



LETTER WRITING

*Personal Observations &
Communication—Letters from
Home & the Field*

TEACHER'S GUIDE & MATERIALS

THE CIVIL WAR VOICES FROM BROOKLYN

This curriculum was developed in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and highlights collections from Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Cemetery. These letters, cartes de visite, wartime illustrations, and broadsides document visual and print communication made by and for Brooklynites during the American Civil War.

The Civil War coincided with innovations in photography, print media, and postage systems. The primary sources highlighted in this curriculum speak to an explosion in personal communication between battlefield and home and to the rise of a mass culture meant to solidify national identity and patriotism. They have been paired with adaptable handouts and strategies for critical thinking across the humanities and social sciences, designed for grades 4–12.

The sources highlighted here and their accompanying critical-thinking strategies offer a rich entry point into the following topics and themes:

- Life as a soldier
- Life on the home front
- The draft in New York City
- Women and relief efforts
- Technological advancements in communication
- The use of propaganda

School groups in and around New York City can deepen their study of the Civil War through onsite programs at Green-Wood Cemetery and Brooklyn Historical Society. At Green-Wood, burial ground to many Civil War soldiers, they will unpack themes of commemoration and memory. At Brooklyn Historical Society, founded during the Civil War in 1863, they will explore archives and museum collections for what they contain as well as probe their omissions. Both this curriculum and visits to these institutions will push students to move past epic, patriotic narratives of the Civil War and to consider the powerful forces and personal experiences that defined this transformative era.

The Civil War: Voices from Brooklyn was created by Rebecca Krucoff in collaboration with the Education Departments of Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Historic Fund.

Visit Us! Bring your class on a tour!

Contact us to schedule a tour or an in-class program.

At Brooklyn Historical Society:
education@brooklynhistory.org
www.brooklynhistory.org

At Green-Wood:
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Education programs at Brooklyn Historical Society and Green-Wood Cemetery are designed to support the Common Core Learning Standards and the NYC DOE Scope and Sequence.

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LETTER WRITING

A close reading of Civil War letters illuminates soldiers' experiences and perspectives

CONTEXT

Though the Civil War was not physically fought in Brooklyn, the conflict touched the lives of many who lived here. Over 30,000 men from the borough (then city) — most of whom had never served in the military — enlisted or, beginning in 1863, were drafted into the armed services and departed from the shores of Brooklyn and New York. Many captured their experiences with pen and paper, leaving behind thousands of letters, such as those featured here. The letters preserved in archives, however, represent only some of the voices from the past, in particular those of white, middle- and upper-class men and women. Soldiers who were literate wrote to their own loved ones, and some of those unable to read or write received the help of others in communicating. By the end of the 1860s, 11.5 percent of the white population and 79.9 percent of the nonwhite population in America were considered “illiterate.” This situation has left a vacuum of information about life in army camps among the working class and people of color that current historians struggle to piece together. Among the letters written by blacks, far fewer were preserved in archives compared with letters written by whites. In his seminal study of 20,000 letters, historian Bell Irvin Wiley could only find 12 letters written between black correspondents. Yet by the end of the war, 180,000 black soldiers had fought in the U.S. Army. Therefore, users of this guide should be aware of the limitations of these collections, even as the resources provide us with important insight into the lives of families during the period of the Civil War.

The letters that do exist offer a set of primary sources that go beyond the timeline of battles and major events to include correspondents' visceral descriptions of their experiences and a range of emotions about them — from fear to boredom to grief. They challenge students to consider point of view, to question the veracity of a first-hand account, and to differentiate fact from interpretation.

In an age when communication comes at the touch of a screen, it is difficult to imagine the challenge of patiently waiting for news from loved ones at home through letters, written over the course of days or weeks and subject to the complexities of a wartime postal system. About 180,000 letters daily passed through the two main military post offices at Washington, D.C., and

CONTEXT
(cont.)

Louisville, Kentucky. The Post Office Department proved relatively efficient at delivering letters to and from encamped soldiers. Regiments on the move, however, might wait weeks or months to send or receive mail. Soldiers also struggled to obtain mail supplies. “Dear sister, we cannot get paper for love or money,” wrote Daniel Underhill in December 1862. Christian Walthert asked a friend to send “25 cents of postage stamps ... as quick as you can.”

**TIPS FOR
TEACHING WITH
THESE LETTERS**

The following sets of letters are from Brooklyn soldiers writing home from war. Each letter writer has a unique personality and writing style, a specific understanding of his circumstances, as well as a particular point of view of the war. Reading these letters, you can feel like you “get to know” the author and can gather specific details and anecdotes that round out an understanding of life for soldiers at this time. You may also notice the materiality of the letters, including the stationery, handwriting, and methods writers employed to conserve paper, or the fact that letters were sometimes written, set aside, and added to later.

The sets of letters included here are primarily from white, upper-class men (the exception being the letters written by Daniel Friel, who was working-class), which are the prevalent letters in existence from this time period. These letters do not represent a complete picture or the diversity among soldiers with regard to race, class, and rank; there isn't “a” soldier's story. However, together they offer some common attributes and relay attitudes of the time, including the racism of many white Northerners. Hence, it is useful both to examine individual letters in depth and to engage in a comparison of different writers' letters, to yield a rich understanding of life for Union soldiers on the front.

TIPS FOR TEACHING WITH THESE LETTERS

(cont.)

When working with letters, it is useful to keep the following questions in mind:

- **Who wrote this letter, and to whom? What was their relationship? How regularly do you think they corresponded?**
- **Where and when was this letter written? Under what conditions?**
- **Is there evidence of personal point of view or bias?**
- **How might the letter writer's circumstances affect what he writes and the tone of his letter?**



WARNING THESE LETTERS INCLUDE A RACIAL SLUR

Winnie Bennett and Daniel Friel, both white Union soldiers, use the N word in the enclosed letters. Their casual racism reflects the continuing anti-black bias among many northern whites throughout the Civil War, even though many of them opposed slavery by this point. In order to accurately show this troubling history, we have not edited the N word out of the reproductions of the letters in this packet. However, we acknowledge the hatred behind this language, and we advise all teachers to take the time to explain your decision to say it aloud — or not to — with your students. Be prepared for that conversation to be emotional and messy.

In order to retain the historical information provided by this racist language, we have left all of the reproductions of letters unedited and given you two options for transcripts. The first includes the entire word. In the second, labeled “Edited,” we have deleted the N word and replaced it with “[racial slur, referring to black people].”

LESSONS

Note The following two lessons are meant to be used sequentially but can be adapted as stand-alone lessons. The “Big Understandings,” theme, aim, objectives, and additional questions can be used for both lessons.

Lesson 1 Reading letters through observations & inference

Lesson 2 Decoding & analyzing letters

LESSON 1 READING LETTERS THROUGH OBSERVATIONS & INFERENCE

40 MINUTES

AIM

What kinds of information about the Civil War do letters provide, and how is it different than the information provided by other kinds of sources (textbooks, movies, articles)?

THEME

Personal communication

BIG UNDERSTANDING

- Though the war did not take place in Brooklyn, many Brooklynites were affected by and contributed to the war.
- Events in history are experienced differently by different groups of people and individuals; race, class, ethnicity, and gender are lenses through which individuals experience major events.
- Letters are subjective and communicate a personal perspective.
- Letters can be read to understand the words on the page and also as a visual primary source.

OBJECTIVES: SWBAT

- Make observations and inferences about the Civil War based on reading Civil War letters.
- Draw conclusions about how letters helped soldiers to get through the war.
- Make inferences about how the Civil War impacted specific individuals by examining letters written by Brooklyn soldiers.

MATERIALS



- 1 Projection of the Cranston "Capitol letter" from July 1861
- 2 Copies of Friel, Cranston, Bennett, Woodward, & Sims letters, enough for each group
- 3 Copies of Observations and Inferences handout, one per student

LESSON 1 PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Introduce the letters by explaining that you will be looking at some letters from the collections of Brooklyn Historical Society and Greenwood Cemetery that Civil War soldiers from Brooklyn wrote home during the war. Explain that you will be looking at the letters over the course of two days, first to examine them as primary source objects, and second to focus on what the text of the letter can teach us about the war and its impact on soldiers.

Ask students to think about and answer the following questions:

- **How might looking at soldiers' letters be important in studying an event such as the Civil War?**
- **How might looking at letters give us different information than reading a newspaper article or a book, or seeing a movie about the Civil War?**
- **What kinds of things do you imagine you might find in these soldiers' letters?**

MODELING

Print out or pull up an image of Cranston's "capitol letter" from July 1861 (on whiteboard, LCD projector, or document camera). Give each student a copy of the Observations and Inferences handout. As a class, make observations about how the letter looks. Emphasize that during this time the class will be looking at the document as a whole, to learn from it, instead of turning to the actual words written, which will happen during a later lesson. Consider the following kinds of information:

- **What type of paper was used**
- **Date and location of letter writer**
- **Letter recipient**
- **Type of writing implement used**
- **Handwriting style**
- **Descriptions of drawings**
- **How text is laid out on the page**
- **Any markings on the letter (such as holes, imprints, etc.)**

As a class, make inferences, based on students' observations. Examples of inferences include the following:

- **He was far from home.**
- **He was trying to convey a sense of what it was like for him both in pictures and in words.**
- **People in the 1860s wrote in script.**
- **Things were "makeshift" — the post office is a tent.**
- **Letters are important — there is a post office.**

LESSON 1 PROCEDURE

(cont.)

Ask students if they have any questions so far about the person who wrote this letter, the war, or anything else. Have them write their questions in the space provided on the Observations and Inferences handout.

APPLICATION

Explain that in small groups or pairs, students will use the observation/inference strategy they just practiced to examine another letter written by a Brooklyn soldier. In pairs or groups, give students a copy of one of the letters below. Alternatively, ask them to view the letter on a laptop or an iPad/tablet:

- **Cranston letter (May 27, 1862) — troop movements, landscape, army news**
- **Woodward letter (May 11, 1861)**
- **Sims flower letter (July 4 and 15, 1863)**
- **Bennett stationery letter (January 12, 1862) — army medical practices, army band [contains a racial slur]**
- **Friel letter (February 24, 1864) — battle, being wounded, community news**

DISCUSSION

In their pair or group, students follow the same observation/inference protocol you used as a class to record their notes and ideas about their letter.

- **As a whole class, ask students what they are learning so far about their soldier, the time period, the Civil War, or anything else.**
- **Based on what they have examined so far, what can they infer about the war's impact on these soldiers?**

Alternatively, you can ask students to answer these questions in a short paragraph.

LESSON 2 DECODING & ANALYZING LETTERS

60 MINUTES

AIM

How did Brooklyn soldiers experience the Civil War, and how were these experiences informed by factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and gender?

THEME

Personal communication

BIG UNDERSTANDING

- Though the war did not take place in Brooklyn, many Brooklynites were affected by and contributed to the war.
- Events in history are experienced differently by different groups of people and individuals; race, class, ethnicity, and gender are lenses through which individuals experience major events.
- Letters communicate a personal, subjective perspective and share intimate details of life.

OBJECTIVES: SWBAT

- Gather ideas about how the Civil War impacted specific individuals by examining letters written by Brooklyn soldiers.
- Gather information about the life of Civil War soldiers in general by comparing and contrasting different individuals' experiences.
- Make conclusions about how letters helped soldiers to get through the war.
- Consider how the race, class, ethnicity, religion, and gender of historical agents affected the impact of the Civil War on their lives.
- Identify holes in the history represented by these letters, including a lack of information about the experiences of black Brooklynites and black soldiers.

MATERIALS



- 1 Copies of Cranston, Bennett, Woodward, Sims, and Friel letter sets, organized into folders for student groups
- 2 Copies of Analyzing Civil War Letters handout, one per student

Optional: Copies of [Creating a Character Sketch handout](#)

LESSON 2 PROCEDURE

Note: *If you are skipping Lesson 1, we recommend using the introduction and questions provided there.*

INTRODUCTION

Explain that students will read the letters of Brooklyn soldiers who wrote to friends and family from sites in the South. The letters contain detailed accounts of how soldiers experienced the Civil War personally, as well more general information about the time period. Explain that the practice of closely reading this type of text gives us an opportunity to “get to know” a soldier and to consider how the war was affecting him personally. It also gives us a chance to learn about those who were left behind and their feelings about the war.

APPLICATION

Organize students into pairs or groups. (If you used Lesson 1, we recommend moving students into the same groups and giving them the same person to study.) Hand out sets of the following letters to students, and copies of the handout called Analyzing Civil War Letters. Each letter set contains a least one copy of an original letter, as well as several letter transcriptions.

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

- July 1861 (image available) — drawing, army life
- October 11, 1861 — army life, post office, quartering soldiers, community news
- March 28, 1862 — army life, food, Union soldiers, fever, community news
- May 27, 1862 (image available) — troop movements, landscape, army news
- November 27, 1862 — thanksgiving, food, feelings on soldiering
- June 24, 1863 — troop movements, army life

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

- May 11, 1861 (image available) — army life, food, geography
- July 7, 1861 — purchasing a black man's freedom
- June 15, 1862 — food, insects
- July 8, 1862 — hot weather, training a war horse

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

- December 5, 1861 — food, blankets and heating
- January 10, 1862 — troop movements, camp, remembering home
- March 4, 1862 — food prices, wounds/casualties, war news
- September 5, 1862 — battle experiences
- July 4 and 15, 1863, flower letter (image available) — war news, army life, rattlesnake bite

LESSON 2 PROCEDURE

(cont.)



WINNIE BENNETT LETTERS

WARNING: These letters contain the N word. In the reproduction of the letter, the word will be visible to students. You may choose between two transcripts. The first includes the entire word. In the second, labelled “Edited,” we have deleted the N word and replaced it with [racial slur, referring to black people].

- January 12, 1862 (image available) — army medical practices, army band [uses the N word]
- September 11, 1863 — food, diverse steamboat passengers, soldiers [Uses racist language to describe people of mixed race]
- November 19, 1863 — newspapers, food [uses the N word]



DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

WARNING: These letters contain the N word. In the reproduction of the letter, the word will be visible to students. You may choose between two transcripts. The first includes the entire word. In the second, labelled “Edited,” we have deleted the N word and replaced it with [racial slur, referring to black people].

- February 13, 1863 — money, troop movements, community news [uses expletive]
- February 15, 1863 — money, anti-abolitionism, community news [uses the N word]
- February 24, 1864 (image available)— battle, being wounded, community news
- March 19, 1864 — troop movements, found items, community news
- April 23, 1864 — community news, missing home, troop movements

Ask students to begin by reading the letter they examined in Lesson 1.* The handwriting may be difficult to decipher; transcripts are available for groups that are struggling. After attempting to read the copy of the original letter or letters, ask students to read the transcripts of other letters in their folder.

Once students have read the letters in their folder, ask them to fill out the Analyzing Civil War Letters handout.

* Note: If you skipped Lesson 1, assign each group a soldier's letters to examine.

LESSON 2 PROCEDURE

(cont.)

DISCUSSION

Ask students to share their thoughts about their letter writer. Use any of the following questions to lead a class discussion. Alternatively, allow students to choose one question to answer on paper and then turn and talk to another student about their answer.

- **What did you read that surprised you?**
- **How are these letters similar? How are they different?**
- **What are these letters telling us about life for soldiers during the Civil War?**
- **What are these letters telling us about how individuals experienced the Civil War?**
- **How helpful do you think letters are in helping us to understand the Civil War?**
- **How many ways can you think of that letters helped soldiers get through the war?**
- **Whose points of view are represented in these letters? Whose are not?**
- **Think of a soldier whose view was not represented in these letters. Can you imagine what that person might write about in a letter home?**

Ask students to summarize their findings by answering the Aim question: How did Brooklyn soldiers experience the Civil War, and how were these experiences informed by factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and gender?

PRIMARY
SOURCES

LESSON 1

Alfred Cranston letter

→ PAGE 27

(July 1861)

Alfred Cranston letter

→ PAGE 31

(May 27, 1862)

John Blackburne Woodward letter

→ PAGE 43

(May 11, 1861)

Samuel H. Sims letter

→ PAGE 49

(July 4 and 15, 1863)

Winant Bennett letter

→ PAGE 56

(U.S. steamship Illinois, January 12, 1862) [uses the N word]

Daniel Friel letter

→ PAGE 68

(February 24, 1864)

LESSON 2

Alfred Cranston Letters

→ PAGE 27

- July 1861 (image available) — drawing, army life
- October 11, 1861 — army life, post office, quartering soldiers, community news
- March 28, 1862 — army life, food, Union soldiers, fever, community news
- May 27, 1862 (image available) — troop movements, landscape, army news
- November 27, 1862 — thanksgiving, food, feelings on soldiering
- June 24, 1863 — troop movements, army life

John Blackburne Woodward Letters

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- May 11, 1861 (image available) — army life, food, geography
- July 7, 1861, Quarters Company G, Baltimore City Prison — purchasing a black man's freedom
- June 15, 1862, Headquarters, Thirteenth Regiment, Camp Crooke, Suffolk, Virginia — food, insects
- July 8, 1862, Camp Crooke, Suffolk, Virginia — hot weather, training a war horse

PRIMARY SOURCES



LESSON 2

Samuel H. Sims Letters

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- December 5, 1861, Camp Burnside, Maryland — food, blankets and heating
- January 10, 1862, onboard gunboat Lancer — troop movements, camp, remembering home
- March 4, 1862, Roanoke Island, North Carolina — food prices, wounds/casualties, war news
- September 5, 1862, Bivouac on Seventh Street, Washington, D.C. — battle experiences
- July 4 and 15, 1863, flower letter (image available) — war news, army life, rattlesnake bite

Winant Bennett Letters

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- January 12, 1862 (image available) — army medical practices, army band **[uses the N word]**
- September 11, 1863 — food, diverse steamboat passengers, soldiers **[uses racist language to describe people of mixed race]**
- November 19, 1863 — newspapers, food **[uses the N word]**

Daniel Friel Letters

→ PAGE 68

- February 13, 1863 — money, troop movements, community news **[uses expletive]**
- February 15, 1863 — money, anti-abolitionism, community news **[uses the N word]**
- February 24, 1864 (image available) — battle, being wounded, community news
- March 19, 1864 — troop movements, found items, community news
- April 23, 1864 — community news, missing home, troop movements

HANDOUTS



OBSERVATIONS & INFERENCES

→ PAGE 22

This strategy encourages students to closely examine a visual source. It helps students distinguish between what is a factual observation, and what is an inference interpreted from facts observed. Make sure students study their artifact for several minutes and that they write down as many observations and inferences as they can. When students first use this strategy, they often tend to rush through it. You will need to encourage them to slow down their examination.

These strategies align to the following Common Core Standards:
CCRA.R1, CCRA.R6

ANALYZING CIVIL WAR LETTERS

→ PAGE 23

This strategy uses a series of leveled questions to help students gather information from the letters they are examining. The questions ask students to make observations and claims from the letters, and to support their claims from textual evidence.

These strategies align to the following Common Core Standards:
CCRA.R1, CCRA.R4, CCRA.R5, CCRA.R6, CCRA.W9

CONNECTING SOURCES

→ PAGE 25

This strategy helps students gather information on one topic from a variety of source material. It asks them to chart evidence about the topic and cite the source from which they gathered their evidence. In this way, students begin to understand that different sources provide us different perspectives.

These strategies align to the following Common Core Standards:
CCRA.R1, CCRA.R7, CCRA.R9, CCRA.W8, CCRA.W9

EXTENSIONS



CREATING A CHARACTER SKETCH

→ PAGE 26

After examining these letters closely, you might choose to extend the learning by asking students to create a character sketch of their letter writer, using the Create a Character Sketch handout.

BIOGRAPHIES OF LETTER WRITERS

ALFRED CRANSTON

Alfred Cranston was born in Savannah, Georgia, around 1840, the eldest of seven children. When he was 4, his family moved to Brooklyn, New York. As a young man, he served with Engine 17 of Brooklyn's Volunteer Fire Department, and he enlisted in Company 1 of the 14th Regiment of the New York State Militia in 1861. The regiment, known as Brooklyn's "Fighting Fourteenth," was in turn part of the 84th New York Infantry Regiment. Cranston fought in the Civil War from 1861 to 1864, eventually reaching the rank of captain. Throughout the war, he maintained an active correspondence with his fiancée, Elizabeth Hollington Petford.

While with the 84th New York, Cranston fought in the Army of the Potomac, seeing combat at First Bull Run, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania, among other locations. Although Alfred's July 1861 letter to Elizabeth contains a drawing of the U.S. Capitol, his regiment was already fairly deep into Northern Virginia at this date, well on its way to Bull Run for the first major battle of the Civil War (First Bull Run occurred on July 21, 1861). The contents of this letter are Alfred's first meditations on "camp life," meaning life on the march. Although this particular letter exhibits an exuberant tone on the novelties and goings-on of camp life, his letters would become markedly more somber less than a month later, after the First Battle of Bull Run resulted in 142 casualties — 46 of them confirmed dead — for his regiment alone.

Cranston and Petford married in 1864, following his discharge, and they had three children: Alfred Petford (b. 1865); Henrietta, or "Etta" (b. 1866); and Ella Maude (b. 1870).

Alfred Cranston remained active in veterans' affairs in the years after the Civil War. He served as secretary of the 14th Regiment War Veterans Association, which held annual reunions and sponsored monuments such as the new 14th Regiment Armory at 8th Avenue and 15th Street in Brooklyn. Cranston was a charter member of the U.S. Grant Post No. 327 of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), Union Veterans of the Civil War.

In 1909, the National Tribune, the official newspaper of the G.A.R., established a veterans' "colony" in the newly founded town of St. Cloud, Florida, having taken title to 35,000 acres of land through a subsidiary, the Seminole Land & Investment Company. In 1914, as a G.A.R. member and a Civil War veteran, Cranston received a "land script" worth \$25 for purchase of a lot in the St. Cloud veterans' colony. The Cranston family began to spend summers in the Florida town, which, by 1914, boasted the second-largest G.A.R. post in the country. Cranston died in St. Cloud in 1919 at the age of 79.

BIOGRAPHIES OF LETTER WRITERS (cont.)

DANIEL & HUGH FRIEL

Daniel and Hugh Friel, sons of Irish immigrants, grew up near what is now Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn. In 1861, 19-year-old Daniel enlisted in the 47th Regiment, New York Infantry. He was injured in the Battle of Olustee in February 1864. In letters home, Daniel implored his younger and impetuous brother not to enlist. Hugh did not listen; by 1864, he was fighting with the 158th Regiment, New York Infantry. Hugh's regiment was among those pursuing Lee's army when the Confederate general surrendered in April 1865.

The Friels displayed a casual but virulent racism in their correspondence. After the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect in 1863, Daniel bristled at the idea of risking his life for the emancipation of African Americans. Opinions like these were common among white Northerners, many of whom opposed slavery yet articulated racist beliefs about African Americans.

SAMUEL H. SIMS

Like many Brooklynites, 32-year-old glass stainer Samuel Sims enlisted within days of the fall of Fort Sumter in April 1861. Only four months earlier, Sims' wife, Mary Ann, died suddenly, leaving him to raise their daughter and two sons. During the war, Sims left his children in the care of his sister, Lucretia, and wrote to her regularly with lively and descriptive letters. He also corresponded with a young woman named Carrie, whom he appeared to be courting.

Sims was quickly promoted to captain in the 51st New York Infantry Regiment. As part of Burnside's 9th Corps, the regiment traveled extensively and fought in key battles, including the Second Battle of Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and the Battle of the Wilderness. In his letters, Sims expressed a sense of pride at his burgeoning leadership skills, even as he coped with the exhaustion of regular marches and the horror of human loss in battle and as a result of disease.

On July 30, 1864, Sims' regiment participated in the Battle of the Crater, a disastrous loss for Union forces that resulted in over 4,000 deaths. Among the dead was Captain Samuel Sims. He is buried in Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery.

BIOGRAPHIES OF LETTER WRITERS (cont.)

JOHN BLACKBURN WOODWARD

John Blackburne Woodward was born on May 31, 1835, at 84 Sands Street, Brooklyn, New York. The son of an English emigrant, Woodward left school at age 15 to join his uncle in the importing business. He eventually shifted to exports and traded mainly with Brazil and other South American countries.

Woodward entered the Brooklyn City Guard as a private in 1854. He would fight with this regiment in the Civil War, fighting at various times in the mid-Atlantic theater, including at the Battle of Gettysburg. Woodward was himself elected colonel of the 13th Regiment in March of 1863, and led the regiment thereafter during the war.

He resigned as colonel in 1866 and was appointed major general of the Second Division of the New York State National Guard in March of 1869. He would go on to become inspector general of New York State in 1875, and adjutant general in 1879. Woodward briefly entered the Brooklyn political stage when, in 1885, he made a bid for mayor. He ran as an independent and had the backing of the outgoing mayor, Seth Low. He came in third place, with 13,641 votes.

Woodward resided at 259 Henry Street in Brooklyn with his wife, Elizabeth Cook Blackburne, whom he had married on May 31, 1870, and four children. He died in 1896, after a brief decline due to pneumonia.

Note: John Woodward's collection of photographs are also highlighted in the Cartes de Visite lessons of this curriculum.

BIOGRAPHIES OF LETTER WRITERS (cont.)

WINANT BENNETT

Winant, the only Bennett child to serve in the Civil War, was born in 1830 in New York. He was a druggist by trade, and in 1861 enlisted in the 90th New York Infantry as a private in Company F. At some time during his service, Winant transferred to Company K and was promoted to the position of hospital steward, likely a result of his training as a druggist. In January of 1862, Winant's regiment left New York for Key West, Florida, where Winant served at the Marine and Stewart Hospitals. Most of the Bennett family's letters in Brooklyn Historical Society's collection are to and from Winant when he was stationed in Key West.

After spending only five months in Key West, Winant was discharged on June 16, 1862, due to an unknown disability. He then mustered in to the 5th New York Cavalry on October 18, 1862, in New York City, as a private in Company F. During his time with the 5th New York Cavalry, Winant again served at a hospital, this time at Camp Parole Hospital in Maryland. Camp Parole also operated as a prison camp for Confederate prisoners of war, and Winant speaks at length about his time at Camp Parole in 1863 in his letters. Winant also saw combat defending Washington, D.C., while with the 5th New York, and was a part of campaigns with both the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the Shenandoah in Virginia.

After the war, Winant opened a business, Winant H. Bennett Drugs, first at 323 Van Brunt, then at 169 5th Avenue in Brooklyn. Winant died on September 10, 1901, and was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery.

GLOSSARY

Abraham Lincoln—16th president of the United States, who served from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865; was president during the conflict called the Civil War

Accurate—free from mistakes or errors, recording factual evidence

Artisan—a craftsperson in a skilled trade, often someone who makes things by hand

Broadside—a large, one-sided poster advertising or announcing information

Brooklyn Academy of Music—a major performing arts venue in Brooklyn, founded in 1861

Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair—a successful fundraising event in support of soldiers and families of the Union, organized by women's civic groups in Brooklyn in February and March of 1864

Caption—words next to a picture that describe what it shows

Carte de visite—a small paper photograph mounted on a card, popular in the 1860s and notable for its low cost and easy accessibility

Cavalry—troops mounted on horseback

Citizen—a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protections of that country

Citizenship—the fact of having the status of a citizen

Civil War—an armed conflict that took place between 1861 and 1865 in the United States, between the Northern and Southern states to determine the survival of the Union or the independence of the Confederacy

Colored citizen—a term that referred to African-Americans during the time of the Civil War

Confederate—someone who fought for or allied themselves with the Confederacy during the American Civil War

Confederacy—the organization of Southern states that seceded from the Union during the time of the Civil War

Depict—to show something in a painting, photograph, print, or drawing; to show something in words in a story

Document—a paper, map, image, or other source about something that provides evidence

Draft—a system for selecting men for required service in the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines)

Economic—relating to the system of how goods and services are produced or bought; relating to the role of trade and money in society to purchase and produce goods and services

Engineer—a person with science training who designs and builds complicated machines, systems, or structures

Enlist—to sign up to join the armed services

Ephemera—collected materials such as posters, tickets, flyers, and more, which were expected to be discarded after use

Fortified lines—defensive positions that have been reinforced by man-made or natural protection, such as hills, mounds of earth, or walls

Gallatin Rifles—a group or company of Union soldiers that was

organized by Major Theodore Lichtenhein, a New York merchant, internationally known chess master, and recent Prussian immigrant; the Gallatin Rifles joined other ethnic companies to form the 58th Regiment, New York Infantry

Gender roles—cultural standards that determine how males and females should think, dress, act, etc.

Historical actor—someone who lived in the past

Illustrated print—an image, often created by hand, and meant to be reproduced multiple times through printing it

Illustrator—someone whose job it is to draw pictures or create prints in order to describe events or ideas, such as a story-book illustrator, cartoonist, or print-maker

Image—a statue or picture that is made to look like a person or thing

Immigrant—someone who comes to a new country with the intention of living there

Inferences—conclusions made from facts and evidence; what you think about what you see

Mobilize—to bring people together for action

Observation—what you see; a statement you make based on what you notice; facts about something, as opposed to an inference

Objective—factual

Picket—a soldier or group of soldiers assigned to stand guard

Primary source—a first-hand account or document made at the time period you are studying

Portrait—a painting, drawing, or photograph of a person

Portraiture—the art or practice of making portraits

Race—a culturally constructed way of grouping people by physical characteristics such as skin color or facial features

Recruit—to find and encourage people to join a group, such as the armed services

Recruiter—someone whose job it is to recruit people to the armed services

Regiment—a military unit generally made up of groups of soldiers and led by a military officer

Secession—the act of separating from a nation or state to become independent

Subjective—one's personal opinion, based on feelings rather than fact

Transcription—a typed, word-for-word copy of someone's words; used with handwritten letters and interviews

Truce—stopping fighting (as in a war)

Ulysses S. Grant—the commanding general of the Union Army during the final years of the American Civil War; later the 18th president of the United States

Union—the term used to describe the states fighting to preserve the union of Northern and Southern states in the American Civil War, located primarily in the northern and western sections of the country

OBSERVATIONS & INFERENCE

DIRECTIONS

Choose one letter and answer the following questions

OBSERVATIONS

What do you see when you look at the letter?

INFERENCE

What guesses/assumptions can you make about the document, the creator of the document, the technology of the time, or the time period based on those observations?

Questions Now that you've looked at this document, what new questions do you have?

ANALYZING CIVIL WAR LETTERS

DIRECTIONS

Read your letter excerpt(s). Then, based on what you have read, answer the questions below, making sure to choose a quote from the text to support your ideas.

What do these letters tell you about the letter writer?

Record five adjectives that describe the personality of this letter writer (imagine you are describing him to a friend):

How old do you think he or she is?

What do you believe are his or her feelings towards the war?
What clues in the text make you think that?

Who is the person or people receiving the letters?

What is the relationship between the letter writer and the person or people receiving the letters?

ANALYZING CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Use adjectives to describe the quality of the relationship (how close are they, how well do they get along, etc.)? Give an example from what you have read.

.....
.....

What do these letters tell you about the Civil War?

Choose two of the following categories and record examples from your soldier’s life that relate to those categories:

FOOD, HOUSING, CLOTHING, HEALTH, EXPERIENCES IN BATTLE, ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAR, CAMP LIFE, OTHER

1

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.....
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.....
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2

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.....

Based on what you have read and observed, describe as many ways as you can think of that letters helped soldiers get through the war.

1

.....
.....

2

.....
.....

3

.....
.....

CONNECTING SOURCES: THE LIFE OF A SOLDIER

DIRECTIONS

Search your documents for information about the life of a Civil War soldier. Record the facts you find in the chart below, writing them under the category you think is best. In parentheses, make note of which document you got the information from.

(More than one document may be used for each category.)

TOPIC	FINDINGS
Housing & Clothing	
Food	
Natural & Physical Environment	
Health	
Time Spent not in Battle	
Feelings Towards War	
Experiences in Battle	

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

JULY 1861 Page 1

 Transcript available on p. 35

Camp Porter Arlington Heights
 My Dear Lizzie

I have just got into my quarters & made a very faint attempt at sketching a view of the Capitol as seen from our camp or as I should say seen from under the shade of a tree directly opposite our tent you may see it in my sketch with the little silk flag. The square pillar in the distance is supposed to be Washington's monument with the Capitol building on the right ^{with} the dome unfinished my first days experience in camp life running from pillar to post about 5 o'clock it commenced to rain & then we had to bunk down in one tent I was fast asleep by eight o'clock & slept until morning call

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, July 1861; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

JULY 1861 Page 2

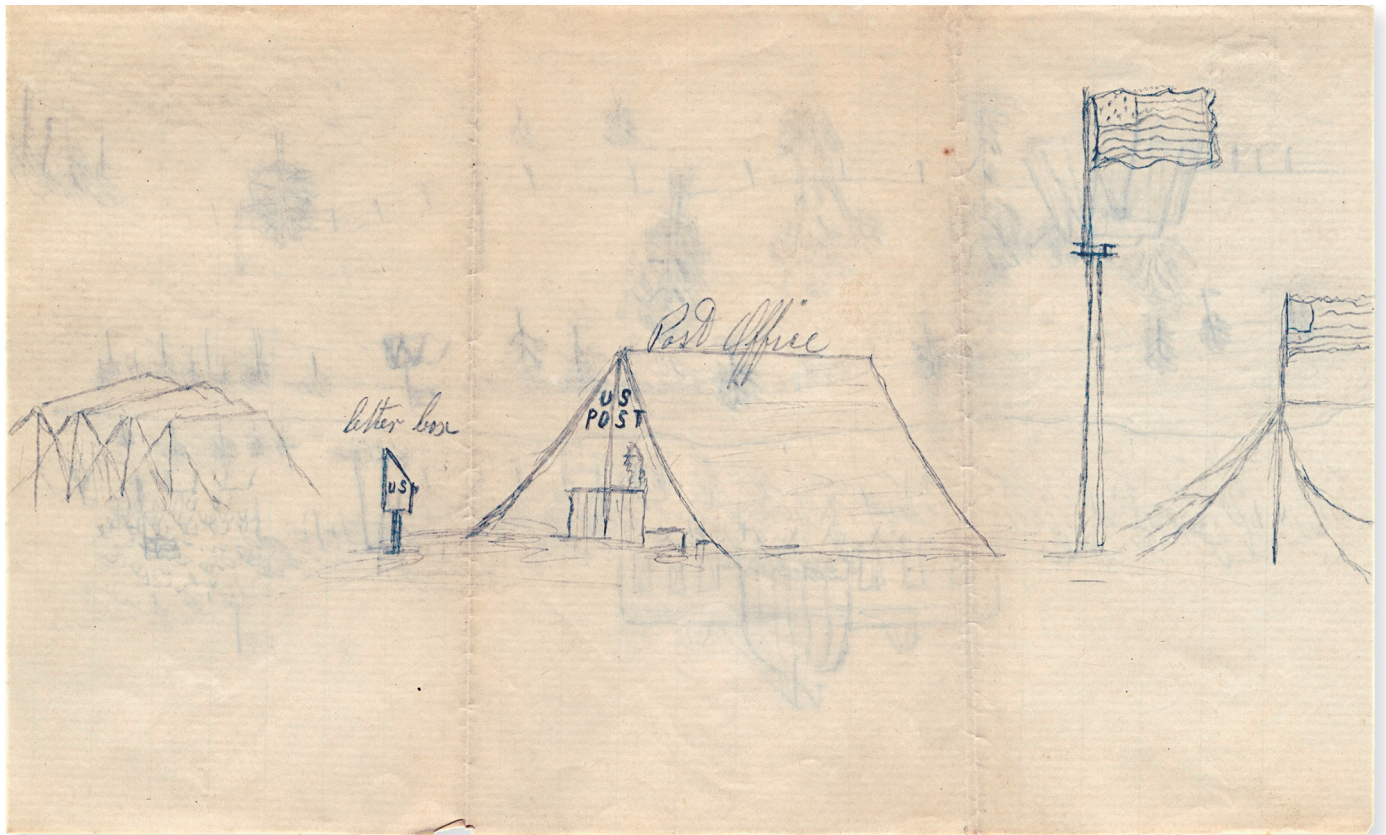
 Transcript available on p. 35

4 O'clock then the first thing was
 breakfast some coffee without milk
 or sugar some fried Bacon & bread
 then wool call now to setting our
 tents this finished we had our
 dinner some very nice soups &
 fresh bakers bread one O'clock P.M.
 it commenced to rain we all turn
 into our tents I take my seat in
 one corner & write these few imperfect
 lines on my cartridge box with it
 resting on my knee & the three
 other boys W. Smith W. Willard
 W. H. Hodges being talking not
 having any thing more to say I will
 close & set to work & put some
 more pockets in my cloaths as I am
 very much in need of them &
 hoping this may find you in as
 good health & spirits as it leaves
 me & I remain Yours through
 life Alfred Cranston Co. I. N. 3rd Regt
 Washington D.C.

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford,
 July 1861; Cranston family papers and photographs,
 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

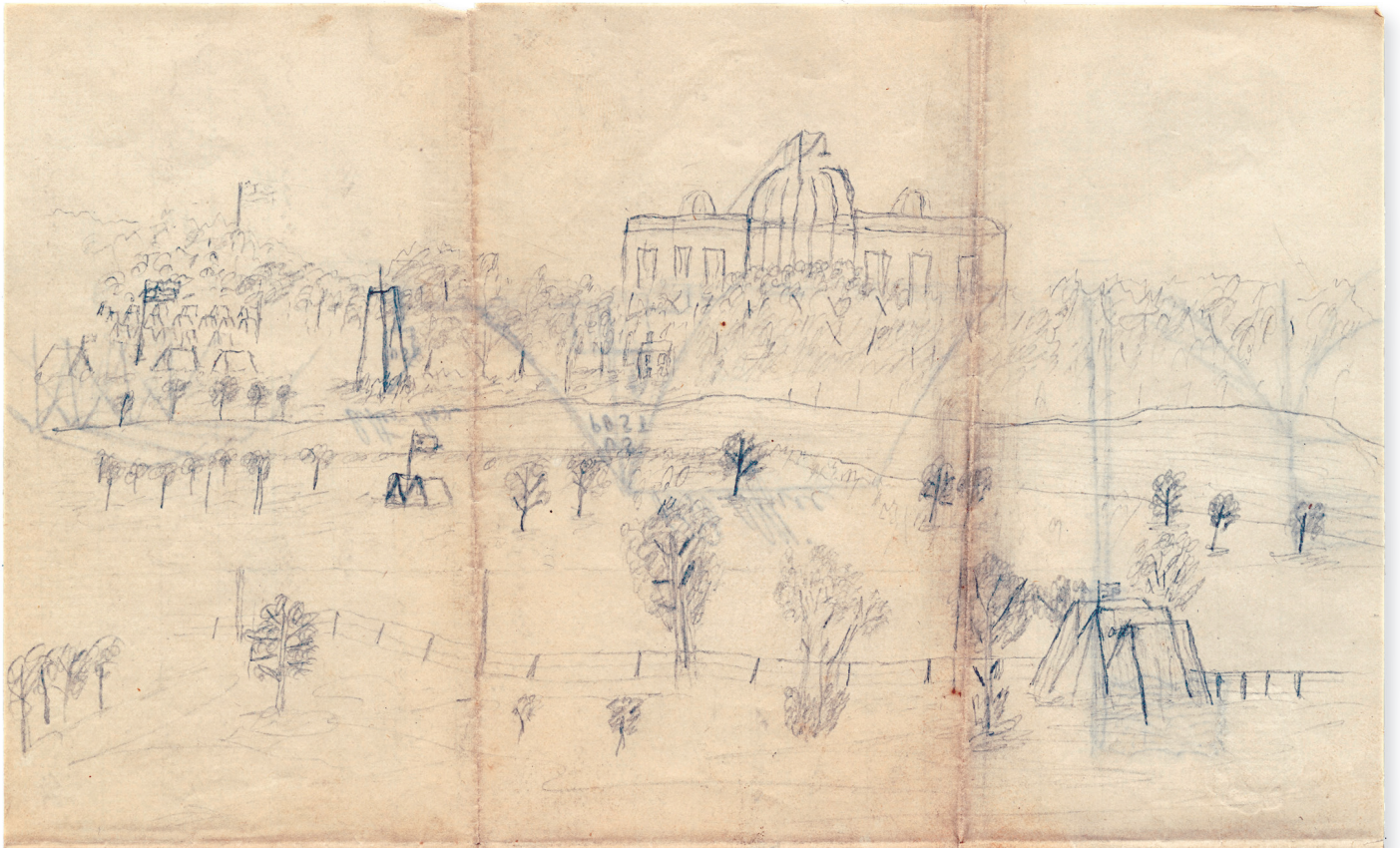
JULY 1861 Page 3

 Transcript available on p. 35

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, July 1861; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

JULY 1861 Page 4

 Transcript available on p. 35

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, July 1861; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

MAY 27, 1862 Page 1

 Transcript available on pp. 38-39

Camp six miles south of Fredericksburg
 May 27th 1862

My Dear Lizzie

I have just been relieved from guard duty & thought while I had time I would write a few lines to you to let you know of my whereabouts you will see by this that we are about six miles south of Fredericksburg we left our camp on Palmyra heights about two o'clock on Sunday last & crossed the Rappahannock about one hour after & marched through the city of Fredericksburg the first street we marched through was Princess Ann street a fine shady street & occupied by all the rich folks of the city Princess William street which leads to the rail road is the business street of the city there is very few stores open & the only place doing any kind of a business is Adamses Express Office after leaving the city our march was along a fine road shaded by tall oak & pine trees I have a better opinion of Old Virginia now than I have had for the country on this side of the Rappahannock is the finest I have ever seen for miles around it looks to have been cultivated & the grain is growing finely the birds are singing sweetly & close

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, May 27, 1862; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

MAY 27, 1862 Page 2

 Transcript available on pp. 38-39

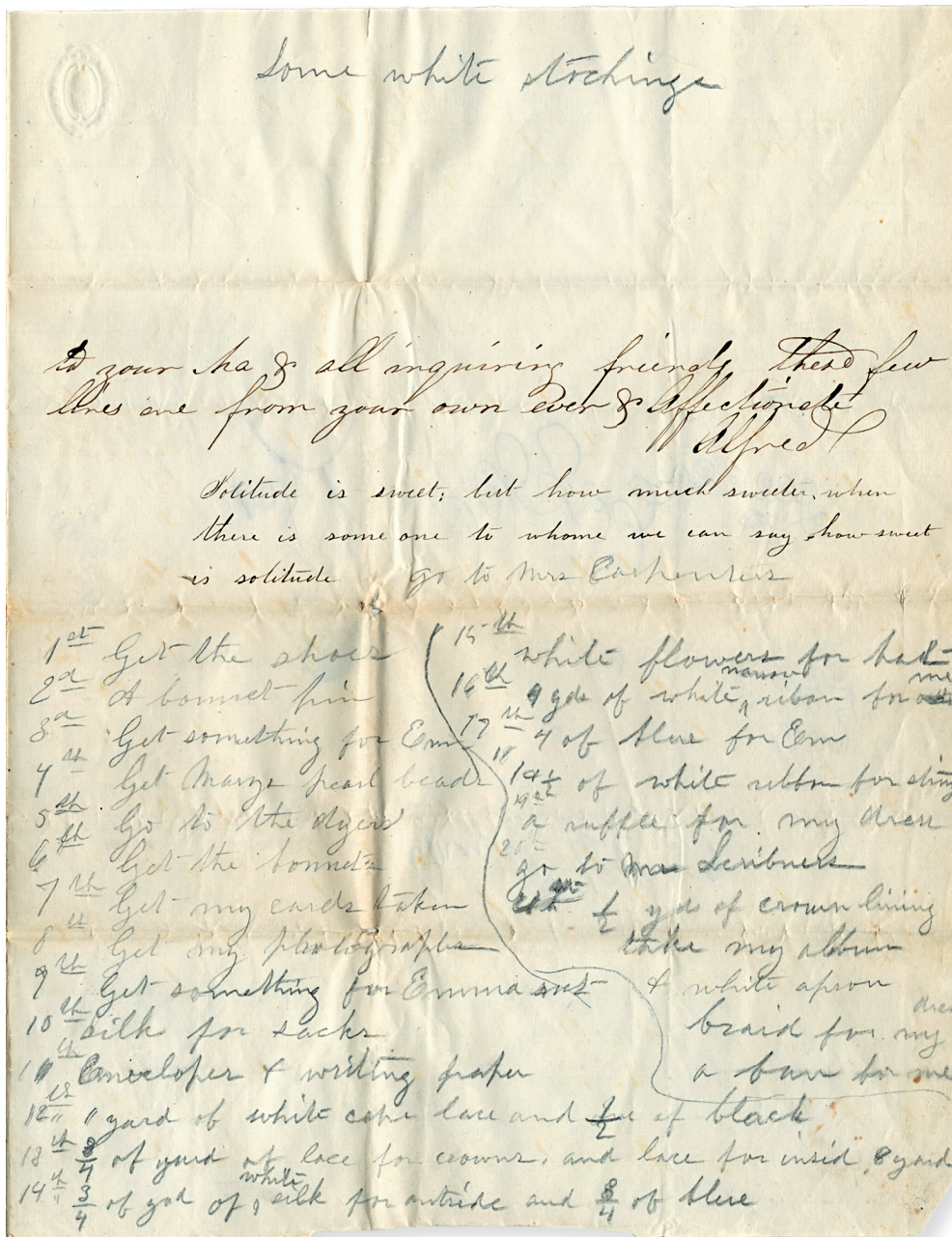
by our tent is a cedar bush in which a little bird has built her nest yesterday there was three little eggs in it but this morning there is three little birds instead the old one is now busy feeding them there is nothing around here but the occupation of the country by our troops To show that there is such a thing as war going on last night a man came into our lines & gave himself up he says that he belongs to Cannade & was south when the war broke out & was forced in the services he belonged to Walkers battery he said there was five more on the road to join our troops confederal money is 1 seventy cents below par in Richmond on the seventeenth of this month a man was hung in Richmond & the next morning there was written on Jeff Davises house the following it will be your turn next he also says that sensible people do not express their opinion on the war in Richmond but there is some few who still think that Jeff Davis will get wip the madsills as they call us the hangers are giving out five day rations & it is reported that we are to move again tomorrow if so my next letter will be written some miles nearer Richmond I hope Dear Liz that this may find you in good health please give my love to sister Emma my best respects

Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, May 27, 1862; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

MAY 27, 1862 Page 3

 Transcript available on pp. 38-39

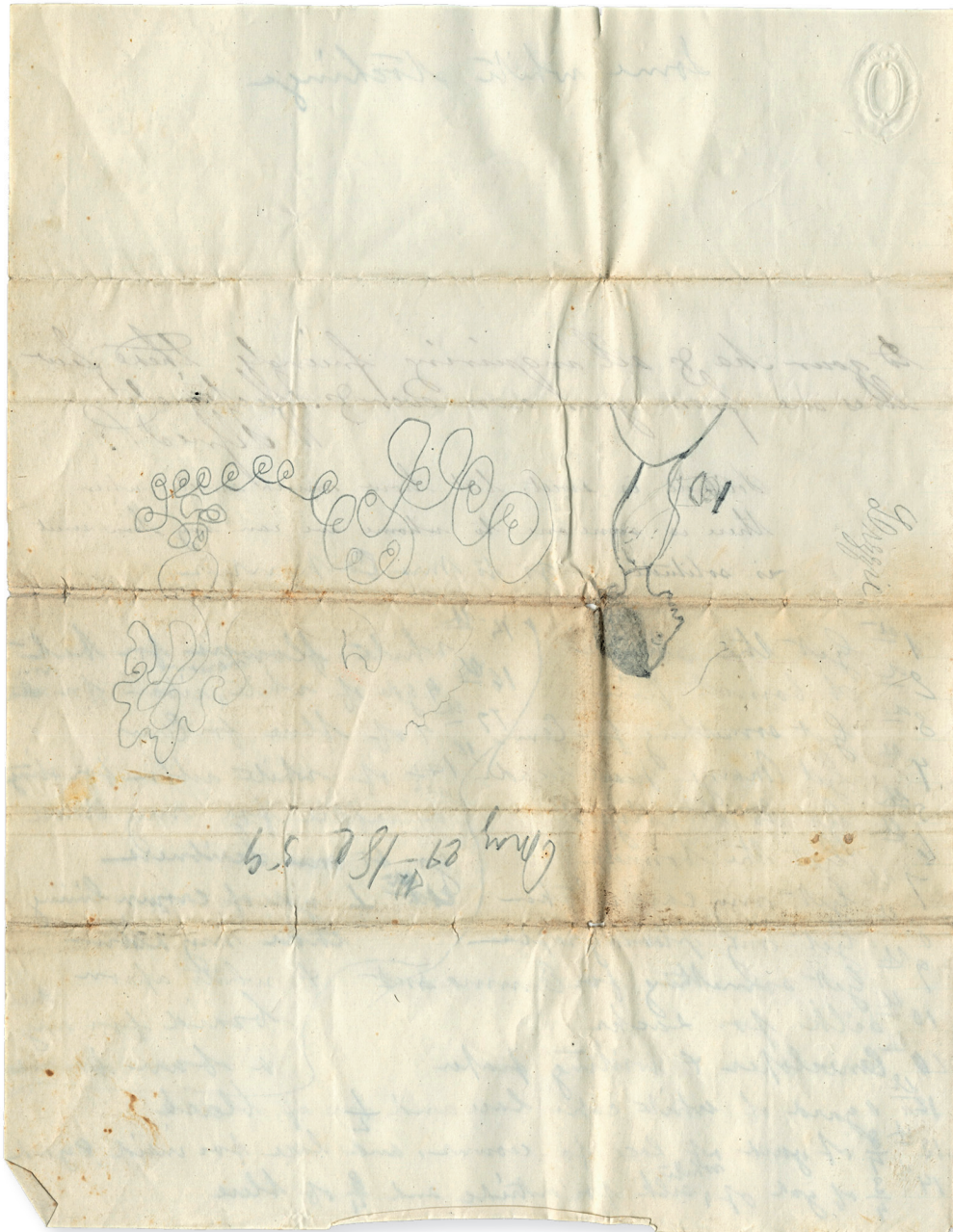


Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, May 27, 1862; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

MAY 27, 1862 Page 4

 Transcript available on pp. 38-39



Letter from Alfred Cranston to Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hollington Petford, May 27, 1862; Cranston family papers and photographs, 1994.013; Brooklyn Historical Society

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JULY 1861

 Images available on pp. 27–30

Camp Porter Arlington Heights

My Dear Lizzie,

I have just got into my quarters & made a very faint attempt at sketching a view of the Capitol as seen from our camp, or as I should say seen from under the shade of a tree directly opposite our tent. You may see it in my sketch with the little silk flag. The square pillar in the distance is supposed to be Washington's monument with the Capitol Building on the right with the dome unfinished.

My first days experience in camp life running from pillar to post. About 5 o'clock it commenced to rain so then we had to bunk ten in one tent I was fast asleep by eight o'clock & slept until morning call, 4 o'clock, then the first thing was breakfast some coffee without milk or sugar some fried bacon & bread. Then roll call, now to setting our tents. This finished, we have our

dinner some very nice soup & fresh bakers bread one o'clock ___ it commenced to rain we all turn into our tent I take my ___ in one corner & write these ___ imperfect lines on my _____ with it resting on my knee & the three other boys W. Linnith, W. Sulland, W. H. Hodges busy talking. Not having anything more to say I will close & get to work & ___ some more pockets in my clothes as I am very much in need of them. So hoping this may find you in as good health & spirits as it leaves me & I remain yours through life,

*Alfred Cranston**Co I. NYSM Washington DC*

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

OCTOBER 11, 1861

My Dear Lizzie,

I received your letters of the 26th & 30th of Sept. in due time & the one of Oct 7th this morning. I am sorry that I couldn't answer them before, but since leaving Camp Wood we have had pretty hard times. The first day Sunday we had to help build a fort, the next day cut down wood, & on Tuesday I went to the old Camp & wrote to you and Mother. Since then we have been on picket. Last night was the first night's rest since yesterday. We were relieved & came to this place. We then had to put up our tents & find our things as best we could. It's raining very hard all the time. I went about two miles for some boards to make a bed. I got them made my bed & got things to rights about five o'clock. I then went to bed & slept until this morning. In yours [letter] of the 30th you ask me how we spent our first day in the morning. At six o'clock we had a company drill. At ten the regiment went to church, heard a very good sermon by our Chaplin, and in the afternoon had a dress parade.

Please tell Mother that I reported the post master to the Post-Office committee. I have not heard from them yet Mr. Gill tells what is not so when he says the Regt have envelopes provided for them. It is true there is a post office here & they keep paper & envelopes, but you have to pay very high for them & nine times out of ten when you want a stamp they have not got any. You pay them three cents & they say they will post it & that is the last you hear or see of the letter. It is useless to send any more boxes out of here. They get as far as Washington & then the soldiers cannot get them. I have two box[s] now in the city; one sent me by the boys at the Engine house & the other by some friends. It is impossible to get them. Tell Alfred Harvey that I very often see his friend Eugene Halls.

He is quite well but cannot get furlough. Give my best respects to Alfred and his Mother.

They have got three large forts now on the hills around here & have the guns planted on one of them. There is lots of soldiers all around here & I do not think the enemy will every attack us although they sent three shells over here on Sunday last. We answered then & have not heard from them since. It was my good fortune when on picket to be stationed at a negro hut. There was two tables three stools & one pan there. We cleaned out the place, made a fire & then went to see what we could find. It had been occupied by the enemy, for we found some papers to certify that a Mr. Williamson had taken the oath of allegiance. Some other papers were found but they were of no importance. There was a house close by occupied by some women folks that had relations in the rebel army. They told us that we would get drove off them hills before long. They said that at first they had no guns, but now they had a plenty & men to use them. They said that the women folks could whip us if they tried & if the men did not do it, pretty soon they were going to. We tried to get some milk but they said we should not have any. As soon as they got through, our sergeant posted a guard on the house & told them not to let any one or mor off the ground. This they did not like but they will have to put up with it.

I will close now hoping this may find you in good health. Please give my best respects to all enquiring friends & remain ever & affectionately

Yours Alfred

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MARCH 28, 1862

Camp Scholes
Near Alexandria March 28th/62

Dear Lizzie,

I have just received your very welcome letter of the twenty fifth about half an hour ago & I was very glad to hear from you, but sorry to hear that you should be sick again. I expect you will be surprised when you see the heading of this to see that we have not yet left the Sacred soil of old Virginia but we expect to move every moment. The cooks are all cooking three days rations of salt pork & it is reported that we are to leave here tomorrow.

Dear Liz you seem to think that I am not strong enough to stand the long & hard marches but so far I have done very well. Only one man fell out on our march from Centerville to Alexandria & that was as long & hard a march as was ever made by any troops. Twenty two miles in heavy marching order through a drenching rain fording streams that were up to our middle waist. This was done by the 14th Regt in eight hours. The boys all had ten hard crackers the morning we started, but the rain got into our haversacks & soaked them & while crossing the first stream I got my haversack full of muddy water. The wagons are to follow us hereafter with our rations & I expect I will be able to send you a letter once in a while, but perhaps not quite as often as I done heretofore, but rest assured that I will write as often as I can.

You ask if it is true that the Rebels took the bones of Union soldiers for trophies. I am afraid that it is true for I seen in a log hut at Mannassus, the skull of a man nailed over the door on which was marked with ink the following: N.Y. Fire Zouave killed at Bull Run on the 21st of July 1861. You say that William has only written one letter to Emma & that she has not written an answer & ask me what I would do if that was my case. Perhaps the mail was lost that she has not re-

ceived another letter but I think that if they where on as good terms as you & myself are, they would receive a letter once in awhile. If I wrote a letter & received no answer I should write another, for mails are some times lost & some times miss carried. I think that if Emma & William are on friendly terms she ought to answer his letter, but as I do not know the feeling existing between the two. I had not ought to pass my opinion of the subject. I received both of your letters directed to Centerville. Please direct hereafter as it is written below. The drums have beat for parade so I must close for a little while.

6 o'clock PM: Inclosed you will find what you asked for; a lock of my hair. Your letter came just in time for I shall have my hair cut tomorrow. It is getting very thin. In fact, I have hardly any on my head. All that have had the fever loose their hair, but I supposed I shall have a new growth soon. I received a letter from home this morning. They are all well. Please give my love to your folks & my best respects to all inquiring friends. Except this with love from your ever &

Affectionate Alfred

Co I 14th Regt NYSM
Augors Brigade
Kings Division
Or elsewhere Virginia

Lizzie
Monday Morning
Oliver come home Mother

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MAY 27, 1862

 Images available on pp. 31–34*My Dear Lizzie,*

I have just been relieved from guard duty & thought while I had time I would write a few lines to you to let you know of my whereabouts. You will see by this that we are about six miles south of Fredricksburg. We left our camp on Falmouth Heights about two o'clock on Sunday last & we crossed the Rappahannock about one hour after & marched through the city of Fredricksburg. The first street we marched through was Princess Ann Street, a fine shady street & occupied by all the rich folks of the city. Prince William Street which leads to the rail road is the business street of the city. There are very few stores open & the only place doing any kind of business is Adamses Express office. After leaving the city our march was along a fine road shaded by tall oak & pine trees.

I have a better opinion of Old Virginia now than I have had, for the country on this side of the Rappahannock is the finest I have ever seen. For miles around it looks to have been cultivated & the grain is growing finely. The birds are singing sweetly & close by our tent is a cedar bush in which a little bird has built her nest. Yesterday there was three little eggs in it but this morning there is three little birds instead. The old one is now busy feeding them. There is nothing around here but the occupation of the country by our troops to show that there is such a thing as war going on.

Camp six miles south of Fredricksburg

Last night a man came into our lines & gave himself up. He says that he belongs to Canada & was south when the war broke out & was forced into the services. He belonged to the Walkers battery. He said there was five more on the road to join our troops. Confederate money is seventy cents below par in Richmond. On the seventeenth of this month a man was hung in Richmond & the next morning there was written on Jeff Davises house the following it will be your turn next. He also says that sensible people do not express their own opinion on the war in Richmond but there is some few who still think that Jeff Davis will yet whip the 'Mudsills' as they call us.

The sergeants are giving out five days rations & it is reported that we are to move again tomorrow so my next letter will be written some miles closer to Richmond. I hope Dear Liz that this may find you in good health. Please give my love to sister Emma, my best respects to your Ma & all inquiring friends. These few lines are from your own ever & Affectionate,

Alfred

Solitude is sweet; but how much sweeter when there is some one to whom we can say how sweet is solitude.

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MAY 27, 1862 cont. from p. 39 Images available on pp. 31–34

Go to Mrs. Carpenters

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| <i>1st</i> | <i>Get the shoes</i> | <i>13th</i> | <i>¾ yard of white lace for crowns, and
lace for inside, 8 yards</i> |
| <i>2nd</i> | <i>A bonnet pin</i> | <i>14th</i> | <i>¾ yard of white silk for outside and
¾ of blue</i> |
| <i>3rd</i> | <i>Get something for Em</i> | <i>15th</i> | <i>white flowers for hat</i> |
| <i>4th</i> | <i>Get Mary's pearl beads</i> | <i>16th</i> | <i>4 yds of white narrow ribbon for me</i> |
| <i>5th</i> | <i>Go to the dyers</i> | <i>17th</i> | <i>4 of blue for Em</i> |
| <i>6th</i> | <i>Get the bonnets</i> | <i>18th</i> | <i>1 & ½ of white ribbon for strings</i> |
| <i>7th</i> | <i>Get my cards taken</i> | <i>19th</i> | <i>a ruffle for my dress</i> |
| <i>8th</i> | <i>Get my photographs</i> | <i>20th</i> | <i>to Mrs. Scribners</i> |
| <i>9th</i> | <i>Get something for Emma suit</i> | <i>21st</i> | <i>½ yd of crown lining take my album &
white apron brain for my dress a ban
for me one white stockings</i> |
| <i>10th</i> | <i>Silk for sacks</i> | | |
| <i>11th</i> | <i>Envelopes & writing paper</i> | | |
| <i>12th</i> | <i>1 yard of white cape lace
and ½ of black</i> | | |

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

NOVEMBER 27, 1862

Camp Brooks Station

Nov. 27th

My Dearest Lizzie,

I last evening received your very welcome letter of the twenty third. I was very glad that you were well. This is Thanksgiving day and I suppose you will want to know what I have been doing all day. Well, this morning the regiment were taken out at ten o'clock for inspection. We got through about twelve & were dismissed. We all live high today. For dinner we had coffee & McClellan pies, or in other words, U.S. Army bread. Then, for supper we had hard bread & coffee. Then, they have just distributed the mail but no letter for me. The quartermaster is going to Aquiv creek in the morning after the express goods, so I suppose that I will get the goods that have been sent me. I hope so. Anyhow, you need not be the least bit uneasy about

my being a soldier after this war is over for I am not so fond of soldiering as all that. No, I give up soldiering as soon as I can & will then if they will let me take my Liz to my side & live a quiet and peaceful life. I shall, dear Liz, give up soldiering as soon as possible for your sake, so keep yourself easy on that point. I am, dear Liz, quite well & hope this will find you & yours quite well. Please give my love to sister Em & best respects to Ma & all inquiring friends & accept this with the undivided love of your ever

*Affectionate,
Alfred C*

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JUNE 24, 1863

My Dearest Lizzie

I cannot let this opportunity of writing pass, but I do not know how long it will be before I will be able to mail it. But, never mind I will write it & try & give you an account of what we have been doing in the past two weeks. You will remember when I wrote you last I stated that it was my opinion that we were going to have another Bull Run. It did not come quite true but very near it. My last [letter] was written in a hurry & sent off by Mr. Hildreth to be in time for the steamer that was to leave New York on the seventeenth. I hope you found it in England when you got there. But now to give you an account of our transaction.

We struck our tents and left camp Wadsworth at three o'clock AM on the twelvth. It was then that I started off your letter. We marched all morning it was very hot & dusty & halted at twelve about four miles from Falmouth on the Cattetts road. After about an hours rest we were drawn up in line to witness the execution of a man who was found guilty of desertion. He was shot at two o'clock PM. We were then started off & did not halt again, only to get breath, until six o'clock PM. We had then reached Elk Run. Oh! How long & dusty it was. After we had got cooled off a little, we went down to the run & took a good wash that refreshed us some. We then got our coffee & hard tack & retired at three o'clock AM. We were turned out feeling but little better for the sleep we had had. We where soon on the road again & this day only halting time enough to get breath until four o'clock at which time we reached Beelton Station on the Gordonsvill and Alexandria RR. It looked some like rain so we fetched our tent & retired as soon as possible. We slept soundly all night and turned out at six o'clock AM Sunday. It was not long before we were on the road again. At nine we halted to let the wagon train pass us for the enemy

were in our view & it was thought that at any moment they might attack us. We were soon off again and passed Catletts Station. We then went down the RR & when near Bristow Station we halted to cook coffee & get a little rest. We stayed here about one hour & a half & then started off again.

Oh! Dearest, you do not know how many very many times I thought of you that day. I have sometimes thought or feared that something has happened to you on that day but I hope not. It had tried to rain but did not make out. However, it was somewhat cooler than Saturday. We then kept on the road all Sunday night. The General told us we had to get to Bull Run by day light or Lee would be there with his Army & then we would have to cut our way though his lines or die in the attempt. As it was, we got to the Run first & as soon as we reached there we got two hours rest & in the distance we could see the dust of Lee's Army. At nine o'clock we started off & went across the plains of Gennessus. Oh! How very hot it was. Not a breath of air stirring & the sun pounding down & no shade. The only house is a brick one used in the last two battles as headquarters for the Rebel Army. There is some grass growing which has grown over and most covered all the traces of the late battles. I have plucked a rose, the only one I could see for miles around. I have pressed it & sent it to you. It is with the exception of the grass the only living thing to be seen on the plains. But, as you walk along almost covered with grass is a cartridge box, then an old shot, then an old coat, perhaps a piece of pants. One little thing here & one there is all that is left to tell of the awful strife that has take place on these fields. After crossing these fields we soon reached Centervill Heights & there we rested until Wednesday.

ALFRED CRANSTON LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JUNE 24, 1863 cont. from p. 41

June the seventeenth we left at four o'clock AM & moved off for Leesburg, but hearing that the enemy were there in force we turned off in the direction of Edwards Ferry. It was very hot. Capt. Gill & quite a number of the men were struck down with the sun. The Capt. is now home on leave for seven days. Since that time we have been laying around this railroad. Last night we had orders to move at six this morning but it is now one o'clock & we have not started yet. The regiment and five of the officers have gone off picket for three days & you see I am writing to my Liz & will have to finish. The reg. rolls as soon as I finish this letter.

I have not seen or heard from any of the folks in Brooklyn in some time so I cannot tell you anything about them. The weather today is fine. I do not know of any news more than I have written, so I will close. Please give my love to Sister Emma & best respects to your Mother who I hope is improved by this time. Hoping Dearest that your health is improved & that you are enjoying yourself. I close remaining ever your own true and Affectionate,

Alfred

*Camp of the 14th Regiment near
Hoopers Ferry July 16th*

My Dearest Lizzie,

It is a long time since I began this letter but since then I have had a nuff time of it as you will see by the slips of paper enclosed. So far all is going well as far as I know. I will not attempt to give you any account of what I have gone though the last month for I could not. I will write again as soon as possible & if possibly write you a good long letter. Give my love to sister Emma & remember me to your Mother & believe me ever the same your true and Affectionate,

Alfred

July 17th : Dearest Liz, I am well this morning. It is raining hard. I have not heard from you yet. This is my second letter. Your, Alfred

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

MAY 11, 1861 Page 1

 Transcript available on pp. 45-46

I wish Annie that I had been endowed with the ability to sketch, as this Naval Academy is the most beautifully located and arranged place it has ever been my good fortune to see - from the window at which I write I can see for miles down the Chesapeake Bay which is here as wide as Long Island Sound at Cold Spring, the shores are beautiful - the grounds which are enclosed by a brick wall, like our Brooklyn Navy Yard, are laid out with brick walks in every direction and the most splendid of grass plots, the buildings are very large and extremely well built - the rooms devoted to us are ~~frontly~~ used as libraries and by command - Troops are also quartered where the professors lived with their families, which are large & very ^{one side of} houses similar to those in which you live - they are built all ^{around} the place. the grounds cover an area of 150 acres - so we have plenty of woods - There are also several beautiful monuments erected to those who have achieved fame in the Navy - one is to the gallant Hornet who you will remember was lost in the Central America.

I have covered a large amount of paper in this letter and a perusal of what I have written has almost decided me to lay it up and try again some future time when a clear and less painful head may enable me to give you a more connected and interesting epistle, but then the remembrance of my old copy book bearing that "Delay is Dangerous" has made me feel it my duty to send it hoping that in your good nature you will overlook the imperfections, and accept this as an earnest that your remembrance of me is appreciated and that I have not forgotten your injunctions to "fight! fight!! fight!!! I love this duty, and hope I may do nothing that will make you ^{ashamed} to acknowledge me as your friend (Mr. J. Woodward)

Department of Annapolis Md
Charles Co. 9 15th Reg^t Infan^y
May 11th 1861.

My dear Annie -

My conscience has been pricking me ever since I have been here to write you, and tell you that the "Colors" you ever so good as to make me, are still pinned to my breast, and appear upon all occasions of duty - The White is not as pure in color as when I left, but it still means the same - I shall keep them and surrender them to you on my return, ~~un~~ ^{un} ~~finished~~ ^{finished} (I hope) by all except of course the wear which time and exposure work on all things, no matter how jealously guarded.

It would surprise you, were you here, to see how readily men accommodate themselves to the various and complete changes which a military life imposes - and I have found that those of our number who have lived the most luxuriously, are even the most contented - ~~on~~ rising in the morning when home at 5 o'clock, would have been deemed an impossibility, it is a pleasure, imagine those you know of us - with our hair clipped close, (as close as scissors could clip) our faces and hands either "turkey red" or dusky, darkly, desperately, "brown" stretched out on the floor, knapcoats or an overcoat rolled for a pillow, the manilla matting which covers the floor, for a bed, their attire as various as their faces, packed ~~down~~ ^{down} as closely as slaves in a transport, and you can judge of the luxury of sleeping with 141 men in one room measuring 90 x 30 feet, yet we all sleep soundly, and well, the majority ~~snore~~, the combination of ~~these~~ ^{these} ~~various~~ ^{various} ~~snores~~, is peculiar, and must be heard to be appreciated.

Letter from John Blackburne Woodward to Annie, May 11, 1861; John B. Woodward papers, ARC.275; Brooklyn Historical Society

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

MAY 11, 1861 Page 2

 Transcript available on pp. 45-46

Then for our meals - Those who have been accustomed to life at hotels, or the bust of boarding houses - where the dropping of a Spoon on the Clean Carpet, or the presence of a speck on plate or Glass, would consign them to be washed before fire, to be placed before them for use, are now to be seen with tin plate, Spoon & Cup, in one hand, a half rusty knife and fork in the other, marching up in single file to a place at a table where a man is stationed at a tin pail from which he ladles to each in his turn a portion of Soup, or rice, or slice of beef or what our Commissary may provide for us. They having received their share, they retire to such a point, and sitting down a la Turc (for our room is destitute of Chairs) eat with as much relish as if they were at Delmonico's or Wellington's all is good humored though often noisy, we men are always to be found with a peculiar taste in musical matters which is best gratified by the clash of tin - we have many such, and nothing can stop them during their performances - Yesterday we gave the men a treat for breakfast in the shape of an excellent manufacture from 200 eggs - it was a treat to me to watch them enjoy it - another is in store for them, a present of 200^{lbs} of meal having arrived from which our Cooks (we have employed 2 negroes for this purpose) will make a mess or two of mush, it will be eaten with Soap, as milk here is undrinkable ~~as~~ it lasts more like ^{corn} Onion Soap than milk - As our friends home keep sending us luxuries which will shortly arrive we hope we long to be supplied with many ~~luxuries~~ ^{good things} - last week I received a can of Fresh Praches which were eaten with much gusto by me officer for supper - though they hardly harmonized with the balance of our tin of Tin -

Our duty here has not as yet been very severe as it is all comprised within drilling and Guard work - we drill by Squads (each Sgt & Corporal having one) from 6 to 7 a.m. at 7 we breakfast at 9 a Company drill (at 8 Guard is mounted) at 12 dinner at 1 Company inspection and regimental parade from at 1 supper - at 9 "tattoo" when all retires, at 9 1/2 "taps" when all lights are extinguished, all noises stopped (snoring only excepted) within doors, and nothing heard within the Camp lines except the occasional Challenge of the Sentry as to "who goes there?" or the call for the "Corporal of the Guard" when a sentry comes across some unlucky fellow who has straggled from the quarters without the countersign. So you see our duty is not very hard to bear, although some grumble when sent on Guard as the tour lasts from 8 till one day to the same hour the next, each man being on guard 2 hours and off four. I have had some special duty to perform the pleasantest being that which sent me to Washington, that I was brought in contact with the Secretaries of War and Navy both of whom I found extremely pleasant and agreeable men to deal with - Today we are to be sworn in - so you need not expect to see your friends from here for three months yet -

I am today the sickest man in our Company and my only trouble consists of a severe neuralgic headache caused by having caught cold by with sleeping with my crooked head in too close proximity to an open window - Are you ^{now} satisfied in regard to the effect of War upon the health of your friends -

Sunt Jas Polow (a brother of Peter whom I believe you know) has this moment left me he is with the 30th Regt and goes with to Washington or the Relay house this afternoon, he looks and acts better than I ever knew him to be, or do, before.

Letter from John Blackburne Woodward to Annie, May 11, 1861;
John B. Woodward papers, ARC.275; Brooklyn Historical Society

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MAY 11, 1861

 Images available on pp. 43–44

[Written at top to the side:]

Uncle Sam don't provide us with Gilt Edge or Scented paper with which to write our lady friends –

*Department of Annapolis, MD
Quarters Co G 13th REG't NYS
May 11th 1861*

My Dear Annie,

My conscience has been pricking me ever since I have been here to write you, and tell you that the 'colors' you were so good as to make me, are still pinned to my breast, and appear upon all occasions of duty – the white is not as pure in color, as when I left, but it still means the same – I shall keep them and surrender them to you on my return, untarnished; (I hope) by all, except of course the wear which time and exposure work on all things, no matter how jealously guarded-

It would surprise you, were you here, to see how readily men accommodate themselves to the various and complete changes which a military life imposes – and I have found that those of our number who have lived the most luxuriously are now the most contented; rising in the morning when home at 5 o'clock, would have been deemed an impossibility; now it is a pleasure, imagine those you know of us- with our hair clipped close (as close as scissors could clip) and faces and hands either 'turkey red' or 'deeply, darkly, desperately' brown 'stretched out on the floor, knapsacks or an overcoat rolled, for a pillow, the manila matting which covers the floor for a bed, their attire as various as their faces, packed as closely as slaves in a transport, and you can judge of the luxury of sleeping with 141 men in one room measuring 90 x 30 feet, yet we all sleep soundly and well, the majority snore, the combination of the various snores is peculiar, and must be heard to be appreciated.

Then for our meals—those who have been accustomed to live at hotels, or the best of boarding houses –

where the dropping of a spoon on the clean carpet or the presence of a speck on plate or glass, would consign them to be washed before fit to be placed before them for use, are now to be seen with tin plate, spoon & cup, in one hand a half rusty knife and fork in the other, marching up in single file to a place at a table where a man is stationed at a tin pail from which he ladles to each in his tin a portion of soup, or rice, or slice of beef or what our commissary may provide for us, they having received their share, retire to such a point as they may choose and sitting down a la Turk (for our room is destitute of Chairs) eat with as much relish as if they were at Delmonica's or Weller's; all is good humored though often noise, as men are always to be found with a peculiar taste in musical matters which is best gratified by the clash of tin ... we have many such, and nothing can stop them during their performances— Yesterday we gave the men a treat for breakfast in the shape of an omelet manufactured from 285 eggs – it was a treat to me to watch them enjoy it –another is in store for them, a present of 250 lbs of meal having arrived from which our Cooks (we have employed 3 negroes for this purpose) will make a mess or two of mush it will be eaten with syrup, as milk here is undrinkable it tasting more like cold onion soup than milk. As our friends home keep sending us luxuries, which will shortly arrive, we hope ere long to be supplied with many good things. Last ev'g I received a can of fresh peaches, which were eaten with much gusto, by we officers for supper, though they hardly harmonized with the balance of our bill of fare –

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MAY 11, 1861 cont. from p. 45

 Images available on pp. 43–44

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I am today the sickest man in our company and my only trouble consists of a severe neuralgic headache caused by having caught cold with sleeping with my cropped head in too close proximity to an open window—so you may rest satisfied in regard to the effect of war upon the health of your friends—

[Illegible name] (a brother of Peter whom I believe you know) has this moment left me he is with the 20th Regt and goes either to Washington or the Riley house this afternoon. He looks and acts better than I ever knew him to be, or do, before.

I wish Annie that I had been endowed with the ability to sketch, as this Naval Academy is the most beautifully located and arranged place it has ever been my good fortune to see— from the window, at which I write I can see for miles down the Chesapeake Bay which is here as wide as Long Island Sound at Cold Spring the shores are beautiful – the grounds, which are enclosed by a brick wall, like our Brooklyn Navy Yard, are laid out with brick walks in every direction and the most splendid of grass, plots, the buildings are very large and extremely well built – the room devoted to us was formerly used as library and Lyceum – troops are also quartered where the professors lived with their families, which are large 3 story houses similar to those in which you live - they are built all on the one side of the place. The grounds cover an area of 150 acres - so we have plenty of room - There are also several beautiful monuments erected to those who have achieved fame in the Navy- One is to the gallant Herndon who you will remember was lost in the Central America.

I have covered a large amount of paper in this letter and a perusal of what I have written has almost decided me to tear it up and try again some future time when a clearer and less painful head may enable me to give you a more connected and interesting epistle, but then the remembrance of my old Copy book heading that “Delay, are dangerous” has made me feel it my duty to send it hoping that, in your good nature you will overlook the imperfections, and accept this as an earnest that your remembrance of me is appreciated and that I have not forgotten your injunctions to “fight! fight!! fight!!!. I have this duty and hope I may do nothing that will make you ashamed to acknowledge me as

*Your Friend,
Mr. J. Woodward*

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JULY 7, 1861

Quarters Company G, Baltimore City Prison

You will observe that we are still behind bolts and bars, but as we are comfortable we do not object. Yesterday a negro sentenced for larceny was sold as a slave for one year, to the highest bidder. I bought him for ten dollars. I am therefore a slave owner and have got my property now as a servant, but I intend to let him go to-morrow. He is a very good fellow. Has taken a desperate fancy to me and declares he won't leave "his marster"; but, as I bought him for the sake

of his mother, who has washed for me since my arrival in Baltimore, and not for my own benefit, I shall present him to her. In this State a free negro is sold as a slave for the length of time for which a white man is imprisoned. The State is therefore saved expense and the negro benefited. The boys poke a good deal of fun at me and my purchase; but I don't mind it, as I think I have spent ten dollars as wisely as I ever did any similar amount.

Epistle means a letter

JUNE 15, 1862

Headquarters, Thirteenth Regiment,
Camp Crooke, Suffolk, Virginia. June 15, 1862

The two great discomforts of our camp life are the impossibility of securing supplies for our mess, and, second, the insect world, woodticks, flies, and mosquitos. The inhabitants of Suffolk will not sell anything for a Union officer to eat. Our men are treated precisely the same as if they were in Baltimore or New York, the Quartermaster's stores being here in full supply. We have been obliged to sponge on the men. Yesterday six of us made a breakfast from two small spring chickens and hardtack, nothing for dinner, bread and molasses for supper. This morning a red herring apiece, coffee, and hardtack; for dinner much and molasses. What supper time will bring I cannot say; but as our sutler has just arrived and it carting his stores upon the ground I have hopes of filling up one something or other.

The insect world we fight during the day with both hands and a handkerchief. At night I fix them by wearing an arrangement some Yankee has invented. It is made of mosquito netting in the shape of a feed-bag kept distended by whalebone rings. When you lie down the rings keep the netting three or four inches from your face. I found I could not do without one of these contrivances. The wood-ticks, however, are not to be baffled. We have to pick them out on the point of a knife whenever we find them upon us. The wounds are far more uncomfortable than the lumps caused by the pigeon-sized mosquitos which the Dismal Swamp supplies us.

a **sutler** was a person who sold food and provisions to the army

JOHN BLACKBURNE WOODWARD LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JULY 8, 1862

Camp Crooke, Suffolk, Virginia

Whew! We have got it now. Imagine the hottest day you ever saw and then fry it and you will approximate the heat we endured yesterday and are enduring to-day. Yesterday it marked in a cool place 105 degrees, and no breeze. At half-past six we commenced battalion drill, which had been postponed from four o'clock, In ten minutes five men had fainted and been carried off, so I sent the regiment all to their quarters. We shall not try it again until the weather moderates. I shall, however, take advantage of the fine moonlight now in season.

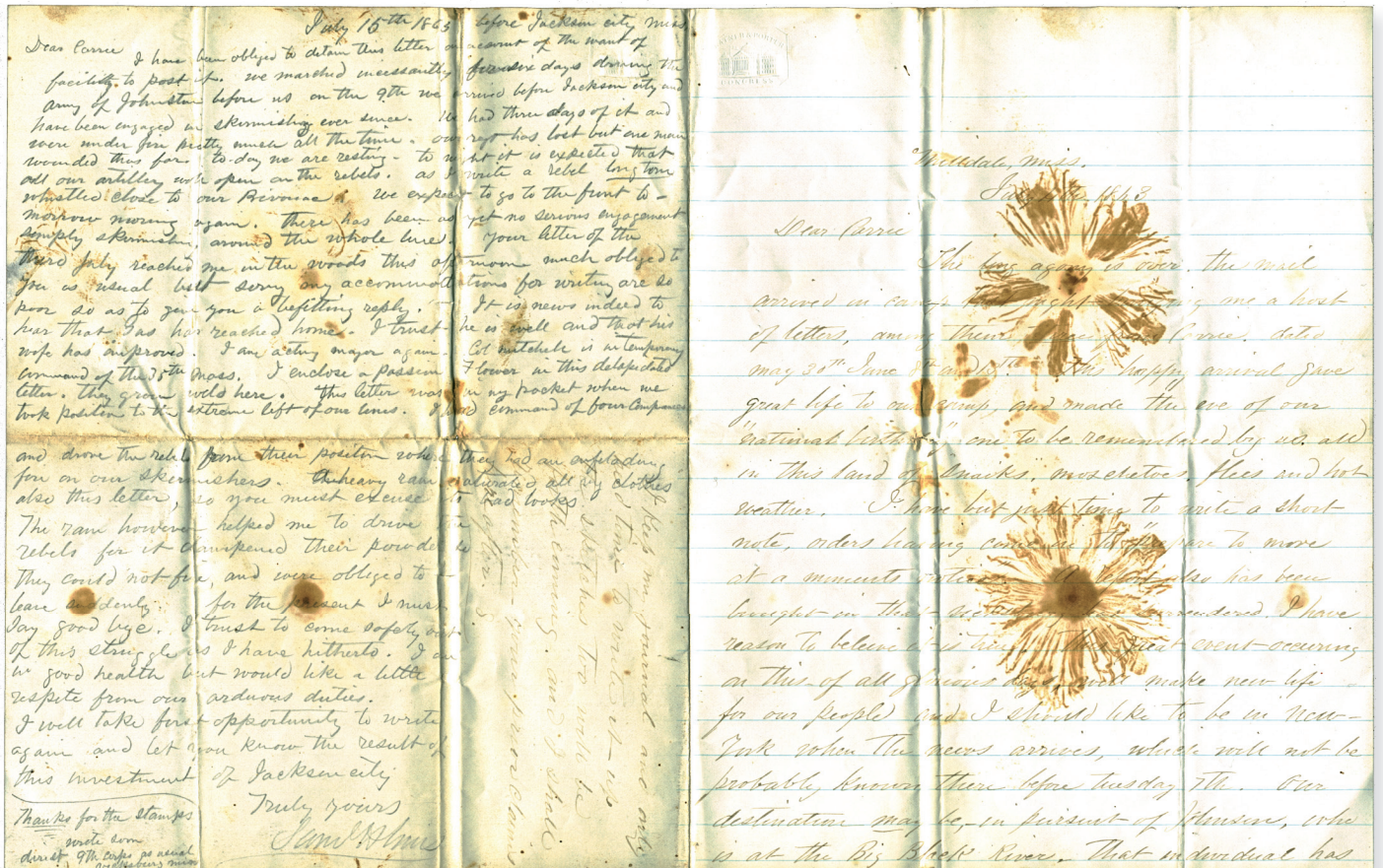
...Our regiment is practiced daily now at target shooting. I wanted to try Tanner under fire. I find he takes it as quietly as slapping your hands. To-day I took

him out when the artillery was at work firing blank cartridges; rode him within ten feet of a gun when it was being fired; after three discharges he took it calmly; let the reins fall over his neck and the only notice he took was to prick up his ears; did not move his feet. So, if we do get in action I hardly think it will be necessary to pay any attention to him. I practice him daily in jumping ditches, and will shortly try fences. Yesterday I jumped a ditch eight feet wide, from a halt, which is doing pretty well. He does not like that kind of work but spurs are good coaxers.

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

JULY 1863 Front

 Transcript available on pp. 52-53



Letter from Samuel H. Sims to Carrie, July 4 and 15, 1863; Green-Wood Historic Fund Collection

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

JULY 1863 Back

 Transcript available on pp. 52-53

Letter from Samuel H. Sims to Carrie, July 4 and 15, 1863;
 Green-Wood Historic Fund Collection

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

DECEMBER 5, 1861

Camp Burnside, Maryland

You must keep in good spirits for all is going well with us, and also for the cause for which we are enrolled My health is excellent. I weigh ten pounds more than when I left home. Palin also looks better than I ever saw him.

There has been much cause for complaint in the regiment for want of blankets sufficient, also the want of rubber blankets. This want will soon be remedied and then our equipment is complete.

We have a colored boy to cook for us and he gets up good dinners too. We have apple dumplings, oysters, chicken pot pie and everything first rate. Lieut. Banker gets a box of varieties from home every week or so. We cannot complain of lack of good eating but the case I suppose will be different when we leave. A sample of

condensed coffee was shown us yesterday, which was already sweetened and has milk in it. The government has adopted it for the use of those regiments who wish it. It is very good and I think it will be adopted, for a cup of coffee is a rarity in camp and nothing tastes better.

Our tent is heated by a small stove, which makes it very comfortable for us. A friend of mine came to Annapolis and took dinner with us Thanksgiving Day; we had roast turkey and all the "fixings." I would like it if I could let you hear my footsteps coming down the alley but at present I must not think of it. Give kisses to the children for me. I trust they are behaving well. They must for I could not bear to hear they were doing otherwise.

JANUARY 10, 1862

On Board Gunboat Lancer

We have just cast anchor off "Fortress Monroe." It is nearly nine o'clock. Our passage down the Chesapeake Bay was delayed by a heavy fog which lasted twelve hours and obliged us to anchor. Everything has thus far passed off pleasantly. All our men are in good health and eager to see the enemy. How soon that may be I cannot tell. We may lay here some time before the final start.

It is a beautiful sight to see the large number of war ships congregate here with their numerous lights.

The "breaking up" of our camp before the start was a sight but seldom witnessed. The tents were struck long before daylight, and the fires lighted in the camps about, lit up the country around for miles. Most every tent had its evergreen trees about them and all of these were set on fire. The ground was covered with snow and reflected the light almost brighter than day.

The weather is now very mild and with the moon shining bright, it is quite pleasant on deck.

I often imagine myself home in the kitchen. I can see it, and every part of it. That spot in the window where Ellie tore the paper looks bad. You can find some of the same kind of paper in the closet under the stairs. That carpet on the floor looks very shabby and I am afraid Henry will trip up and fall on the stove. I see that Charlie has not trimmed the grape vine yet. This should be done before the month of March. If I had time I would try the handle of the pump to see if the cistern has been cemented yet. Sammy must shovel off the snow and not let it freeze on the front door so much. So you must get a new carpet and have the cistern fixed and Charlie must trim the vine. Guess I must stir about. I will write soon again. Do not fail to write....

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MARCH 4, 1862

Roanoke Island, North Carolina

Dear Sister,

I received yours, Sammy's and Lucy's of the 13th of February. We are just about to re-embark on board to the transport again for another expedition.

You will hear of us before this reaches you, as usual our destination is unknown to us.

I have full hope that we shall succeed again, we may possibly have it pretty rough but hopes are entertained, and expressed, by our General that we shall gain a point that will go towards ending this war. The communication with the North is irregular. I have seen New York papers to the 21st February (Tribune).

...tell [Willy] he should see the water we drink sometimes. It is good enough to drink with the eyes shut.... We eat ducks (wild) and have lots of shad (12 cts for 6 pounders). We have eggs in abundance. We pay 5 cts a piece for apples, 50 cts a pound for raisins, 50 cts for Cheese. These things are all from the Sutler who brings them from the north. Sutlers make lots of money. Some of our wounded men are going home soon.

My wounded are all recovering fast. I have not lost a man since we left N.Y. Most of the companies have suffered severely in losing men. There has been six of a company (quartered near me) buried in the last two weeks from fevers. Our men go in bathing here while Sammy is skating in Brooklyn. The buds in the bushes are swelling and planting season will soon set in.

A good many Contrabands come to the Island having escaped from different points on the Sound. We had a celebration in our camp on hearing of Fort Henry and Donelson.

We have also heard that Memphis, Savannah and have been surrendered to us. All here are in the best of spirits. Recollect Lucretia that the next thing pleasant to hearing of victories is the arrival of mail with letters for us, direct to me as usual.

We may soon be home in Brooklyn. No more at present. God bless you all...

Contraband refers to the enslaved African Americans who escaped by running away to the Union Army encampments.

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

SEPTEMBER 5, 1862

Bivouac on seventh Street, Washington, D.C.

...A large mail reached here for our men. It has been gathering over a month. Our regiment has passed through most of the fighting with Jackson and Lee commands. We were supporting batteries and a good part of the fighting at Bull Run passed directly before us. We were exposed constantly to fire from shells and missiles but have escaped with a loss in killed and wounded of about sixty and there is probably thirty missing men.

I know how anxious you must have been when the news of the fighting was first published but I believe you have strength of mind sufficient to bear up under the infliction and suspense, which is worst of all.

The scenes I have witnessed I can not write but I will say that however it may appear to you in the north – our men have behaved nobly in every case. I speak from observation for the whole battle field was spread out before us and every movement was discernible by us. The failures to drive the rebels is accounted for by several of us. It is not proper though for me to speak of them. Others will attend to the fault I sincerely hope. The 14th Fifth Brooklyn were terribly cut up. They rallied near our lines with but a handful of men bearing their colors with them. Two of their officers I helped to carry were badly wounded.

I knew most all of their officers for we were once together in one company under Sprague. I can not help saying that their almost total extermination is the fruit of a deliberate plan laid by a traitor, who sent them to certain defeat well knowing it before hand; enough of this, but it is the talk of us all. Maj. John M. Gould and I have been having some correspondence in regard to the battle of Sharpsburg, and I am happy to say that all my correspondence with the “boys in blue,” meets with a hear response in my heart of hearts.

I will give you a list of my wounded who were left on the field and of course fell into the hands of our enemy. They are probably now in this city—or Alexandria as all the wounded have been paroled and released... None of them are seriously wounded that I know of.

I must close with thanks to God for our safety and good health though all these perils of the last three weeks. My hope is strong that better days for the cause are close at hand and our apparent reveries are soon to be proved to be victorious. Thus I pray with love to you all.

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JULY 4, 1863

 Images available on pp. 49–50*Dear Carrie*

The long agony is over. The mail arrived in camp last night bringing me a host of letters, among them three from Carrie, dated May 30th, June 8th and 13th. This happy arrival gave great life to our camp, and made the eve of our national birthday one to be remembered by us all in this land of snakes, mosquitoes, flies and hot weather.

I have but just time to write a short note, orders having come in to “prepare to move at a moment’s notice.” A report also has been brought in that Vicksburg has surrendered. I have reason to believe it is true. This great event occurring on this of all glorious days will make new life for our people and I should like to be in New York when the news arrives, which will not be probably known there before Tuesday > Th. Our destination may be in pursuit of Johnson who is at the Big Black River. That individual has kept “shady” for some time back, not relishing the little preparations our corps have been making for him. If we pursue Johnson our camping is likely to be dusty enough in more ways than one. The roads are horribly up hill and down. The dust like _____ to fine. Water is scarce, and the sun! It does not need a thermometer to tell us it is hot.

Well I can get along. The letters have set one all right. Yes! I would like to take a _____ “walk” with Carrie as a companion better than anything I know of. Woe be unto thee _____ worm who dared to measure himself on my fair correspondent. I am particularly sorry that you are such a _____ victim of the miserable geometri-

cian for I cannot with due sense of propriety write you to this menagerie of animated nature unless you were time clad. Did I tell you in my last that Lieut. Butler was bitten by a rattlesnake in the camp break? If not I must. He was hunting for something or another and was suddenly snapped at by what is supposed to have been a rattlesnake. This was about a half mile from camp. After reaching camp in a hurry he drank some two quarts of whiskey. Strange to say, this quantity did not seem to intoxicate him in the least. The place where he was bitten swelled up and pains were felt from his hand where he was bitten, extending up his arm. In about four or five hours the pain left him and Butler was out of danger.

We expect to strike tents at any moment and I must close. Thank you for your good wishes and prayers. Give my kindest regards and remembrances to all. I will take care of myself as you advise. This is our second summer in service and it is said _____ more _____ person. We have had a little more _____ than what but there is nothing of a services nature. So Carrie, goodbye for the present. God bless you and keep you in good health, in the prayer of,

*Truly yours,
Sam Sims*

Vicksburg Miss.

SAMUEL H. SIMS LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

JULY 15, 1863 cont. from July 4, 1863

 Images available on pp. 49–50*July 15th 1863 before Jackson City Miss.**Dear Carrie*

I have been obliged to detain this letter on account of the want of facility to post it. We marched incessantly for six days drawing the army of Johnston before us on the 9th. We arrived before Jackson City and have been engaged in skirmishing ever since. We had three days of it and were under fire pretty much all the time. Our regt has lost but one man wounded thus far. Today we are resting. Tonight it is expected that all our artillery will open on the rebels. As I write a rebel Long Tom whistled close to our _____. We expect to go to the front tomorrow morning again. There has been as yet no serious engagement. Simply skirmished around the whole line.

Your letter of the third July reached me in the woods this afternoon. Much obliged to you as usual, but sorry any accommodations for writing are so poor so as to give you a befitting reply. It is news indeed to hear that _____ has reached home. I trust he is well and that his wife has approved. I am acting major again. Col. Outchuck (?) is in temporary command of this 35th Mass.

I enclose a passion flower in this dilapidated letter. They grow wild here. This letter was in my pocket when we took position to the extreme left of our lines. I had command of four companies and drove the rebels from their position where they had an _____ fire on our skirmishes. A heavy rain saturated all my clothes, also this letter, so you must excuse its bad looks. The rain however helped me to drive in rebels for it dampened their parade. They could not fire, and were obliged to leave suddenly. For the present I must say good bye. I trust to come safely out of this struggle as I have hitherto. I am in good health but would like a little respite from our arduous duties. I would take first opportunity to write again and let you know the result of this investment of Jackson City.

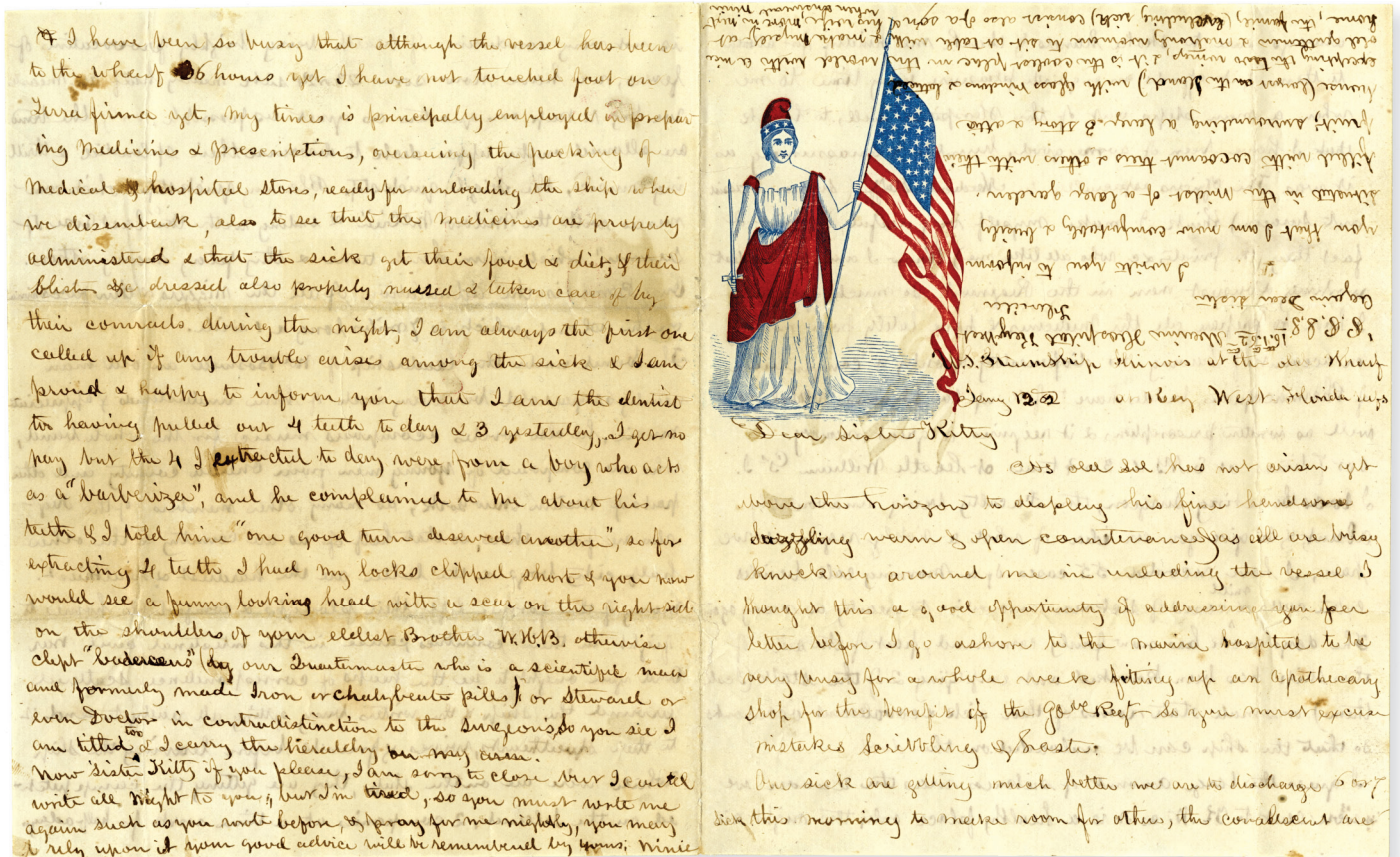
*Truly yours,
Sam Sims*

*Thanks for the stamps.
Write soon. Direct 9th corps as usual.
Vicksberg Miss.*

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

JANUARY 12, 1862 Front

 Transcripts available on pp. 56-57; 58-59 (edited)



Letter from Winant Bennett to Kitty, January 12, 1862; Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material, 2009.012; Brooklyn Historical Society

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

JANUARY 12, 1862 [Back](#) Transcripts available on pp. 56–57; 58–59 (edited)

always sure to shake hands & thank me kindly for attention to them, & it affords an exquisite pleasure every time to me when a man steps out of the Hospital well, to think that I have been of some good, humble & unassuming as it was. The Officers especially the Medical Staff (Surgeon & Assistant Surgeon) think I make myself very useful, in point of fact they (the private &c who all like me) know I am the hardest working & busiest man in the Regiment. So much for that I have to prepare all the Medicines & have lately from memory on account of having no dispensatory & only a compendium of Pharmacopoeia, besides have to fill up the physicians verbal as well as written prescriptions & it requires a great memory. For 7 times at V.M. & 3 or 4 times at Battle William G. I. I was Acting surgeon, the 3rd being unavoidably absent & to give you an idea of what a sickly Regiment we have, I have recorded 55 cases of a morning call besides extra calls & cases of sickness amounting to nearly as many again. The dysentery has now fairly commenced, part of the sick of the ship has been knocked out emptying 2 of the stables (I call them) in small state rooms of their sick & convalescent occupants so that the ship can be unloaded on the deck. I guess the large amount of sickness was the reason we were sent to B. M. as it is a healthy place only the night air is not very conducive of health being highly provocative of fevers, we have now some 23 or 24 sick nearly half are measles. We try to keep our quarters as quiet as possible, only the band are allowed on the upper deck to discourse their splendid & thrilling music, the Sigel quickstep, Blenny quickstep which commences with the "Midow McClui" & ending with the "last Rose of Summer" which is an Irish tune & they play many others. Our Band is the admiration of all the niggers & their picconins on the island, which is 7 miles long & 1 wide. The Band under the leadership of Mr Boswell an old man nearly 60 years old but every inch of him understands & appreciates music, he also writes & composes music for the whole band, who are composed of young men from Onida county and other parts of Western New York, as many other members of the Regt also are from there, so that half of us are Country & the other half city boys & the latter are the hardest & healthiest. Many of the former left their ploughs & comfortable homes to fight in their countries cause in this infernal civil war and you ought to see the heaps of correspondence scattered around the ship & the writers busy getting all ready to send it to their sweethearts, wives & friends before leaving the ship. While we are on the ship, they are getting the camp pitched on the Island, 2 companies at a time work for half a day.

Letter from Winant Bennett to Kitty, January 12, 1862; Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material, 2009.012; Brooklyn Historical Society

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

**WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE**

JANUARY 12, 1862

 Images available on pp. 56–57*U.S. Steamship Illinois at the old Wharf
Jany 12. 62 at Key West Florida ____**Dear Sister Kitty,*

This old Sol has not yet risen yet above the horizon to display his fine handsome dazzling warm and open countenance as all are busy crouching around me in unloading the vessel I thought this a good opportunity of addressing you per letter before I go ashore to the marine hospital to be very busy for a while week lifting up an apothecary shop for the benefit of the ____ Regt. So you must excuse mistakes scribbling in haste.

Our sick are getting much better we are to discharge 6 or 7 sick this morning to make room for others, this convalescent are always sure to shake hands and thank me kindly for attention to them, it affords an exquisite pleasure every time to me when a man steps out of the hospital well, to think that I have been some good, humble and unassuming as it was the officers especially in Medical Staff (surgeon I assist out are like me) know I am the hardest working and busiest man in the Regiment. So much for that I have to prepare all the medicines and have lately from memory on account of having no dispensary and only a compendium of Pharmacap ____ besides have to fill up the physicians verbal as well as written prescriptions and of requires a great memory. 6 or 7 times as ENYL and 3 or 4 times at least William GI. I was the actin surgeon, the faculty being unavoidable absent and to give you an idea of what a sickly regiment we have, I have recorded 55 cases of a morning call besides extra calls and mild cases of sickness amounting to nearly as many again. The days has now fairly commenced past of the side of the ship has been knocked out emptying 2 of the stalls (I call them) or small staterooms of their sick and convalescent

occupants so that the ship can be unloaded on the dock I guess the large amount of sickness was the reason we were sent to K. W. (Key West) as it is a healthy place only the night air is not very conducive of health being highly productive of fever, we have now some 23 or 24 sick nearly half are measles we try to keep our quarters as quiet as possible, only the band are allowed on the upper deck to discourse their splendid and thrilling music, the Seigel quick step.

Blaring quick step which commences with the “window Me ALL” and ending with the Last Rose of Summer” which is an Irish tune and they play many others. Our band is the admiration of all the nigger and the Piccaninis on the island, which is 7 miles long and 1 wide.

The band under the leadership of Mr. Bosswell and old man nearly 60 years old but every inch of him understands I appreciates music, he also writes and composes music for the whole band, who are composed of young men from Oneida Country and other parts of Western New York as many other members of the Regt. Also are from there, so that half of us are country and the other half city boys and the latter are the hardiest and healthiest Many of the former left their ploughs and comfortable homes to fight in their countries cause in this intestinal civil war. And you ought to see the heaps of correspondence scattered around the ship and the writers getting all ready to send off to their sweethearts, wives and friends before leaving the ship.

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

**WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE****JANUARY 12, 1862** cont. from p. 58 Images available on pp. 56–57

While we're on the ship, they are getting the camp pitched on the Island, 2 companies at a time work for half a day and I have been so busy that although the vessel has been to the wharf 6 hours yet I have not touched foot on Terra Ferma yet, my times is principally employed in preparing medicines and prescriptions, overseeing the packaging of medical, hospital stores, ready for unloading the ship when we disembark, also to see that the medicines are properly administered and that they sick get their food and diet of their blisters are dressed also properly nursed and taken care of by their comrades during the night. I am always the first one called up if any trouble arises among the sick and I am proud and happy to inform you that I am the dentist too having pulled out 4 teeth today and 3 yesterday. I get no pay but the 4 I extracted today were from a boy who acts as a "barber" and he complained to me about his teeth and I told him "one good thing deserves another" so for extracting 4 teeth I had my locks clipped short and you now would see a funny looking head with a scar on the right side on the shoulders of your eldest brother W.W.B. otherwise _____ (by our quartermaster who is a scientific man and formerly made Iron cheelybeute pills) or Steward of even Doctor in contradistinction to the surgeon's so you see I

am titled, too, and I carry this heraldry on my own (arm?). Now sister Kitty if you please I am sorry to close but I could write all night to you, but I'm tired to you must write me again such as you wrote before and pray for me nightly, you may rely upon of your good advice will be remembered by yours,

Winie

16.1.62

Marine Hospital Key West Florida

PPSS Again Dear Sister

I write to inform you that I am now comfortably and busily situated in the midst of a large garden filled with coconut trees and others with their fruit surrounding a large 3 story and attic house (largest on the Island) with glass windows and lattice excepting the 2 wings. It is the coolest place in the world with a nice old gentleman and matronly woman to sit at a table with myself at home, the family (____ sick) consist also of a son and his wife. More in next when answered. Winie

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS, EDITED

JANUARY 12, 1862

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WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS, EDITED

JANUARY 12, 1862 cont. from p. 60

 Images available on pp. 56–57

While we're on the ship, they are getting the camp pitched on the Island, 2 companies at a time work for half a day and I have been so busy that although the vessel has been to the wharf 6 hours yet I have not touched foot on Terra Ferma yet, my times is principally employed in preparing medicines and prescriptions, overseeing the packaging of medical, hospital stores, ready for unloading the ship when we disembark, also to see that the medicines are properly administered and that they sick get their food and diet of their blisters are dressed also properly nursed and taken care of by their comrades during the night. I am always the first one called up if any trouble arises among the sick and I am proud and happy to inform you that I am the dentist too having pulled out 4 teeth today and 3 yesterday. I get no pay but the 4 I extracted today were from a boy who acts as a "barber" and he complained to me about his teeth and I told him "one good thing deserves another" so for extracting 4 teeth I had my locks clipped short and you now would see a funny looking head with a scar on the right side on the shoulders of your eldest brother W.W.B. otherwise _____ (by our quartermaster who is a scientific man and formerly made Iron cheelybeute pills) or Steward of even Doctor

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WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS



WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE

SEPTEMBER 11, 1863

Camp Parole, Annapolis Md.

Friday, PM Sept. 11, 1863

Dear Sister Kate,

Being along & having just eat a good dinner considering it was cooked by a bachelor "an that's me-self" I laid down full length in my bed to answer your kind sisterly epistle of two days reception by me. Well, now proceed to tell you what I ate, this A.M. about 9 o'clock we drew fresh flesh of the "Bovine" species, as my partner (of 5 ½ long weeks so journeying here) and two more of our next door neighbors but over here one story of tier, were going into town with the squad to draw extra clothing, I offered to boil bey for all or else it "wouldn't keep raw" did so, and as I had in about two hours some "bully" (it might have been a cow though) broth, and the meat was tender, so as I had no vegetables, potatoes, nor corn we have not drawn lately at least for 2 days, so I soaked my fresh loaf of bread crust in it and it went down my esophagus. Finished with a small pie (10 cts) and the pickles I made lately with assistance of further friends. It is good, but too hot and messy.

Nick was teasing me yesterday about the cost, saying it was dearer than he already made. I proved it was not as the vinegar from US cost nothing, the tomatoes, 05c, onions, small half bunch, 05c and half the spice for which I paid 16 c. In all a sum total of 18c. Immense and you couldn't buy a better nor larger bottle for 50 cts. We knew how ours was made too which makes considerable matter. The tomatoes and onions were washed and seeded, then the vinegar hot spices poured on them to stand a period of not less than a week. Made a "sass" yesterday of ripe "fox grapes" foraged 6 miles up the Annapolis. Elkridge Dr. improved the second mess by slewing with good cider apples from the same place.

Was going to finish this letter before 3 PM as the mail leaves then, but a little soldier boy by name James Wallace came in from town with a pass that was good for the rest of the day, and it being 2 PM he offered it to me. I took it and took a walk down town. Was at the Baltimore Steamboat landing, where many expectants were awaiting the arrival of the Champion from Eastern, Md. (on the Maryland Eastern shore) many soldiers were there, beside well dressed white gentleman and ladies black, brown, mahogany, ebony, and "yalles," colored "mokes" of all ages, sizes and qualities as lounges and passengers. There is a quality, caste, rank or distinction whatever you may dignify the superiority by a name, among the descendants of _____. Saw a dark mulatto lady, elegantly dressed in chocolate colored silk trimmed with black and _____, white silk shawl, blue silk hat, beflowered in the latest style of the Parisian Modiste escorted by a white gentleman. Saw 2 linen, coated, frock do, seedy citizen clothed young men, that I suspected were in disguise, but couldn't say that I had see them before, just as the boat was landed they walked about like "any other men," but were halted by the _____ armed cavalry guard and with all their shabby gentility even notwithstanding the fact of their belong to the gallant Brooklyn 14- they were hustled to guardhouse wanted to take French leave. I should dress n good new and gentlemen like citizens uniform, but I intent to wait till my turn comes for a furlough.

Major Everts says that all will go soon, as the "Maine boys" have gone; the penneyers next, then our turn may come if there is a governor to be selected or not as there happens to be in the "Sunrise State."

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS



WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE

SEPTEMBER 11, 1863 cont. from p. 62

The smart and knowing major E, than whom there couldn't be a better man in the right place, says, "there will be a military in Camp Parole if not in mine (_____green barracks) if the governors of States won't see to it," tis said a commission is already to the war department about it, the rebel paroled prisoners are not all obliged to remain at Camp Lee, their parole camp, on their arrival at city point but it is optional with them to remain there until ordered back to their respective regiments or go home on furlough, only opportunity. I shall be careful not to risk my life now you may depend and never desert after having gone through so many dangers and hairbreath es-

capas by field and food, besides risk of starvation in the bankrupt confederacy. Please tell mother if possible to send box by Wednesday or before, so that I can receive it by Saturday next. Am extremely obliged for the interesting RW and Blue account of marriage of one who apparently didn't want to be drafted. How is Van? Please write again, love to husband kiss children a few, & accept kind regards & love for self from one you shall see before long & honorably too.

*Yours truly and affectionately,
Winant*

Epistle means a letter

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

**WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE**

NOVEMBER 19, 1863

*Dismounted Camp Stoneman
Griseboro Point, Washington D.C.
Thursday night, Nov. 1863*

Dear Bro. Abe,

I write this to thank you for Monday's Herald which I received promptly Tuesday evening, and very welcome indeed it was. Now why can't H Army similarly send papers to me it cost no more to send one package containing one newspaper than it does to dispatch a half dozen or dozen papers every two to three months at two cents each paper-another thing, news does not become stale by waiting so long for it; I have as yet seen nothing of the Ledgers Mercuries et. That I suppose (from Kate's letter) Mother sent me a week ago. Now it is possible that such a large package as she is inclined to send any have been lost, delayed, or prevented from reaching its destination or perhaps sent for wrong direction to the front where the regiment is.

I hope Mother, Kate and Emma have received letters from me this week. The first two each a letter, and the latter with something (\$10) inside of it, tell Mother (sent \$20 in hers) to take care of the little whole am't for me, for I waited long enough for it, had but little left when I ventured it by mail, I have no doubt it arrived safely, for I took pains about it, the address, I mean.

Now Abram I have but little news to write, in fact I don't feel in the notion, but having nothing to read (same as extravagant ladies nothing to wear) now to do I imagined I might employ a little leisure in writing you my thanks for thinking of or giving a thought to a soldier.

Papers cost us 5 cents here, even though "Old Fighting Joe Hooker" means the Herald is sold to us at 5 cents instead of 10 cents.

As for the papers while on Belle Isle they were few and far between and with all dear, 25 to 50 c confed. or C.B. for a paper the size of N.Y. Sun and News, why it could be crammed on half a page in order to keep even the sheet filled they repeated old news until they became stale or unprofitable, of course we would be obliged to laugh at the lies therein, the prisoners that brought the newspapers would tell us the truth anyhow. Then the miserable paper, even the note or letter paper was made of poor miserable material, it blotted if you used ink, some of it was handed to me by the rebel commissary to take down the names anew, just after we had been counted, I being starvation ration divider, or chief of a mess, early the next morning after a crowd or sick or well paroled prisoners had left for Bitz Point we would be ordered out of our fold (like a flock of sheep), then as we entered our enclosure, or entrenchment, or living open sepulcher of a camp they counted us, one time the delay was so great that we had but one meal (5 ½ o'clock P.S.) least meal 9 ½ A.M., 2nd and last meal 4 P.M. After cutting up the bread in exact squares, I would cut the meat from the bones (half boiled beef) in justice to all I would try to give each an exact share of lean, fat, and gristle. Often it only amounted to a mouthful, with a precise pinch of salt on the meat that lay on each ration or piece of bread, then I would turn back with list of men in hand; an honest member of the mess would then

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

**WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE****NOVEMBER 19, 1863** cont. from p. 64

place his hand on each little piece of bread, meat and salt, ask "Whose is this?" etc. He would skip his hand about and I would skip with the roll of names, so then no one could say but that everything was impartially done. When in the afternoon sometimes soup would be given out of beans (hog, nigger, or Spanish brown ones) or maggoty, buggy rice, then my cup held the exact measure, a common water pail full. A pail full of fresh meat on the bone (15 lbs. in all) for 100 men, ¼ loaf or three or four oz. bread twice a day.

There I must close by saying the barbarous treatment of the poor prisoners is now noticed (?). Tell mother, Mandy, Emma and Kate to write, of course you must

write with the latter. 'Tis no use to ask Harny to write, fr I am tired of being always in expectation.

I have the honor to remain yours, etc.

Winant G. Bennett

*Dismounted Camp Stoneman
1st Brig., 3rd Divis.
Washington, D.C.*

P.S. Please tell my mother to send me a paper (only one) and see if it will go straight, yes send one or two at a time.

WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS, EDITED

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WINANT BENNETT LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS, EDITED

NOVEMBER 19, 1863 cont. from p. 66

place his hand on each little piece of bread, meat and salt, ask "Whose is this?" etc. He would skip his hand about and I would skip with the roll of names, so then no one could say but that everything was impartially done. When in the afternoon sometimes soup would be given out of beans (hog, [racial slur, referring to black people], or Spanish brown ones) or maggoty, buggy rice, then my cup held the exact measure, a common water pail full. A pail full of fresh meat on the bone (15 lbs. in all) for 100 men, ¼ loaf or three or four oz. bread twice a day.

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DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

FEBRUARY 24, 1864 Page 1

 Transcript available on p. 75

Jacksonville, Florida Feb. 24th 64

Dear Father & Mother Brothers and Sisters i' take this
 favourable opportunity of writing those few lines
 hoping they will find you enjoying good
 health as this leave me at Present with the
 Exception of getting a Bullet in my Right
 Shoulder But thank God it did not touch the
 Bone, Dear Father i' will be better in a few
 days with the help of god you need not be
 any more uneasy about me i' am in the Hospital
 and getting along Bully, Dear Father i' Received
 a Letter from you the very day that we get
 orders to march so you can see that i' could
 not answer it, dear Father i' have seen some
 pretty hard times there last three weeks back
 we have marched over two hundred miles
 and in all that time i' never had of my
 Shoes on a stitch of my clothes at night we
 would lay down on the Ground and throw
 our Blankets over us and go to Sleep as
 comfortable as if we where in a Feather Bed

Letter from Daniel Friel to his father and mother, February 24, 1864;
 Daniel and Hugh Friel letters, 1977.425; Brooklyn Historical Society

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

FEBRUARY 24, 1864 Page 2

 Transcript available on p. 75

Dear Father we had a very severe Battle it
 come on a sudden we did not expect to have
 it the day that we did But we where sure
 of it the next day The Battle lasted three
 hours and ten minutes The total strength
 of our Force was seven thousand and the
 Enemy had sixteen thousand against us
 our Regiment went into the fight with
 seven hundred men and the next morning
 all that answered Roll call was two
 hundred and seventy so you can see that
 the Poor old ~~old~~ ^{old} got pretty well
 cut up, dear Father ^{I hope} you will not be weary
 about me tell me mother to keep up a good
 heart for with the help a God i will Return
 home safe and sound my wound will
 be better in a few days But the Doctor
 will not let me go to the Regiment for
 a month or two, Dear Father i am very
 to let you know that poor old Burk is no
 more he was shot right through the head
 and i seen his Brains Laying on his cheek
 i will give you the names of our Neighbors

Letter from Daniel Friel to his father and mother, February 24, 1864;
 Daniel and Hugh Friel letters, 1977.425; Brooklyn Historical Society

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

FEBRUARY 24, 1864 Page 3

 Transcript available on p. 75

that are wounded (Matty Martin hit in the
 Leg he will be better in a few days Billy
 Gallagher shot through the ankle i think
 he will lose his foot you need not say
 so to his wife or Dinis Mr Crossen let
 Micheal Mulligan know that Jimmy Wilson was
 shot through the Body i think he is a Prisoner
 with the Rebels he listed the same time that
 i did, young Coyle was wounded in the Leg
 i guess you knew his mother she lives in
 the fourteenth ward New York i believe he
 is a Prisoner we had to leave our dead
 and wounded on the Field all that was
 able to walk like myself got away in my
 next letter i will give you a better account
 of affairs, dear Father you might think
 that you would feel afraid going into
 a Fight you do not feel a bit scared i
 know i did not i never felt better in my
 Life when the Regiment go home you
 see Micheal Roden and ask him how
 i behaved myself i did not disgrace
 you or any one belonging to me till old

Letter from Daniel Friel to his father and mother, February 24, 1864;
 Daniel and Hugh Friel letters, 1977.425; Brooklyn Historical Society

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

FEBRUARY 24, 1864 Page 4

 Transcript available on p. 75

Paddy & Hughey so give them my respects
 and to their family tell Annie that
 I received her letter and as soon as my
 shoulder get a little better I will answer
 her letter tell her that I am satisfied
 that you can warm any of beats
 around them corner, I am Father I am
 very sorry to hear of John Gallagher
 death and Mary Henderson let me know
 in your next letter what she died from
 give my respects to Johnny Friel and
 Jimmy and his father and mother, and to
 all the boys around the corner let me
 know how Ellen is getting along and if
 she is with my mother get write soon and
 let me know all the particulars no more
 at present but remains your affectionate
 son until death

Daniel Friel

I have lost my knapsack and your silence
 let me know what Hughey is doing

Letter from Daniel Friel to his father and mother, February 24, 1864;
 Daniel and Hugh Friel letters, 1977.425; Brooklyn Historical Society

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

 WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS PROFANITY

FEBRUARY 13, 1863

Dear Father and Mother,

I write you these few lines hoping they will find you in good health as this leaves me at present, thank be God. We have just got payed and I am sending you thirty dollars. You will receive it in this letter. That is not as much as I thought I would be able to send you, because they took out for clothes from the four months pay that we received and I wanted a little for myself. I have little debts to pay myself and I want to buy some tobacco and other little things.

We have received marching orders and like to be off any minute so that is the way things go. We expect that we are going towards Savannah but I hear that we are going on a little island near Savannah. Look out for us. The first thing you know, you will see us in Savannah and will have a pretty good time of it. The Dun Boats will have the most of it to do, so you will see that we are not going to have such fine times as we expected to have, but never mind. I will be all right with the help of God. You need not be afraid that we are going to fight, we are going to Garrison a small island. It is about thirty miles from Savannah.

I hope that this little amount that I am sending you will do you some good. Tell the old woman that I want her to buy a new dress for herself and Annie, and tell her not to forget it either. Tell her to keep up a good

heart, that I expect to be home with her before long with the help of God. Give my respects to Duggan and to all the neighbors. I sent a letter to my uncle Patrick last week. I hope that he got it. Let me know if little Ellen is living with him or not. I hope she is, for she will be a smart girl if she lives. Let me know how Humfrey is getting along, I hope that he is doing what's right with you. I guess he is getting pretty big. Anna told me in her letter that he was on a spree on New Years Day. How are you managing? You must not think bad of us leaving here, for it does not amount to anything and I want for you to not let it give you any bother. So long. No more at present, but remain your affectionate son until death.

Daniel Friel

P.S. give my respects to all my uncles and aunts also to all my cousins. Give my respects to Mike Muilligan and to all the boys that run with the Carriages with the exception of that Dutch son of a bitch Glen.

Write soon. Direct your letter as before.

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS



WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS RACIST LANGUAGE

FEBRUARY 15, 1863

Dear Father and Mother,

I write you those few lines hoping they will find you enjoying good health as this leaves me at present thanks be to God for it. Dear Father, I received your kind and welcome letter on the fourteenth which gave me great pleasure to hear from you. I sent a letter before this one. It contains thirty dollars and I hope it will do you some. I am very sorry that I can't send you more, but never mind I will, with the help of God. I will be able to send you some more by and by.

Dear Father, I see by your letter that you think the war will be over pretty soon, I hope so. By God I often think so myself. If I had thought that I was coming out to fight for the niggars, I would be the last one to come out and plenty more besides me. This was not be the reasons and the people see that it is not and I would be surprised if you do not see a man to come home among you. If they appoint three men from each state, they will settle it pretty quick. The people cannot see it any more, getting their sons and brothers killed for nothing but the niggers.

Dear Father, we are going to leave here, we are going to build a fort on a small island near Savannah. There will be no danger there for we are under care of the Gun Boats. Dear Father, you say that you are the unfortunate man born, never mind old man. I will

be with you once more with the help of God, and working along side of you I hope before long. Keep up a good heart and so will I. Never write any discouraging letters to me for it makes me feel bad, but you have not wrote any to me yet. You told me that Mickey Friel had gone. Johnny, Bully for him I hope he will like it. Dear Mother, I hope you will keep up a good heart and not fret for me, for I will be all right with the help of God. You see, we have been removed out of where we was but that is nothing. I would just a fief be where I am for I think it would be very unhealthy in the summer. Anna sent me a very funny letter and I am proud of her. I can _____ you. I gave Brother Hugh a little cut in it just for the fun of the thing. I guess he will be able to beat me when I get home for it. Never mind Hughy, be a good boy and nothing will happen to you. (You know there is always one lost Mick in the flock and that's me.) We are getting ready to go away and I must wind up so no more at present, but remain your affectionate son until death.

Daniel Friel Esquire

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS, EDITED

FEBRUARY 15, 1863

Dear Father and Mother,

I write you those few lines hoping they will find you enjoying good health as this leaves me at present thanks be to God for it. Dear Father, I received your kind and welcome letter on the fourteenth which gave me great pleasure to hear from you. I sent a letter before this one. It contains thirty dollars and I hope it will do you some. I am very sorry that I can't send you more, but never mind I will, with the help of God. I will be able to send you some more by and by.

Dear Father, I see by your letter that you think the war will be over pretty soon, I hope so. By God I often think so myself. If I had thought that I was coming out to fight for the [racial slur, referring to black people], I would be the last one to come out and plenty more besides me. This was not be the reasons and the people see that it is not and I would be surprised if you do not see a man to come home among you. If they appoint three men from each state, they will settle it pretty quick. The people cannot see it any more, getting their sons and brothers killed for nothing but the [racial slur, referring to black people].

Dear Father, we are going to leave here, we are going to build a fort on a small island near Savannah. There will be no danger there for we are under care of the Gun Boats. Dear Father, you say that you are

the unfortunate man born, never mind old man. I will be with you once more with the help of God, and working along side of you I hope before long. Keep up a good heart and so will I. Never write any discouraging letters to me for it makes me feel bad, but you have not wrote any to me yet. You told me that Mickey Friel had gone. Johnny, Bully for him I hope he will like it. Dear Mother, I hope you will keep up a good heart and not fret for me, for I will be all right with the help of God. You see, we have been removed out of where we was but that is nothing. I would just a fief be where I am for I think it would be very unhealthy in the summer. Anna sent me a very funny letter and I am proud of her. I can _____ you. I gave Brother Hugh a little cut in it just for the fun of the thing. I guess he will be able to beat me when I get home for it. Never mind Hughy, be a good boy and nothing will happen to you. (You know there is always one lost Mick in the flock and that's me.) We are getting ready to go away and I must wind up so no more at present, but remain your affectionate son until death.

Daniel Friel Esquire

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

FEBRUARY 24, 1864

 **WARNING THIS LETTER CONTAINS GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF BATTLE** Images available on pp. 68–71

Jacksonville, Florida Feb. 24th 64

Dear Father & Mother, Brothers and Sisters,

I take this favourable opportunity of writing these few lines hoping they will find you enjoying good health as this leaves me at present, with the exception of getting a bullet in my right shoulder. But that God it did not touch the bone. Dear Father, I will be better in a few days with the help of God you need not be any ways uneasy about me. I am in the hospital and getting along bully. Dear Father, I received a letter from you the very day that we got orders to march so you can see that I could not answer it. Dear Father, I have seen some pretty hard times these last three weeks back. We have marched over two hundred miles and in all that time I never had of my shoes or a stitch of my clothes. At night we would lay down on the ground and throw our blankets over us and go to sleep as comfortable as if we were in a father bed.

Dear Father, we had a very severe battle. It come on a suddenly. We did not expect to have it the day that we did, but we were sure of it. The next day the battle last three hours and ten minutes. The total strength of our force was seven thousand and the enemy had sixteen thousand against us. Our Regiment went into the fight with seven hundred men, and the next morning all that answered roll call was two hundred and seventy, so you can see that the Poor old 47th got pretty well cut up.

Dear Father, I hope you will not be uneasy about me. Tell me Mother to keep up a good heart for with the help of God I will return home safe and sound. My wound will be better in a few days, but the doctor will not let me go to the Regiment for a month or two. Dear Father, I am very (sorry) to let you know that poor old Rush is no more. He was shot right through the head and I seen his brains laying on his cheek. I will give you the names of our neighbors that are wounded. Matter Martin hit in the leg, he will be

better in a few days. Billy Gallagher shot through the ankle, think he will lose his foot. You need not say so to his wife or Dinnis McCrossen. Let Michael Mulligan know that Jimmy Wilson was shot through the body. I think he is a prisoner with the Rebels. He listed the same time that I did. Young Coyle was wounded in the leg. I guess you know his mother; she lives in the fourteenth ward, New York. I believe he is a prisoner. We had to leave our dead and wounded on the field. All that was able to walk like myself got away.

In my next letter I will give you a better account of affairs. Dear Father, you might think that you would feel afraid going into a fight, you do not feel a bit scared. I know I did not. I never felt better in my life. When the Regiment go home you see Michael Roden and ask him how I behaved myself. I did not disgrace you or any one belonging to me. Tell old Paddy & Hughey, so give them my respects and to their families. Tell Annie that I received her letter and as soon as my shoulder get a little better I will answer her letter. Tell her that I am satisfied that you can warn any of beats around the corners. Dear Father, I am very sorry to hear of John Gallagher death and Mary Henderson. Let me know in your next letter what she died from. Give my respects to Johnny Friel and Jimmy and his Father and Mother and to all the boys around the corners. Let me know how Ellen is getting along and if she is with my uncle yet. Write soon and let me know all the particulars. No more at present, but remain your affectionate son until death.

Daniel Friel

*I have lost my knapsack and your likeness
Let me know how Hughey is doing*

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

MARCH 19, 1864

Beaufort S.C. March the 19 1864

Dear Father and Mother,

I take this favourable opportunity of writing these few lines to you, hoping they will find you enjoying good health as this leaves me at present, thanks be to God for his mercies to be. Dear Father, I am still in the Hospital at this place and I am nearly all well. I expect I will be back to my Regiment in a few days with the help of God. I am sick of being in in the hospital. I would sooner be with my Regiment.

Dear Father the Regiment is now stationed at a place called Palatki. It is about seventy miles from Jacksonville. They say it is a nice place. The boys write to us that is in the hospital and let us know what is going on.

Dear Father if I had been with the Regiment I would have reenlisted again. I understand that they would have taken me. I hear that Billy Davis and John Gunnies have reenlisted and that they went home in the last steamer that left Hilton Head for New York. I guess Masthead Rodan will give you a call. He has reenlisted again for three years more. He is a brave young fellow and deserves to be higher than what he is. All he wants is a few friends to work for him and he will get the shoulder straps.

Dear Father, while I was here on my rambles I found a watch. I sent it home to you by Sergt McGee. I guess you have received it before this. All that is the matter with it is that I let it fall out of my pocket one morning when I was putting on my pants. She was wound up when I sent her to you. Get her fixed and wear her for she is worth wearing. Let me know in your next letter if you got her and if she is fixed. It is an ill wind that blows no one some good.

Dear Father, I wrote a letter to you some time ago and I have not received an answer for it yet. I guess they are with the Regiment that is your letters. There is no one in the Regiment know what Hospital I am in or they would send me my letters. I wrote to Annie. Also, she mentioned in her letter about John Gallagher and Mary Henderson being dead. I was very sorry to hear it. Give my love to Annie and tell her that I will get home safe and sound with the help of God. Tell my mother not to be uneasy about me, for I am getting along bully. I never felt better in my life. I weight between a hundred and forty or fifty and that's not bad for a gasson of my cloth. Give my love to Hughy and Johnny, also to Charles and Ellen and the little Furdawn. Jimmy, write as you receive this letter and let me know how you are getting along with the store. I know I have not done right by you since I left home, but I will do better for the future. Give my respects to Johnny Friel and to his Father and Mother, also to his Brothers. Give my respects to all the neighbors and to all the inquiring friends that if they be any. No more at present, but remain your affectionate son until death.

Daniel Friel

Direct your letter the same as usual. Tell Johnny Friel that I wrote him a letter and I have not received an answer yet. Hurry up John and write to me and let me know how all the boys are getting along.

DANIEL FRIEL LETTERS

TRANSCRIPTS

APRIL 23, 1864

Dear Father and Mother,

I now take this favourable opportunity of answering your kind and welcome letters of date the fifteenth and tenth, which gave me great pleasure to hear that you and my mother and all the children were in good health as this leaves me at present, thanks to be God for his mercies to me. I am now with my Regiment. There came an order to the hospital for all, and I was one that was sent along with about a hundred more. I can assure you that I am satisfied to get out of the hospital. You told me to stay in it as long as I could. I did stay.

Received a letter from Annie. I was glad to hear from her. She told me about brother Hugh having a fight with some boy from Frankfort Street. If he was out here he would have all the fight he wanted, but I don't blame him for taking his own part and another thing never let him come for a soldier. I hope you will do that much for me. I think one is enough for to be in the army. If he ever talks about going to the war break his back for me the last letter that I got from you, you gave me a pretty hard account of him that he would not work never mind he will come to himself one of these days. I wish to god that I was home I bet a dollar or two that I would stick to it like a brick. But it is no use in talking about that so I will dry up. I suppose

this letter will surprise you the last letter that I sent you I was in South Caroline now I am in Virginia and the next Brush we have it will be at Rishmond. We are concentrating a force of one hundred thousand men at this place and Grant has more than that with him. There is some other general got as many more men with him. We are going to tackle it in three different places and my opinion is that we will take it, if we do it is all day with them. Our companys time is up on the fifteenth of July and if I do not go home with the Regiment I will never shoulder a Musket for Uncle Sam. Let the consequences be what it may I have my mind made up. When you are writing to me Direct your letter to all the boys and to all inquiring friends. No more at present. But remain your affectionate Son until death.

Daniel Friel

Tell Annie that I will send her a letter in a few days also one to Hughy I am glad to hear that Ellen is stopping at my uncle I never received a letter from Johnny Friel

Write soon