a few plantations.

How are you off for money. I of opinion we will not be paid till some time in April if then. Direct as I stated in my last, 7th Regt, P.R.V.C. Va. near Washington City, D.C. We will get a mail every other day, I presume, if not daily. I expect a letter from you next mail which will be Saturday. The mail will go in tomorrow & come out Saturday as it takes one day to go in & one to return. When the railroad is completed we will probably get a daily mail.

Remember to all the friends.

Your devoted husband
James

Near Alexandria Va
17th March 1862

My Dear wife,

I was truly glad to receive your two letters of the 13th & 14th inst. yesterday evening or rather last night. I had heard nothing from you directly for more than a week. I received a letter from Sister Libby while at Hunter's Mills. I wrote to you twice from there.

On Thursday morning about 5 o'clock we received orders to pack up & in 15 minutes we were on the road to Alexandria. We marched that night to a place near Jackson's mills where we arrived about 10 or 11 o'clock at night where we lay or sat till morning a slow drizzling rain all night. But we had fires. The next morning we ere in line half past six. But it having been ascertained that a couple of bridges on our direct route had been destroyed, after standing about 1 1/2 hours in the rain we turned back the way we had come for about two miles and marched to within three miles of our old Camp Pierpont then took off for the Alexandria Pike.

And such a march. The roads were almost impassable, and the rain poured down almost in torrents. We trudged on however till about 4 o'clock P.M. when we halted in a pine woods. With great difficulty we got up some fires. I held the end of a gum blanket over while others kindled the fire till my fingers were quite benumbed. After we got the fire under way we had that comfort but the rain continued to pour down till we were drenched completely before we halted. I sat all night by the fire without a minute's sleep. At about 10 or 11 o'clock it ceased raining but every place was too wet to lie down, and I preferred sitting up although I slept none the night before except about 10 minutes.

I got my clothes pretty well dried out by morning only one stocking. I took off one boot & wrung out the stocking & dried it, but such a labor had I to get my boot on again that I left the other one on to dry itself. At ten o'clock yesterday morning we started again and got here in the evening. I had two crackers & some coffee for breakfast yesterday was all I had till about sundown, when I got my supper at a home near camp.

I was sorry to hear of Will Henderson's death. I had not the slightest idea that he was so ill. He was very delicate as I have learned since we came into the army. He should not have come. Another month of such times as we had last week would use up a good many men.

We are here now waiting to be shipped south. We expected to go on board as soon as we arrived here, but it is said there is not sufficient coal for the steamer and we must await its arrival. We may go tomorrow - we may not go for several days. I am in hopes you have a letter on the way that will reach me before we start. When I will have an opportunity of writing you again I cannot say. I do not know where we are going. Some say to join Burnside. Others name other points. I presume the better way

for you to direct a letter would be to me Co. A, 7 Regt, P.R.V.C., McCall's Division, near Washington City. I presume letters will be sent after us. Write often. I will do so as often as I can find opportunity.

My prayer to God & heart's desire is that he may protect us all and that we may meet again in peace & happiness & so live many years.

Your truly devoted husband

James

Since commencing this letter I have seen Mr. Beatty & he says that he saw Sam Clelans & he told him he was going to send my trunk home by express. I hope he will. I will send the key if I get an opportunity. Sam's wife lives in Carlisle. If the trunk does not come see her where Sam is (?) or write to him about it. If the key don't arrive some time soon you can get Healey to pick the lock.

jsc-6203.21

Camp Near Alexandria Va.
21st March 1862

My Dear wife,

We are still here as you see & do not know when we will leave. I have received nothing from you since your letter of the 14th inst. The mail was not brought out from Washington yesterday and there may be a letter in the office for me. We had a mail day before yesterday evening bringing a number of Carlisle letters but none for me. I hope you will not cease writing because you may not know where I am. I have written you two letters since we encamped here on Sunday evening. I would have written you yesterday so that you might have received it this week, but it rained all day and having no tent I could not write

It is most uncomfortable time for the men. I do not see how they will be able to endure it if the weather continues wet. It rained night before last all night & yesterday and last night. This morning it is not raining but remains cloudy and at present (10 o'clock A.M.) it looks as if we would have more rain although the wind is veering a little towards the west. Yesterday we drew what is called shelter tents sufficient for 21 men. That is all that could be got. That is that number for each company in the regiment. As for myself I got a corner in the tent of the assistant surgeon. I slept very soundly last night, being protected from the rain. My blankets were very damp I might say wet but there is no help for it. They cannot be dried till it clears. My health remains good for which I am thankful. I stood in the rain yesterday all day till 8 o'clock P.M.

There must be great mismanagement or want of forethought somewhere. On Saturday afternoon we were within three miles of our old camp Pierpont where we had tents, stoves & everything to make us comfortable, and when the vessels were ready we could have marched here in 6 or 8 hours any day or night. We have been here nearly five days two of them nearly lying in the rain, and we may be here five more for what I know and perhaps nobody knows at present when the transportation for us will be furnished,

If my trunk does not come forget to see Sam Clelan's wife and write to him about it & get him to send it by express if he has not done so. If he has to send you the receipt for it. I have hopes I will get an opportunity to send the key home before we leave.

Do not postpone writing. Direct as I before stated Co A 7th Regt P.R.V.C. McCall's Division near Washington D.C. I do not know whether I can get this letter to the post office before tomorrow.

I write this sitting out in a clearing with the canopy of heaven for a cover and I must say the cover has been leaking badly the last 40 hours. My fingers are now quite numb with the cold.

Your devoted husband, James

I must now close. My paper is all done and too rainy to look for more. I do not know whether I can get a postage stamp or not. I hope you and the children continue well & enjoying yourselves. Mr. McClure did not get any money for you. You will have to draw on Carlisle Deposits Bank for what you want, unless Mr. McCleaf has some for you. I remain your true & devoted husband

James

I have returned from church & learned that a man will probably be sent to Washington tomorrow morning with letters & bring back our mail. I hope I will receive at least two. Continue to direct your letters to Washington as heretofore, always putting on the Regt. and Co and McCall's division. I understand a division postmaster will be appointed in a day or two. His business will be to send in & bring out from Washington all the letters of the division. I do not know how often we will get a mail but I hope you will continue to write as promptly as you have done the last two weeks.

I have not the least idea where we are to go nor when we will start. There is a rumor that we are to guard the railroads running through here on down south. That will be a tiresome task. But whether it is a rumor started in camp I have no means of knowing. It may be true or it may not. A great many of the officers and men have gone today to visit the battlefield of Bull Run which is said to be about five miles from where we are. There is a great appearance of rain this afternoon. It will make it very unpleasant if it does as our quarters are. Major Todd has just passed along. He is looking very well and says he is with the exception of a slight return of rheumatism.

I remain

Your sincerely afft.
husband
James

jsc-6203.23

Camp Near Alexandria Va
23rd March 1862

My Dear wife,

Since I wrote my last on Friday I received yours of the 18th which arrived on Friday evening. I was truly glad as I had heard nothing from you from the day after we came to this place.

We have had very little pleasant weather since we stopped here. Yesterday morning it looked as if we should have good weather, but it soon clouded over and after dark it rained very heavily for an hour or two. This morning the sun rose bright and clear, but did not remain out long. It is now cloudy and quite cold though not freezing.

It is said now that we will embark tomorrow night with what truth I cannot say. If it should prove to be true you will hardly hear from me for some days, as I judge there will be no mail for sometime. However I hope you will continue to write as there will doubtless be some arrangements made to forward our letters. And I shall always be anxious to hear from you. I am hoping to receive a letter from you tomorrow before we leave if we do leave.

I write seated on my valise with camps & soldiers all around, while you I suppose are in church listening to Mr. Ealls if he is able to preach. The drums have just commenced to beat the church call, so we are to have preaching today. We had none since we left camp Pierpont, and may not have for some time again. Where we are to go from this remains secret. There are various surmises. Some declaring Acquia Creek to be the point others the Rappahannock or Fortress Monroe, York River etc. But I believe no one knows except a few of those directing the movements. I think I will go to church & hear what father Hunt has to say.

2 P.M. I have heard a queer discourse from father Hunt. Text Revelations I do not remember the chapter. He sometimes preaches odd sermons.

I have learned that letters were received in the company yesterday evening which were mailed in Carlisle on Friday. I think I should have had one too.

I am sorry to hear of Charley's bereavement. It is probable that they were too indulgent to the baby in the way of eating if it was old enough to eat as I suppose it was. It is another proof of the saying that man proposes but God disposes. So it is with us as we know not what is before us. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends rough hew them as we will."

I hope your funds will last till I can send you more. You will have to get credit at the stores and save the cash for marketing.

I hope & pray your dream will be realized in all its extent. And then I shall stay with you always till you consent I shall go.

Smith division is embarking today. Ike Parker is in that division. He is in the 47th Regt. I presume we will not go before Tuesday or Wednesday if then. It is said our writing will be stopped soon and I suppose it will be when we go down the Potomac as we may not have any chance to forward letters for some time. So do not be uneasy if you do not hear from me for some time. I will write whenever opportunity offers.

I am of opinion that there will be one or two severe battles in Virginia, & if we are successful the rebellion will be pretty well subdued.

Your devotedly attached husband

J.S. Colwell

Address as directed in my former letters from this place. Remember me to all friends & kiss the children in my behalf.

Yours etc.

James

jsc-6203.25

Camp Near Alexandria Va
25 March 1862

My dear Wife,

I could not write yesterday afternoon owing to our having a grand review and we did not return till almost dark. I have time to write a few lines before breakfast and must close before as the mail is very irregular and may leave soon.

We had a review of three divisions about thirty thousand men I should judge. This comprises McDowell's army corps of which McCalls division forms a part. The day was quite cold - uncomfortably so. The ground froze quite hard last night and also night before. My health remains good except I have a cold not very severe however.

You were mistaken in supposing that yours of the 21st would not reach me. I received it on Monday evening, just as soon as if I had been at Camp Pierpont. You do not receive mine so regularly perhaps, because we have no fixed time for the mail leaving camp and once if not twice the mail had gone before I delivered my letter & consequently it was kept in camp till next day. I hope you will still write even if you hear we have left. I think the letters will be forwarded. When we do get orders to move the notice will probably be so short that I will not have time to write, as I will have many other things to attend to.

If Sam Clellans left my trunk at Mr. Walter's you had better get him to bring it into the city of Washington & express it to you. And tell him to take a receipt for it & forward it to you. I fear he has taken it to the express office & neglected to get a receipt in which case you will probably never see it. Whatever the cost for bringing it to Washington you can forward to him or pay it to his wife which will answer as well as he sends her money.

I have no idea what day we will move. We expect orders every day, and I have no doubt they will come before many days. You ought not to be grieved by accounts of what the reserves are going to do. No one knows what is in store for the reserves. They may be in some battles and some may be destroyed. But we must put our trust in providence. He can preserve us in all circumstances. And we cannot escape his will by any course of our own. A number of young men who remained at home have been cut off almost as suddenly as those who fell in battle.

Believe me to be ever
devoted husband
J./S. Colwell

jsc-6203.28

Camp Near Alexandria Va
28th March 1862

My Dear wife,

Your favor of the 24th mailed on the 25th was received by me on the evening of the 26th. So you see I receive your letters this far quite as promptly as I did at Camp Pierpont.

I can say nothing as to our future movements than I formerly stated. We have new rumors almost every day which turn out to have no foundation in fact. Among the latest is one that we are not to go by water but to march south by land. And the very latest but one is that Governor Curtin is in Washington endeavoring to have the Penna Reserve discharged. This latter I have no doubt is made up. And the last report was brought by the asst surgeon about 10 o'clock last night, which was that we were to go today. His chief reason for thinking so was that he had received orders to have papers made out last night to send all the sick who are not able to go to the general hospital. I must say that order looks a little like getting ready to start, but it is not conclusive. I thought however I would write a few lines before breakfast to let you know that I am still well. The weather has been comparatively pleasant for some days although it is rather cold sometimes for comfort.

I feel sorry for Mr. Ealls in his misfortunes, but I think he ought to leave as he will not do much good where he is. His remaining would probably cause considerable trouble, perhaps injury in the church. I saw Mr. Walters since I last wrote. He says my trunk was not left at his house that he ever heard of. So Sam probably took it to Washington.

I hope you will have a pleasant time with your preachers. Mr. Cain would not suit the people of Carlisle in any respect. He would soon wear out, and besides I do not think he is any better than he ought to be. I know a great deal about him. He is not reliable. But say nothing about him. He should have a chance to do the best he can and I would throw nothing in his way. But I would oppose his going to Carlisle if I were there, because I believe the congregation would wish to get rid of him before many months.

I hope you will be careful of the children by keeping them home as much as possible when the smallpox is raging so badly. Someone received a letter yesterday stating that there were 200 cases in Carlisle. The letter was from Mechanicsburg and is doubtless a great exaggeration. It is also prevailing in Mechanicsburg.

It seems to me Daisy is a long time learning to talk. Nan might injure herself jumping the rope if you do not restrain her within proper limits.

I remain your truly devoted husband
J.S. Colwell

Camp Near Alexandria Va
1st April 1862

My Dear Wife,

This is the first time since I left Camp Pierpont that I have undertaken to write a letter by candlelight. This I write in the surgeon's tent or rather the assistant surgeon's.

Yours of the 28th ult. reached me yesterday evening & right glad was I to receive it. I hardly expected a letter before this evening. However I got none this evening and now I shall expect to receive one tomorrow.

We are still here in the same state of uncertainty. Continually preparations are making which go to show that we will move at some early day. But I do not think we will embark before next week or Saturday at the earliest. Still I do not profess to be in the secrets. McDowell's Army Corps has not commenced to embark and I do not believe we will be the first division to go.

I forgot to mention in my former letters that Mr. Watts has received his appointment and appeared very much rejoiced thereat. I hope he will attend to his duties but I am afraid his appetite for the cups will prove his bane.

Mr. Harkness is here again. He visits us oftener than anyone else. I gave him the key to my trunk to take home. He may not get home for a day or two after you receive this, or he may be home before you receive it.

As you said nothing about Vienna in your last two or three letters I presume she has recovered from her illness. If the men are such deceivers as you seem to think, the ladies generally soon recover from their afflictions in such cases. Don't you think so? Then Vienna will soon seek consolation in another cavalier.

Mr. Harkness informs me that it is not true that Mrs. McCartney & daughter are dead. He says it was reported that old Mrs. McCartney had died of smallpox, but the report was not correct.

Yesterday was a beautiful day and that of today likewise, but this evening it has great appearance of rain. The wind blows from the east, but it may change before rain comes.

It is said the paymaster is to pay some one of the regiments tomorrow. I hope he will pay us if I have an opportunity of sending the money home. But I do not care much about having that much money in my pocket.

I have no doubt Mrs. Cooper is as you say very much elated at the idea of Mrs. Genl Cooper. And I have no doubt she would glory in exhibiting considerably in Carlisle where at one time she was not of much consideration. And indeed I very much incline to the opinion that Mrs. Brigadier Genl Cooper even at the

present time is not held in as high estimation by the proud citizens of that old dilapidated town as she is in her own. And I incline farther to the opinion that the Brigadier himself will never make much noise in military circles.

I remain your most devoted husband

J.S. Colwell

Don't forget to write & keep writing although if we go you may not hear from me for some days.

J.S.C.

jsc-6204.03

Camp Near Alexandria Va
3 April 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have to acknowledge yours of the 31st ult. It arrived yesterday evening. You have been very prompt in writing for the last few times for which I feel very grateful. I hope you will continue doing the same.

I have nothing new to communicate except that this morning was a most beautiful calm spring morning and gave promise of a warm day. But about 9 or 10 o'clock A.M. strong wind sprung up and continued to blow all day which rendered the day not very pleasant although it was not cold. I speak of this as something new because we have had so little fine weather for a long time. Yesterday afternoon it was quite cold. This evening the wind has fallen & there will probably be a little frost tonight.

Dick Henderson returned today but I have not seen him.

Why do you not lock the front door soon after dark and then you will not be so liable to fright. I can imagine what consternation you & Minnie would be in at a visionary depredation.

I hope Annie Hepburn was found that night, and that Will Watts did not run away with her, so that an advertisement will not be necessary.

I presume the lieutenant feels very consequential in his new uniform. He has rather a pompous strut at any time but with a fine uniform he will no doubt "spread himself." He will make a remarkably good looking soldier.

I think our days of remaining here are becoming few but I have no idea what day we will leave.

My cold remains about in status quo but it is not very bad.

It is getting so dark I cannot see to write much more. Tell Daisy I should like exceedingly to nurse her a while tonight. And tell Nan & John I think of them very often. I hope they will be good children and obey your instructions.

I will add a line in the morning if I have time before the mail leaves.

Truly your devoted husband
J.S. Colwell

4th. It was pretty cold last night but this is a fine morning. I forgot to mention that there is a powder flask in my trunk. Be very careful of it & do not let the children get it as it is dangerous. While on that subject it occurs to me that it is said that some of the coal oil is very explosive, and more

dangerous than the etherial oil. Be careful with it. Nothing new only reports of our going soon.

Truly your affectionate husband
James

Camp Near Alexandria Va
6 April 1862

My Dear wife,

I receive your letters more regularly since we are here than I did in Camp Wayne. It is probably because you write more regularly. Yours of the 2nd inst. - mailed the 3rd arrived Friday evening. The fact is we are much nearer Washington here than we were at camp Pierpont. In time I mean. A steamboat runs from Alexandria every hour for Washington which it takes about an hour to accomplish and our camp is about 1 1/2 miles from Alexandria. We are not far from the Johnsons place Mary & Etty Ege. But the house is not in sight. I presume their property is destroyed as most of the other properties around here.

I made an effort to get a pass to Washington yesterday but did not succeed. I think I will try again tomorrow. The time for our departure I think is drawing near.

I should judge that there is a very poor idea among citizens in Washington as to what is going on in the army, from what Charley McClure wrote home namely that there was a whisper that McClellan's army would move the 2nd of April. We came here three weeks ago today. And there must have been at least 20,000 of McClellan's army gone down the river then. Heintzleman's Army corps was by all gone then and he must have between 30,000 & 40,000 men. They must have been shipping troops ever since belonging to McClellan's army. Key's corps has gone since and Sumner's now shipping, most of them gone I think. These all belong to McClellan's Army of the Potomac, and will be about 100,000 men.

You have probably seen in the papers yesterday or day before that a new military department has been created called the department of the Rappahannock, embracing the district of Columbia, part of Maryland & that part of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge and west of the Potomac & the Frederick & Richmond railroad. To be commanded by Genl McDowell. This is our department. A change has been made by this arrangement. And now we are to go South through Manassas by railroad or on foot. Part of McDowell's army have already gone by rail as far as it is repaired.

There is a rumor today that Yorktown has been taken by our troops & that the rebels are evacuating Richmond. This is probably not true. But I believe it will be true in a very few days. I do not think now that the rebels will make a determined stand in Virginia.

I am sorry that you sometimes feel very bitter toward me for having come. That is one of the things I cannot understand. I can conceive how you might be sorry & grieved at me and regret it but why you should be embittered against me is past my comprehension unless you are a secessionist. I hope & trust however that these moments are very brief & of rare occurrence.

It is just ten months since I left home the first time on this business. I hope that the expiration of the 12 months will see it ended as far as the reserves are concerned & we all safe at home. I may be a month or two more, but not longer unless our army should meet with serious reverses which might prolong the war.

I trust John is quite recovered by this time. Our family are not much subject to croup & I do not think yours is. I never knew of a case in our family. Some of Sister Nancy's children have had it I believe, but that comes from the Hays side. I have found that croup is in some families very much in others very little or not at all.

Yesterday was a rainy day. It cleared off before evening. Last night we had a heavy white frost, & today is a bright sunny day but with a strong wind.

I am glad Nan can read so well. You say nothing about John's scholarship. Is he getting behind. Do not let him get lazy in his studies. He could once read nearly as well as Nan. Is it not time for Nan to begin to write. Will Henderson can write pretty well & he has never gone to school a single day. It is time for Daisy to be learning her letters & speaking a little. It would serve to amuse her.

You speak of Mr. Brady buying Crabb's house. Do you mean the house that Mrs. Crabb lived in? Did it belong to Mrs Crabb. I never saw the misses Crabbs bearing water from the well like Rebecca. The latter you recollect carried it in a pitcher on her shoulder if I recollect right. The former generally carried it in a tin bucket.

Wonder what put into Ellie Ege's head to be an Episcopalian. It was hardly piety I think. Mrs. Todd seems to have much trouble with her husband's affairs.

You speak of a report that the reserves are to be sent to Harrisburg. We have had such reports. But there is no truth in them. I have an idea that perhaps the reserves may be among the first discharged when they begin to reduce the army. That will not be till the end is nearer. We shall soon expect news from island No. 10 & Buell & Grant's army.

Your devoted husband
J.S. Colwell

7th April. I am in Washington & will put this letter in the post office myself. The first I think since we left Camp Wayne. I have seen Charley McClure. Geo Gibson is in Carlisle as I suppose you know. I return to camp this evening.

Yours
James

Camp Near Alexandria Va
8th April 1862

My last was mailed yesterday in Washington as you will perceive by a note at the top. While there about 12 o'clock M. it commenced to snowing & snowed all day, and snowed & rained & sleeted all night, and today it has been sleeted the whole day, a regular cold northeast storm. A sharp driving sleet that cuts your face if exposed to the storm. We have had no weather more disagreeable last winter than we have had for the last 30 hours. If the weather we have had in virginia for the last six months - it will be six months tomorrow since we came into virginia - is a fair specimen of the sunny south, I would prefer the wintry north by far. I do not believe I ever saw six months with as little sun as I have seen the last six months in Va.

Yours of the 4th inst. arrived in camp last night but strange as it may seem I did not receive it till today at 3 o'clock P.M. When I returned to camp it was getting dark & snowing & raining and I did not know where to find the man who had the letters and having no place to sit I went to bed. And when I got up in the morning it was sleeted & raining so tremendously nobody was to be found up. I went to a neighbouring house to get my breakfast and it continued to sleet so excessively all day that I remained with several other officers till after 3 o'clock P.M. When I returned to camp I received your letter.

I rejoice with you that the children & ourselves have been blessed with such good health. I hope & pray that it may be continued. As to your remark that if any of the children should be very sick I would come home, I must say that it is not in my power to go home when I choose. I could hardly get a furlough now and I presume my resignation would not be accepted at this time if tendered. But I hope you will all retain that good health you have been blessed with during the last year.

Mary Seavers is like all the secesh. They will not believe anything in the Union papers. Now the fight at Winchester was a severe one and the loss heavy. But the names of the killed & wounded are published which would not be done if it was intended to deceive because the falsehood would be easily discovered. The rebel papers always make out our loss about 10 times as great as theirs. But it is strange they do not look at results. How does it come if our loss was so much greater than theirs that they ran and left their dead & wounded. It takes them a long time to come to the belief that the north with the aid of providence can whip them but I think they will have to come to that at last.

We have orders at last that we are to move tomorrow. I hope it will clear by that time. Still I think it will take tomorrow for the first brigade to get off. We are the second. We are to go in the cars beyond Manassas as far as the cars run. Continue to write. Your letters will be forwarded from Washington.

Your devoted husband
James

jsc-6204.10

Camp Pierpont Va
10th April 1862

My Dear wife,

Yours of the 7th was duly received yesterday evening in the midst of a driving snow storm. How it did snow & sleet & rain all day yesterday and ever since Monday noon. It cleared up sometime before daylight today. The sun shines but it is cold & awful muddy & slushy. The snow is melting fast but there is considerable on the ground which will keep the ground muddy for two or three days.

When I received yours I did not think I would be replying to it here today. As I wrote in my last we had orders to be ready to march yesterday at any time on five minutes notice. The first brigade left at 11 o'clock A.M. and we being in the 2nd brigade were to leave when the cars returned. We go by rail to some place in the neighbourhood of Warrenton junction. In the evening we received notice that we would not leave till this morning. The orders were for us to be at the railroad at 11 o'clock. We had everything packed waiting for the drum to beat, to fall in when orders came that we will not go till tomorrow. So we have to unpack & remain.

The last two nights I have slept in a house on the settee. The first night - night before last I caught additional cold by sleeping in the house, but still my cold is not serious.

I hope Daisy & James are convalescent by this time. I fear you are too easily frightened when anything happens to the children. It is much better not to become excited if you can govern yourself. It can do no good to the children & may do harm to yourself.

Mrs. Todd's information was not so very reliable. We did not go on Saturday, & whether we are to be kept as reserves or not I do not think Major Todd knows any better than others. And I do not believe anyone unless Genl McDowell knows. As to the Captain business she is entirely too hasty. Lieut. Col. Totten's resignation has not been accepted yet. And when it is Capt. Henderson has to be elected in his place, before the captaincy will be vacant.

It is not worth my while to write you anything about the movements of other parts of the army. You see them in the papers as soon as I do. Today's papers have not come but we have reports here of a terrible battle between Beauregard & Buel out near Corinth. The loss is said to be enormous on both sides. But I hardly think it can be as great as represented. Island No. 10 is ours without the loss of men on our side. The news is not so favorable from Yorktown. It is reported McClellan has fallen back but I have no particulars, except contradictory rumors.

The suicide of Col. Holliday seems a very strange one. I suppose poor Lyd will receive the news with great grief. But I think she will recover from it as soon as any young lady I know.

I presume you are having a gay time with your preachers. You did not tell me who they were to be. Perhaps you did not know.

I do not think you and I can visit Europe this year. I hope as the storm is over, that your headache has left you altogether & that you are as bright as a May morning.

Your devoted husband
J.S. Colwell

My Dear wife,

I wrote you last on Thursday evening I believe. I have heard nothing since from you. We will probably get a mail from Washington tomorrow or next day. I write today but do not know what day it will get mailed.

We left our old camp near Alexandria on Friday morning at six o'clock A.M. We took the road to Fairfax courthouse on foot, & march to a place about six miles south of F.C. where we bivouacked for the night. Next morning we started at six o'clock for Centreville & Manassas junction, and arrived here about the middle of the afternoon yesterday. The march was not so hard as some we have had & I was not much fatigued, but my feet were quite sore the first day, & yesterday morning I could not walk without pain when I first got up in the morning. This is the first time I have had sore feet and I can hardly account for it. Yesterday they became better as we proceeded and this morning they were entirely well and I feel as if I can march all day. But I presume we will not move before tomorrow.

We came through the renowned places of Fairfax Courthouse, Centreville & Manassas, all of them insignificant places of themselves. F.C. is the largest and is about the size of Newburg - I believe you have been there - but some of the homes are more elegant than any in Newburg, but most of them are no better. A majority of the houses seem to be deserted. Centreville is a miserable looking place & always has been I judge. The homes now seem nearly all abandoned & the windows broken. It occurred to me that Centreville was the place Miss McKinney & those other ladies lived who were in Carlisle some nine or ten years ago. I remember very well there were some ladies at your mother's from that place and I think they were the parties. If I had seen any citizen in the place I should have made inquiries about them.

Manassas junction I judge had not more than a half dozen houses before the secesh war began. A number of rough board houses have been put up apparently since the secesh army came here.

The country north or rather northeast of the place (Manassas) is beautiful. Far different from any idea I had of it. In fact it is a beautiful country all around here, but on the south side it seems to be poor while on the opposite side the ground seems naturally to have been good but impoverished by bad culture. At present the whole country is desolated. The fences for miles all gone, most of the houses deserted, and many of them destroyed. How the secesh have suffered here for their disunion principles. And the people are utterly & ignorant of every thing. And think that the yankees or northern people are a set of abolitionists worse than the heathen.

One of our men told me that he was in the house of a secesh lady yesterday and she thought everything had gone to destruction

in the north. That the yankees had utterly destroyed the capital at Washington and all the pictures etc. and when he told her she was mistaken that he had been in it himself & that it was all right, she would not believe him & he could not get her to believe him. She said it would have been a great deal better to let the Southern people have Washington & they would have taken care of it. Thus have these people been deluded & made to believe that the preservation of the country depended on the south & that the northern people are no better than barbarians. The church call has just beaten & I believe I will go to church.

Your devoted husband

James

(The enclosed clipping from a newspaper was in the same envelope as this letter. Sometimes however letters were removed from their original envelopes - to be re-read presumably - and put back in different envelopes. So it is not certain that this clipping originally was forwarded by JSC to AHC with this letter.)

Camp at Manassas Va
17th April 1862

My Dear wife,

I received your two letters of the 8th & 11th yesterday. The former was postmarked 10th. I was glad to hear from you again as I had heard nothing from you since I think last Wednesday. I wrote you on Sunday from here. We have had but one mail since our arrival. That was yesterday. The mail will go in to Washington this morning and come out some time tonight or tomorrow when I hope to get two more letters. Direct to Washington as before till I instruct otherwise.

I have no idea how long we will remain here. The 1st Brigade is to leave this morning for some post farther on. And the report is we are to go tomorrow morning. The weather is getting warm here. Yesterday was quite warm & this morning gives promise of another warm day.

The news boys follow us up with the papers. So that we are at no loss for the news. Occasionally we miss them from some mishap but generally we get them. Yesterday the news of the taking of fort Pulaski afforded great satisfaction. If McClellan succeeds in capturing Yorktown & the forces around it the war will not last very much longer.

A great many of the houses in this part of the country have been deserted. The people who remain all profess to be for the Union. I have no doubt that many of them say what is not true, but it shows that all the boasting of Southerners that they can never be conquered is senseless bombast. Any nation can be conquered. And the Southerners are by no means as difficult to conquer as Northern men. The history of the world shows this. And this is not self-aggrandizement, as I am neither a North-man nor a South-man, but a Pennsylvanian, which lies between them.

You did not mention what mystery it was that Vienna discovered in the yard. Was it tracks of a man or some other sign. I did not think you would be so superstitious.

Speaking of superstition reminds me of an incident that occurred in camp as our 1st sergeant states. On that last march we were lying at Hunters Mills. W. Henderson was then our 1st Sergeant, and a lawyer of Carlisle named Ruby was our 2nd sergeant, now 1st. On that day he tells that he was lying in his hut looking out across the country when everything became misty & hazy before his eyes, when Will Henderson appeared & says Ruby I'm dead. Ruby just had it on his lips and almost said aloud Will you ain't dead. In two or three days we received the news that he died on that day. Now I think Ruby deceives himself. He might have been thinking about him and might have thought perhaps he would die, or soon return as it was about the time his furlough would expire. And while he was absent Ruby was performing Henderson's duty as 1st orderly sergeant.

As the mail may soon start I must soon close. Please write often to

Your bad but devoted husband

James

jsc-6204.20

Fauquier County Va
Near Catlet's Station
20th April 1862

My Dear wife,

I would have written you before this but on Thursday morning we left our camp at Manassas and I had not time & opportunity to write since. And if I had written no mail has gone since from our regiment. A mail will go to Washington tomorrow evening.

At 2 o'clock A.M. on Thursday we were roused with the order to prepare to march. The men got up & got their breakfast and laid about till 6 o'clock. We reached this place about 3 o'clock P.M. the same day. Between 4 & 5 we started out on picket duty a couple of miles off. As the wagons had just got into camp I had to go without my supper. I had some biscuit & dry beef, & got along very well. About noon it commenced to rain and rained all afternoon. We returned to camp after dark and had a wet night. It is still raining at intervals and it is quite cold. For a few days previously the weather had been quite warm

The pear & cherry trees are out in full bloom and the fields beginning to look green. There is some beautiful country that we have passed over some of it very poor. But if it were farmed like the land of our good farmers in Pennsylvania, it would make a splendid farming country. The Virginians, whether from slavery among them or some other cause, are "a shiftless set."

I believe a great deal has been conceded to the South just because she claimed it. I believe now that her claims are mere pretension, without foundation. The Southerners will now have to take their place as inferiors taken as a race or a nation and submit to the sentiment of the civilized world.

The paymaster is here and we expect to be paid today. I will send you some money the first opportunity. As Mr. McClure sent you some you are not bad off. The papers stated a day or two ago that the reserves had been paid off. This was true as to part of the reserves but not as to all. You cannot believe the fourth of what you see in the papers. It was stated that Major Todd is Colonel of the 84th Penna. & Capt Henderson lieut. Col. of the 7th P.V.R.C. I know nothing about whether Todd is a Colonel but I know that Totten is Lieut. Col. of the 7th. His resignation has not been accepted & if it was I think it is doubtful whether Henderson would be made Lieut. Col. as there are several other candidates for the place. This you need say nothing about as I don't wish to circulate such reports as he may be elected but there will be a strong opposition. So you perceive your chance of being a Captain is not so bright.

We are about ten miles from Manassas. I have no idea how long we will remain here.

I received yours of the 14th last night. There must be two on the way for me and another will leave tomorrow morning, making three.

It is true that I never told you that Miss Culbertson was a sweetheart of mine. But it is just as true that I did tell you all the sweethearts I ever had. And whoever told you she was one told you what never had any foundation in fact. I never even was attentive enough to her to start a report of that kind. I was once at a sleighing party with her and a number of couples were married in sport & she & I were among the number. And we were teased some about such marriages being held binding. There never was any other grounds for calling her my sweetheart. She was not my style as the saying is. Perhaps you wish she had been Mrs. Colwell. That would have answered you just as well, I being a disconsolate widower could never gained your ear and consequently could not have had the nice darling "unambitious" little wife - decidedly the best one I have any knowledge of - I now have. But she has some faults, one of the chief of which is: that she is so headstrong & self-willed I never can convince her how much I love her.

I have not read the Soldier's Talisman which you enclose with your letter but I will this afternoon if some order or duty does not turn up to prevent it.

Genl Ord's brigade has not gone to Yorktown. The whole reserve is within a few miles of where we are except some of the cavalry who are at Yorktown. One regiment, the 4th, is at Manassas Gap, the 5th is between Alexandria & Manassas. The rest of the reserves we have.

It is still raining and it is dinner time.

Your devoted husband
James

jsc-6204.23

In Camp Near Catlett's Station
Fauquier County Va. 23 April /62

My Dear wife,

I have just enclosed to you a letter with \$160, which will be sent by express to Mr. Beete~~m~~ where you will receive it if it arrives safely. I do not know whether a mail will be sent to Washington tomorrow or not, but it is probable there will. I think we will also get the express package with the money into the city tomorrow. You need hardly send to Mr. Beete~~m~~ before Monday next. It may not arrive for two or three days after this letter. It may arrive before this. It is probable Beete~~m~~ will let you know when it comes.

I wrote to you on the 20th inst. which letter it is said went to Washington on Monday. If so you will probably receive it tomorrow if you do not today. We have had no mail since I last wrote - consequently I have received no letter from you. The mailman is absent now after it and we expect it tonight or tomorrow morning, when I hope to receive about three from you.

We have had terrible weather here since I wrote. It was raining then but the rain increased and on Sunday afternoon & night and Monday all day till evening it rained very fast. It cleared during the night but on Tuesday we had several showers keeping the ground muddy but today is bright & clear with considerable wind & we are quite dry but the roads are still bad. I presume we would not have been here now if the roads had been in condition to move.

On Monday our campground was overflowed & the bottom of our tent - or rather fly for I have no tent - was covered with water which we bailed out as best we could & laid our blankets on the mud. I have a gum blanket & it would not have been so bad if my woolen blankets had been dry, but they were not. However I have experienced no bad effects from the wet thus far. It perhaps prevents me from getting clear of my cold as soon as I otherwise might. But I do not perceive that it is any worse.

The rumor is that we will move tomorrow about three miles. I have no doubt we will go about that distance as soon as we can cross cedar run about two miles in advance & which was very high since these last rains. We may perhaps stay there a few days or a week. Where we are to go seems to be kept secret. In fact I do not believe Genl McDowell himself knows where our destination is. That will depend on the movements of the rebels or the success of Genl McClellan most probably. Part of Genl McDowell's force is now at Fredericksburg, and it is said Genl Jackson is moving with his force towards Gordonsville. Gordonsville is on the same railroad we are on about fifty miles South or South West of this place. If that is true we will probably move to that place instead of to Fredericksburg & Richmond.

I presume Libby is with you now. She must have remained at Shippensburg more than two weeks.

I hope you have had no more frights and no more evil omens. Write often. I will get all your letters and will write as often as opportunity offers. Give my love to Libby, Minnie & all other friends, & kiss the little ones for me.

Your faithful and devoted husband
James

jsc-6204.27

In Camp near Catlett's Station Va
27th April 1862

My Dear wife,

I received your two letters of the 17th & 21st inst. came to me in camp on Friday. The mail was four or five days coming out from Washington owing to the destruction of a railroad bridge by the freshet. Our latest mail left Washington on Monday evening or Tuesday morning, so I suppose there are at least three letters from you waiting there. A man is there now for the mail and will leave for camp about tomorrow evening. I wrote you last week & also enclosed \$160 by express to W.M. Beetem Esq. The mail did not get off till Saturday, and the money went to Washington. If it goes safely you will probably receive it on Tuesday. Write as soon as you get it & let me know. If you do not get it on Wednesday write me. I shall feel anxious till I hear you have received it as you may stand in need of some of it before you get any more.

I am sorry to hear of your old enemy neuralgia seizing you again. Can it be produced by the old cause. You know what Aunt Irvine and cousin Henrietta and others always attributed it to. I think you might let me have some light on that subject. Please let me know how that is in your next. Now don't forget.

The reserves are still about here but if it had not been for the great rain I presume we would have been at Falmouth today. Falmouth is on this side of the Rappahannock opposite to Fredericksburg. The 1st Brigade had orders to march for that point on Friday morning but on account of the heavy rain on Thursday night and the consequent rise of the creek the order was countermanded. I judge we would have gone on Saturday. The 1st Brigade started yesterday after dinner and moved about five miles and are still lying where they stopped I am informed, and will move on tomorrow. It is probable we will start tomorrow afternoon or Tuesday.

The 1st Brigade that is at Fredericksburg or rather Falmouth is not ours but the 1st brigade of King's division, which also belongs to McDowell's army. None of the reserves have been there except the cavalry.

Just as I write nine inhabitants have come in seven men one woman and one little girl. Some of them are from Fredericksburg & vicinity. We are twenty-eight miles from Fredericksburg.

I am glad you treated Vienna as you did. The only way to get along with such is to treat her well but be firm and don't let her manage you. You must be "boss" as the men call it.

This has been a bright beautiful day. The wind a little cool. I hope it will continue so for a few days. We had a heavy frost this morning.

I am glad that Nan was no worse hurt. I hope she is entirely well. Was Kate Sharpe expecting her husband in two weeks that she

wanted to know if you were expecting yours. I have seen him only once I think in six weeks, and I never hear anything about him. He is in the 3rd Brigade Genl. Ord's which is behind us. Part of it is in sight of our camp.

I do not know when I can send this but I hope to get a private opportunity tomorrow.

Your devoted husband

James

Camp Near Falmouth, Va
4th May 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have received nothing from you since I left Catlett's. I think the last letter I received was dated the 18th or 19th of April. That I received in due time about the 22nd or 23rd. The Regiment received a mail from Washington since we arrived here I think the 30th. I received no letter from you at which I was greatly disappointed and would have thought you sick, or some calamity had befallen you. But fortunately Capt Henderson's wife mentioned in one of her letters that she met you purchasing garden seeds the day she wrote which was only two or three days before the letter arrived here. I am unable to account for your not writing on any other grounds than that you had forgotten me. As I have written to you several times since the date of your last received I hope some one of them will remind you of me. I wrote you on Wednesday and the mail left on Thursday the 1st May. I expect to hear from you when the return mail arrives. We looked for it yesterday evening but it has not arrived yet. We have heard that the mail carrier took sick on the road but several persons have told me that it takes four days sometimes to go to Washington & back. I had half intended not to write again till I would hear from you but Lieut. Col. Totten has been discharged at last and he intends to leave for home in an hour or two. And I could not let the opportunity pass with(out) embracing it.

I had a dream about you last night. I thought that I had returned home. The war was over and I was going to be very happy. I felt so. I dreamed that I saw you and you looked just as you did eleven or twelve years ago but you proposed that we should not live together & withdrew yourself from me. And just then I woke to find it a dream.

I sent you \$160 to the care of Mr. Beetem. I trust you have received it before this. I would like if you would acknowledge its receipt in a couple of your letters so that if one would miscarry I would still have a chance of hearing that you had received it.

We are still in the same place we encamped when we first arrived here. The weather for two days has been very warm. The apple trees here are in full bloom and the woods are getting quite green. I suppose vegetation here is two or three weeks earlier than with you. It is a poor looking country here but is sure to be good on the other side of the river. The place where Washington was born and where he cut down the cherry tree & threw the stone into the Rappahannock etc. is said to be only about a half mile from our camp. I have not seen it yet but have some notion of visiting the place if I can.

I have no idea how soon we will move from here but I have no doubt it will be as soon as the railroad is completed that we can get provisions & forage.

Don't forget any more to write often and direct to Washington as heretofore.

Your devoted husband
James

I don't know when I will write again. If we move, our mail arrangements may be broken up so that we cannot send letters every day. I hope however you will continue to write as usual - rather a little more punctual than usual. The letters will be forwarded to the regiment somehow.

I enclose a note to Sister Libby which please hand to her. I have not time to write much this evening.

Most sincerely
Your devoted husband
James

jsc-6205.07

Camp Near Falmouth Va
7 May 1862

My Dear wife,

On the evening of the 4th the same afternoon I last wrote I received your two letters of the 28th April & 1st May. You cannot conceive how much I was rejoiced at the reception. I had received no letter from you for 10 or 12 days a longer time I think than I ever was before without a letter from you. I was still more rejoiced to learn that you were all well and that you were relieved from your neuralgia pains.

I wrote you by Lieut Col. Totten but I do not know when you will receive the letter. I thought he was going right on by railroad home. But I have since been told that he intended to go on horseback from Washington. That would take him several days. He lives in Mechanicsburg. The new lieut. colonel was elected on Monday and it was not Capt Henderson. So you perceive I am not a captain notwithstanding Mrs. Bower's assertion. A capt. named Bolinger was elected. I hope you will console yourself that you are not a captains wife. Whether if Capt Henderson had been elected col. you would have been it is not worthwhile to inquire. Would you like to be. I think I can get to be one without any trouble.

I presume you have received the money I sent as you say Mr. Beetem has sent for you, and we know he had received the money.

We had a mail go out on Tuesday morning but I could not write as I was inspector of the election for Lieut. Col. on Monday which kept me busy and as soon as I was through I had to start on picket duty & did not return till Tuesday evening.

8th May. I was obliged to stop writing yesterday afternoon to have inspection. We expected a mail yesterday evening but it did not come unless it came sometime in the night. I am writing this before the men are generally up so as to have my letter ready for the mail if it goes this morning as was intended. If the mailman did not come in last night the mail may not go today.

The news from Yorktown day before yesterday we thought very good & that the war would be at an end in a few days but yesterday we found the(y) were exaggerated, and the news were not so good.

I must have had a great many sweethearts according to Mrs. Colwell, as she finds one out every now & then. She is as far off in the case of Levia McClay as ever.

The weather here tonight is quite cold for the season. The poor blossoms are killed. The apple trees are in full bloom for a week and the woods are quite green. In all the country I have passed through I have seen ploughing in but two or three fields and I think the inhabitants will be badly off for food next year.

From yesterday's news I should judge we will not remain here very long, but it is impossible to tell. I should be glad if the war was ended and I at home with my little family. Write oftener than you have been doing lately. When a mail arrives and I receive nothing I do not feel comfortable.

Your devoted husband
James

May 9th. My letter did not get off as I expected. The mail carrier did not get back until last night. I was disappointed again at not receiving a letter from you. But I do not suppose it is your fault. A new order had been made that the mail for McDowell's army is to be brought to his headquarters & distributed from there. We suppose the mail for seven days has gone that way as only letters from Carlisle of the 5th May was in the mail. Those of prior dates must have gone the other way. I presume we will get them today.

We have had fine weather since we were on picket. That night it rained as it nearly always does when we are on picket. The nights are cool. The fields where we were out on picket some of them were covered with strawberry vines now in full bloom and the woods are full of huckleberries (whortleberries). And peaches and cherries are very abundant. Still if we were to remain here till the fruit season I would not get much benefit. There are so many soldiers here. I have no idea that we will remain here longer than till they can repair the railroad bridges so as to transport provisions and forage.

The news yesterday from Yorktown & Williamsburg was quite favorable. And if some reverse does not occur for the Union armies the war cannot last very long although by retreating the rebels may continue it two or three months longer. But I am still of opinion that Miss Martha will lose her bet with Mr. Woodward. Still there is nothing certain. If our troops should be beaten at Richmond or in the southwest the war might be considerably prolonged. I do not anticipate any such event(?) however. But the rebels faith is strong _____. They actually seem to think it is impossible for yankees to whip southerners and it will require repeated drubbing to bring them to their senses.

Respy your husband
James

jsc-6205.13

Camp Near Falmouth Va

(The letter is undated,
but probably was written
on Tuesday, May 13th.)

My Dear wife,

I wrote you on the 11th and received yours of the 8th yesterday. We now have a daily mail, & it has been very regular since it commenced. I suppose it will continue as long as we remain here.

Orders were made out on Sunday for us to move on Monday morning - I understand, but they were afterwards countermanded. The news of the surrender of Norfolk arrived between 10 & 11 o'clock, and made a wonderful excitement. The men had all retired but got up & sent up cheer after cheer from one camp to another. The bands were playing all around as far as one could hear. I was officer of the guard that night & had not to get up - being obliged to be up all night. We are expecting to hear this week of the capture of Richmond, although if they are strongly fortified they may hold out a while longer.

The last two nights have been cold, last night especially was, quite cold.

I hope by this time you have finished your house cleaning and are enjoying your "otius cdrsn dighitate"(?).

It is beginning to get dry here and the roads getting better but very dusty, which will be almost as unpleasant as the mud.

The bridges are not completed yet. It is said that the cars will get up this far tomorrow but the bridge across the Rappahannock is not completed yet.

There was a skirmish on the other side of the river Sunday and the enemy were said to be in some force about two miles back. They had come there that day, but I presume they left again or there would have been some fight. I judge the papers have no regular reporters in McDowell's army, as a great many things occur which do not get into the papers while similar things at other places are duly chronicled in the papers.

I have not been over to Fredericksburg yet and can say nothing about it. It is said that a great many of the inhabitants who have fled on our approach have returned and that the secesh are getting tired of the war and would like to have it stopped. The fact is I believe if the mass of the people of the south knew the truth with regard to the war they would stop it at once themselves and hang the promoters of it.

Have you any idea of visiting Shippensburg this summer or did you get enough of it last year. Cumberland Valley must be getting lovely now with her spring dress. I do not remember any time when I would rather see it than the present. This country is

so dilapidated and ruined. There is scarcely anything in the cultivated portions except the forest to redeem it.

I remain your truly devoted husband
James

Write often.

Camp Near Falmouth Va
14th May 1862

My Dear wife,

I was expecting to receive a letter from you today but unfortunately for me from some cause no mail came to the regiment today. The other regiments received theirs, and ours probably was by mistake left behind at Washington. However it might have turned out that there was no letter for me in which case I would have been equally unfortunate.

I would not have written till tomorrow, as the letter cannot leave till after dinner, but we have orders to be out for inspection at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning with knapsacks, haversacks, cooking utensils & everything ready for a march. There are surmises that we will not come back to camp although there is nothing positive on that subject so far as I know. I thought it better to write this evening lest I might not have an opportunity again for several days.

It has been raining most of the day and is still raining, with the appearance of a continuance.

We had reports in camp today which came from Fredericksburg through rebel sources, that Genl. McClellan's forces were whipped & cut all to pieces, and the secesh around Fredericksburg were in extacies. I do not put much faith in such rumors unless I know where they originate. I do not believe this one is true although there may have been some slight foundation for the rumor. By tomorrow I suppose we will know the facts.

Every day a new regiment or two arrives here. I have no idea how many men Genl McDowell has under him now. The railroad bridges are not completed yet, but report says they soon will be. I hope we will not be ordered to move till it stops raining. The roads were becoming good but very dusty.

I believe I did write you that the regiment Bill Biddle belongs to is encamped a few hundred yards from us. It is cavalry & he is adjutant of the regiment.

I scarcely ever go out of camp only when on duty, and consequently have seen but little of the country, except that through which we have marched.

I will not close until morning. I can perhaps get time to finish then.

15th May. Just as we were falling in for inspection and had everything packed ready to start the order was countermanded, and we are still here. This was probably on account of the rain which still continues.

The mail has arrived this morning but no letter for me. The mail we should have received yesterday has perhaps been mislaid

or miscarried. I am inclined to think you do not write as often as you might since you have got so well and joyous.

Love to all friends, but the best share to my dear wife.

Your faithful husband

James

jsc-6205.20

Camp Near Falmouth Va
20th May 1862

My Dear wife,

On my return from picket duty yesterday evening I found yours of the 15th inst. in waiting. I am glad to know that you are getting along so well, but this house cleaning remains on hand a long time. I am also glad that you have got a good girl in place of Vienna. I hope she will wear well & remain with you.

I have been very busy since I got up this morning before five o'clock and I have only time to write a few lines as the mail will soon close. I am very well. No news of importance. But a generally prevailing opinion that we will start for Richmond in a day or two. It will take us about four or five days to get there if there are no obstructions in the way.

I apprehend we will meet the enemy before we get there which may delay us a considerable time. But I hope we will get there surely.

Your afft husband
James

jsc-6205.22

Camp Near Falmouth Va
22nd May 1862

My dear wife,

I wrote you a few lines on Tuesday. I have received nothing from you since. I believe you write only about once every four days - perhaps sometimes on the third day. Could you not strain a point and write every other day. Last night I was on guard duty & I now write sitting on a stump in the woods before sunrise.

I have no knowledge as to when we will move, and I do not expect to have till the order comes to start. It is said the rebels have a strong force a few miles from Fredericksburg on the other side of the river from us. It is pretty certain that Genl Anderson (our cousin) is in command over there. I could probably see him by an hour or two's ride, but I think I will postpone the visit till I get a larger party along.

I see of late the papers are getting at the truth in regard to the bitterness of the secesh women. It seems that they urge on the war and do not care if all their male friends are utterly destroyed. I do believe the war would have ended before this had it not been for them. You can discover the same feelings in Miss Eliza Duncan although her sentiments may have been somewhat modified by being so long in the North. Hatred of the Yankees is the predominant power. And they actually do not know what for. They have no cause except the belief that they are superior & that the northerners are an inferior race of beings. They know no better.

In your last you say you have no ale in the house so that I cannot attribute your putting things wrong end foremost to that cause. That is no doubt true but then I believe you have some of Mrs. McClure's "blue medicine" if you have not used it all and might I not charge it to that?

If little Ernest Brady is as lazy and worthless as the old man I hope Daisy will have as little to do with him as possible.

Last night was very pleasant. It was warm with a gentle breeze just sufficient to dry up the dew. It will soon be very warm marching. And the dust raised by so large a body of men will render it rather disagreeable I suppose.

I am expecting a letter from you today and I will not close till the mail comes. It arrives generally about 9 or 10 o'clock and has been very regular. It closes at half past 12 o'clock.

There is appearance of a very warm day today.

I have heard that Charley McClure is down at aquia creek landing. He is in the quartermaster's department.

The cars are now every hour or two from the Rappahannock to aquia creek. We can hear the cars but cannot see them.

10 o'clock. The mail is distributed and no letter for me. Don't you think you postpone writing to me too long. You wrote me a few days ago that actions speak louder than words. I would be glad to see you carry out that doctrine.

I have come across another article on the subject of southern women. It is cut from the Baltimore clipper a southern paper and one I suppose you do not often see.

Although I have not received a letter since yours of the 15th inst. I shall hope better things from you for the future.

Your truest husband

James

jsc-6205.27

Camp Near Falmouth Va
27th May 1862

My Dear wife,

I wrote you on Sunday & I believe acknowledged the receipt of your last, dated the 20th. But must have been written on the 21st as that was the night of the great storm. I hope it has done (no?) very great damage to the crops & fruit but from the violence of the storm I fear the destruction must have been considerable.

Yesterday a little before dinner we received orders to pack up for a march without delay. Immediately all was bustle and activity and in a few minutes everyone was ready to start. We remained however two or three hours in camp before we received orders to move. We came I suppose about three miles. We were about two miles back from the Rappahannock & a little above Fredericksburg. Now we are not over a half mile from the river I judge and below Fredericksburg. Our camp is not near so pleasant as the one we left. But I presume our stay here will not be very long. It is said that the 1st brigade of the Penna Reserves have crossed the river. If that is true it is probable we will soon follow.

Last night it rained moderately and this morning ditto.

The F.F.V.'s have come down wonderfully in the matter of pride or self-respect if they ever had any. The misses Washington that I wrote you about some time ago that sent in a bill for ice at 50 cts per pound have been taking washing for the yankees, and the misses Moncure(?), daughters of Judge Moncure(?) one of the F.F.'s living here after we left camp, came with their donkies and gathered up the old cast off dirty clothing to take home! Remember the Judge Moncure & the other male members of the family are in the southern army, and we are the hireling yankees - nefarious and every thing else that is vile & mean. What do you think of the southern honor now. This is true they did it. And what do you think of the Southern chivalry running off and leaving their wives and daughters in the hands of men that they defame so much.? Southern chivalry and southern honor is played out. They must stop their boasting. You have seen from Parson Brownlow's speeches how they treat union ladies.

I see by the papers that the union men of Baltimore are beginning to hold up their heads and assert their rights. I hope they will continue to do so. If they had always done so it would have been better for us and for them.

I hope I shall receive a letter from you this forenoon. The mail is not in yet. Write me about the hail-storm whether the damage was very great. I think you have a mind to have plenty of tomatoes this summer. Love to Libby, Minnie & kiss the children for me.

Your devoted husband
James

jsc-6205.30

Camp Near Falmouth Va
30th May 1862

My Dear wife,

We are still in the camp we removed to on Monday and of which I wrote you in my lats. Orders were issued at Washington a day or two ago for us to return to Manassas but were countermanded before they were issued her. All the other troops have gone from here it is said but McCall's division and a few others. This is contraband news I presume. But you need not publish it. If you know it that will be enough.

I would have written to you yesterday but was expecting a letter from you and thought I would wait. Our mail has not been so regular this week but we have received three mails. We got none yesterday perhaps it will come in this morning. As the mail does not go out of our camp until evening I shall not close this letter till towards evening. Perhaps I may hear from you once more. I wrote to you on Tuesday but the mail left before the hour fixed and the letter remained in camp I think till Wednesday. I hope you will not forget altogether to write to me. Recollect your last letter was written on the 20th or rather it was dated 20th. I think it was written 21st. And was received on Sunday morning.

The camp we are in here is not so good nor so pretty as the one we left being on lower ground. The strawberries in the fields are beginning to ripen and if we were back at the other camp we might get some, where they were very abundant out in the fields where we picketed. Here they are very few. It is said they have them in Fredericksburg. I have not been over there yet. If we stay here two or three days I shall try & get over.

I believe I wrote you that snakes are a great institution in this country. I have seen a great many especially when out on picket and around our present camp there are some. One of the men found a copperhead in his tent yesterday morning. We have small tents now - called shelter tents - in which three men can crawl and lie. I sleep in such an one. I can sit up in it in the middle.

We have had pretty warm weather. Last night was pleasant and the night before was quite cool. In fact I was able to sleep comfortably.

I trust the storm did not destroy your tomatoes and other vegetables on which you have bestowed so much labor in the cultivation, and that your labors will be rewarded with a good crop. It seems to me that you intend to live on tomatoes you have planted so many.

I shall leave this open till towards evening. Perhaps I may have the pleasure of receiving a letter from you when the mail arrives.

Evening. This forenoon the mail came in and no letter from you although I received a letter mailed at Carlisle on the 27th. I felt right badly. But in an hour or two Kennedy Long brought me yours of the 25th which had gone with several other letters to Genl McCall's headquarters. At this I felt better. Still it was dated 5 days after your preceding letter. You used to write about every other day.

We have had a heavy rain this afternoon and it is still raining with appearances of a wet night. I am glad to know that you are all well and to believe that you are better contented than you were last summer.

Write often. I like to hear from you. I would like better to see you.

Your truly devoted husband
James

My Dear wife,

It is several days since I have written you. I received your few lines written on the 29th ult. on Sunday morning. You stated in that you would write again the next day. I have been waiting for it ever since, but it has not arrived yet.

Besides I have not been very well especially yesterday. Today I am pretty well. The heat has been oppressive for a few days with numerous showers. On Saturday & Saturday night I was on guard. It drizzled most of the day. And about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning we had a tremendous thunderstorm. The rain poured in torrents. Monday night another thunderstorm. And yesterday evening another. A tree was struck yesterday evening about 200 yards from our camp. Last night it rained nearly all night and it has been raining all day. Now near noon. Our tent does not protect us very well, as the rain blows in and the tent leaks till our blankets are quite wet. You never mentioned whether the hailstorm you had did much damage.

We are still in the same camp we moved to last Monday week. There are no troops here but McCall's division and a few other regiments. McDowell and all the others left a week ago. I do not know where they are but presume they have gone back towards Winchester after Jackson, or wherever he is.

This is a famous country for snakes and bugs and insects of nearly every kind. Several have found snakes in their tents in the morning. A couple mornings ago a black snake was discovered lying between two of our men "as snug as a bug in a rug."

We have left the mess and are now at housekeeping again. We have got a contraband as cook and he seems to get along pretty well.

Day after tomorrow it will be one year since I left home. At that time I believed the war would be over and I at home in one year. Of course I have given that up. The war might now come to an end suddenly any day and it might be protracted a considerable time although I am inclined to think it cannot last much longer.

You seem to blame the abolitionists & contractors with prolonging the war. The contractors no doubt would be glad to continue the war. But you do the abolitionists wrong. I am not one. And I think their cause reprehensible. But give the devil his due. It is quite fashionable to blame everything on the abolitionists. They used to be blamed for hurrying things too much to bring the war to an end and not giving the generals time to mature their plans. And that is the truth. They are for bring the war to an end as speedily as possible, & as a general thing they are making no money out of it. You seem to think that if McClellan had his way the war would have been over. You often hear such sentiments. But who knows what McClellan's plan was. It is generally believed that he wanted to take the whole army of

the Potomac to Richmond. If the President had permitted him to do so I have no doubt that the secesh would have been in Washington before today. I have nothing to say against McClellan, but I can see nothing more that he has done to entitle him to any more credit than many of our other generals. Some of them have I think exhibited more energy & military skill till this time than McClellan. If you will just take notice I think you will find that there is not a secesh sympathizer in the North that is not always praising McClellan if he praises anybody. I am willing to give him credit for everything he does. But I will wait till he does it. I believe he will take Richmond. But I also believe we have many other generals would do the same thing - and just as speedily and perhaps more so. The contractors you will find are nearly all for McClellan.

How are your friends. How long can you do without more. You never say anything about them.

Yours etc
J.S. Colwell

jsc-6206.07

Camp Opposite Fredericksburg VA
7th June 1862

My Dear Annie,

I received yours of the 2nd inst. Thursday evening. I was really glad to receive it as I have not heard from you for a week and especially as you said in your preceding letter that you would write the next day. I mean that your previous letter was dated a week or eight days previous & received on Sunday.

I have only time to write a few lines at this time as we have just received orders to be ready to march and I have pretty good authority to believe that we are going to Richmond.

I have not been very well for a week, but feel better than when I last wrote. I was not sick but feel out of sorts. I hope to be well again in a day or two.

Write often. The letters will be forwarded wherever we go.

If we do not start immediately I may add a little more before I close the letter.

Your attached husband
James

8th June. We are still here, but waiting to go. It is said that the transports are coming to convey us to Richmond. And a number have already arrived at the landing. It is probable we will go before tomorrow. Perhaps not till next day. But I have no doubt but that the order has been issued transferring us to Genl McClellan. So henceforth we will be with McClellan instead of McDowell. It may be Tuesday or Wednesday before we leave, as it is a considerable distance here by way of the Rappahannock.

It has rained here either in daytime or at night for the last ten days, part of the time very heavy. The Rappahannock was very high. The bridges the troops built at Fredericksburg were all swept away.

I have no doubt you feel very fine with your new vases, decanters etc. But you know I am not very partial to pedlers & I will venture to say that the articles are counterfeit and you were shorted. But it can not be bad judging from what you gave in exchange.

I received yours of the 4th inst yesterday, as you will perceive by my noticing part of the contents. I am very glad to learn that you are happy and enjoying yourself. I wrote you last Wednesday which I presume you have received before this.

I am glad John is getting along so well at school. I hope he will not forget what he has learned during vacation. I suppose the children will be all excitement till after the show on Wednesday.

Kennedy Long is waiting to take this. I must close. .

Write often. Your letters will be forwarded.

Truly your devoted husband
James

My Dear Wife,

We are not quite in the bay yet but are at the mouth of the Rappahannock and expect to be in the bay in a few minutes.

I received your letters of the 2nd & 4th June in due time, and presume I would have had one of later date had we remained in our former camp. I wrote to you last on Sunday the 8th. I trust you have received the letter before this. When you will get this it is impossible to say.

We left our camp on Monday about 12 o'clock M. and marched seven miles down the river to the place we were to embark and bivouacked for the night. We had a pleasant day to march having a cool breeze although we had the heat of the day to march. We arrived at the point about 3 o'clock P.M. I retired about 10 with a clear bright sky without the slightest idea that we would have rain. I arose about 4 A.M. raining pretty fast. Had breakfast at 5 and laid around till about 8 when we received orders to go on board which occupied us some two hours. Some were completely soaked but I fortunately having a good gum coat was comparatively dry excepting my feet & legs. We left the landing about 1 o'clock P.M. & steamed down the river till dark when we cast anchor and remained till daylight.

The first brigade and half of the second had gone before us. We have two boats together with the 7th Regt all but two companies. We have 4 1/2 companies and the other boat 3 1/2 companies on board. There are a few handsome places along the bank of the river but very few. Only three or four villages that I saw and they miserable affairs. The white people wherever we saw them stood in grim silence. The negroes everywhere exhibit the greatest evidence of joy, waving handkerchiefs and throwing up their arms. We see but few men either white or black. The former I suppose having gone to the army or hiding themselves the latter having run away. One man on whose farm we halted a few minutes on our march had one hundred field hands. Now he has one the rest having left. We passed a little town yesterday called Port Royal where a few days ago they shot three negroes because they were going away.

One place some 20 or 30 negro girls & women went dancing & hopping along the beach a considerable distance singing and uttering some exclamations which I could not distinguish. They are poor deluded creatures, that do not know what they are rejoiced about. They have a vague idea that this war is going to benefit them in some way. It may a few. But I am inclined to think it will be an injury to most of them although it may benefit their posterity & the civilization & religion of the world in general.

There is one thing I think you have learned by this war of which I used to endeavor to convince you but always without success. And that is, that you can live and live just as well &

happy without me as with me if you have the means to live on. I judge that you enjoy yourself quite as highly as you ever did.

There is one remark in your letter before the last one that needs explanation. You state John thinks you are too out setting and follow it with a remark that John reminds you very much of Ban when he was young and you used to receive beaux under difficulties. How is that? Do you receive beaux under difficulties now? If not how does John remind you of Ban. I trust you will have no beaux nor the reputation of having them. You have several times mentioned about being a grass widow. A term I hate applied to any friend of mine and I conceive a very vulgar term although sometimes used in polite society, but never ought to be. This much I will say that they as a class have to be very careful as they lose their Reputation easier than any other class. They are in more danger than any others and more of them fall than any others. You remember what the gypsy told you although you never told me. Enjoy yourself but do as you always did when I was with you. You exclaim lecturing. No indeed. But I know how artless and unsuspecting you are & how very much the reverse the world is.

I do not know when I will be able to mail this letter. We are on our way to McClellan's army & expect to get there tomorrow or next day & I will forward this as soon as I can. In the meantime I will keep it open as long as possible. Write often and direct as heretofore till further instructions.

12th June. We laid all night last night on the Pamunkey River 10 or 12 miles below White House where we will land and are now nearly there. I may have an opportunity to mail this there. We had a most delightful day yesterday. I was not well and felt uncomfortable. I slept scarcely any last night but feel better this morning. I hope to be well in a day or two.

I have heard no news since Mondays papers. I expect the mail will soon be sent after us, when I hope to obtain a budget from you & Sister Libby. I will forward this the first opportunity and hope you will write often to

Your ever faithful husband
James

P.V.R.C.
Camp of the 2nd Brigade
15th June 1862

My Dear wife,

I do not know the name of our present camp. But it is near Dispatch Station on the railroad from White House landing to Richmond about 12 miles from the latter place. We arrived here on Friday evening a little before sundown expecting to remain all night but McClellan sent word to Genl McCall to hasten on as fast as possible. Our orders were to get some coffee as quickly as we could and move on. By the time we got coffee the orders were countermanded and new orders to hold ourselves in readiness to march at day time during the night back towards White House landing as there were reports that a large force of rebels had got round McClellan & were making their way to that point to capture or destroy the commissary stores of which there is a large amount there. Some guerilla cavalry were along the road that we came over during the day and probably they saw us. At night they burned several cars and fired on a train of cars and shot several. They also burned a number of wagons report says. They did burn the cars & fire on the trains. The 1st Brigade started back yesterday morning after them. We are still in the same place waiting.

I would have written you yesterday but was busy acting as brigade commissary. And in the evening was very much fatigued. Don't know that I was ever nearer giving out. The weather has been excessively warm here the last two days. This morning is comparatively pleasant though still warm.

I wrote you on board the boat & mailed my letter on landing Thursday morning. It is possible you received it yesterday. I have received nothing from you since yours of the 4th inst. which was received last Sunday. No mail has arrived in camp since except the one we would have received on Monday at our old camp had we remained. It was brought on after us. The third brigade has not arrived yet. The mails will all come together I presume as soon as we get to our destination. Direct to Co A. 7th Regt P.R.V.C. Or 2nd Brigade McCall's Division Washington City D.C. And don't forget to write.

I feel better this morning than I have for several days/. I am getting the fat off very rapidly. One trouble we have is to get something good to eat. I am tired of salt meat & hard bread. This morning I had a piece of onion for breakfast. I hardly ever eat anything that tasted better. I could eat any kind of vegetables with a ravenous appetite. But it almost impossible to get any.

We can hear the cannonading very distinctly yesterday morning and this morning a while. All is quiet now. I presume there will be a tremendous battle near richmond some day before a great while unless the rebels retreat which I believe they will do if McClellan gives them time. I think it would be better to capture them if possible before retreating and that would end the

war. If they retreat it will be to make a stand somewhere else. I see Genl Ord is to go to genl Halleck's army. I suppose that _____ Sharpe will go along.

Truly your devoted husband
James

jsc-6206.19

Camp Before Richmond Va
19 June 1862

My Dear wife,

I sent my last letter on Tuesday morning 17th. Of course you have not received it yet. I have received nothing from you since your letter of the 9th inst. Though desiring very anxiously to hear from you I do not feel uneasy because I know no mail has arrived since those last letters had gone to Fredericksburg and been forwarded. We are expecting a mail from Washington at an early day when I hope to receive a large supply from you. It is said that there is a regular daily mail to the camp here so that after we get under way I hope I will receive your letters regularly.

We left our camp near Dispatch station yesterday morning about five o'clock and marched here a distance of seven or eight miles. Where we are now encamped we are on the extreme right of the line and the rebels are in front. Their pickets can be seen and their drums heard distinctly. A number of shells were thrown yesterday, but they were over towards our left. There was evidently some skirmishing over that way but I don't know what it _____. You get the news by the papers a great deal sooner than we do except what occurs in a small place around us. We heard yesterday that fort Durling was taken but do not know whether it is true. If it is it is an important point gained.

Somehow I have caught a cold. We had a few quite cold nights and some very warm ones. Yesterday and last night were warm and today bids fair to be a scorcher. The changes appear to be as sudden or more so as they are with us at home and I think greater.

This is generally a poor country although we passed a few fine houses. The people in this country so far as I have heard are generally tired of the war and would like to see peace. They seem willing to come under the old flag as they were before. These are the poor people. The rich being generally secessionists.

I hope you are getting along well. There are several of the men of our company in Carlisle on furlough. I understand they were sent to the general hospital and got home from there. I see by the papers that you are to have several hospitals in & about Carlisle. Those are terrible places for soldiers. Some of them I mean as I have no doubt some are well conducted, but others miserably. Where many a poor soldier finds an untimely grave. Breakfast is ready and I may have an opportunity to send this soon so I close. Write often.

Your true & faithful husband
James

My Dear wife,

Yesterday I had the great joy of receiving your letters of the 12th & 16th and Libby's of the 11th altogether. I presume now the mails have all been forwarded and hereafter we will get the letters regularly. I cannot say whether I have received all yours or not. If you would mention in each succeeding letter when you wrote last, I would always know if any miscarry. From the 12th to the 16th is a long time between letters. You used to write every other day and I would be glad if you would continue the practice. I write three times a week except sometimes when not practicable or I have not heard from you. I wrote you last on Thursday morning, which you probably received yesterday or will tomorrow.

I was on picket yesterday when your letters were forwarded. We had a very pleasant day. The rebel pickets were in sight but neither molested the other. Several deserters came over on Friday night but none of them too line(?) our company occupied. There has been more or less firing every day since we have been here. We can see the enemies batteries, and where there camps are behind the hills and woods. Day before yesterday they shelled our camp so that we were obliged to move it a little back. One shell burst just over us and a piece of shell went through the tent of one of our men about ten or twelve feet from where I was standing, no harm was done. I presume they do not know where our camp is now.

There was a short fight yesterday afternoon a little below us. But I have heard no particulars. I heard firing during the night. We were called out this morning about three o'clock and stood under arms till about sun up, when we were dismissed to hold ourselves in readiness to fall in at a moment's notice. So I write this not knowing what moment I may have to close. It is evident that our side are apprehensive of an attack. I think however there will be none today. I saw Capt John Smead on Friday or Thursday and also Jim Piper. Their battery is only a few hundred yards from us

I feel much better for the last five days than I have for two or three weeks previously, although I have a slight cold. I have lost all my fat & am getting quite thin. Suppose you are still growing fat. Was sorry to hear of the childrens sickness, hope they are nearly recovered by this time. It will require some of your careful nursing to prevent any subsequent effects.

I did not say that I supposed you were becoming reconciled to my absence. That I suppose would be impossible as long as you retained any regard for me. You misunderstood. I think I said you had discovered you could live without me, and be happy and content. That is all. Is it not so? I have no doubt you would have your lonely maybe sad moments. Everyone has no matter in what station or condition they may be. When I was home you had them. All I meant was that you have learned that you will not always be miserable without me.

The balloon is up now examining the position of the enemy.

I presume Libby talks of leaving you soon. Would you just as soon be without her. She does not say whether she intends to return. Does Minnie intend to go to New York. Did she get tired of living at Cousin Margaretta's.

Truly your devoted husband
James

I wrote in my last to send me a half dozen stamps for postage.

My dear wife,

I intended to write you in time for the mail this morning, but we were called up at 1 1/2 o'clock A.M. in order to have breakfast over by 3 o'clock and fall into line ready to march. We did fall in and stood under arms about an hour, when we were dismissed with orders to stay in quarters ready to fall in at a moment's notice. The reason of this is said to be that Genl Reynolds 1st brigade is making a reconnaissance today and we are held ready to support him should he get into any difficulty. It is now after 12 o'clock M. and it is not probable anything will grow out of that reconnoissance although I do not know that the 1st brigade has returned yet.

The time drags heavily here, although we have to drill three or four hours every day when not on duty, but the days are very long and I have abundance of time to think about you & the children "at our house at home."

One difficulty we have is in getting something to eat. We can get crackers and generally have coffee and sugar, but we cannot get soft bread or vegetables. We can sometimes get butter at \$1.00 per lb eggs 50 cts per doz etc. We got a dozen of onions for 25 cts. but can get no more. So ravenous do I feel for vegetables I could eat a half dozen large raw onions at a meal if I could get them. We succeeded in getting a few dried apples which will last us a week or two. They taste much better than they would at home when we could have other vegetables. I think I could eat one or two of your saucers of strawberries & cream if I were with you without much persuasion. But I shall eat none this year. I hope better things for next year.

Sister Libby informed me that she intended to go to Shippensburg shortly. Will she return? Or can you get along well enough without her. She did not say whether or not she intended to return.

I hope Nan & John are completely recovered from the measles before this time under your good nursing. I had a queer dream last night which I cannot relate to you now. And what seems queerer than the dream is that I dreamt it when not asleep.

Occasionally some deserters come over from the enemy. They give a doleful account of the condition of the rebels that they are living on half rations and are in a demoralized condition and that many of them are dissatisfied and would desert if they could get away. Deserters are sometimes not very reliable men, and exaggerate very much. The corporal who fired the shots at us the other day came over that night & stated that he does not aim to hurt anybody and would have been very sorry if he has done so.

We had a very heavy rain & thunderstorm 1st night about midnight. The rain poured down in torrents, but fortunately it did not continue very long. The sun is very warm just now and we

may have another rain this afternoon. I will now close this till I see if I get a letter from you today. Your last was dated the 15th. I am afraid you forget me too long sometimes.

4 o'clock P.M. About 1 1/2 o'clock I received your letter of the 20th. The previous one was the 15th - 4 days - too long. I have written you three a week since our landing when I had the opportunity. You will perceive from the dates of the letters when they were written.

I have gotten pretty well but have a cold. I am glad to learn that Nan & John are recovering. I wrote you on Sunday which I presume you will receive today if you did not yesterday.

Your truly devoted husband
James

25th June. I closed my letter yesterday afternoon not knowing but I might have to go on picket. I knew that eight companies had to go from the Regt. But we being on guard yesterday and the night before were left at home. All was quiet yesterday all day except that a few shells were thrown in the neighbourhood of our camp. We could hear occasional musket firing, but at a great distance and we do not know what it meant. We hear more or less firing every day sometimes very close, sometimes at a great distance.

Last night was quite cool, but this morning bids fair for a warm day. I have recovered except that I have a cold. I expect you and Mary Severs will have a gay time. As to paying Mr. Steel, you ought certainly to pay your debts whenever you have the money, but I have not been paid yet, and have heard nothing of the paymaster. If we had remained at Fredericksburg we would have been paid in two or three days. But now I don't know whether I could send it home from here. Probably I could write oftener.

James

jsc-6206.28

Camp before Richmond

My Dear wife,

I should have written yesterday but I was otherwise engaged. We had a terrible battle on Thursday afternoon & yesterday all day. The slaughter on both sides must have been great. But we do not know the result with any accuracy. I have escaped safely thus far as has Capt Henderson. There were 19 in our company killed wounded & missing. Of the missing we do not know how many may be killed or wounded or prisoners. It is pretty certain that David Haverstick is killed - our old sexton.

I saw Maj Todd this morning also Lieut. Graham and Lieut. Halbert. I presume you will get the particulars more accurately and earlier than I can. Capt. Sergeant of Harrisburg is present & well while I write. He desires me to say so. I did not know him & I suppose you did not. He married Miss Espy, and cannot write.

The battle may be renewed at any moment. It was fearful and terrible beyond anything you would apprehend. The rebels fought desperately all day yesterday and at night we occupied the same ground we did when the action commenced in the morning but we left it during the night & crossed the chickahominy. What is going on today I have no information of. It is now 11 o'clock A.M. and we are awaiting orders.

I would & will telegraph to you if I can get a message to the telegraph office which is doubtful. Our fate & that of Richmond will be decided I think in a day or two. Thank the Lord & his Christ that I am preserved thus far with only a slight scratch in the face. I hear cannonading now in the distance.

Give my ;love to the children and all the friends. No mail has been received since Wednesday. I hope to receive something from you when we get a mail. Will write at first opportunity again.

Genl Anderson was in the fight on the other side and is reported killed, with what truth I cannot say. Probably without any foundation.

I remain your devoted husband
James

jsc-6207.06

Camp Near Harrisons Landing
on James River Va
6th July 1862

My dear wife,

I have received two letters from you since I last wrote dated respectively the 25th & 28th of June. The latter I received on Friday & the former yesterday. I was most heartily rejoiced to hear from you again it seemed so long since I had heard. And oh how often & anxiously I had thought of you during those long and weary days, not knowing what moment I might be cut off from you and our dear children forever. But thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, I am still in the land of the living with the hope strong that I shall see you all again in the flesh. The scenes through which I passed were terrible, but I do not feel like giving any description of them. The casualties as far as known will be published in the papers I have no doubt.

We have a large force here now. How large I have no means of knowing. The rebels are said to be in front of us but I do not know in what force. Another battle is imminent and may be fought any day. Or there may be no more battles for some time.

I hope Daisy has recovered from her measles by this time. I presume James will take them also. But I hope you will not. I am glad John is disposed to be more tractable. I always judged that he was a remarkably good boy. Endeavor to make him obey you in everything and he will hereafter be a comfort to you & an honor to himself.

When this war will be ended it is difficult to say now. It will probably be two or three months but I trust it will not be very long.

I feel much better since I have got some rest & sleep.

Ban's wife must be a very bitter secesh. I suppose that is one reason he is so violent himself.

Capt. Geo Gibson must have an easy time of it in the military way to what some of us have. What will become of Charley McClure since McDowell's command is transferred to Genl. Pope. Is he still in his situation.

I presume no advance will be made on Richmond for some days - perhaps weeks but I think the present plan of operations as I understand them much better to the former.

I would very much like to see you all but that is impossible at present so I must be content. Give my love to all friends that may inquire,

And believe me to remain your most devoted husband
James

The mail arrives almost every day now.

jsc-6207.10

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
10 July 1862

My Dear wife,

I received your letter of the 4th mailed the 5th on the evening of the 8th. The mail seems to come here pretty regularly. I cannot conceive why it is so much longer going to you unless because there are so many letters it takes several days to sort them all out at Washington. I wrote you on the 8th which I presume you have not received yet.

We are lying here doing nothing. And I should not be surprised if we would do nothing for some time. The weather is very warm and we suffer from the heat being exposed to the sun. I doubt whether the rebels will ever attack us here. They will be defeated I think.

I can state nothing as to the truth of the report of the death or mortally wounding of general Anderson. It was told by a prisoner I believe on that evening of the day of the battle. The Richmond papers afterwards confirmed it but made it the other Genl Anderson. There are two in the rebel army. Prisoners also said that Stonewall Jackson was killed, and the Richmond papers of the next day also confirmed that but it has been contradicted since. You can get more news in the papers than we can get here, although a great deal of it is untrue just as our camp rumors are.

You can tell Mrs. Thompson that Joseph is all right. He did not receive a scratch. He says he writes once a week home and wrote twice last week. I hope his mother has received some of them ere this. I can hardly conceive why Mrs. Frazier is such a fierce unionist. She was always pretty strongly Southern in her feelings, and her brother-in-law Mr. Merryman is so strong the other way. And besides she is crazy which I suppose would lead her to secesh.

I do not believe there is any truth in the report that Genl Anderson is commander of a guerilla band. I never heard of the report till you mentioned it. And it cannot be true as he has command of a brigade somewhere about Richmond.

I hope Daisy is convalescent by this time. I suppose James will take the measles next.

There is not much doubt about the death of Capt Biddle. It is possible he may be alive and a prisoner. He was seen to fall from his horse and afterwards raise himself up on his elbows & then fall back apparently dead. Bill Bireles(?) was _____ wounded in the leg.

I did not suppose that it was A.B. Sharpe that was taken prisoner as that was a major & he was 2nd Lieut. Sharpe is a Captain now.

I write this before breakfast but the mail does not leave until evening. It seems as if we are going to have another very warm day unless it gets cloudy of which there are some indications.

I hope you will take good care of yourself and don't imagine that I am uncomfortable because you are happy. Write often as your letters offer me more pleasure than anything else & believe me to remain your ever faithful husband

James

12 o'clock M. All quiet & excessively warm.

jsc-6207.13

Camp Near Harrison's Landing
13 July 1862

My Dear wife,

Your favor of the 7th came to hand on Thursday evening I think. I have to thank you for writing so promptly the last two weeks I expected another letter from you yesterday evening but none came. Was it delayed on the way or did you forget to write on the 9th.

I cannot tell you what my dream was that I wrote you about. I remember having a sort of half dream and afterwards had a vague confused idea of some parts of it. But since the scenes I have passed through I have no recollection at all of what it was about.

We had quite a heavy rain on Wednesday evening I believe it was or was it Thursday. It has been warm since but not so warm as before. The nights have been cooler.

Everything is quiet here. The rebels occasionally fire on our boats coming up the river. You get all the news in the papers - sometimes a good deal more than is true. So many reports are circulated in camp that I never know what is true unless I see or hear it from a reliable person who knows it to be true.

I am glad Daisy is getting better & I hope by this time she is quite recovered.

The report today is that the paymaster is here. I am inclined to believe it although we had the same report frequently at Fredericksburg, although it was not true. If he does pay us, I do not know how I can send it to you, but probably some way will turn up. I suppose you are pretty nearly bare if you paid Steele as you spoke of doing. I will send it the first opportunity when I get it. Be careful of your gold & silver. You will see that it is at \$17 per cent premium by the papers with a prospect of rising. It will soon be impossible to get it for change, and you will have to go on credit till the bill amounts to \$1 or upwards unless they get small notes or "shin plasters" which I presume will be done before a great while.

I suppose Miss Nancy Severs has left you as you say nothing about her in your last letters. If Minnie goes to New York you will be quite lonely again. And I think Sister Libby would come if you desire it or would ask her. But perhaps you can get along as well without her.

Have you any idea of visiting Shippensburg this summer or fall. I would like very much to make a visit with you, but I will have to decline the pleasure I fear.

I have no idea when an advance will be made, but I have no doubt that it will have to be made some day - near or remote. I

suppose Mr. Beatty will have to be back for some considerable time till his wound heals.

And so Geo Gibson & Fanny Hurd are to be married. I thought she was to marry Roger Jones as soon as Uncle George would die. I suppose other arrangements have been made since, if such an one as that ever existed.

I must still urge you not to forget to write often to

Your sincerely attached husband

James

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
15th July 1862

My Dear wife,

You see where I have dropped - not a tear but a large drop of perspiration. You may judge that it still pretty warm although I think not so much so as it was a week or ten days ago.

I received yours of the 11th inst. this morning with great pleasure as I have heard nothing for about four or five days. I do not recollect the date of your last previously received as I have to destroy them as soon as answered having no place to carry them, but I believe it was written the 7th. So you did not write for four days or else there is one delayed on the way for me. I hope you will not neglect to write every other day. I am sorry you do not receive my letters earlier and more regularly. I have written three letters a week for the last two weeks not one of which it seems you had received when you wrote on the 11th. I am unable to account for the non arrival of my letters especially as Mrs. Haverstick and others had received as late as the 4th. The number of soldier letters are so great that while sorting and distributing them at Washington I do not wonder that occasionally one is missent. You ought to have had at least two if not three from me of later date than the 28th when you wrote. Perhaps you may be more fortunate hereafter. I hope you will.

Yesterday morning we moved our camp about a mile to the right which puts us further down & nearer to the river. The camp will I think be cooler & pleasanter than the other if we can get plenty of water. We know nothing scarcely now as to what is going on except what we see in the papers which are beginning to come pretty regularly the evening of the day after they are printed.

I am glad Daisy was recovering and hope by this time you are all well. Mary Severs must be pleased with her visit or she would not stay so long. Perhaps what made her young man so stately in manner was you taking him for Ban & rushing up to embrace him he would naturally be surprised & stately. Miss Severs must have been cruel not to accompany him home.

I suppose you discovered that the report that I had got home was not true. I most heartily wish it was.

We feel perfectly secure in our present position. I do not think there is any danger of the Rebels attacking us in force here, and if they should I think they would meet with a prompt repulse. It is quite probably that we may remain here two or three weeks or perhaps longer. But that perhaps will depend on circumstances.

As I mentioned in one of my former letters there is not much doubt about Capt Biddle's death, although it is barely possible that he may have been only wounded. I should judge from your letter that Rebecca Baird is more inconsolable than his wife.

The paymaster is here at last and we will be paid tomorrow or next day perhaps. I will send you some money as soon as an opportunity offers.

Your ever faithful husband

James

Nan & John might write me a letter apiece. They have nothing to do. But they ought to give some attention to their books in order that they do not forget them altogether.

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
17th July 1862

My Dear wife,

I have received no letter from you since I last wrote, which was day before yesterday. I sent that letter to be put in the mail down at the river hoping that you might get it earlier. It seems that those put in there have sometimes arrived home earlier. I do not know whether I will get an opportunity to send this down there or not - doubtful as it is now noon, and I have been so busy today I could not write earlier. It is very warm, evening before last we had a violent thunderstorm & rain such as we do not often have in our part of the country. Yesterday was exceedingly warm and in the evening we had another heavy rain & thunderstorm although the thunderstorm was more distant than the evening before. I should not be surprised if we would have another this evening.

All seems generally quiet here but we hear firing occasionally with heavy guns at a distance. It turns out mostly that it is the gunboats & batteries along shore of which you see accounts in the papers. Firing has been going on all the time I have been writing some ten or fifteen miles off down the river I should judge. And maybe the firing at boats as happened heretofore.

I trust you have received some of my letters since your...

18th July. I was called off yesterday on duty and could not finish my letter or get it to the mail. So I suppose you will be a day longer in getting it.

Yesterday evening we had another rain but not so violent, but about the middle of the night we had a tremendous rain. In the last three days we have had a great deal of rain.

The firing I spoke of yesterday was continued during the afternoon but we have not heard what it was.. There may have been a small battle somewhere.

It seems as if we are going to remain here some few weeks, but of course we can only conjecture as only those in command know the plans. And it is very doubtful whether Genl McClellan has any definite idea of the time we will remain. That will probably depend on circumstances not yet developing.

It is cloudy this morning with some appearance of a clearing and becoming very warm

I hope to get a letter from you this morning, as your last received is dated the 11th and the one you mailed on Monday morning ought to have come yesterday morning. I will not close this till after the mail comes unless I get an opportunity to send it over to the river. I have an idea that the letters mailed there reach their destination earlier. It generally takes a letter three days sometimes four to reach here from Carlisle. We

do not get our letters till the next morning after the mail arrives.

The mail has arrived, with a large mail from Carlisle postmarked the 14th Monday. But none from you.

Most truly yours etc.

J.S. Colwell

jsc-6207.21

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va

(This letter was undated,
but was probably written
on 7/21/62.)

My Dear wife,

After writing my last letter the 18th I had the gratification of receiving yours of the fourteenth - mailed 15th. Four days from the mailing of your previous letter of the 11th. I was glad to hear that you had received mine of the 8th on Saturday only four days after it was written. But then after that you did not write till Monday night! There were two other letters if not three, previously written there or on the way which I trust you have received ere this.

I cannot say that it is as warm here as it was on the Chickahominy. Some days it is exceptionally hot and some days not so warm, so it was there. Friday night and Saturday morning was quite cold, and yesterday was very pleasant. Today very warm.

You can tell Mrs Holmes that her son was wounded in the finger, not seriously in the first battle on the 26th. It is nearly well now. He has not been very well but is now nearly well. I presume she will have heard from him before you receive this. Perhaps the reason he did not write earlier was that it was his middle finger was wounded.

Zimmerman was wounded in the fight of Monday the 30th. I saw him or rather conversed with him on Monday night after dark at the hospital. He told me he was wounded and pointed to the place in his chest or between that & the shoulder or perhaps a little lower. We left that night and were obliged to leave the wounded who couldn't walk, behind and he was with them and I have no doubt he is a prisoner now. Some prisoners who were in other regiments and have returned say that the prisoners were well treated as far as they knew. E. Curriden a member of our company from Shippensburg and who was perfectly well remained with the wounded. The wounded had not been examined by the Surgeons when we left but I do not think any of our company at that hospital were mortally wounded.

It is reported now it is said on the authority of an officer returned from Richmond that Capt. Biddle was not killed but was seriously - but not mortally wounded and is a prisoner at Richmond. I hope it is true. He was a brave & deserving officer.

The paymaster is here & the regiment is paid off at last. All but the officers. They will be paid today or tomorrow I presume. I will send some money at the earliest opportunity.

As you don't appear to be too delighted with miss S I hope she has left you. If she is so violent you can imagine how violent the ladies are in Virginia as I have written you. If a Northern lady expresses her opinion in favor of the union in the South she is imprisoned or offered indignities. Yet they are the chivalry.

I can say amen to Daisy's wish all but putting up the stove this kind of weather. I should dearly love to be nursing her.

Write a little oftener to your sincerely attached husband
James

jsc-6207.23

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
23 July 1862

My Dear wife,

I wrote you yesterday & the evening before both of which I sent off yesterday morning, one to be mailed at Baltimore and the other by a Mechanicsburg man who will probably mail it at Washington. You will probably receive them both about the same time. I expect an opportunity to send a letter this morning by a German barber who goes to Carlisle this morning. He has been discharged on account of sickness.

I write a line to inform you that I sent you some money yesterday by express to be put in the express office at Baltimore. I sent to you direct so that you ought to see Mr. London about it. Let me know as soon as you receive it.

I look for a letter from you this morning.

Everything here remains as before. Last night was quite cool, and it is cloudy and looks for rain now.

Truly yours etc.

J.S. Colwell

X jsc-6207.25

2nd Brigade Quartermaster Dept
Near Harrison's Landing
25th July 1862

My Dear wife,

After writing to you day before yesterday I received your letter of the 19th inst. I do not think with you that things look darker for the union. I think I can see the beginning of a brighter day. But I think the president ought also to draft or require the governors to do so of all the men he has power by law to do. If government would put 500,000 or more men in the field at once the war would be soon ended. I fear the number demanded cannot be raised by volunteers.

I sent you some money \$340 on Tuesday, to go by express. You ought to receive it today if not yesterday. I wrote you also day before yesterday by a German barber from Carlisle named Ninnecool. I dont know whether I spell his name right.

I am detailed to act as brigade Quartermaster during the absence of the brig quartermaster - gone home on sick leave for twenty days.

Capt Henderson is acting Lieut Colonel and most probably will get a commission. How long I may be in my present position I cannot say. It is doubtful whether the quartermaster will ever return. I have an opportunity to send this by him part of the way and he is about starting.

Write me as soon as you get the money. Also if you don't get it.

Cat Henderson is well, although he has been complaining some for a few days.

Truly your devoted husband
James

jsc-6207.27

Camp Near Harrison's
Landing Va. 27th July 1862

X
My Dear wife,

I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 22nd mailed the 23rd this morning. But I see you will extend the time between letters your former letter was mailed the 19th the last the 23rd. Four days. I wrote you five letters last week three of which I sent part of the way by private means thinking you would receive them earlier. One on Sunday one on Monday one on Tuesday one on Wednesday and one on Friday. I hope you have or will receive than all. But I am more concerned that you receive \$340 that I sent on Tuesday to be expressed from Baltimore. I hope you have received it. If you have not write to me immediately on receipt of this.

As I stated in my last I am acting as assistant quartermaster of the brigade. This keeps me away from the regiment about a half mile. I expect to move my quarters nearer the regiment tomorrow. The assistant quartermaster has gone home sick and I am put here till he recovers. His leave of absence is twenty days.

You say Molly Baird has started for Fortress Monroe. Poor Molly. It is a pity she ever heard that her husband was living. She will arrive at the fortress to hear that she will never see him alive if she does not learn it before she gets there. I heard here two or three days ago that he had died, and I see it is confirmed by the newspapers. I fear it is too true.

You speak in one of your letters about my resigning. I presume it would not be accepted if I did. Maj Todd it is said has tendered his twice since we have been here and it has not been accepted. And also many others. But it would hardly be proper for me to resign at the present time when the government is calling for more troops and can scarcely get them. Do you think it would?

My eyes seem to be failing very much. I can hardly see to write. This is old age coming on. We had a heavy rain last evening which was very acceptable, as the roads had become very dirty. Everything was quite fresh this morning but today has been quite warm.

What is the name of the servant you have now. I have always drawn my pay in Vienna's name. The capt H. drawing in the name of one we have had together. We are entitled to pay for a servant but we have to give the name etc.

Send me postage stamps. I can't get them here. Send me till I have two or three dozen. Endeavour to write every other day. I think the war will be over in six months perhaps less. I hope it will and that I may be safely at home.

Your devoted husband
James

Camp at Harrison's Landing Va
30th July 1862

X
My Dear wife,

I was highly delighted at the receipt of your two letters of the 24th & 25th respectively yesterday morning. I was delighted because the former was a good long letter written in good spirits and the latter acknowledged the safe arrival of the money of which I was a little fearful.

I should have answered your letters yesterday but I was so busy I was unable to do so. We had to move our quarters on Monday & had scarcely got fixed rightly till I received another order to move again which we did today. I have twenty three wagon-teams one four horse & one two horse ambulance and thirty-three men, one blacksmith shop - one carpenter shop & a saddler shop. The shops are only tents and the stock of tools very light. On the whole the labor is lighter than in the company and I can have more conveniences, but the responsibility is much greater.

I think you will not have much difficulty in getting change in a few weeks. The postage stamp will be out, and the government one & two dollar notes. The postage stamps intended for change will not answer for letters but will be for change altogether. However they will answer every purpose as you can get other stamps for them. You recollect I cautioned you to be careful of your change & gold. I was expecting the scarcity of specie that has come. How much have you now.

I hope George will make out well in his speculation in gold but I see the premium has come down to \$17 per cent. It was as high as \$20 & \$21.

You say I never say anything about resigning. I think it is hardly worth while. I did write you something in my last written on the 27th which I hope you will receive in due time. My letters now will hardly arrive so promptly as they did last week as I then had opportunities of send them part of the way by private hands. I wrote you by Capt. Ringwalt on Friday morning he lives in Chester county and went home on sick leave for twenty days. I hope you have received the letter before this. I am acting assistant quartermaster of the 2nd Brigade in his place, till he returns. I believe that is the position Charley Penrose had in Bank's army.

By the way I see that W.M. Penrose was participating in the war meeting at Carlisle the other evening. Has he a notion to gird on his armor again and take the field?

It is true that Col Harvey has resigned. I presume he did so to prevent being dismissed. He did not behave well in the battlefield. But I have never written to anybody about it. The fact is that a great many of the officers who have resigned have done so because they have received hints - sometimes very broad ones - that it would be to their credit to do so. They were not wanted. Others were sick & their health would not permit their

remaining in the service. A great many officers have resigned but I do not know of one who had good health and was considered a meritorious officer whose resignation has been accepted.

The reserves have done considerable fighting but it is a mistake to suppose that they have done more or as much as some others. They were in the battles of Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill & New Market Road - three. That is all. Some divisions have been in a number more battles and severe ones too and in some of those same ones. The reserves did not do all the fighting on that memorable retreat as you suppose. Nor the half of it. You must remember that they are all Pennsylvanians and that it is Pennsylvania papers that you read. And I have discovered that a great deal that you see in the papers is not true. But I do not desire to detract from the reserves. They did bravely and nobly especially in the first two battles. In the third they were so fatigued and worn out from marching and watching and loss of sleep that many of the men were scarcely able to walk. It is quite probable that if the reserves had not been there the army could not have escaped. But others did their duty nobly & bravely as the reserves.

There is nothing new here. Everything is quiet. It is rumored that a movement may be made from here soon, but I think that very uncertain, and will depend altogether on future contingencies.

I have received a letter from Mrs Holmes inquiring about her son. She says she received one from Capt. Henderson. I will write her tomorrow if I can get time.

Don't forget to write every other day. Your letters generally come very regularly, although yours of the 24th & 25th came together.

Your most devoted husband
James

X My Dear wife,

Since I last wrote I have had the gratification of receiving three letters from you - two yesterday of the 26th & 28th and one this morning of the 30th ult. No I mistake I received yours of the 26th before, but I received one from Sister Libby with yours yesterday morning. My last letter to you was written Wednesday morning. I hope you will excuse me. I have been very busy this week. On Tuesday, and Friday & Saturday especially. That I could not find time to write you. I was drawing quartermasters stores and camp & garrison equipage and issuing them to the regiments. I think I am through the heaviest part of that for a while at least.

It has been pretty warm here some days, but I have not felt the heat so oppressive any time some of the first few days after we arrived at James river still I sometimes feel very uncomfortable from the heat.

I presume it was too warm for you to enjoy yourself to the full extent at Mr. Hamilton's "pic a nic a."

Neither Capt Henderson, Beatty or myself have received any commissions other than we had but have all been named for promotion as I understand and act in that capacity except Mr. Beatty. The people generally get ahead on these things. Capt Biddle was always called Col. in Carlisle. I mean Harry Biddle. I believe he was a Lieut. Col. in the state service but was only a captain in the U.S. service.

You are mistaken about quartermaster's not having fighting to do. That is true to some extent. You think they are not field officers. Only Genls & Colonels Lieut Cols & Majors are. The others are officers of the line or company officers. A brigade quartermaster belongs to the brigadier generals staff. But it is true that when the wagon trains are moving as during the battles before Richmond the quartermaster must be with his train. But then it is also true that the enemy always shell the trains and attack them at every opportunity, as they contain the provisions of the soldiers and other valuable stores. Still as a general thing it is not as dangerous I suppose as commanding a company in the field although that depends on circumstances. Sometimes the trains are shelled when the soldiers are not molested. Parties go out to attack trains & cut them off.

On Thursday my slumbers were disturbed by the sound of a cannon down towards the river but I paid no attention to it as it is no unusual thing to hear two or three shots during the night, but at the 2nd or third shot I heard the shell whistle. I knew what that meant. I jumped up & put on my clothes & by the time I got out the shells were flying pretty fast. The rebels had planted batteries up the river & down it and along it and when they all got started they rained the shells & solid shot all around. Dangerous as it was it was a grand sight. We could follow

the course of the shells which passed off a distance from us by their fuses which were lighted, but those which come directly toward us we cannot see however we could hear them, and could easily step out of the way if we knew exactly the place they would pass; but we would be just as likely to pass right into the track of the ball as out of it so it is just about as safe to stand still.

I do not think there is much danger of the rebels cutting off our supplies while we remain here. I have no doubt they would do so if they could, but I think they cannot succeed.

It is rather strange that an officer in the union army would be so very intimate with a lady who would speak of his government & army as Mary Severs does of the U.S. Government.

I am glad you have plenty of berries. I would like very much to eat some. I never see a berry. I have been where there are quantities of all sorts of berries & peaches but always green when I saw them. I do not suppose I will taste a berry this summer. The season will soon be over.

I am afraid you will not have much money left when you get all your bills paid. I thought that you would have none but Steeles and the shoemakers, unless you have paid Steel in which case I thought you would have contracted others. Be careful about running up bills. They grow unawares like tores(?) in the night.

Father Hunt followed Col. Harvey. He was of no account. Nobody had any respect for him and I believe he was requested to resign which he did very reluctantly. He was in the army for the pay. Nothing else. I believe he has gone & nobody regrets it. He was no honor to the cause he professed to serve. Write often.

Your loving husband

James

Last fall & winter you often desired me to send you a photograph likeness of myself, but I never had an opportunity of getting one. You have not asked for one for some time. But having succeeded at last in getting a photograph I send you one hoping it will not be unacceptable now. Please let me know whether you think I am changed in appearance.

Your devoted husband

James

jsc-6208.05

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
5th August 1862

My Dear wife,

I was again made glad yesterday morning by the receipt of your favor of the 30th. You have been more prompt in writing latterly than formerly like my own Dear good wife ought to be. I believe however when I come to think of it that it was Sunday morning I received yours of the 30th. And I wrote you same day acknowledging its receipt. Still I must give you credit for being more prompt lately. But I should have received a letter this morning.

Every thing remains in status quo here. This morning there was heavy cannonading up the river some place. It continued an hour & a half or two hours. We have no idea what it is but suppose it to be the gun boats engaging some batteries or other boats. You will probably hear of it in the papers before you receive this.

Some of the regiments have orders to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moments notice with two days rations. This order was given before the firing commenced and may have had some connection with it. They have not gone yet and probably will not. Our pickets cross the river now and we have a small force on the other side all the time. This we had not previous to the late midnight cannonading I wrote you of in my last. At least I think I wrote you about it.

Yesterday was very warm. It seems to me that I perspire much more than ever before which renders the heat so exceedingly uncomfortable.

I received the ten postage stamps but they will soon be exhausted. Please send some more.

I hope Daisy is entirely recovered. Be careful not to let the children have imperfect fruit. Now is the time early apples begin to come to market. Scarcely any of them fit to eat.

You never mention how Mr. Beatty is getting. Sometimes I hear he is very ill. Then again that he is nearly well. This is the last report. I have heard that two companies were to leave Carlisle for Harrisburg yesterday. John Hays in one of them as Lieut. And he has left his Janie after all. Or have they dissolved?

Why dont Nan & John write to me?

Your devoted husband

James

I wrote to Mrs. Holmes that you may see what a dear wife she considers you but you must not show it so as to offend her. She would be offended perhaps.

Since writing last on Tuesday I have received yours of the 2nd inst. I had not time to write yesterday. This forenoon I went into my tent to write you and it was so hot I was obliged to beat a retreat. It has been very warm all this week and the nights are almost as warm as the days. I have a Sibley tent and it is so warm I can not remain in it during the heat of the day. I write this in the tent of my clerk which is not so warm as mine. I dont know whether I told you before that I have a clerk, or not. I have and as he is a pretty good looking young man and writes a good hand perhaps you would like if he would write you sometimes instead of me.

You seem to think that it is the glare of the sun that has affected my eyes. Doubtless that had something to do with the failure of my sight. I find my eyes are recovering since I came into my present position where I am not so much in the sun as formerly.

With regard to the question of age I will relate to you what occurred yesterday. I stopped at a spring to get a drink down at the river where no one knew me. There was but a single drinking cup and the spring was surrounded by men waiting for their turn. When one was satisfied and was about handing the cup to his neighbor, the latter told him to "give it to that old fellow first." "That old fellow" was your humble servant - your husband.

I think it was a good deal of a risk for you to undertake to drive to the mountains with the children. You could drive a quiet horse well enough but if any thing had gone wrong - "and accidents will happen in the best regulated families" - I do not know what you would have done. I think you would have been frightened and almost powerless to get out of the difficulty. I am glad however that you got back safely and that you all enjoyed yourselves.

I am glad to know that the government has waked up at last and are going to draft 300,000 men in addition to the 300,000 new volunteers making 600,000 additional troops. They should have done it long ago. If we had had half that many additional last spring the war would have been over and we at home. I believe the war can be ended before six months expire if it is conducted energetically. And I sincerely hope it will be and I safe at home with you all, where I would dearly love to be.

I received the two stamps with your last and the ten - not a dozen - you sent sometime since. I received your letter acknowledging the receipt of the money I sent. I presume you have received the letter before this.

Oh but it is warm. The perspiration is rolling off me. Clerkey complains of it being the warmest day we have had. He has fallen asleep however and does not feel the heat I presume.

Your truly devoted husband
James

jsc-6208.10

Camp Near Harrison's Landing
Va 10 August 1862

My Dear wife,

Yours of the 6th has been received. That is pretty quick - mailed the 7th it gets here on the evening of the 9th but I did not get it till this morning. I forget whether I had received yours of the 4th before I wrote to you on the 8th.

It does seem as you say that a great many officers get leaves of absence, but you see the complaints about it. And it should not be allowed in the extent that it is. The officers who ask for it ought to be ashamed of themselves. No one would like better than I to get home for a while but this is not the time to ask for that permission.

I am glad to learn that the people are becoming aroused to the importance of pushing the war energetically. If it is continued the war will soon be at an end. And if providence smiles on our efforts and my life is spared I expect to be home before six months expires.

I was expecting to have leisure today & to write you a long letter but I had to get tents for a regiment returned from Richmond which occupied me till near noon. While at dinner an order came too that the knapsacks were to go on board transports this afternoon. And I had to attend to getting transportation for them to the river. This means I suppose that we are going to move. Where I have no idea across the river or up it or down it. I must now close as I have to go to see the brigade commander.

My health is good but the weather is oppressively warm.

Your devoted husband
James

P.S. There is no order yet for our wagons to move. The 7th Regiment crosses the river this morning with the 3rd Brigade expecting to return in two or three days.

I enclose the counter part of the picture I sent you a few days ago.

jsc-6208.12

Camp Near Harrison's Landing Va
12 August 1862

I wrote you on the 10th a short letter. I cannot write you a long one now. The 2nd Brigade has gone except the 7th Regiment which is somewhere on the other side of the river with the 3rd Brigade. When I last wrote the intention was for the troops to march by land. That has changed for our brigade has gone on board steam boats. Knowbody (sic) knows where we are going except the few. I presume we are going back to Fredericksburg to go to Richmond in that direction.

I am obliged to remain here till I get rid of my teams. I have over fifty of them now and quartermaster's stores. I expect to get off in a day or two but may have to remain here several days.

The weather remains very warm and I have been very busy but my health is good. Last night I had a delightful bed out of doors with an oil cloth blanket fixed over me to keep the dew off. John would have been delighted to sleep in just such a bed. I sent my tent off on the boats with the other tents.

I have heard nothing from you since yours of the 6th. I do not recollect whether I had received it or not when I last wrote. Write as before and direct the same the letters will be sent after.

Truly your devoted husband
J.S.C.

jsc-6208.14

Camp Near Harrison's
Landing Va. 14 Aug. 1862

My Dear wife,

I received your favor of the 9th this morning. I believe it was here yesterday morning, but the company being absent with the Regiment over the river I did not get it. So yours of the 6th laid here a day before I received it.

You perceive I am still here. The whole army seems to be getting ready to move. The second Brigade has gone somewhere on board boats all except the 7th Regiment and some brigade teams. Where they are I cannot say. The remainder of us will have to go by land I suppose.

Ban and his wife will be in great trouble about there little "Beauregard" whom I presume they love very much and then the drafting business in Baltimore will not lighten their affliction.

I have seen nothing of Gilbert Totten that I am aware of. I might meet him every day and not know it. Sergeant Ruby now promoted or recommended for promotion to 2nd Lieut. now has command of Co A. 7th.

I am glad John has gone to his uncle Daniels. It will do him good. He might as well have gone a week earlier then he could have remained longer.

You speak in your last of Mary Severs being in such continual troubles and of her being talked about so much. But you do not mention the cause of her troubles nor why she is talked about. Has she been guilty of improper conduct?

We are all packed up and loaded - and have been for two days - ready to start at the word. I write this sitting in a wagon. Whether we will get off tonight or not for several days I cannot tell. I judge we are going back towards Fredericksburg but the late battle at Culpepper courthouse may change our destination.

Write often direct as usual.

Your devoted husband

James

jsc-6208.19

Near Fortress Monroe Va
Hampton 19th Aug. 1862

My Dear wife,

X I left camp near Harrison's Landing on Friday about noon and arrived here on Sunday morning. I mounted my horse at nine o'clock take some teams to the landing to have provisions unloaded and then we started, and traveled all day and all night without feed stopped next morning about 20 minutes to feed the horses and went on again till after dark when we halted till the moon rose about 11 o'clock P.M. when we started again and arrived here as stated above.

We have been awaiting orders ever since. It is the impression that we are to go on board here for transportation for Acquia creek. I was pretty considerably fatigued on arrival here having been in the saddle about fifty-six hours with very little rest. The troops all came down on boats. I mean McCall's division. The 7th Regiment is out on the bay here on board as I am informed. We are about two miles from Fortress Monroe. I went over yesterday evening but could not ascertain the position of the boat till dark when it was too late to go out.

So you see that those who were not quartermasters had the easiest position that time. We saw no enemy on our road nor did we hear a gun fired. It is said that the guerilla's seventy-five in number made a dash at one of the trains and instead of capturing the wagons were themselves captured.

Our brigade all except the 7th Regt left several days before us and are said to be at Fredericksburg, where I presume we are going. The 1st & 3rd brigades are out in the bay near the fort as is said.

I have received no letter from you since my last nor do I expect to receive any till we get into camp again somewhere. But I hope to receive them all some day soon and desire you to write as usual.

Your affte husband
James

Hampton Near Ft. Monroe Va
21st August 1862

X
My Dear Wife.

I wrote you day before yesterday, not having the least idea at that time that I would remain here so long. But you perceive I am still here and still more I do not know when we will get away.

The water here is very bad and the dust is sometimes almost choking. The fact is dust has been more abundant than anything else for the last two weeks. Before we left Harrison's Landing it had become very annoying. So many wagons & horses moving almost kept the dust in continual motion. And on the way here we were surrounded & covered with dust. And since our arrival here there is no improvement.

Since we left Harrison's landing we have had comparatively cool weather, especially at nights, so that we have been spared the discomforts of the very scorching weather we had previously during the march. If it had been as warm as formerly I hardly know how we could have got through without water or food for the horses. While speaking of the weather I may say that it is very warm this morning, and gives token of a very hot day.

This is the town the rebels burned when they left it. You perhaps saw the account of it in the papers at the time. There are but one or two houses left standing in the suburbs. Nothing is left standing but the chimneys and parts of broken walls. And the whole place seems an utter desolation. A fit place for owls & bats. Here and there the negroes have erected a board shanty, but that adds nothing to the improvement of the place. It appears as if it might have been a pretty village in its prosperous days. Many of the houses were of brick. We are in the gardens or rather what was once gardens or yards. Now overgrown with weeds, and a great abundance of fig trees laden with figs but green. They say they are figs I dont know. They must have been very plenty here in other days.

Yesterday I rode over to and through the fort. It is quite a pretty place. And I thought of Mrs. Brent who was wont to talk so much about "old point" comfort. And then I thought of a little light haired, bright eyed girl that used to be moving noiselessly around in those days who was of far more interest to me than aught else, and who although a girl no longer, still occupies my thoughts by day & by night. Her hair is not so light nor her eyes so black as in those days. But the same brightness sparkles in her face. I am not going to tell you who it is lest you might become jealous and you know jealousy is "a green eyed monster" which when aroused can scarcely be appeased. What would I not give now for one long look into the deep depths of those dancing eyes and to remain in their light for long years to come. My sincere hope is that this boon may be vouchsafed to me before many months.

I have heard nothing from you since yours of the 9th inst. I do not expect to receive any of your letters till I get where the

company is. The reserves have all gone to Acquia creek as I am informed. From there I presume they will go to Fredericksburg and then "on to Richmond" I suppose.

How is Ban coming on. Is he in Baltimore yet. I presume he will be very much afraid of being drafted as he would have to fight against his _____ secesh.

Watermelons are quite abundant here but they are dear. There are also some peaches but pretty hard to get hold of. I got a saucer of ice cream yesterday, the first I have taken since I was at home. That is nearly eight months ago. It seems a long time since I have seen you too long. How much longer it will be till I can see you & be with you I have no conception. But I pray the time may come at last. I think it cannot be eight months more. The rebellion ought to be suppressed before the end of this year and by the blessing of God I think it will be.

I remain your sincerely attached husband

James

Carlisle Aug 22nd 1862

My own dear husband,

X I have had the great joy of receiving your letter of the 19th which came in an incredibly short time. You have had a very fatiguing journey. I suppose you are now at the end of it. I am so thankful that you continue in good health. So many suffer during this season with diarrhea. You have never spoken of it so I conclude you have escaped. A very good & simple remedy for that disease is clove tea - hot water poured over a few cloves & let steam & drink at intervals - during fruit & corn season I find it very useful among the children. Our tomatoes are at perfection now though the drought is injuring them, I still put up a goodly quantity for you. Oh! you will fare so well for I am making so many nice things in anticipation of your return. You will have to show your gratitude by growing fat & driving all care away from your brow, so that no one would think of offering that "old man a drink" again.

I am surprised to notice Mr. Beatty growing so gray. He has a mammoth flag out of his window & notices posted all round the town recruiting for the 7th Regt. I suppose Mrs. Holmes is happy in having her son home with her.

I felt very sad this afternoon in seeing the lady of poor young Zimmerman carried by here(?). I had no idea his wound would prove fatal. When I saw him last winter he appeared so robust with a promise of long life, to be cut off so early is sad. How many useful lives have been lost by this war & how many broken hearts it has made. I pray that God in his infinite mercy will spare us.

I am told that Charley Penrose is released on his parole. Mr. Penrose is keeping bachelor's hall & entertaining his sisters & their families whilst his wife is in New York. Miss Martha Duncan has recently heard of the death of Mrs. Bannesille. She formerly lived here. The tableaux passed off so well that there is to be a repetition of them in a few weeks. \$1 (10?) M were cleared after paying all expenses.

I think I told you of the treasure of a servant I thought I had secured. Just before I made the final arrangement with her I received a note from Miss Virginia Lyon telling me that her figure was not such as an unmarried person's ought to be so I'd better be wary of her. On investigation I think I have made a narrow escape by declining taking her. I now have my eye on another treasure in the country. I hope that she will suit so that I shall never have to change again.

We had a promise of a rainy night but it has passed off with a light shower. We have real August weather now delightfully cool nights & oppressively hot at mid-day.

George is still here, quite an invalid. Charley & Lizzie return to Chicago next month. I am expecting any day to see Ban's

name in the papers for refusing to support the government: He feels the loss of his Beauregard keenly.

Nan & John are having a conversation in my hearing on the subject of ghosts. Today after the marvellous had been dwelt on for some time, John remarked that he had never heard of any excepting the Holy Ghost, and he wondered if they were all holy. Daisy is getting very companionable & grows fat. James is as sweet as ever & I think is remarkably intelligent. Of his age though his speech must be like Paul's rather stammering as yet.

I believe I always wind up my letters with a domestic recital which is only very dear to you & I. I think people who have no children must necessarily grow egotistical. Nan & John wont be transferred till Monday week because they were sick at the time of the regular examination.

Genl. Elliott has been here on a visit to his family. Mrs Elliott says he will soon be a Major Genl. Report says that John Lee is making every exertion to advance himself. I have seen nothing more of Edgar Hayes since he left us for Harrisburg. Neither have I heard anything from Shippensburg.

Anderson's body-guard is being recruited here now. Martin's hotel is very much of a rendezvous for them. So of course St. James Square is very popular with the young ladies.

Write soon often & good long letters telling all about yourself. Good night.

truly your devotedly attached wife
Annie

Hampton Near Fortress
Monroe Va. 23rd August 1862

X
My Dear wife,

Here we are still without the least sign of our moving still I think we will go within two or three days or perhaps today. I wish we could get to the brigade as I do not expect to hear anything from you till I get with it. I hope you are still writing. If you discontinue I will get nothing but old letters when I do get there, and then none for a long time. If I had known we would be here so long and had written you before we left Harrison's Landing to write here, I might have received several letters while here.

We had a fine rain here yesterday morning which laid the dust and it has been quite cool and pleasant since. It is delightful this morning - cool & cloudy. I hope it will not get at raining again.

I don't remember whether I wrote you about the contrabands we have in the Army. At Harrison's Landing there was quite a city of them, dwelling in tents. We were here but an hour or two till they were beside us putting up their tents. I believe there was not one left behind. What is to be done with them I do not know. I suppose they are more uncomfortable than they were with their masters.

It is said that this army is to be put under Genl Burnside. Genl McClellan seems to be fading away. His friends are not nearly so numerous as they were formerly. His plan has turned out a failure. He ought to have been in Richmond long ago. The army could have been taken there months ago I believe with far less loss of life than has been sustained by it. Notwithstanding the great loss of life we are no nearer Richmond than we were last April. And it will be more difficult to go there now than it would have been then. Still I believe we will go there before many more weeks or give it up.

I never could see what such a clamor was got up in McClellan's favor for. He never had done anything to justify it. I did not desire to condemn him but always wished to wait till he would do something to hurrah about before commencing it. I believe I wrote you as much a long time ago as you appeared to be infected with the McClellan mania at that time. I don't know how you feel now. He has not fulfilled the expectations of his friends. There will probably be some hard fighting the coming fall, but not harder than we have had but I think we will go to Richmond with the blessing of God.

The men that have died in battle are few compared with those who have died of disease. Therefore the quicker the war can be ended the fewer lives it will cost.

I see David Nevin who formerly belonged to our company and was made a lieutenant last winter in the 109th Pennsylvania vols has been taken prisoner and I suppose is in a cell now as Jeff

Davis threatened to secure(?) thus any of Pope's officers he would take prisoner.

My health remains good thus far. I pray God it may continue so for the Army is a terrible place for a sick man. I have no doubt that hundreds die for want of proper attention who might live with care. It seems impossible to give the sick the attention they ought to have. They are so many and the accommodations so inferior.

The children have not written me a letter since last winter and now vacation is over and they will plead want of time. Will they be transferred to a higher school or did their sickness prevent it.

It is beginning to look very much like rain and I have to go two miles to the post office so I must close soon.

I wish you would make me a couple of flannel shirts. Cassimess is the best. It is barred or striped dark & light grey. Make them long, long as my white shirts and wide in the sleeves etc. but I will write you again before you get the stuff. I will want drawers too. The flannel you made my drawers of last winter did not wear at all.

Very truly your affte husband
James

Hampton Va
25th August 1862

My Dear wife,

I wrote on Saturday morning. At that time I hoped we would be gone ere this but here we are still. Perhaps it is best so, as the weather has been pretty rough and we have reports of several being lost that were boarded here, but they may be reports only. It commenced raining on Saturday soon after I returned from the fortress where I had been to take your letter. It rained during the day and at night a great deal. So that the dust I wrote you about is converted into mud, still as the mud is not deep it is pleasanter than the dust. The weather has been quite cool for two or three days sometimes too cool to be comfortable.

Saturday afternoon & night I was quite unwell. I attribute it partly to the water which is very unpalatable to me, and partly to eating corn melons and fruit not being accustomed to such diet, and some of the fruit not as ripe as it ought to be. Yesterday afternoon I was better and today feel quite well.

Last week seemed the longest week I have spent yet. It is nearly two weeks since I received a letter from you and there is not a man here that I have known over a month. It is just a month today since I took charge of the quartermaster's department.

I write this morning as I intend to go into the fort tomorrow morning to see if we cannot get transportation soon and may not have time to write in the morning. I am getting anxious to get to the regiment with the hope that I will have late news from you. I suppose you know where it is as you would probably hear from some of those receiving letters. I have no idea where it is & have heard so many different reports.

I am afraid you have stopped writing when you heard that I was not with the others, but I trust not. I hope to get all your letters some day before a great while. If I had known we would be here so long I might have received several letters from you here. But if you direct as formerly, they will find their way to the regiment wherever it may be. I am adding a line in the morning to give you the latest news if there is any.

Truly your devoted husband
James

Tuesday morning. No news only a prospect that we will commence shipping today. It will take a couple of days to get all on board. It is a beautiful bright calm morning.

ahc-6208.26

Carlisle Aug 26th

My very dear husband,

I was prevented writing last night by company tres tres late so you will accept an apology this time with a promise of doing better tomorrow night for that is my regular time for writing. You will perceive that I have been very punctual lately if you receive them at all.

We are all well. I have had the great pleasure of receiving yours of 21st & 23rd since I last wrote. Mr McClure called to see us last night. He complained of great press of business since he has been appointed to the enrollment of this county. George left us on Sunday night for New York. He would reach there the following morning at 8 o'clock - quick travelling.

Your letter of the 21st was so sweet that I gave your picture a huge kiss. You exclaim how silly!!

Mr. Zimmerman was buried on Saturday. Quite a long procession followed him to his last resting place. We have had some rains lately which allay the dust. This morning is cool.

I have already canned some tomatoes off of our vines. Do you remember what a siege you & I used to have over them? Cousin Margaret had a letter recently from Sallie Anderson. She says she is gayer, receives more kindness & goes out more than in all her life & sends for handsome clothing. That dont look much like the South suffering.

I have no ink this morning. Will write you more fully again.

In haste devotedly your attached wife
Annie

Carlisle Aug 28th /62

My Darling Husband,

X I have heard nothing from you since I last wrote.

I had the childrens' likenesses taken this week. They promise to be very good. I have not seen them since they were finished. The four were taken together without any trouble & with the first sitting. We will love to look at them when we get old.

Aunt Miller is failing very rapidly. Cousin Catherine Smyzer(?) is there now. Some of the Coopers & Jane Smyzer are to be here this week. Galbraith Miller is here again. I do think he is getting quite imbecile. I think he is a pretty hard drinker. This morning he showed me some of his wife's letters, wanted to know what I call you, & altogether behaved in a most nonsensical style. Even our John remarked to me how badly he managed his little boy, teaching him to fight, lie & reprove & praised him in the same breath. He says his wife cant manage him, but I think he is getting the worst kind of management now.

This afternoon I was interrupted in my writing, but since then I have had the great joy of receiving yours of the 25th. You were not very well, have you entirely recovered? Do be prudent - about your eating.

If you left Hampton as you anticipated doing on that day, you will have received quite a budget of letters ere this reaches you. I have no idea where the Brigade (Boryads?) are have not seen any of the Anderson's lately.

You must feel so lonely in the evening with none but strangers about you, but you will probably find some of them pleasant acquaintances.

Today Mr. Holbert called here to get your age & name as the business of drafting has commenced. I gave your age about 40. Mr Croft cant be taken because he is 45. Now if you had not gone already we might have added a few years to your age & kept you at home. Judge Heplen's sons stand a poor chance of staying at home any longer without buying an exemption because the poorer classes are very violent against him. Galbraith Miller has thrown up his Colonelcy in the 2nd Maryland(?) Regt. & is applying for a Generalship. Will Watts left yesterday for Ft Leavenworth(?). His habits are very bad. The Anderson troop numbers nearly 300 & are camped near the Garrison. I believe there is to be a repetition of the tableaux whilst they are here at a good time to collect some spare quarters.

The old college bell sounded this morning for the first time in two months. I was real glad to hear it. Sounded like an old friend.

Last Sunday morning Minnie & I were startled by great hallooing & shouting in Mrs Croft's yard & we thought we would apply our eyes to the fence holes to know the cause of the

commotion. There we saw Mr. Rhoads & Mrs Croft issuing from the convenient little outhouse with a mouse in their hands & Mrs Rhoads the other side of the building with a hoe trying to extricate Mrs Croft's hen which had gotten down. Mrs Croft retired in disgust, but Mrs Rhoads made her (Han? Man?) whom she calls her husband persevere in the task of emancipation until his patience was exhausted. So the poor chicken remained in her new home till the next day when she was released & the poor thing expressed her joy by laying an egg.

I think I am now fixed with a servant. Yesterday afternoon I went out to the forge(?) to see a girl. She is highly recommended. She is stout & accustomed to hard work. The town is full of contrabands but so worthless, they think if they can do one thing they are accomplished. The girl we have now is delicate & I find the most of my time is spent in the kitchen which dont suit me who has so much sewing to do. Whenever you write me fully about your shirts & drawers I will be very happy to make them. Tell me particularly about the shoulders whether you prefer yokes or lends(?). I have seen such flannel as you describe on persons but not in the stores but Bentz could send for it.

My dear, dear husband I am so anxious to have you home. In three days it will be eight months since I was perfectly happy.

Mr. McClure has been in quite a commotion about the key of the office. I suppose Mr. Goodyear mislaid it in the hurry of going away though he writes that he left it with Gillatin(?).

I intend making Nan & John write you soon. I have been busy preserving & attending to the household. Daisy & James are well. Good bye write often to your dear little wife

Annie

Carlisle Sept 1st /62

X
My Darling Husband,

Today we have been startled by the word of the death of John Smead & of Robt Henderson being wounded. My own Husband how much I hope & pray & trust that you are safe. God only knows! That your life may be saved & that you may be returned to us is my daily & most ardent prayer & all things else sink into nothing in comparison.

I am persuaded that you are well because you have been acting as Quartermaster & I hope you are still at Fortress Monroe, & then I can neither see in the papers nor hear anything of you & as bad news always comes fast I console myself. I hoped very much to hear from you today but was disappointed. Tomorrow I think will surely bring me something. This afternoon I heard the bad news from Virginia. I waited almost breathless till I sent to the office & thought I would sink(?) if no letters came but 'tis wonderful how we are supported under such circumstances for now I think if anything had befallen you I surely should have heard. I know you write regularly but at such times I wish it was in your power to telegraph me.

I feel so very sorry for poor Annie Smead. Hers has been a hard lot & now the future is very dark. 'Tis fortunate she had only one child. At this very trying time when the consolations of religion would be so sweet to her soul she rejects them & calls her Maker's justice into question in a most rebellious manner; but God tries us weak mortals, as it were by fire sometimes to answer his all wise ends & we can only look to him for submission & faith & say "Thy will be done." John Smead's body is to be brought up tomorrow. Old Mr. Hinderson sent down this afternoon.

Last night five of our physicians & a number of our Townsmen went to the hospital in a special train. We made up several boxes of jellies, farina & such things as would be grateful to the sick. The Ladies here have been very energetic, today they were collecting money for the wounded(?) & succeeded very well.

What will be the end of all this? We seem to be gaining & losing all the time & this battle has been fought on the same ground of the one a year ago. Capt Churchill predicted last night that the war would be over in three days.

This morning I got Mr. Hamilton to examine Nan & John & after going through the ordeal very creditably they were transferred into Miss Julia Beetim's & Mr Masonheimer's schools. Mr. Hamilton tried to dissuade me from putting John into a boy's school, but as he is prepared & has the ambition I think it right to gratify him. I shall have to study a good deal with them. The higher schools are much more prepossessing than the primary departments because not so crowded & then too they are removed from our troublesome opposite neighbors.

Aunt Miller has had quite a bevy of her relations lately. They all left today excepting Galbraith Miller. Mr Wills, Jane

Smyzer's husband, gave me a pressing invitation to visit them, which of course they were very safe in doing. Galbraith Miller is past reformation I'm afraid & from his wife's letters I expect they have an unhappy time. His little boy is almost constantly at our house even all night sometimes & his father knows nothing of him. He is a sad example for the child. I do wish he would send him to Milwaukee. His Mother is the proper person under such circumstances even if he is unmanageable.

We had a heavy rain this afternoon. Tonight is quite cold. Yesterday was our communion Sabbath. Mr Munreay(?) officiated. We had pleasant services no additions. The congregation are by no means unanimous in calling Mr. Bliss or indeed anyone.

There are about 800 of the Anderson troops here. I have never seen the encampment. They say 'tis very pretty sight.

Daisy has regained her old good looks & is very hearty. James will soon be able to say everything. I think you will be delighted with their photograph & so natural, very reasonable too only \$1.50 & 75 cts for frame.

I had a letter from Ban few days ago. Quite inconsolable about his boy. Louise is in bad health. Good bye my precious husband.

Affectionately & devotedly your attached wife
Annie

Your letter of the 25th is the last I have had from you.

On board steam tug Kingston
Potomac river below Alexandria
2nd Sept. 1862

My Dear wife,

It is one week today I believe since I wrote you & nearly three weeks since I heard from you. I might have written to you last week, but we were loading vessels & waiting continually for others to come so that I could not get off to take a letter into the post office at the fort, and besides I expected to get started towards Alexandria every day, and thought I would write from there. Just as we were about leaving Hampton I discovered that a post office had been established there, but I did not know it before although I had made frequent inquiries before.

Our destination is Alexandria & we are within ten miles of the place. I have no idea where the regiment is. I saw by Saturday's paper that Pope was expecting Porter's corps at Manassas on Saturday morning. I suppose the regiment is in that direction if the army has not been driven back by the Rebs. I feel great anxiety to hear something of the result of the fight on Friday and Saturday also if there was one. I presume you have seen it in the papers of yesterday.

We left Hampton on Sunday about 11 o'clock. Lay at Fortress Monroe till after two when we started for Alexandria. It blew quite a gale out on the bay and the sea was very rough, but we have got along safely this far.

What I am to do when I get to Alexandria I have no idea. Whether remain there or go on to the regiment. Neither the wagons nor horses have arrived here, although they were all loaded & started before I did, except eight that I have along. Perhaps the old quartermaster will be waiting to take charge or perhaps a new one. I hope soon to get where the company is that I may get your letters which I know you have written and are writing for me, unless they got lost in the marching & moving about.

It is nearly breakfast time and I must close. I expect to be at Alexandria in an hour or hour & a half.

Truly your devoted husband
James

I have arrived in Alexandria. The news is not favorable from the army as far as I can get any. But nobody seems to know anything. I don't know where I will go tomorrow. Lieut Col Henderson was wounded on Saturday. He is in Washington. I presume he will soon be at home. His wound is not considered dangerous.

J.S.C.

Carlisle Sept. 3rd /62

My dear dear husband,

I am so very much disappointed in not having heard from you since your letter of the 25th a long time! I can get no clue to your whereabouts. This evening I saw the notice of a J. Colwell /Sergeant/ being wounded. I feel very anxious and miserable about you. Do telegraph me when you can't write. I read the papers till I grow sick.

Oh, the bitter, bitter fruits of this war are seen & felt everywhere. Poor John Smead was buried this afternoon at 4 o'clock. A sad funeral & the doleful music was so harrowing to the feelings. Annie is down there for the present. If anything can unite people its grief, & in this bereavement they have certainly a common sorrow. Old Mrs Smead reproaches herself & the girls now for not being reconciled to him & his marriage before this.

Last night Mary Chambers had a dispatch from her husband in Washington saying he was ill & come on immediately. George Gibson keeps us well posted about everyone we know in Washington. Through his exertions John Smead's body was recovered as the grass was dug & he about being interred when George interfered. I think if anything had happened to you he certainly would know of it.

Oh! I would give nearly all my life if I could feel assured that you were out of danger this night & I could soon see you. Everything anything to have you again home. May Heaven answer this my constant prayer.

If you know anything of a Charley Holbert in Co A. please tell me as his Mother is very anxious not having heard for more than a month. She is very bitter in her complaints against Robert Henderson who she considers a most passionate hard-hearted man - & says he had only six votes for the colonelcy so great was his unpopularity. I am told that his wound is not dangerous but painful. - is still in Washington.

Charley McClure's imprisonment is contradicted. Mr. McClure was here for a while last night. He is still busily engaged at the enrolling business. I will write a short letter tonight directing it to Fortress Monroe hoping that one of these may reach you. I am so anxious if I do not hear in a day or two I'm afraid I'll be perfectly good for nothing.

Na and John are getting along nicely with their studies. They are promoted into higher books & Na actually studies geography. I intend making them write you soon. John forms many plans for entertaining you when you return. Daisy is now old enough & sufficiently trust-worthy to go errands for me down st. She is a very dear child & retains her old fancy for being nursed. James is my little comfort till you return. He cannot bear me out of his sight & calls himself "Mama & Papa's Kitty."

As you were so kind as to send one Capt Brady's pictures I return the compliment by enclosing Mrs Brady. Did you ever see her?

Good night my own dear precious husband. May God ever bless & spare you, is the anxious prayer of your devotedly attached wife

Annie

jsc-6209.04

Alexandria Va
4th Sept. 1862

X My Dear wife,

I mailed you a letter here on Tuesday the day I arrived. I did not expect to be here so long at that time. The horses & wagons have not arrived yet. And cannot say when they will. I have heard nothing from them since I left them.

I have no news about the army except what I get in the papers which I suppose you see. I hear a great many rumors most of which turn out to be untrue.

It seems that the whole army is back around Washington pretty much in the same position they were last winter. The reserves are somewhere in the vicinity of Arlington heights or were yesterday.

I forgot to mention in the post-script to my last that I had received five of your letters viz. of the 12th 14th 16th 18th & 20th ult, so you have written very promptly that far for which please accept my hearty thanks. Dick Henderson had got a letter of a later date from you for me before I saw him & had given it to one of the soldiers of the regiment to give to me as he knew I had come & he was going to Washington to see his brother. He did not know the name of the soldier & I have not received the letter. The other letters are I suppose with the regimental mail. The ones I received had been sent down from Fredericksburg.

I am expecting the vesels with the horses & wagons every minute. or I would ask of you to write to me here. As soon as they arrive & are unloaded and put together, I presume I will be off.

This city is so crowded that I can find no place to stay except to lie on the floor. I stay down on the wharf where I have some horses, and have my blankets. I am tired of living the way I have been for the last year but more especially for the last six months.

John Smead was killed in the late battles as I suppose you know. Poor Annie Ege. She will be left very desolate. Her near relatives not able to do much for her. How many children has she? She will have her pension from the government to rely on I suppose. What a terrible war this is, and the end dont appear to be visible yet. Still it may be nearer than we suppose. "The darkest hour is just before daybreak." Write often.

Your devoted husband
James

Carlisle Sept. 6th /62

X Since I last wrote I have had the great pleasure of receiving two letters of the 2nd & 4th from my own very dear Husband. So long a time had intervened between the letters that I had wrought myself up to a very miserable pitch thinking you were sick, or imprisoned or something terrible had befallen you. Now I am very much relieved but I would like to know your destination if you go to Washington I want to go to see you. I don't believe this war is going to end in a long time & I am so anxious to see you & talk with you.

Our normally quiet valley is in quite a commotion anticipating a visit from Stonewall Jackson. All the stores are closed & all business suspended after 3 o'clock every day by order from the Governor so that the men can drill & provide themselves with arms in case of an attack. It seems to be regarded in a more serious light even than the anticipated attack of last year in which you figured with a club & I with four children and a basket of valuables making our way to the scene of action.

Lyle(?) Lyon is now a prisoner on Governor's Island & Wm died recently in Richmond leaving his family extremely poor.

The Anderson troops are still here numbering 800. Everyone will be glad when they go, for ladies cant walk in the evening without being insulted. Mr. Eales told me he was pretty near giving one of them the weight of his cane for looking impudently at Anna.

Poor Annie Smead is very much distressed of course about the death of her husband. Fortunately she has but one child. She is making her home for the present at her mother-in-law's. This mutual sorrow may make their future relations more friendly. Annie has been in delicate health for a long time. 'Tis a great pity of her.

Mary Chambers writes that her husband is much better & has captured a secesh horse with which she is much delighted & is going to bring it back to Carlisle with her.

I wrote yesterday to Sister Libby telling her that you had not been in the recent battles & were well. Edgar is still at home. John is in Capt Kelso's company. Robert Henderson is now in Baltimore. I saw a devoted friend of yours young Robinson a few evenings ago. He told me he would see you sometime soon as his leave had nearly expired. George McClure borrowed your books on military tactics as his Mother is obliged to let them learn the art - if war comes(?) to defend the valley.

Do you ever get any peaches? They seem to be very abundant & seasonable in this section of country. Last night Mr & Mrs Eells(?) paid us a visit of an hour & a half long. Nan & John get along with their new teachers very well. I study with them every day. Daisy & James are laying in a fine stock of health by playing outdoors all the time.

We are enjoying delightful weather now, the nights are too beautiful to sleep.

Take good care of yourself & write often to

Your affectionately & devotedly attached wife
* * Annie

Carlisle Sept. 8th /62

My Darling Husband,

Since I last wrote I have heard nothing from you. I surely will be more fortunate tomorrow.

The war excitement continues & as long as the Rebels remain at Frederick I suppose it will scarcely abate. Dont it seem singular that they have made such rapid strides lately. Somehow I dont feel much afraid of them visiting this valley. I think they would be more apt to be off to Baltimore or Philade.

The drafting business had been postponed five days more & only from the age of 21 upwards. So Cousin Margaretta will get off this time. We have four companies formed in town for the defense of the state. Ricd.(?) Jack Hay is a Lieut. Major Bill Biddle is here recruiting his health. He still wears crutches but I'm told will soon be well enough to go into service again. Mrs Genl Churchill died on Saturday last. She has been an invalid for some time. Mrs Long was to see me on Saturday night - in a great state of excitement regarding her son Kenneely(?) from whom she has not heard since the recent battles. She wishes you to make inquiries about him & let me know whether he is well. There are to be more tableaux here this week for the benefit of the soldiers.

We are enjoying delightful weather now though rain is much needed. The tomatoe vines are nearly dried up. Yesterday we had the Newville Mr Henderson to preach for us. There is much prejudice against him many persons wouldn't go to hear him. This has been our wash day so I have been cook & baker so I feel pretty tired.

The children are all snug in their beds in anticipation of our early opening of books in the morning. Nan has come to the conclusion that she gets along better than she expected to. John is the youngest boy in his school. He says Mr Masonheimer is pretty sharp & all of his scholars have to wear thick pants - which sounds rather ominous. Daisy thinks she is a very big girl. She & Ernest Brady are very good friends but this morning they had a difference of opinion at the front door & she called up to me that he had spit in her face, but she liked him anyhow. I think that was a striking instance of devotion. Jamie has hit upon a very endearing name for me & calls me Mommy. He is as fat as a little mule.

This uninteresting letter you must excuse for I am tired tonight & have a sore finger.

Don't you think you could come home on a visit now that you are near us again? I am so anxious to see you that I could go to see you if you think there is a possibility of your being in or near Washington for a day or two.

I have heard nothing from our friends in Shippensburg since I last wrote you. I have just been at the door a minute, there I

saw Mr Brady. He told me he heard last week that you were wounded & a prisoner but as I have had later advice from you my mind is at rest for the present.

Good night my dear husband. Write often as you can to your truly attached wife

Annie

Carlisle Sept. 12th /62

X
My precious Husband,

Last night I did not write to you because I had a serious attack of blues owing to having received nothing from you for over a whole week. Oh! I am so uneasy & miserable, what can be the reason that your letters dont come? Mr Haverstick has had very late advices from his sons. I retired at an early hour last night thinking I could write you more agreeably this morning - but my wanderings in search of you through dream-land were vain. I thought I was in Esmentoberg(?) searching for you through the rooms & cells of the monastery & among the sisters & monks but no one answered to you. At last I was directed to a little chapel which stood on the border of a dense wood where I was told you would be, but just as I got to the little ivy covered Inn(?) & expected in the next moment to be clasped in your arms - I awoke.

Now it is quite early not clear light & to add to the other gloom rain has been falling nearly all night, but I still write you regularly hoping some of my letters will reach you & I do sincerely trust some of yours will soon get here.

I have no news. We are constantly in receipt of wild rumors about Jackson's approaching us but I do not feel afraid yet many are very uneasy & are packing up their valuables lest they may be destroyed. I cannot think that the Rebels would burn our town or interfere with the women & children. Our Army never committed any outrages in Virginia.

Yesterday quite a colony of contrabands arrived here telling of coarse(?) extravagant stories & finding plenty of hearers. I think if we do have to leave town Perry County would be the most out-of-the way place.

I have just finished a nice purple calico dress which fits me very nicely. I am going to make Nan & Daisy Garibaldi's out of my old white wrapper which will look very nicely with dark skirts. The children are all well. I have no trouble with them. Providence has been very good to us in preserving their health for I know I am not an experienced nurse which is taught alone by sad experience, & I have never been thrown much with sickness. I have not seen Major Todd yet. From all I can hear he must be confined to his bed.

I sincerely trust that you are still safe. I do hope you can find some means of visiting me. I have heard nothing from Shippensburg for several days. I dont know whether Mr. McClure is down this week or not. Mr Croft & Dr Mahon are in the country in the enrolling business.

Our markets are now stocked with all the good things belonging to this season of year. The children enjoy the sweet potatoes which are very fine. Yesterday I canned some tomatoes our vines did not bear so luxuriantly as they promised owing to the drought.

Good-bye my very dear husband. May God preserve & bless you
is the earnest prayer of your devoted wife

Annie

X
ahc-6209.13

Saturday night 13th

Again writing to my own dear husband & have heard nothing from him for so very long a time consequently I am in very bad spirits. Last evening I was so miserable about you that I went down to Major Todd's to ask him whether he had seen or heard of you lately but he had retired so I heard nothing there. I heard afterwards that he had been sick in a hospital before arriving here & I suppose he could not enlighten me.

Some letters do come to town so I think it is strange that I get none. I have sent word to George Gibson to interest himself in finding out where you are for this uncertainty is wearing. I do think I will die if I don't hear something of you soon. I never was so long a time without letters before.

Last night there was a report that the Reserves were to pass through town. I passed a watchful night, still I think if you had been coming you would have telegraphed me. Again there is such a report but the time is not definite. If you are stationed near here I am going to see you if only for a half day.

Since I wrote you on Thursday our town has been in a great commotion owing to Jackson's anticipated visit to this valley. Many families have left town: Bairds Blaneys old Mrs Watts' family - Loomis family & many others. Numbers who still remain are packed up for a start. It seems that Genl Elliott got up this scare by getting his family off & Mr Edwrd. Biddle keeps it up by persuading others to go. I think I won't leave till the Rebels get to Chambersburg. Then of course the track will be torn up & it will take them a day or two to march here so in that time we can hide some place. George Gibson sent for Fanny Hunt & meets her tomorrow morning in Harrisburg. Egolf's boarding house is closed.

Today two companies left town for Chambersburg - two Hepburn boys George McClure our neighbor Callis & many others we know. Mr Fry resigned because his wife said he should not go. It's well that we are away from the excitement for the people downtown say they can't sleep for the _____ & fuss while we live in blissful ignorance. Still it is nearly over(?). Some people thank that the end of the war is at hand though these are our dark days. I earnestly pray that it is.

Now my own dear darling husband do please try to find out some way of communicating with me, for to hear often from you & to know that you are well is the only comfort that I have these times. Our sweet children are all well & often talk of "Papa". Tomorrow will be Sunday so of course I can't hear but Oh! I pray that Monday will bring me some news from my dear dear husband.

Ever your devoted wife
Annie

ahc-6209.15

Monday morning

(This little scrap of paper was undated, bearing only the heading "Monday morning." It was found in the same envelope as AHC's 9/18/62 letter, and must have been written on Monday, Sept. 15th, since she refers to JSC rejoining his regiment.)

My mind was greatly relieved regarding you to hear last night from young Harkness that you are well and with the 7th Regt. So I presume you have received all of my letters.

We are all well - Ever yours

Annie

X jsc-6209.13

(This letter is dated Sept 13,
but the postmark indicates
it only got into the mail
system at McKecaysville[?]
on September 18.)

about 4 miles from
Frederick Md
13th Sept. 1862

My Dear wife,

It is more than a week since I have had an opportunity of mailing a letter to you. I write now with the hope that I may be able to send it to you in a day or two. I think I have received all of your letters up to & including the 8th inst. I had recd up to the 20th ult when I last wrote. Since that I have received yours of the 25th, 26th 29th ult. and 2nd 4th 6th & 8th inst. The one you sent to Fortress Monroe I suppose I will never receive. I also received the one enclosing Mrs Brady's photograph, for which I am much obliged. Mrs. B. seems to be much younger than he. I have seen her often. And I must say the picture does not do her justice. I think her much handsomer and her expression much sweeter and more animated. I always thought that she was the lady I should like to have for my wife. I do not know her equal anywhere, excepting always your dear self. There now I hope you will not be jealous of my dear Mrs. B.

The wagons & horses arrived at Alexandria on Friday night. I got them off & set up about midnight on Saturday night, got them loaded and out of Alexandria by 10 o'clock Sunday. On Saturday the Division crossed the long bridge into Washington city. We passed through Washington as the people were going to church on Sunday evening. I could not stop to write you a line, nor even to get something to eat. I got up with the brigade about midnight that night 10 miles out from Washington.

On Monday morning I was sent back to the company. So I am now footing it in the old way. We remained in camp till Tuesday and have been marching every day since. We arrived here a few minutes ago, 12 o'clock M. How long we will remain I have no idea. We can hear firing all forenoon on the other side of Frederick from us.

You write in one of your letters about flour. Of course get it always from McLeaf if you can.

Also you had better lay in your winter's coal at once, if it has not risen too much. If it is not over five dollars per ton lay it in. You had better get 6 or 8 tons at any rate whatever price it is.

How much money have you left. Have you paid Dr. Harman.

I dont think the Rebels will go into Pennsylvania. They will probably get back to Virginia if they can. I suppose we will follow them so I presume I will not get much closer to you than I am now. I would love dearly to see you & have a talk with you. But I could name no place where I would be at a given time. Nor would it suit for you to be there if I could.

The reason I mentioned about the coal is that I think it will rise very high if it has not already.

Your devoted husband
James

jsc-6209.14

14th Sept 5 O'clock P.M.

X (This was inserted in the same envelope as JSC's 9/13/62 letter. Apparently he had no paper: this is written on the inside of a torn open envelope from one of AHC's earlier letters to him.)

I had no opportunity of mailing the enclosed letter, & I don't know when I will have. I hope soon. We have been on the march since yesterday we had a fight. We drove the Rebs clear over the mountain. We are now about 4 miles south of Boonsborough towards the Potomac. There is fighting this afternoon three or four miles in advance. The Rebs are in full retreat I think towards Va. Never to return. The end of this war has commenced. I escaped unhurt again through the favor of the Lord & his Christ. Joseph Steel of our comp.....No other was hurt that I know of. Capt Dwin of Carlisle was killed. I have received all of your letters till the 8th. I saw Charley McClure two days ago & again he passed this evening. He is well. We will not get into the fight this evening I think. Boonsborough is only 10 miles from Hagerstown but we are now moving away from you. I suppose I will not get to see you at present. A report was circulated that Lt Col. Henderson now is dead. I do not believe it as it as it does not come in an authentic way. I presume we will go to Va again. The papers will give particulars of the battle.

X ahc-6209.18

Carlisle Sept. 18th /62

My Husband my own dear Husband,

This will prove but a poor apology for a letter because I am so much dispirited in not having heard from you for so long a time. Two weeks! that I cannot write neither can I do anything till I hear from you. I have written you regularly. I hope you receive some letters. I would give worlds, had I them, for one letter from you this night. Indeed I am so utterly miserable. I never felt so helpless before.

Last night I tried to telegraph you through Jim Cooper, but the telegraphic communication being broken I wrote to him begging him to find out where & how you are.

I expect you will think me foolish my dear Husband but indeed I cant help it. I do want so much to hear about you. If the road between Hagerstown & Frederick was fixed I could go to see you. As it is if there is anything the matter with you dont hesitate a moment about letting me know for I could go anyhow. Some way would be found. Young Harkness leaves in a few days I could go with him.

I do wish I was with you. Wont you give me some encouragement to go? I could find a home some place near you so that I could see you sometimes. Then my mind would be at rest.

We hear glowing accounts of McClellan's victories but the sad after part, the list of killed & wounded, is very much of a mystery. No mail or papers have come today. They will be here during the night. I felt quite stunned at seeing the death of Capt Brady in yesterday's paper. His connexion with you in my mind by means of his photograph which you enclosed makes me feel singularly sad regarding an entire stranger. Oh! this terrible war how much bitterness & misery it is creating.

My husband may Heaven spare your life through all these struggles. Oh! how fervently I pray for your return.

This afternoon it rained quite heavily but a bright sunset promises a pleasant tomorrow. This is a sad letter but is the index of my feelings. When some of your good, dear letters come I will furnish you a more cheerful correspondent.

The children are all very well. Both of their schools are closed for a few days owing to the great excitement here. There were no passenger trains here today all being used for soldiers. There was a report this evening that Stonewall Jackson & 46,000 men had been captured which if true must surely be the beginning of the end.

Good night my darling husband.

Ever your affectionately & devotedly attached wife

Annie H. Colwell

oth-6207.22

(This letter from Mrs. E.M. Holmes to JSC was written July 22, 1862. JSC refers to it in early August.)

Carlisle Cumberland Co
Tuesday the 22nd 1862

Dear Mr. Colwell,

I called upon your Dear Wife on the 14th being informed that she had received a letter from you. And not hearing of my Dear Son William, since he received the wound in the hand - fearing he was not able to write. Immediately wrote to Capt. Henderson not receiving answer. I became quite uneasy. In which your Dear Wife was so kind to me - told me she intended to write you that evening and would inquire of him to you, but fortunately I received A letter from the Capt. next day that was so satisfactory, and A great comfort - for I was very much troubled, and the mixture of hope of seeing him, but in this I have been disappointed.

The reason I have of writing these few lines to you is, as feeling you might be a friend to my Dear Son and the youngest of 6 who is A member of your company. I know you have many cares and duties of your own and anxiety for your Dear ones at home to occupy your time. But would it be too much of you that you would think of him - for he never was two weeks away from his home before. But allways, obedient Son - had borne his afflictions with so much patience, bearing not murmuring. That causes me today to have more anxiety about him, when I think of his past sufferings bearing his afflictions so submissive.

I am sensibly that this year is, and has been a year of trouble and sorrow - to all at home and abroad. I do hope, and will have hopes in you, and Capt Henderson if any thing should happen him by accident or his life gone - that might have that comfort to have him brought home. We are allways in the care of the Lord, we must try and cast all our hopes on the Lord who alone has power to save us all in the day of trial.

Excuse a Mother's fond weakness. I know I have become weak and more sensitive and feels for the suffering but at times I fear he might go to far as my Father's Brother did in the year of 1812 being Capt on the Vessel and being under Commodore Chauncey - when wounded he would not give up to have his wounds dressed - but fell overboard with the loss of blood, in which I hope all will submit when surrounded, to use the means of self preservation in which is our duty.

I hope my Dear Son William has acted right since his leaving home. I know the temptations has been strong for a young man that has been kept from the evil of the world, but O how thankfull was I, and all to think his life was spared - just with a wound.

Now I do hope that you may be spared, and your Dear ones all to meet. I seen your likeness in your Son just appeared I saw you.

Your Dear Wife looked well quite cheerfull and kind. As this week past or few days is rain or clouds I have not got to town - to hear from Mrs. Colwell. Would you any time that would be convenient, to you just to let me know how my Dear Son is getting along - how that poor hand or finger has got - how his health is. But Dear sir, he would think it my weakness if he knew that I would make any inquiries about him - or I think so at least.

I have written this in haste but may it find you in good health and all of you. And may it be God's will that all will be peace again and soon, and very soon - that all may be spared to return to their peaceful homes is the most sincere Wish of a Friend.

With kind respects to yourself and Capt Henderson
E.M. Holmes

Will ever be held in gratefullness & remembrance to you and Capt H. Please excuse all - pleased to hear when

Shippensburg 4th Aug 1862

Lieut. J. Colwell

Respected & Honored Sir excuse the liberty I take in addressing a line to you in the first place with out the least shadow of flattery. I admire the heroic act of bravery in one of our own fellow citizens who picked up the standard of our country's honour whose bearer had been pierced with the enemy's bullet & bore aloft as I have been cribly (credibly?) informed with a strong arm & a brave heart unfurled it to the breeze in the face of a desperate foe during the remainder of the day, and in that person who was none less than your humble self for which you fully merit the admiration of your countrymen.

My dear Sir my whole heart is with you & in my dear country's suffering cause did my health & strength permit I should have been doing battle with you in the past year but as it will not permit I must submit. I have sent one representative & in all likelihood will send another & I would send a dozen would I have them to send.

Permit me to ask you the question did Edgar show himself the Soldier which I could scarcely doubt as I have understood he bore his humble part in the three days fight in front of Richmond where so many of our poor brave Reserves suffered so severely yet behaved themselves so heroically. I see an account of a prisoner taken under Genl Hatch, command of Popes Army Eulogizing the Pennsylvanians & particularly the Reserves for the great bravery. He stated also that Genl Lee & all his men felt confident of baging our whole army but owing to the extraordinary stratagetical skill of Genl McClelland outgeneraled all their generals.

Be that as it may in my own humble opinion our Army made a very narrow escape for had the rebels succeeded in gaining the opposite side on you then forward march across Whiteoak Swamp which they _____ very near they would have captured your Train & would have annihilated our whole army but through the interference of a kind Providence matters were otherwise ended.

My dear friend would I be asking too much of you to ask your influence to have Edgar promoted above a private as he has now been in the service for over a year & endured some of the _____ & perplexity of Camp life & has passed somewhat through the fire with no complaint cry sent home but always manifested a determination to do his duty & leave the consequences with God. He has never in all his writing home requested my interference to endeavor to have him promoted but if he is at all worthy I should like he could be, as I have seen strongly manifested by the departure at Washington recommencing the soldiers participating in our battle hour the pressent(?). I shall be under a thousand obligations to you for any influence you may exert on that score.

There seems to quite a _____ in urge of enlistments to fill up the Army. I think Shippensburg will do her humble part. Your friends around here are all well. I should be pleased when you

can find it convenient to hear from you. I have a cousin in the
shape of Qeact(?) Geo. Clessinger(?) who is a Surgeon of the 14th
Indiana Regt. I remain

Yours Truly
A.H. Wolf

oth-6209.17

Battle field
Sept 17th 1862

My dear Madam,

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the death of your brave husband Capt Colwell who fell while gallantly leading his Company on the field of Battle.

He was recognized by our gallant Lt Col. Brisbane by whose order he was carefully buried. The burial service I performed while our Regt standing mournfully around gazed upon the scene.

His grave is carefully marked so that you can have his remains removed at any time. You will (find) it at the foot of a large tree on the edge of a grove near a pond on the Diffenbaugh farm near Dunkertown Rd(?). His name is marked on the tree. I will render any assistance if in this place when you send for the body - and will furnish any other information you may desire. He effects are in the lands of his Lieutenant.

Let me say that we deeply sympathize with you in this sad affliction and pray that God may comfort & sustain you and your dear children.

You have much to be proud of - in such a husband & father. He was heroic generous & brave - and so he fell - while defending his flag.

May God's blessing rest upon you and your bereaved family.

Yours very truly,

Wm Earnshaw
Chaplain 49th
Rgt Pa Vols

By the side of the Capt we buried one of his men, John Calleo.

W.E.

(OVER)

(On the back empty page of the foregoing letter there is an additional note in pencil. Friday was September 19th, two days after the battle at Antietam.)

Carlisle Friday morning

Dear Madam,

These distressing letters came this morning. I thought it best to enclose them to you with my heartfelt sympathy in this sad, sad bereavement. Poor dear Annie is perfectly overwhelmed with grief.

Respectfully yours

Ch G McClure

(Ann Hall Colwell's mother, Ann Galbraith Hall, had seven older sisters. One of them, Sarah Galbraith, married John Bannister Gibson, who was Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for many years. One of their daughters married Charles McClure, Sr.; and one of the children of that marriage was Ch G McClure, who wrote the above note, was a close associate of James Smith Colwell, and is frequently mentioned in these letters. Ch G McClure was Ann Hall Colwell's first cousin, once removed.)