



The following are transcriptions of the letters of William W. Clemens, 2d Lieut., Bvt. Capt.,

US Signal Corps 1861 to 1865

(Source: Clemens Family Records)

(PART 2 of 2)

West Point. Va.

May 1, 1864

Am here with one brigade - Landed Sunday and are entrenched at this place. Cannot say whether we will remain or not or whether troops are coming to us. We landed here without opposition and the enemy not closer than fifteen miles. Am well and am quartered in a house with the staff, I send Richmond Enquirer of 27th which I rec'd from a young lady here - Have one minute to write this.

Camp in the Field

May 8th 1864 Sunday

Having just received your letter of the 2nd I think it is no more than right that I should answer it, as I do not know when I may have another chance. I wrote you last from West Point, Va. merely a note - to let you know where I was. We left there about four o'clock Thursday morning last and went down the Fork River to Fortress Monroe when we immediately started up the James River and landed at "Bermuda Hundred" where we found the 10th Corps & other troops - how many it is not necessary to say. This move is a bold one and is to operate against Richmond in this campaign. Just think we landed two miles above City Point and only eighteen miles from the Capitol. The object of this force is to cut the Richmond & Petersburg R.R., which connects the south & southwest with Richmond. The enemy has been taken by surprise but they still have no doubt a large force to resist our advance. Get a map and you can easily see our present position. We landed as I said at Bermuda Hundred and immediately advanced five miles - entrenching ourselves by earthworks running from the James to Appomattox River. Yesterday afternoon three (3) Brigades were sent out to cut the R.R. and had a severe fight but succeeded in accomplishing the object and returned to our present position. We lost nearly two hundred killed and wounded - and what is very singular two thirds of our wounded were struck in the lower limbs showing how low the Rebels fired. Instead of having a wagon etc. to every two officers we have all been separated and are attached to different Head Qrts. I have all my baggage with me and am on Col. Alfred's staff - 1st Brigade, 2nd Division 10th Corps. Our Brigade consists of 4 New York Regts. & One Mass. The weather is dreadful, whilst the dust is almost insufferable and if you were to see me now you would not know me - for I know, I like the rest, am a

miserable looking object - covered with dust and it is so warm it is impossible to arrive at any degree of comfort. At daylight tomorrow morning we march and expect to have a hard fight and there is no doubt but that it will be a bloody one - and I only hope that we are successful and that Meade succeeds in whipping Lee. Oh, that there was an end to all this bloodshed for to tell the truth I am getting tired of witnessing it and it is no wonder - if only the parties who are so warlike at home could see but half the suffering to this kind of life - I think they would be less brave. But enough - it must be and we must abide results. I wish I knew what is to be the result of tomorrow.

Whilst I am writing our Hd. Qrts Band, without doubt the best band in the service, is playing by my side and it is next to impossible to write. Tell Mother I am sorry to say that I have not written to Mr. Lewis and have no excuse to offer - except that having delayed it in the first place I hesitated about writing afterwards. I know I should have written long ago and am sorry I did not. Tell Mrs. Patterson I will write her after these battles if I come safely through, Give much love to all and write often. John I think was in rather a bad predicament in Phila. Is he with his Co? Love to all the boys and remembrances to friends.

Your Affec. Son Will
Direct Head Qrts 10th Corps U.S.A.
via Fortress Monroe Va.

Camp near "Bermuda Hundred Va.
May 15th 1864

I have just come to camp from the front where I have been during the last week. I shall go back again having just come in for rations for my men. We have been fighting all week and have had a hard time indeed. So hot and dusty the fore path and rain and mud the latter part of the week. What we have been doing or what we expect to do I cannot say; but this much I can say, that several severe and bloody fights have taken place and is still going on, with not a little loss to us. We have been advancing steadily and have thus far forced the enemy back towards Richmond and our lines are now about eight miles below that city where the enemy is strongly entrenched in earthworks and a very strong fort - at which our artillery is now pouring shell - whilst our infantry have as much to do, as they can desire. Candidly I can give you but little information of what has transpired and would refer you to the papers in which no doubt you will find particulars.

I have, as a signal officer, not been of a great deal of service as the nature of the country will not admit of our working to advantage - yet still I have been constantly with the army and have thus far escaped; although I have not been in the most dangerous places - yet their shells have fallen many times very close to me. We have glorious news from the Army of the Potomac and I hope that it may be true that Grant is driving Lee before him - but what a fearful loss to both armies. A Hearld, which I saw, seemed filled with the names of killed and wounded and our losses here will add considerable to the lists. As I said in my last letter I am sick of war and wish that it was over - but so long as it exists of course I do not wish to be at home.

I rec'd Journal of the 7th this morning. Have you heard from John? Is he safe? Do not neglect to write me. I came into Camp this morning about as dirty a looking object as you could wish to see and I took advantage of my time here and have had a good wash and now enjoying a change of clothes which I can assure you is a pleasure almost beyond imagination.

You must excuse this short letter as I have but little time to spare and must go back to the front. With much love to all at home and remembrances to all my friends.

I am your affectionate Son. I am enjoying first-rate health and am living on "Fat pork and hard tack". I see Doug Patterson often and Will Moorhead is also here, seen him yesterday. He was in charge of an ammunition train moving forward. Pres. Carpenter I heard is here but has not seen him; he is attached to the 18th Corps. If you see Ben McCool ask him why he has not answered my letter.

Camp in the Field, Near Bermuda Hundred, Va.
May 17, 1864

I wrote you last on Sunday whilst the fighting was going on and stated in that letter that I thought we had as much to do as we could desire; it has been verified & I am sorry to say that we have been forced to face back into our entrenchments and that after immense losses. We have as you know been on the move engaging the enemy daily, keeping communication between Richmond and Petersburg cut off. Our last advance was towards the former place and we drove the enemy steadily before us, until within about nine miles of Richmond where on Saturday we met them strongly entrenched in rifle pits with artillery in position protected by heavy earthworks. During that night we had very severe and heavy skirmishing but continuously advancing our lines so that early on Sunday morning the enemy was compelled to abandon his entrenchments which we immediately occupied. These works are of a very formidable character and were erected over a year ago, which fact shows how carefully their Capitol is protected from assaults in all directions. It was a source of the greatest wonder to me why they evacuated their works, but I concluded that they had but a small force and retired only until reinforced which occurred during Sunday and Sunday night, as the cars were heard running all that time between their lines and Richmond.

There was little reply to our firing on Sunday and I felt satisfied that the booming of the cannon and the yells of the Rebels would be heard as the dawn of the following morning would appear. Monday morning came and instead of the customary bright clear weather, it was so foggy, it was impossible to see ten feet ahead and in this fog the enemy fell upon our right in mass and drove everything before them killing~ wounding and capturing a great many. Nearly all of Heckman's brigade was captured (so says reports) as well as he himself and a portion of his staff.

As you can imagine we were at that time, 4 a.m., in rather a predicament not knowing what point might be assailed next. I was with Gen. Turner near our centre behind the earthworks and after the shells commenced passing directly over our heads we thought it about time to get up. At that time only the right was being attacked but of course we did not know at minute they would advance on our position. I got on my horse and started for the right to find out the result of their charge at that point but arrived there only in time to find matters as just stated. I never saw such a

fog and I had to feel my way, in fact could not discern an object only a few feet from me. I found however it was far from safe to go over the same ground as we had the night before, for not only were shells flying around but bullets were "zipping" uncomfortably close and the scribe came to the conclusion that he had better change his tack and move to a more convenient distance which, it is hardly necessary to state, he did. After the right had been turned they changed our centre several times and were repulsed splendidly but with heavy losses on both sides. The fog did not clear up until nearly nine O'clock, when it became evident to the minds of all that a retrograde movement must necessarily be made and the order was issued to that effect. Our troops were gradually withdrawn and the enemy evinced every disposition to take advantage of it, by repeated assaults first at one point and then at another. At this time the fighting was severe, in fact awful, but our troops stood nobly and slowly gave up the ground which, many think, ought not to have been lost. Our forces were brought away in fine order and immediately took positions ready for any attack.

The enemy did not push forward and we returned to Camp that night. Our losses in killed, wounded and missing were heavy yesterday and have been variously estimated from three to four thousand and certainly not much less than the former estimate. It is indeed strange that we, after having obtained such a fine position, behind breastworks where one man was worth two in an open field, should be compelled to fall back and then also before a force which I have no doubt was inferior to ours. That morning orders had been issued and our troops were in readiness to change them and I feel satisfied we could have driven them. But after their assault upon our right and the results, which followed, we acted upon the defensive and finally yielded the ground to them. What we are expected to do now I don't know but I suppose we will be kept busy by occasional advances in order to keep their communications cut - if in the meantime we are not attacked in our present position which is hardly to be expected as we are strongly entrenched in a good position, which would require a large force to drive us from. A larger force than it is all likely they can at present bring to bear upon us, but who knows - they may sacrifice many other places rather than that Richmond should be lost to them. We are all as you can readily imagine anxious to hear from Grant, our latest dates being the 14th and we hope he is still meeting with continued success - and that we may soon hear of his having entered the rebel capitol. What a sacrifice of life and what a loss amongst our general officers, which shows conclusively the great danger to which they exposed themselves and testifies to the bravery of all.

If you were only once in the rear of an army engaged in battle and was an eye witness to the horrible scenes attendant you would wonder as to how men with such sights before them could be so willing to risk their own persons in the same attempt - and what praise can be given those noble men who now lie suffering in the cause of their country and ought not the thought of these things make some men blush at their conduct when crying union - union - they do nothing towards establishing that union? Do not think I am trying to call forth praise in behalf of myself for it is certainly far from my intention but I think it the duty of every young man to be in the army no matter in what capacity or position only so he is there and counts one amongst the number.

I have been in the saddle almost constantly for over a week and as you can judge I am pretty well tired out, last night when I arrived in camp I could hardly sit upright. I have a fine horse and certainly a good one or he would not stand the hard riding to which he has been subjected. This

morning I thought I would not get up but would lie quietly in bed all day as I felt so tired, but I soon got tired of that and instead went to Bermuda Landing about five miles from here in order to have my horse shod. I saw Capt. Atwood with whom I was associated on Folly Island, S. C. and took dinner with him. The roads are in terrible condition - mud nearly up to the axles of the wagons and it is almost an impossibility to get along. I am only afraid Grant may have difficulty from the same cause to get his supplies quickly to him - but I hope it may not be and that he may still push Lee rapidly before him.

I have just been interrupted by an officer who came into my tent & says that Beauregard in front of us was reinforced by a portion of Lee's army and that the latter is now falling rapidly back towards Richmond - but where he got his information is hard to tell - however you know more of what is going on than we here as the papers are slow coming and very irregular. As it is late I shall close. Enclosed- find seven dollars, five to pay expressage on trunk which Mr. Brodie failed to pay and he returned the amount to me, and two dollars of N. Y. money (Which I can't use here) to be given to the boys.

Give much love to Mother Tillie and all the boys and my kindest regards to Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson & family, Mr. Lewis & all my friends, write often and I promise you shall hear often from me. I am well and ought to be in good spirits after having passed safely through the late troubles. I saw Geo. Hill after the fight and he is safe although he lost a great many of his company.

With love to all, I am your affect Son,
Will

Head Qrts. 10 Army Corps, Va.
May 23, 1864

Why do I not hear from home? Everybody gets letters regularly and I am daily doomed to disappointment. To expect the least I think I ought to receive one letter a week with as many more as you may chose to write. Particularly at this time letters from home are so acceptable, now when one it continued excitement, in daily engagement with the enemy and I may say with hardly a moments rest, that a message from home is certainly a welcome visitor. We receive a daily mail from Fortress Monroe and letters are but a couple of days coming and I can hardly think there is an excuse for all of you not writing don't let it be so but try and let us have more frequent communication.

I wrote you last week stating that we had fallen back into our entrenchments and that the enemy was in our front. As you are aware upon our first arrival here we drove the rebs before us after severe and bloody fights and succeeded in cutting the R.R. and telegraphic communication - which was, I think, the sole object of this expedition, but now after these great sacrifices of men the enemy has again full possession of the roads, with communication reestablished and the engines can be distinctly heard puffing as they bring supplies and reinforcements to the confederate armies now in front of Grant and Butler. The losses in our army here have been immense, but even that would not be taken into consideration if our object was gained but it is certainly deplorable to find ourselves, at the end of this time, not only defeated in our plans - but actually hemmed in and menaced at all points - not knowing at what moment an overwhelming

force may be thrown against us and we thereby be compelled to give way and trust as our last refuge to the protection of the gun boats in the James. I hope you will not understand me to consider our position as unsafe, for I only mention that such a catastrophe might meet us, if sufficient force was thrown against us, but whether the Confed. Gov't will feel safe in taking away forces from Lee and send them against us or whether it intends only to make a show in our front to prevent any advance on our part, remains to be seen.

We are strengthening our works daily and the rebels are also fortifying themselves. New batteries are being placed into position daily and rifle pits thrown up in every direction by them. They have made several attempts to carry our works but have thus far been driven back with heavy loss on both sides. They generally make the attacks either at midnight or at daybreak - and nearly every night we are routed up with the most terrific peals of artillery and musketry together with that demonic yell of the rebels but thank God we have thus far been able to resist all. Saturday afternoon they made a desperate attempt to charge us and drove in our pickets and carried a portion of our outer rifle pits - but we charged them and regained nearly all the ground we lost as well as quite a number of prisoners & their wounded - amongst the latter of whom was the rebel Maj. Gen. Walker who had his foot blown off by a shell. He was brought to our Hd. Qrts. but the surgeons did not perform any operation at that time, as he was, they thought, too weak to stand it. What became of him finally I do not know. When the engagement was at its height Gen. Gilmore sent in for all the signal officers in camp to come immediately to the front and open communication along the line of the fortifications. Of course we started immediately and it was but a few moments when we found the enemy's shells bursting in all directions and most uncomfortably close. You can readily suppose that it is more dangerous just back of the entrenchments than close up as the shells are thrown with a view of doing more damage amongst the troops behind than immediately at the front. After getting to the breastworks one feels safe enough as he can sit down protected by heavy banks of earth and is in most danger from shells exploding overhead as it happened that day they passed over us.

Their batteries are from within a mile to a mile & half away and they do not fail to let us know that they still exist but sent their shot with little intermission throughout the day and night. I am strongly under the impression that they will endeavor to drive us from our present position and will do so provided they can accumulate force enough at this point. We are however on the alert and our little army is constantly on the watch and ready for any emergency. I have been unable to get any accounts of our losses since we came here. I have endeavored to find out but was unsuccessful but let me say here that from all accounts they have been fearful and when you read the accts. in papers of our army here being so successful & are accomplishing such great feats - doubt it & ask yourself the question why is that army now behind his entrenchments and unable to advance? But enough - Time will show the victors and till then let us hope that we may be favored with victory not only here but everywhere and that the year 1865 may not usher in upon us thus, with the great work the suppression of the rebellion, still before us.

For the last few days I have been quite unwell - pains in my back and limbs. I am however remaining quiet and expect to be all right soon. The weather is extremely hot and oh how often have I wished that I was back in old Pottsville where I might lie quietly back un-annoyed by this continual firing & excitement. I suppose summer is showing itself with you if not and you desire it, we can spare you some of the heat of which we are having a surplus. The roads here are again

navigable so caused by the heat of the sun - because Butler did not conquer the mud as the newspaper correspondents claim for Grant. Gen. Terry who, I think, was lately in command at Pottsville is here and has his qrts. close by mine. He has been ordered to duty in this corps but has not yet been assigned any command from the fact of his ranking all our Brigadiers here and of course when ordered to duty it will necessarily displace some one of them who are all in favor with the Comdg. Officer, at least that seems to be the reason why he has no position as yet.

Did you get my last letter containing the money I sent to pay expressage etc? Give much love to Mother and all at home. Remember me to Eliza and all enquiring friends and do not let me have to ask you or any of you to write to me for I like to hear from home at all times. I rec'd a letter of yours which had gone to Hilton Head. I have rec'd but one Journal & that an old one since I have been here. Send it.

Hilton Head, S.C.
May 27, 1864

Respected Sir,

Your favor of the 16th came to hand yesterday. I suppose ere this reaches you Lieut. Clemens will have explained the whole matter - as I wrote him about it. The money (five dollars) and trunk were left with me - the trunk to be forwarded to your address - the money to pay the freight.

The day the steamer Fulton sailed for New York I was very busy - and sent the trunk along with some half a doz. others to the express office intending to follow it immediately and pay the freight. It was late before I got to the office & when I did the trunk had gone to the "way bill" could not then be altered. To make the best of a bad business I obtained a receipt for the trunk - enclosed it with the five dollars and sent it at once to William - explaining the whole thing to him, Pray give me credit for being a very stupid fellow at the same time, could I be assured as a consequence of the pleasure it would give me to meet my friend William and hear from you again I would be most willing to repeat the mistake. Please remember me kindly to him. Accept of my respectful compliments - and that heavens' choicest blessings may continually wait upon you and yours is respected sir, the sincere wish of your very humble servant.

Paul Brodie

1st Lieut. Signal Corps, U.S.A.

Mr. Chaso W. Clemens Pottsville,

Schyl Co. Penna.

Curtis House Signal Station James River, Va.
May 1864

"All quiet on the James"- whilst I write- although we are still confronted by the army with which we have been contending during the last couple of weeks. There seems to be, as though it were a mutual understanding between both parties, a willingness to refrain from all firing, except when an advance may be made by either. Our outer pickets are within speaking distance of the enemy's outposts and I have heard they indulge daily in an exchange of sentiment as well as of such luxuries (to them) of coffee and sugar for tobacco etc. It is certainly an interesting spectacle to witness the position of the outposts - here our boys, each in his rifle pit protected by the earth

thrown up in front of him, his watching all movements of the enemy who is in gun shot distance of him also watching the movements on our side. Yesterday afternoon the enemy's works were crowded with the Johnnys anxious to see what might be going on, and they walked and laid about on their works with so much freedom and ease that one could hardly think they were in stones throw of their enemy. We are daily strengthening our works and make no pretensions whatever to advance, but remain contented behind them. What the strength of the army is before us, it would be hard to say, and there are many conjectures as to their movements. I think that a great portion of Beauregard's army has been taken away from here and sent to Lee, which is certainly probable when the present condition of Lee's army is taken into consideration. But I suppose Gen. Butler knows all about the affairs in the rebel army for as the correspondent in his article of the Herald, May 27th says he has a way of finding out everything when others can gain no information. Would that he had possessed that power before ever he landed this army at Bermuda Hundred and results might have been different from what they now are. Read that article in Herald May 27th dated Butler's Hd. Qrts and you can see for yourself how a newspaper correspondent may make a man a hero whether he be or not. In that article it is all 18th Corps and little- very little reference is made to the 10th when the bulk of praise should be given to the latter. It was the 10th, which was last to fall back and then only by order - and it is the 10th, which can prove by its immense losses that they did not fail in their duty. And it was (so says report and also N.Y. Times) Gen. Gillmore commanding the 10th Corps who suggested the strengthening of our fortifications in front of Drury's Bluff to resist any sortie of the enemy - and it was nobody connected with the 10th Corps who said "we are not on the defensive" and who found out in a few hours that had he known that he was on the defensive might possibly have avoided those disasters which his command suffered in consequence. Officers whom I have met and in conversing about the different reports in the papers concerning the movements of this army have told me that the best and most truthful history of it, can be found in the N.Y. Times of 23rd May - either 22nd, 23rd, or 24th but I think it is on the 23rd. I did not read it but have heard it is nearer the truth than anything yet. O.G. Sawyer's despatches to the Herald are a general thing to be relied upon, in fact- we may say truthful in every particular. But when such despatches as that of Herald 27th May - are given as correct in every way, I think it no wonder that the readers begin to doubt all.

The greater parts of our forces have left here. I know where they have gone but I will not say where for fear of this falling into a wrong channel. However before you receive this you will have seen in the papers their destination. I am daily here in communication with the flagship Admiral Lee Commanding squadron and also with the officers along the line of fortifications. This house is an unfinished one and I have my quarters on the porch, one corner being boarded up and have quite a snug room but rather airy. Our lookout is from the top of the house; we have a fine view of the country for miles in all directions except in front of our fortifications, the view in that direction, being interrupted by thick woods. Our fortifications run nearly north and south touching the James on the right (where I am) and the Appomattox on the left. The James is very crooked and in looking towards Richmond we look across it four times in about as many miles.

Richmond lies from my station, 20 degrees west we can distinctly see the tops of a couple of the church steeples. This side of the river is a high bluff and it is here nearly a hundred ft. above the level of the water. The gunboats lie directly below me and send a few shells occasionally towards the enemy's works. The rebel gunboats can be distinctly seen about six miles from here

in a direct line between this point and Richmond. This morning I see two gunboats and one, which I think is a mortar schooner, all of them flying their new flag (which is a pretty one) white with blue and red corner. The country opposite is the most beautiful farmland I ever saw - it is truly magnificent and the scenery is only marred by the earthworks & fortifications of the enemy- which are thrown up in many places. The plantations seem to be in the highest state of cultivation, grain looking beautiful and herds of cattle and droves of horses can be seen in many places quietly grazing - which certainly does not look as though they were impoverished in every locality. As I said we have a fine view of the country across the river and Johnny Reb may be seen doing his guard duty on this fort and digging and entrenching on another officers quarters and encampments here and there through the different roads - and were it not for an occasional shot being fired one would hardly think we were at war.

Nine days have passed by since you wrote last or at least that is the latest dates I have from home. The Journals have all come to hand and was glad to receive them as in them I can get all the news, The weather has been very pleasant the last few days with little rain. It is particularly pleasant here as we have a breeze nearly all the time from off the river.

With much love to all at home,

I am your Affectionate son.

Will

I wrote you some time since that Mr. Brody had neglected to pay expressage on trunk and had returned the money and I enclosed in that letter five dollars to pay it and two dollars for the boys. Did you not receive that letter? Write soon.

Will

In the Entrenchments Near Bermuda Hundred, Va.
June 5, 1864

Had I not just been told that this was Sunday, I would in all probability not have known it until after it had passed by. I was under the impression it was Friday and that it was almost a week since I had last written to you. So you see that even with us the time sometimes flies quickly and days come and go without our knowledge. In my last I was congratulating myself upon having such a pleasant station in comparison to the others but just after I had sent my letter I rec'd orders relieving me from duty there and ordering me to duty on one of the largest batteries along our line and one which was at all times exposed to the enemy's shells. I did not particularly desire to be there but of course must obey orders. The station was erected just behind this work (Battery No.6) and the enemy had perfect range upon it and at any moment of the day or night, a shell might be expected to come tearing through. It was the most miserable place I ever was on - one did not feel safe at any moment for our tents were just behind the works with no protection and just as soon as one shot would be fired in the day or during the night, everyone, officers & men, jumped as quick as lightning from their tents and ran for cover behind the works and in the ditch. Shells passed several times through the station and wounded one of our horses attached close by. It was impossible to rest there as through the day it was too hot, even when they were not firing, and at night we would be routed up so often sleep was out of the question. So I concluded that if there was any way of keeping up communication from another point I would certainly change my location for that one, so day before yesterday I went farther down the line where as yet the enemy have thrown no shells and after climbing a number of trees finally selected one and have

now a station erected on the top of it. It was hard work I assure you for me so little used to it to climb tree after tree in the attempt to discover a clear road which was only obtained after considerable slashing, to the disgust of many who were enjoying their shade - but then the interest of the corps and my own safety must not be overlooked and somebody had to be deprived of some comfort!!!

When I was in Battery 6 a splendid view of the rebels and their works can be had and when looking at them they do not appear to be more than stones throw distant. We have had two or three brisk skirmishes this week, they making the attack and always driven back. A few mornings since at daylight they drove in our pickets and took possession of their pits but we soon drove them back again and captured a Lt. and twenty odd men - besides which we killed a rebel colonel who was shouting as loud as he could "now we have the Yankee-----," which words he had hardly got out of his mouth before he was killed by one of our captains. We brought his body inland. The rebs that afternoon sent in a flag of truce for it, which was given to them together with everything, which was found on it. He was dressed magnificently, in an entirely new uniform of gray and was a fine looking man. He had also a fine gold watch. Papers were found on him from Beauregard ordering him to make the charge that morning. There was also a tailor bill in his pocket for the clothes, which he had amounting to over a thousand dollars on acct of which he had paid four hundred. Rather expensive clothing don't you think so?

Hold I must stop- the enemy has opened on us. I was compelled to stop as the enemy had opened on us with their artillery. They kept a rapid fire for about twenty minutes our batteries replying as fast. They have good range of our works and know just where to throw their shells. It is now quiet. I was on my station and felt satisfied I had moved for their shells burst all around my old place. I was thinking while the firing was going on how different it is with you at home on this Sunday evening, where all is quiet and in the enjoyment of good comfortable places with none of these horrors of war staring you in the face - yet here what else can we expect? What else can we hope for? I should not be at all surprised if we are routed up tonight as it is generally the case when they fire in the afternoon they must give us a few shots during the night. I hope not however as its mighty uncomfortable to be getting up in the middle of the night. Last night however we had a treat and slept till morning without any disturbance.

Some here seem to be under the impression that the enemy has moved a considerable portion from here to reinforce Lee and it may be the case, if the accounts from Grant are correct and I only hope they are - and this year may see the end of the war.

The weather has been very changeable during the last week, with a great deal of rain and the roads are still in good condition for boating. Have you had much rain? Here we have it one day hot enough to roast one and the next wet and cool. Pres. Carpenter is doing duty on a gunboat on the Appomattox, which is about a mile & half from me. He was to see me yesterday and stayed the greater part of the day. He looks well but complaining of the monotony of his life and wants to be ordered ashore. I told him if he would take my advice he would remain where he was comfortable notwithstanding the monotony of his position.

I can't see why it takes so long for my letters to reach home as your letter reached me in two days and will always if you direct Hd. Qrts, 10th Army Corps, via Fortress Monroe, Va. Tell Tim and

Eliza I shall be happy indeed to indulge in chickens etc. when I get home and should I be fortunate enough to get there next fall or the coming winter It shall depend upon their having some of their stock still on hand. They would come pretty handy just at present and think I might enjoy them now as well as then.

Give much love to Mother Tillie and all the boys. Remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson, Mrs. Berryman & Ena, and all my friends. Tell Mrs. P. I had started a letter for her but having been ordered to the front so suddenly was compelled to postpone it. However I will write to her with her permission, I hope soon. Rebs are firing again and I will close. Write soon.

I am your Affect Son. Will.

Remember me to John. Have you heard lately from him? You must excuse this letter written as it is, as I am writing it on a flour barrel in lieu of a table.

In the entrenchments near Bermuda Hundred
June 8, 1864

Dear Father,

I received your letter dated June 4, 1864 last evening and was glad indeed to hear again from home. I wrote you on Sunday last which letter I suppose you have received. You are mistaken as regards the length of time it takes your letters to reach me, because as I told you in my last, that if directed to Hd. Qrts 10th army corps - via Fortress Monroe, they reach me in two days. Your last letter however was a day later it being rec'd by me as I am out here and letters are not sent to us until the next day, they arriving at Head Qrts. the evening before. There is nothing at all that I can write of interest as there is little transpiring and I have already given you a pretty full description of everything and our present position. Little firing has taken place since I wrote you last, but the enemy still seems determined to let us know that they are in our front by sending in a few shells occasionally. This afternoon they fired a few shots, which met with no reply from us. Yesterday we heard heavy firing from the neighborhood of Grants army and also last night about eleven o'clock and I have no doubt but that there was a heavy engagement of which you will be apprised by the papers ere this reaches you. I have as yet received no letters of either party of whom you spoke as having written to me - can not understand, if they have written, why I have not received their letters. The weather the last few days has been pleasant and only hope it may continue so. Excuse me writing more as I have nothing to write of interest. Thought I would write and acknowledge receipt of your letter as also the papers, which were very acceptable. I am in good health and spirits.

With much love to Mother-

I am your Affect. Son Will

In the entrenchments Near Bermuda Hundred, Va.
June 10, 1864

Again with a flour barrel for a desk and lead pencil in lieu of a pen and with little or no material upon which to build even a ghost of letter I write this not for the purpose of giving you startling developments or accts. of brilliant successes to our arms - but in a few words, to let you know I am well and still pushing through the days and nights in one of the most unpleasant places imaginable. Not that the place itself is so unpleasant or that I am debarred from all personal comforts of even a good place to sleep, but that this life, constantly on the quiver behind these

works, not knowing what minute the storm may burst, becomes, as those only know who experiences it, tedious, monotonous and leads one almost to desperation. Yesterday, however, there was a break into the quiet, which we had enjoyed for a couple of days, caused by a terrific shelling which was kept up on both sides for over three hours. We opened upon the enemy's reply and the scene can only be called grand, magnificent etc. by those who witnessed it at a safe distance and out of harm's way - for certainly to those who were exposed, it did not appear so poetical. Night before last two brigades of infantry, & one brigade Cavalry with two pieces of artillery left here and crossed the Appomattox and pushed forward towards Petersburg. They advanced to within a few miles of that city, (the skirmishes of the enemy falling back before them) when they discovered that they were confronted by a very force which was entirely too strong for them to meet and our troops fell back returning to camp last night. They had some little fighting - we lost one of the guns and the other was brought back disabled. We captured one 12 H Brass Piece and carriage, which was taken, past my quarters this a.m. The object of the move, I think, was merely a reconnoissance to ascertain if the enemy was there in much force. It is indeed wonderful how they move their troops about - for go where we will, we always find them ready. They move it seems, with the most wonderful alacrity and the same troops are made to fight two different armies in one day. There is little use expatiating on this subject, as it has already become proverbial.

We get the papers, every evening of the day previous and of course are kept well posted in all the news, war and political. Grant, it seems is, as we, at a stand still and as the Herald says, we must not anticipate a too speedy entrance into Richmond from the fact that now no little engineering skill must be displayed before we can overcome all the difficulties which confront that army. Anyone can easily perceive, if he gives it a moments thought, that it will be no small matter to take Richmond surrounded as it is by the fortifications which have been daily strengthened for the last three years and its downfall and capture can only be accomplished with terrible loss to both parties; but I believe in Grant and think that with the same determination which has thus far characterized him to lead him ahead - he will be able before many days to say to the world, I have Richmond - and how many anxious thousands breathe with me the same prayer that he may do so. We here listen with the most intense anxiety to the distant thunder of the guns on one night when the two armies of Grant and Lee comes into contact and sometimes great fear is manifested by all as the sounds at times grow more distant and we hear one say "can it be that Grant is falling back" another says "No, there is an attack on another part of the line" and many like remarks, then as the thunder comes more distinct no little feeling of delight is manifested in the countenances of all - and the confidence all have in the hero of Vicksburg etc. remains unshaken. We here in our present position are waiting for something to turn up and until the rebels in our front attempt to drive us from this, you will hear little news from this section for we will not, with out present force, make any advances.

The weather has been delightful for the last few days, the sun very warm but then we have had a fine cool breeze during the day, whilst for the last few nights we have been able to sleep comfortable until daylight after which time, one must be a better sleeper than I am, to remain in bed, to be nearly eaten up by the flies; I believe I always had the reputation at home of being rather slow about getting up in the morning, it may be so, but here it is not so, for at day break, I am up and about ready for my coffee and pork at any time after that. I wish you would send me

an occasional Phila. paper whilst the great Fair is in session in order to see what others see there as well as incidents transpiring in connection.

Well here I have gone on and written just four times as much as I expected - but when started once - it is hard to stop. You must excuse my writing this with pencil, for I know it will be somewhat difficult for you to read, but I have no pen or ink, and you will have to cypher out as much as you can. I wonder if those parties who said they wrote to me directed their letters properly - for I get yours all in good season. Remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Patterson and the Rev. Mr. Lewis as well as all my friends. Give much love to Mother and all. Kiss Tim, Frank and Jim for me - and tell them I want them to be good boys. Tell Eliza I often think of her and her good things, which she has so often made for me. Write soon and believe me.

Your affect. Son

In the Entrenchments Near Bermuda Hundred, Va.
June 15, 1864

When this reaches you, you will have heard some startling developments from this neighborhood - for another of the grand flank movements has been made by Grant and his army is here and in the vicinity. That this has been made the present base of operations against Lee's army is certain and an attempt will now be made in a new direction to accomplish what has heretofore been attempted with not the most flattering success.

Grant arrived here yesterday and I understand that all the army of the Potomac is with him although I have not as yet seen any of it. We have been considerably reinforced by troops from Ohio, 100 men, during the last few days and they have already been assigned positions behind our works. Our troops are now on the move towards Petersburg and I am momentarily expecting to hear the thunder of the guns and the roll of musketry. I am still on my old station with little to do, which only makes it more tiresome. If a general move is made I suppose I will be ordered with some portion of the troops and would not be surprised to receive orders to do so at any moment. I should very much like to come across the ninth corps and meet John I shall watch for that corps and if I find it will hunt him up and I may possibly be able to do him some favor or other. I have little else to communicate and you must wait for further developments in order to receive an interesting letter from me. I know nothing of what is going on or what is on foot, beyond that which I have already told you, namely that the army of the Potomac is here and that the fighting for the next few weeks will be done in this vicinity. I would tell you much of the results of the campaign before Richmond but refrain for fear that some persons might think I exaggerated in my statements. Time will show all truthfully and posterity will do justice to those to whom justice is due. Suffice it to say Gen. Grant is here and I anticipate far different results from this time forward than has heretofore been the case and I sometimes firmly believe that we will be successful and accomplish that which will tend so a great measure to bring this rebellion to an end. However say nothing about what I have intimated for fear that some persons might think I presented a rather gloomy account - but then as I said time will show plainly to all the exact positions held during the whole campaign as well as the results attendant. I have rec'd no letters or papers except those which I have already acknowledged. I had supposed I would receive your regular Saturday's letter but have thus far been disappointed. Those persons who you said had written to me must have directed their letters wrongly or I should have rec'd them. I am in first-

rate health and in good spirits - am anxious as usual to hear often from home. We have had all week quite cool weather and very pleasant but today it is hot. With much love to Mother and all at home.

I am your Affect. Son.

Will

Write soon. Do not exhibit this letter, as there can be found at all times someone who would find fault with its contents. Better destroy it than show it.

In the Entrenchments Near Bermuda Hundred, Va.

June 18, 1864

Our little band which has been holding this line of works for the last two weeks, whilst the balance of our army were fighting Lee beyond the Chicahominy, has been considerably augmented during the last few days; for not only have Butler's forces returned, but they have brought with them the great army of Grant and from this point it is expected that the march to Richmond will be accomplished with far less difficulty than has been the case when the base of operations was on the North side of the James. I have much to write about and much to say of what I have heard from those who have had their "fighting" dealt out to them for the last month and half, more regularly than their daily rations, but I am afraid I shall fail in writing you an interesting letter tonight as I feel very little like writing and am far more prone to talking with those who have seen and gone through so much during the late movements of Grant. Well - instead of looking towards Richmond over the old battle grounds of McClellan you must now turn your eyes to South side of the James, to hear of deeds of valor, where the great armies now lie opposed to each other, each ready and willing as at all times to sacrifice their lives to establish the right. The paper copies of which I have with me, have already given you full accounts of the late move of Grant's army from the White House and other points to this vicinity, the manner in which it was done and its success without loss -and you will no doubt have received full particulars of the late fights here, when this reaches you. The 2nd, 5th, 9th, & 18th corps landed on the south side of the Appomattox and have been advancing on Petersburg for the last two days, and although I am here but a couple of miles from them and can see the smoke and hear the thunder of the guns as well as the rolls of musketry. I cannot tell you at the present moment what success has thus far attended our arms. I know this, that we have driven them from a number of their lines of works, capturing many pieces of artillery until we are but a very short distance from that city, but what we have accomplished which will red to our credit I am unable to say. There has been desperate fighting during the last two days, we have torn up the RR in several places and have done considerable damage in all directions, but we are still not in possession of Petersburg.

It seems strange that we here in sight of the fighting should know little of the results, yet still it is so and it is next to impossible to arrive at the truth there being so many reports in circulation and we have a fresh account every half hour of the day and they are very rarely anything near the truth. The sixth corps in which is the 96th are here behind our works. I have seen several Pottsville boys who are in the 67th but have met none of the 96th as they have not passed near my station and I being unable to leave could not hunt them up. I told you in my former letters that the rebs had strong positions in our front from which they shelled and made those desperate assaults upon us. They evacuated their line night before last and yesterday morning there was not

a Johnny to be seen in our front. We immediately advanced our skirmishes and found they had gone bag and baggage. A force was then set to work to level their fortifications, which were far inferior to ours, whilst a portion of our troops advanced considerable distance where they met the enemy and had some little work but they were evidently in small force and it did not amount to much. After we had leveled their works to the ground which was about four o'clock yesterday afternoon, they charged our pickets and drove our forces back and put their batteries on their old line, immediately opening upon us. Our batteries replied and a brisk cannonading was kept up for more than an hour, when it ceased, they still occupying their ground. During the night our batteries did not fire a shot and this morning showed us their old line of works rebuilt and as far as I can judge higher and stronger than they were before. Why we allowed them to do it I, as well as all, can not understand, but it may be that this is part of the strategy, to allow them to do so whilst other and more important movements are going on in other directions. I hope it maybe so and that nothing will be attempted by our forces towards our front. The sixth corps was taken to our front this morning at three o'clock for the purpose of making a charge, but the order was countermanded and they came within our works at daylight - much to the satisfaction of many, for they say they have had so much of that they have little desire for more. The fighting in the army of the Potomac must have been unparallel in the history of warfare and officers and men, with whom I have conversed and who have been in all our greatest battles, say that they never experienced anything like it or saw such a destruction of life. The accounts of our losses, which all give and which are freely discussed amongst all here from the highest in authority to the privates, would astonish you and would if I mentioned the figures brand me ignobly in the estimation of those who are so loud in their cries of "on to Richmond"; There are regiments now lying a few rods from my tent who started out on this campaign with over three and four hundred men, who have now, ninety, a hundred and some one hundred and fifty muskets and commanded by Cpts. and, in some instances of which I have heard, by Lieuts - the officers all having been either killed or wounded. Garrett (son of Squire Garrett) who saw the 96th yesterday told me that Col. Lessig said he had but a little over a hundred men for duty!!!! - And as I said if I were to mention our losses by the number given here the people of Pottsville would not believe me - yet still it is astonishing to see these men who have been fighting & marching nearly every day for the last month and a half, carrying nothing but the clothes they have on, ragged and dirty and almost worn out with fatigue. I say it is astonishing, how nobly they keep up their spirits and are just as willing to fight today as ever, only that they all say they do not desire to continually be changing the enemy's works but that they may meet them on the open field and I would to God that they could for I believe that with this army which we now have here in a fair and open fight, where neither had the advantage we could drove the whole rebel confederacy into the Gulf of Mexico. But you must bear in mind that we have been continually attacking them behind their fortifications and open their own chosen grounds and being the invading army must necessarily labor under the greatest disadvantage. There is no question can be raised as to whether either party will not fight, for all that man can do has been done by all under Grant and the most vivid imagination can not picture to any one the scenes which have been witnessed by the participants in the late conflicts. "Horror upon horrors accumulate" and every one has his right to offer in relation to scenes which came under his own immediate observation.

There are many now in the north who still object to the niggers being converted into soldiers and do not think they should be clothed with our uniforms etc. If those persons who think so would only come into the army and take their places no one would have nay objections, but if not let

them remain silent. I have always been of the opinion that if the life of one nigger will save that of a white man, let him be sacrificed and I would like to find a soldier who would be unwilling to be in the second line with Negro troops in the front to bear the fiercest of the conflict! During the late fights before Petersburg the Negroes have won praise from all and by their conduct have convinced many, who opposed them heretofore, that they can fight when offered a fair show. The colored troops made several charges and captured several pieces of artillery and some prisoners - they rushed into the charges with the cry of "Remember Fort Pillon" and well did many of them remember it, as the mutilated bodies of many a rebel showed. The rebs show no mercy to any of them who are caught "but butcher them without mercy. One instance, which I was told by an officer who saw it was they captured a Negro and after bayoneting him to death built fires on him and burnt him up!!! - I would curse them if they did not retaliate on every rebel they catch they did retaliate & not a few of the Johnnies were seen hanging to the trees and bayoneted by the roadside. Is it not right for these men who having been put into the service, as soldiers by the government and fighting in the common cause should be treated as such and if when falling into the hands of the enemy be compelled to submit to such tortures, that they should find some means of redress? I only wish we had about three hundred thousand Negroes here now under arms and let them charge the enemy's works and if they failed then let the white troops finish it.

Everything is quiet now (11 p.m.) and there is not a sound to disturb the quiet, the moon is shining brightly and it is almost like day. It is too quiet and too beautiful tonight and it only makes me more fearful of the coming morrow - as the calm which precedes the storm - when the dawn of day may be ushered in upon us with the heavy thunder of our artillery dealing death and destruction everywhere. There will be thousands of good lives offered up on our country's altar during the next few days and it makes me shudder to think of the consequences and oh if this sacrifice of life would only bring a speedy termination to this rebellion our losses would be soon forgotten and we can only hope that it may soon be brought to an end. As it is getting late and I am sleepy and tired, I shall not finish this 'til morning.

Contrary to all expectations it is very quiet this morning and only an occasional gun can be heard in the neighborhood of Petersburg. The weather is extremely hot and although there is quite a breeze stirring yet still it is sultry and one feels almost incapacitated for any kind of duty. I have of course not yet met John as the ninth corps is on the left, across the Appomattox but expect that I shall soon see him, I will either hunt him up or he will find where I am and if he can get away will come to see me. Ed Lewis is here but I have not seen him. He is with the division surgeon and their Hd. Qrts. are not with the troops - but some distance back. I was glad to hear that Tillie had been invited to visit the great Fair at Phila and she certainly must feel grateful to Mrs. Patterson who is indeed the best of Ladies and who has at all times shown so much kindness to each and all of us. Remember me kindly to her and also to Mr. Patterson and say that although I have neglected writing to her, that she must consider all my letters home as much to her as anyone. Also remember me to Mr. O'Connor and say if I have a good opportunity I would be pleased to write to him. Give much love to Mother and all the boys and hoping you write often I am your Affect. Son.

I am glad you found Dick after having been lost. Why did you not write that he was missing? It is all right as I get in the same letter the news of his loss and his recapture!

Hd. Qrts 1st Division 10th Army Corps Entrenchments near Bermuda Hundred, Va.
June 25, 1864

I would have written you some days before this, but was deterred until this afternoon when I thought sufficient time had elapsed since my last writing and concluded I would do so even though it was a short letter. To begin with, let me say that we are, here, nearly burnt up and it is impossible to arrive at the least degree of comfort on accounts of the very hot weather. We are now having the hottest weather I can ever remember to have experienced and everything is literally parched up and the dust covers everything; whilst in the roads one is nearly choked with it - oh - how often we have all wished that it would only rain when we might have some relief. I am now very comfortably located and expect to remain here at least for a month, if we are not driven out by the rebs. I am at General Terry's, running a station in communication with the entrenchments, Gen. Brookes Hd Qrts, and the gun boats on the James; three different directions. I have not a great deal to do, but of course must be always present. I moved in from my old station in the entrenchments yesterday and am now about three quarters of mile back of them. My life here is again a change to civilization as of course the staff and all hands whilst lying in camp, live as men and have all the comforts one could desire. We have our elegant mess, composed of about fourteen officers including the Gen. and the table is served with everything, which can be obtained. I of course would be satisfied to remain, but then signal officers don't generally remain long in one place.

On Wednesday last Pres Carpenter and I went over to Grants army and visited the front. We were to see the 48th but they were at the time in the advance and as there was heavy skirmishing going on at the time we did not get to see many of the boys. Saw Lt. Col. Pleasants who is now commanding his Brigade and took dinner with him - also saw Charley Evans and John. John is well but looks rough as all do who have been with Grant during this campaign. It would be useless for me to attempt any description of the country in which our army now is, or the results of the late conflicts before Petersburg, as the N.Y. Papers contain such full and interesting accounts, that I can do no more than refer you to them, We are still before that city and our position there was obtained only by a great loss of life - and the city itself can not be taken without a similar result as the enemy seems to have determined to make desperate resistance to any advance on our part - yet we feel hopeful of success and believe that we will accomplish our object.

The Rebel gunboats came down in force (2 ironclads) the other day but after firing for a couple of hours retired without having done any damage. Our monitors returned their fires briskly but without any result worth mentioning. Firing is still kept up in our front but has been confined altogether to artillery - Longstreet's Corps is now in our front. A deserter who was here this afternoon says that Lee has his Hd. Qrts. there also and the other day when the firing was going on two of our shells passed through his tent, but did not hurt anyone. He says Lee immediately moved a little farther off. I never felt less like writing and you must excuse this hastily written epistle. It is really too warm to do anything whilst the flies are bad enough to set one almost crazy.

I have no doubt received all your letters and papers thus far. My last letter from you I rec'd the beginning of the week. Your letters etc. come through direct and without delay.

Give much love to Mother and all.

Write soon and believe me to be your affect. Son.

Direct your letter as usual Signal Corps Hd. Qrts. 10th Army Corps Via Fortress Monroe.

Head Quarters 2nd Division 9th A.C.
Near Petersburg Va. June 28, 1864 Tuesday evening

I will write you a short letter this evening knowing how anxious you are at all times to hear from me. I wrote you a few days ago since then nothing of any great interest has transpired. The Army is on the secure line seiging Petersburg; how soon we will take it I cannot say. We are not however trying very hard for it. Grant is resting his Army and I can assure you they require it bad enough. I do not see how the men can stand such hard fighting, marching and exposure day after day. I know it would soon break me down were I in the ranks. How thankful I can be that I am where I am. I have a great deal to do - am busy most of the day. I am at present chief clerk in the Adjutants Generals Office of this Division, Quite a responsible position. There are two others in the same office with me and I exercise a general supervision over all, see that the orders are properly written, registered and forwarded; that the reports are made out at the proper time and correctly. I do not write a great deal myself as the other two are rapid and neat penman. All work that is to be done in this office first passes through my hands, and I am responsible for its completion and delivery. We moved our Head Quarters since my last letter about three quarters of a mile further back from the line. We could not live where we were, the bullets flew around us in every direction and the day we moved one of our staff officers had a favorite horse shot. It was tied immediately in the rear of my office. I was writing at the desk at the time but the bullet passed directly over my head. We were not long in moving after that.

We occupy now a fine large house; the General and staff are in tents under the large trees that surround it. We have the parlor for our office. The General uses the dining room, sitting room and kitchen for their mess. The house is all torn to pieces with shot and shell, every window is broken and the furniture all destroyed. There was a fine piano but the soldiers knocked it to pieces and it is worthless. From the window where I have my desk I can plainly see the rebel lines. Yesterday they amused themselves by throwing shells at the colored troops of this corps just as they are marching in front of our quarters. Several burst but a short distance from us. They did no damage however more than wounding one or two colored men, and killing one horse. The Negroes of our Corps have not as yet been engaged. I do not see why they hold them back, surely they are no better than the white soldiers; they are a motley looking mass. I do not envy any officer who holds a commission over them.

Yesterday evening we had a light rain and it has been quite cool all day and this evening it is uncomfortably so. We are having delightful weather and it is a great blessing for the troops that it is so. I saw today in a Journal of last Saturday a notice of the death of Curt Pollock. I could scarcely contain myself when I read it, I was so shocked and greaved. Pollock was a noble fellow, a brave, fearless and efficient officer, always in the foremost rank in battle; leading on his gallant men. In the death of Lieut. Pollock the country loses one of its best and bravest officers, and I one of the best friends I had in the army. He would do anything in his power for me and I

am sorry that he has been called so soon to his God; he was too good to live. It is dreadful to contemplate the great loss of life during this war, of that it may soon come to an end.

I am well, am in good health, although I never am so stout in summer. I cannot stand such hot weather, as most persons, I am living very well. We clerks have a fine mess. I don't want clothing of any kind. Am abundantly supplied with everything, but am much obliged to you for inquiring. My tour of service is rapidly drawing to a close. I have less than three months to serve. I tell you that is something different than three years. I expect to find you all well and happy when I come home in the fall, and in business. Then I can remain with you and assist you all I can. I would like to be sitting this evening with you all in the parlor. I am sorry Dick is lost. I know Eliza will miss him very much. Eliza must have three chickens good and fat for me, for she knows how much I enjoy them. I will not close this letter until the morning. Perhaps I will get a letter tonight. The mail has been sorted. There was no letter for me. I suppose Tillie is still in the city. Give her my love when you write.

With much love to you all

I remain your affectionate son

Hd. Qrts. 1st Division 10th A.C.
Near Bermuda Hundred July 3, 1864

As nearly a week has elapsed since I last wrote you and more time since I rec'd any news from home I thought I would this morning inform that I was still in the land of the living. You need not expect much of a letter as I have nothing to write about, as we here at this Head Qrts. are leading a quiet and retired life with nothing but an occasional booming in the direction of Petersburg to relieve the monotony. You are kept fully apprised of all that transpires in the daily papers as we here, for we are compelled to wait for N.Y. papers to find out what has been going on in our immediate vicinity. We hear of important events as they transpire and result but then the particulars can only be had by recourse to the special correspondents. Petersburg as yet is not in our possession nor do I suppose Grant desires that if he can surround the place and cut off their communications. Fighting, as you are well aware, is going on at all times, resulting in losses in comparison. You have heard no doubt of the disaster to the 2nd Corps which by some mishap became divided and so many prisoners being taken by the enemy besides the loss of killed and wounded as accounts have been published. Kantz who started out on another of his raids some time since has been unfortunate and has suffered very heavy losses in killed, wounded & missing besides a large number of pieces of artillery. The accounts which are given at these Hd. Qrts. are that he was to return by a certain road and he would find one of our Corps there to protect him, but unfortunately when returning he found there instead of our troops- a corps of the rebels and his forces were compelled to get out the best way they could - hence the losses. He had destroyed nearly forty miles of RR however and if he had had the assistance required, which possibly could not be rendered him at the time, his raid would have been successful in every particular.

Lt. Morrell signal officer and who was with us in the Dept south was wounded at Petersburg on Friday and had his leg amputated. He was about to report to some General and was looking for him at the time he was shot. He had dismounted and was standing in the fortifications when a rebel sharp shooter fired at and struck him in the leg, breaking the bones so badly that amputation immediately was rendered necessary. He was one of the oldest and best officers of

our party - beloved by all and his loss to the corps cannot easily be replaced. He was a young married man and from N. Hampshire. I hope that he will be able to retain his position and thereby be sure of a livelihood. He has been sent north and was doing well at last accounts. Journal of yesterday week was rec'd and in it I noticed the account of Curt Pollock's death. I was astonished to hear it, but I had heard he was dangerously wounded. This it is. You at home can hardly know the results and feel them as we do here - for our acquaintance is so extensive that we hear almost daily of some of our friends either killed or wounded. I could hardly count the number of my friends who have thus met their fate and so many of them the best and most noble men I ever met.

The weather still continues very hot and we have as yet had no rain, which we need so badly. It is a little cloudy as I write and am in hopes that it may rain today. The flies are almost insufferable and it almost a torture to write this. I told you I was comfortably located at present. We have a splendid mess and the table is supplied with about as much as can be had on the tables north this time of the year. Dinner is now getting ready and I give you a bill of fare. Roast lamb, roast beef, new potatoes, string beans, cut cabbage, beets, peas, pickles of various kinds, bread & toast with coffee, tea, or chocolate, and almonds & raisins for dessert. We have any quantity of ice and have ice water at all times. So you can see that while so many thousands are now suffering for the want of something beyond the ordinary rations of a soldier and are undergoing so many hardships, we here are so plentifully supplied with everything. There are fourteen officers with the General (Terry) in the mess and by very little more than it costs one man per month when living alone, we can together have all these luxuries. I do not expect to remain here longer than until the middle of this month - as I have taken the place of another officer, a protégé of the General's who is now absent. I was personally acquainted with Gen. Terry and all his staff whilst in the south which made it very pleasant for me upon my arrival here.

Tomorrow will be the fourth of July the day for the boys to fire their crackers and the army here, may be, to fire salutes but not as in olden times with blank cartridges. I should not be at all surprised if the armies of Grant & Lee should both fire their salutes in honor of the day but with the muzzles of the guns pointed towards each other. For ammunition, although we may have tons of it, yet it should not be wasted nor do I think it will but that shells will be placed in front of the powder in case of any firing. I am indeed sorry that in my last letter home I did not send the boys money for the fourth to expend in crackers etc. and fire them for me as I could not be at home - but I forgot it and as I said am extremely sorry that I did. However I shall send them some soon and then it will be saved for them. Give my love to all of them and tell them I think of them often particularly the youngest ones. Are they good boys and do they all attend school regularly? If they could only comprehend what great advantages they will have in after life by close application to their studies, I do not think they would allow an idle moment to pass away. In the army here it is so clearly and fully demonstrated and every day we hear of instances of officers in regts. who are attached and obtain finer and easier positions, and are thus relieved from those arduous duties incident to the life of a line officer and simply because of ability and education. And although I myself have not the most secure position, yet still I think I am far more comfortable situated than thousands of others. I have many times wished that I had, when the opportunity was offered, applied myself more closely and diligently to my studies and I at this time would have had a far better one than I now hold. If the boys could only understand this and be made to feel that all depends upon their own exertions I think they would not neglect their

advantages and if they tried hard I believe there are some of them who have the natural talent which when developed would place them amongst the great men of our country. I would love to see them in after life occupying these positions and as I said it only depends upon them to place them there. Try and impress this on their minds and endeavor to keep them in view of the future that they may not only be a benefit to themselves but to others.

I shall close with much love to Mother and all at home don't forget Eliza. Remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Patterson & family - also to all my lady friends. I rec'd a letter from B. McCool - she desired me to inform you of the fact!!!

I have not rec'd a letter from you for some time. I believe the last letter I got was that one in which you informed me of Tillie having gone to Phila.

If you direct your letters to:

Lt. W.W.C "Signal Officer", Head Qrts.

1st Army Corps via Fortress Monroe, Va.

I will get them in two days. Any other direction is superfluous.

Hoping I may hear from you soon.

I am your Affectionate Son Will

Signal Station on the James River
July 7, 1864

As I told you in my last letter I did not think I would remain long at Gen. Terry's Head Qrts. but I did not think I would move so soon - not before a week or two yet at the least however yesterday I got orders to take charge of this station, relieving an officer who has been on duty for some time here. This station is on the James about one third of a mile below my old station at the Curtis House from which place I wrote you whilst on duty there. It is however more dangerous here than it was at the C. House as the enemy has erected several large and powerful batteries just in our front for the purpose of operating against the fleet which lies directly down in the river from me. When the rams came down and attacked the gun boats these batteries assisted them, but firing as they were at the boats but few shells fell near the station, whilst now directly in front of the station we have erected a battery in the water's edge, in which is a hundred-pounder, and other smaller guns and when this fact is discovered by the rebels, we may expect a lively time as the station is in a direct line with both batteries. In such a case we think it would be safest on the top of the station, which is a strong one and has three natural trees for the uprights and even though one was struck yet still it would not fall. It is fifty feet high and it does not seem as though it would be a pleasant place under such circumstances~ but I am expected to be there in case of any firing in order to direct the fire of the Monitors from which the effect can not be seen. This is also an important lookout and we can see the country for miles around - and we must report all movements of troops, the iron clad rams, wagon trains etc. This is the most lone-some place I have been on yet as there are no visitors which seems to make it feel the more isolated.

Matters and things in this neighborhood as well as around Petersburg are in status quo and there is little or nothing going on of importance that is as far as I have heard. Deserters are coming in daily from the rebs in our front and they give generally a rather gloomy account of affairs, but

everyone of those whom I have seen were as fine looking fellows as any of ours and notwithstanding the fact that their daily ration has been brought down to the lowest notch they all appear healthy and are remarkably robust and stout. I asked one of them the other day to show me his allowance for one day, which had been given him that morning, and it consisted of one piece of cooked bacon weighing about three ounces, besides which they get a piece of corn bread and this is what the rebel soldiers are living on. What would our boys say if they were brought down to that? But this won't happen so long as this war continues.

Many of these deserters seem to think that the war will not last long and that the rebels will not be able to hold out much longer - and I only hope it is so and that his war may be then brought to an end.

I suppose you have seen that the appointments in the Signal Corps have been confirmed. Before the appointments were sent to the senate there was, I understand, a board convened, which made a considerable change in affairs as regards to rank etc. and the appointments now have created no little dissatisfaction amongst some. In the beginning of the war there was no organization of the Corps and officers were detailed from their regiments holding their same rank as acting signal officers. Afterwards there was a board of examination authorized and those who passed were transferred by the President into the corps and appointments given them dating back to March 3, 1863. All received appointments of the same rank as they held in their Regts. or were promoted. Thus, some who were 2nd Lt. or 1st. Lts. in their Regts. were made 1st Lts. or Capts. in the regular Corps. Between that time however of their receiving their appointments and the confirmation by the Senate, this revising board was convened (so I am told) and a complete change was made in the appointments. As far as I can understand there were more officers than would be confirmed and as a consequence some would have to fall - and when the full complement of Capts. was made up those on the tail end were made 1st Lts., and the 1st Lts. made 2nd Lts. I know officers who held the rank of 1st Lt. ever since they have been in the corps and have now only been confirmed, as 2nd Lts. Davy Patterson has always been a 1st and had that appointment, but is down the list amongst the 2nd Lts. I have not seen him since but I hardly think he will be likely to accept it, as some officers would not remain in the service under the circumstances.

Capt. Norton the Chief. Signal Officer of the Dept of Va. & N.C. who expected to rank high amongst the Captains finds himself superseded by quite a number some of whom have heretofore been acting as his juniors and he certainly is not much pleased. I of course could not expect to be far up the list as I was about the last examined and entered the corps the latest. I feel satisfied that I have been confirmed and am not disappointed in the least in regard to my rank, but there are others who have been lowered in rank and on them the disappointment falls. You can see in the papers the positions held by all the officers in their respective regiments and their rank now in the corps. With few exceptions these officers have been connected with this branch of the service for nearly three years and of course many were anxious for promotion, but instead some have been lowered.

The fourth of July has passed away and with us it was a quiet one. We fired from our batteries the national salute and as I said I thought it would be with shells, but we received no reply from the enemy - they being not so patriotic and may be compelled to be saving with their

ammunition. The weather has been and is still warm but whilst I am writing 3 p.m. it is clouding up with appearance of rain and oh how grateful we would be if it would rain for a few hours as everything is so parched up and covered with dust.

I received your letter containing one from Tillie whilst in the city as also last Saturday's Journal - which I rec'd on Monday. I am well and desire to hear often from home - have not

I am your Affect. Son Will

From all I could learn of Col. Bennett after the fight I believe he was taken prisoner without being wounded. This seemed to be the general impression amongst all who were with him. Remember me to Charley Bennett and ask him why he never wrote to me. We had news last night that the "Kearsage" fought the "Alabama" off Cherbourg, France, sank her and took seventy prisoners - but that Semmes escaped. You will no doubt have heard of it by this time if true. If it is so, it is good news as the Alabama has been a terror to many of our merchantmen.

On the James River
July 19, 1864

Your letters one dated 9th and the other 12th have both been received although somewhat delayed on the way on account of the movements of a portion of the Confederate army in the vicinity of Washington & Baltimore and it was in some degree a reason for my not having written to you sooner as I thought that if communication was cut off it were better that I would wait a few days than have it delayed on the road. But it was as I expected, not of long duration, for it would be no small undertaking for the Rebs to endeavor to maintain a threatening position in that locality; but it has been, no doubt as they expected, be successful raid into a rich country to obtain supplies etc. for the army and citizens in the neighborhood of Richmond - and from all the accounts in the papers we find that they did obtain immense numbers of cattle, horses, etc. besides a considerable amount of money from levies made upon the people whom they wish. It is indeed a pity that they are still able to come so close to our own homes but I think that raids of this kind will tend to bring the people of the north more to the realization that there is a war than anything else - and it is with thousands who can only be brought to this realization when their pockets are touched and patriotism, love of country etc. sink into insignificance when brought into comparison with the almighty dollar. These raids, together with the commutation clause repealed, ought certainly fill up the ranks of our army and I only hope that such will be the case, when we may bring this rebellion to a speedier end. But enough I have not time to expatiate on this subject nor do I desire to.

During the last week I have been on board the Monitor "Onondaga" on duty but left them last night and resumed my old place on the tower. On the Monitor I had an exceeding pleasant time - the officers treating me in the best manner possible. I mess in the wardroom and had one of the staterooms. The "Onondaga" is the largest monitor afloat having two revolving turrets and carries two fifteen inch Dahlgren guns throwing a solid shot of 460 lbs. and two two-hundred pounder rifled Parrots. It was my first visit to a vessel of this kind and of course was much

interested in all its parts~ making a tour and examination of everything. I shall not attempt a description as you have seen and read so much, which has been published of them.

As you are well aware all hands live under the water - the decks of the vessel being but a few inches above - and you may well suppose that during this weather it is somewhat hot below and were it not for numerous blowers allover the vessel it would be impossible to live there - but the blower engines are kept constantly at work and a strong current of air is all times passing through the ventilators. Notwithstanding this it is exceedingly warm and almost impossible to sleep at night. Besides which the mosquitoes are as busy and active as ever, enough to almost carry one away clothier and all!!!

The Onondaga is commanded by, Capt. Smith who has also commands of the fleet in the absence of the admiral. He is an old officer and has been in the service nearly half a century. He is a good officer and if he had had command in the first place instead of Lee, I think a great deal more would be accomplished - but under existing circumstances there is little left for him to do. Night before last a despatch came aboard from Gen. Grant that an attack was expected from the enemy along our whole lines at daylight the next morning, as a consequence all hands were piped to quarters and the ship put in all readiness for a fight. We remained at quarters all night until daylight when we found that no attack was to be made - so ended this little scare. I found it very pleasant indeed aboard the monitor as one can keep perfectly clean and can have a good table to sit down to at mealtime - but then it is tiresome and monotonous. It is very probable that I shall go back there again in a few days as the officer now there wishes to change with me and I think I will do so. I do not anticipate remaining there long if I do go.

Lt. Morrell, of whom I wrote you last as having had his leg amputated, has since died. Lockjaw set in, although in not a very severe form, and he died fifteen days after he was shot perfectly conscious to the last moment. Here was a fine fellow and a good signal officer and his death is deeply regretted by all who knew him. We are having this morning a glorious rain and indeed how thankful we ought to be as it has been so many weeks since we have had rain previous to this - everything was literally parched up, whilst the dust was insufferable but now it is lovely out and the trees put me in mind of early spring on account of their first appearance. Many a poor soldier feels grateful for it - it has been raining all morning hard but it looks now as though it was nearly through.

The enemy has been troubling our shipping in the river between this point and Bermuda Hundred, by firing upon them from batteries on the shore. They have thus far disabled no vessels, but have killed and wounded several on board one of the gen. boats. The boats still make their regular trips up and down the river although there is an evident determination on the part of the rebels to interfere with transportation up and down the James. How far they will succeed is hard to say, but I think they will not be able to affect much although they may cause considerable trouble to our transports.

More obstructions are not being placed in the river, which seems to imply that little dependence can be placed upon our fleet in case the Rams should come down - and hence the preventative - old Schuylkill Canal boats half filled with stones are to be sunk in addition to the vessels already sunk. Five of the boats came last night and twenty five more are expected - which when once

down will take considerable powder to displace. Excuse the rambling letter as it was written in great hurry as you can judge by the writing. I am glad to hear that Kate & Gerty were expected to visit Pottsville.

Give my love to them when they come and say to Mrs. McNeely that we feel grateful to her for her kindness to Tillie whilst in the city.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all at home.

I am your affectionate son, Will

I rec'd the Journal of 9th. Write soon.

On Board the Iron Clad "Onondaga" James River Flotilla
July 24, 1864

This being Sunday afternoon and having nothing to do (Which is generally the case every day) I thought I would write you to inform you of my whereabouts as well as my condition. I believe I wrote you before that I had been on this vessel on duty, but had been relieved at the time of my last writing. Day before yesterday I was ordered here again and am comfortably located. I like it better here in some respects than upon shore; one great reason is that I can be so snugly fixed in the shape of a good room and can at all times keep clean and feel at least like a civilized being. It is true that this kind of life is in a great measure monotonous - but then it was the same when penned up at some point, on land - whilst here I have the association of a great many officers and time flies more quickly.

We are lying in the James about twenty-one miles below Richmond by the river and about ten miles below it in a direct line. Our life here is not much varied and we are here merely as it were the protectors of the extreme right flank of our army - with little or nothing to break in upon our regular routine of duty, except the occasional capture of a few rebels by our navy pickets who when brought to the vessel are questioned and queried by everyone on board. Not a day passes but that we capture some few of the Johnnies or that some come and give themselves voluntarily up. There cannot be the slightest doubt but that the confederate's have seen its best days and that the power and means for carrying on this Great War is fast dropping from the hands of the leaders of secession.

From accounts gleaned from those who have come into our lines, it is evident that the majority of those in the rebel army would lay down their arms and return to the Union if only an opportunity was afforded them. There is every reason to suppose that this is true and the simple fact of the great scarcity of the necessaries of life, with all the attendant hunger and actual starvation, would be sufficient to drive men from a course no matter how right or just they may deem it. We have now four rebels aboard two taken prisoners and two deserters and the accounts given by them are certainly doleful in the extreme.

Since the occupation of the country in this neighborhood by Grant - thousands of women and children were compelled to leave their homes and forced into certain localities where they have been dependent upon their government for subsistence and when you take into consideration that their facilities for the transportation of supplies have been so much lessened this summer you can

easily see to what condition they have already been brought to say nothing of the coming winter. Even now this years wheat is being ground into flour to supply their immediate wants and that can only be had at times for four or five hundred dollars per bbl - with all other provisions at proportionate prices. Many deserters with whom I have conversed say that it has become a general impression among them that this year will witness the termination of the war. With Sherman victorious in the center of the confederacy and Grant besieging their capitol there does not seem to me to be much left for them and although they may be slow in dying, yet that must soon be the consequence.

What does the Great Peace Conference at Niagara Falls mean? Do the rebel leaders see their power about to fall from them and they desire now to effect reconciliation in the best manner to themselves? Or do they wish to control the Chicago convention, by creating the impression that they desire to put a stop to this bloodshed, which is not acceded to by the powers that be, and thus create a strong and powerful peace faction amongst the masses? But why Greely should have taken so much interest in the matter and why he should have been chosen as the mediator and afterwards be sent by the board is hard to understand. These transactions in connection with the visit of Col. Jacques and Ed Kirke to Richmond by permission of our gov't and their treatment whilst in the rebel Capitol, have a great deal of significance and we can only await the time in order to have these mysteries explained - but enough.

The enemy on the river below us are still determined to annoy our vessels passing up and down, but now from all accounts there seems to be a disposition on the part of our commanders to abolish this and we are told that a heavy force is now being crossed at or near Turkey Bend and an advance made from that point. There was some heavy skirmishing yesterday but with what result I have not heard. There may be a more open Richmond from that point but I do not think it at all probable.

The rams still lie in their old places evincing but little disposition to come down the river to test the strength of our floating batteries, nor is at all likely they will, so long as the obstructions are left in the river. We are still sinking canal boats every night, which will make so strong an obstruction that it will be difficult to remove. Capt. Smith commanding this monitor is a religious man and every Sunday has service twice a day on the quarterdeck, to which all the officers and men of the flotilla are requested to attend, the ministers being supplied from the army.

The weather has been extremely delightful the past few days - whilst today I may say it is quite cool and more like autumn than winter. It is now cloudy and with signs of rain. Mosquitoes and gnats plenty as ever!!!!

I suppose thats Rate & Gerty have arrived at Pottsville, and are enjoying themselves as they said they always did. This is certainly a delightful time to be there and only wish I was able to meet them. Give my love to them and tell Gerty to beware of the widowers!! I received a note from John the other day he was well but you have no doubt received letters from him since that. In his note he modestly requests a V and that I should charge it to profit & loss. The V has been sent and has been charged to loss.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and with my kindest remembrance to Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson and family.

I am your affectionate Will

Direct as requested heretofore Signal Corps USA

Head Qrts 10th A.C.

Via Fortress Monroe, Va.

U.S. Steamer "Onondaga" James River, Va.

July 31, 1864

The last letter, which I received from home, is yours of the 12th and cannot understand why I have received none since. Nearly three weeks having elapsed since receipt of your last, you cannot be surprised to learn that I am anxious to hear from home. I am again on duty on this vessel and like it very much, as I am so comfortably located, although it is in some degree, monotonous; yet notwithstanding the monotony, I prefer being here than with the army in front of Petersburg during this weather. Talking of weather - let me tell you that this afternoon is a roaster - 100 degrees in the shade and I am sitting in my stateroom over the blower, coat off and shirt sleeves rolled up and still I am far from comfortable. Adding to the heat, the flies by day and mosquitoes at night are so troublesome it is hard to have a moments rest. The mosquitoes are the worst and our faces and hands show every morning, how active they have been throughout the night. To keep cool when in bed here is a subject of very serious contemplation and is only remedied in a slight degree by the many means which have been devised for that purpose. I manage it in this manner- The blower through which a current of air is at all times forced by the engine, is in the middle of my room and I make a sort of pipe out of newspapers which carries the air on to my bed and in this way I manage to eke through the night. We are not foolish enough to make the nights any longer than possible, but remain on deck until we are compelled to go below for want of sleep - as I said the mosquitoes are plenty - last night having a message to send I discovered that fact certainly. The torches used in signaling emit a strong light and of course attract these animated insects and in two minutes the air was so full of them that one could grasp a hand full any where and could scrape them off his face - it was with difficulty I could keep them out of my eyes in order to see through my glasses - rather a stiff story do you think so?

Now what shall I write about next? I hardly know, as we have so little news or information, here aboard ship, of what is transpiring in the army. We get all sorts of rumors and accounts, but generally in such a patched up condition that we can rarely with safety give credence to them and we generally wait for the N.Y. papers to find out something near the truth. However there has been some hard fighting in front of Petersburg yesterday and also across the James at "deep bottom" about ten miles below us.

At Petersburg, one report says, Gen. Grant blew up one of the enemy's principal batteries at 3 a.m. yesterday, killing three or four hundred rebs and that the 2nd Corps, Hancock's, were ordered forward and that from some unaccountable reason his men failed to advance as requested but fell back in some disorder - which statement I can not believe to be true as that Corps is one of the best in the whole army and I do not think that, active as they have always heretofore, they would or could do anything to stain their former fine reputation.

Another report is that a mine was exploded blowing up the enemy's works inflicting great loss etc. and that we had advanced to that line of works and that up to last night we were trying to capture the works on the flanks in order to retain possession of them - which story is more than probable.

It was also reported that Gen. Burnside was killed at dusk last evening but this needs confirmation and is here disbelieved. At Deep Bottom, where Gen. Foster with a portion of the 10th Corps has been entrenched for the past four or five weeks was also the scene of hard fighting. The enemy had been heretofore in his front with a small force, but they moved suddenly a heavy one to that point simultaneously we threw a portion of the army of the Potomac there also and a pretty hard fight took place. At one time we charged their works captured a great many prisoners and several guns - again they charged our works and were repulsed and for the week affairs stood about a drawn game although there is no doubt that our forces inflicted a heavy loss upon the enemy, much heavier than ours. So I am sorry to state that during the fighting at that point the gunboats assisting in shelling the enemy fired amongst our own men - one time killing and wounding several and at another killing six - so the naval officers stated aboard this vessel. It is indeed deplorable that this should happen but when you take into consideration that the gunboats fired only by direction given and not seeing the object at which they fired you will not be able to blame them so severely yet still it is indeed sad that at any time any of our soldiers should be injured by our own shots which are intended for the enemy.

The enemy all day yesterday could be seen from the tower~ where I was last on duty, moving from the direction of Deep Bottom towards Petersburg, thus showing that the attacks of Grant upon the latter place were of so serious a nature as to demand a reinforcement, which demands the enemy always seem to be able to fulfill - although these reinforcements did not arrive in time to assist Lee yesterday, yet there is no doubt they are there at the present time. It is impossible to find out the exact results and condition of things in the army and so I give you just what I hear.

You have no doubt read of the fighting in front of Atlanta and the accounts of those charges made upon Sherman's lines by Hood immediately upon his assuming command of the rebel army there and his repulse with such tremendous losses. We here wait with great anxiety for news from that portion of our army, even more anxious than from that in front of Petersburg. Have you not followed up Sherman from his start, read the accounts of his battles, the great extent of country passed through, the distance he is from his source of supplies and the steady and sure manner he has been driving the army of Johnston before him? The descriptions of the different assaults made and received are certainly enough to convince one of the grandeur, and boldness of the whole campaign, and it is certainly thus far one of the greatest achievements of the war and if he is able to maintain his position there it will be a sore blow to the confederacy, cutting it as it does in two parts and destroying their means of communications and transportation of supplies so essential in carrying on a vigorous war.

Yet amidst our exultations over our victories the names of the fallen dead, stand before us to show us at what price these victories were bought and far above all others stands the name of McPherson. How dear was that victory which was bought at the expense of such a man as Maj. Gen. McPherson. Although we were situated so far from those scenes of operations, received the news of his death reluctantly for our country can hardly afford to lose such men. The army of the

United States knew McPherson by reputation and it has been said, more than once, that to him was due the honor of achieving our greatest victories in the west and that it would indeed have been strange if Lt. Gen. Grant had not accomplished what he did, with the assistance of Sherman, McPherson and Thomas.

It seems that the enemy elated with their late success in Maryland are again threatening the Capitol and Penna. We have not had accounts from that section for the last couple of days and are anxious to know, if there really is any large force of the enemy threatening Washington, I think however we must have a strong force in that neighborhood, being daily strengthened by the acquisition of the 100 days men who we hear are rapidly responding to the call of the President. What has Pottsville done towards sending men for the protection of the Capitol and our State? Having had no papers or letters from home for sometime I am a little behind - hand in Pottsville news and scandal. Don't neglect to write to me soon.

Have Kate and Gerty been enjoying themselves and what has been the order of arrangements amongst the ladies this summer? Picnics and parties as freely given as ever I suppose the coal trade having this year been so good and thrown such large amounts into some pockets. I had supposed while the girls were there I would have received a letter from one or all of them but was disappointed and have come to this simple conclusion that if I hear once a week from you, I will be satisfied and ask no favors from anybody else. I have found out and not lately that there are many persons who always expressed so much kindness and friendship towards me when with them, but a short absence drives that away and I am soon forgotten - but I can assure such parties, that I have during the last year become selfish and am afraid when I get home some persons will find me changed indeed. I have not the least desire ever to visit Pottsville and beyond our own family there are but a few whom I really desire to see. Whilst I am writing it is clouding up and there are strong indications of a thundershower, which would be so acceptable to everyone as we have not had any rain of consequence for some days and the roads are in their old dusty condition.

With kind regards to Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Patterson & the Rev. Mr. Lewis
and with love to all at home.
I am your affectionate Son. Will
Signal Corps USA Head Qrts.
Via Fortress Monroe, Va.

I received a letter from John dated 26th which had gone to Washington before it reached me. He was then well I suppose you have heard from him since that date, he said he had rec'd no letter from home for sometime.
W.

Pottsville
Monday Morning
Aug. 1, 1864

I can hardly realize that this is the first of August. If time seems to pass slowly with you, it appears to fly rapidly from me. We have been in a state of some excitement for the last few days, on account of the return to Pa, a gain of a part of the Rebel forces and also of a reported movement of Grants' army or a part of it across the James River. We had an extra ledger last evening giving a detailed account of the operations before Petersburg, which took place on Saturday morning, and which resulted in the blowing of one of the Rebel forts "sky high", and in the capture of three lines of entrenchments, and the fall of Petersburg - but as Sunday reports are so often unreliable we await this days news for confirmation. We had also news that the Rebels had occupied Chambersburg, and that the greater part of the town had been reduced to ashes - but that they had been driven back towards Hancock, Md. by a portion of our troops under Averill. You will have had, before this reaches you, a full account in the papers.

The people of Pottsville receive the news of the return of the rebels to our state very coolly and do not seem to care much about the matter. Their chief anxiety now seems to be how to escape the coming draft. Meetings are held every night to devise means, and raise money to obtain recruits or volunteers as they are called by paying large sums to aliens or Negroes when they can be had to fill up the quotas of the different districts. Very few however so far have been procured and large numbers will be drafted and many will be obliged to shoulder the musket "Nolens Volens."

I received your letter of the 24th on Friday last, and also one dated I think on the 19th a few days previously. You seem now to have good quarters - barring as you say the heat, mosquitoes and gnats. Tim who is standing by me says I shall tell you to take care not to fall overboard into the river, nor let the rebels catch you. Mrs. Mac Neely & Gertrude are here, and have been enjoying themselves as usual. Mrs. Mac Neely and baby spent 4 or 5 days of last week at Isaac Beck's and they are invited to tea parties almost every other day. Kate expects her husband up this week to take her home but Gerty will stay sometime longer. I wrote you some time ago that Sally Wayne was engaged to Michael Crop, the music teacher. Your mother is very anxious of knowing why you made no remarks on the subject. Since I wrote the match has been broken up - rather a fickle young lady she must certainly be. A few of the girls and a married lady or two are going to have a coffee party this afternoon, either on the Sharp Mountain or at Youngling's farm. Mac Neely regrets that you are not here to take part. I am afraid Charley Miller's nose is getting badly dislocated, as Sally Clayton seems to be much enamored of your particular friend Jack Frick. She has been out carriage riding several times with him lately. By the by that puts me in mind - George Evans a few days ago was saying to Tillie that Frick said he was much surprised that I had quit speaking to him, and if it was on account of his doing anything against you, that I was mistaken, and George who is now a bosom friend of Fricks' wanted to make Tillie believe that Frick had not done anything in the matter. Tillie however reminded him that it was from him through his wife Annie, that we knew what Frick had done. George had several times also told your mother that Frick was no friend of yours. I am glad that he feels my neglect of him. We had a letter from John dated 21st July. He said he had written a note to you, but at that time had had

no reply. I sent him a five as I suspected that was what he wanted but he did not say so - but as I know he had not rec'd any pay for so long a time that he must be in want of funds. He would like to see you before he comes home which he expects to do - if living, about the 1st Oct. With respect to the meeting at Niagara of men from the South - Horace Greely and Major Hay, and the visit of Gilmore and (Jacques) to Richmond, I have but little to say. I hope however as Greely said in his last note to the Southern commissioner that they will not _____ that we are all "Blackguards." Time as you say will explain many things, which are not mysterious. I must close' abruptly or I will be late for the mail.

All wish to be remembered to you.

Write soon and often I remain yours

Chas. W. Clemens

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River, Va.
August 4th 1864

I had almost given up in despair and had concluded that all my correspondents had finally become tired of devoting an occasional idle moment to me, until my mind was set at rest, at least so far as home was concerned, by the receipt this morning of your letter of the 1st. If you take the fact into consideration that the last news I had from home, previous to your letter received this a.m., was of the 12th - you will certainly not be astonished when I say I was exceedingly anxious to hear from you. However your letter has set my mind at rest and I know that you are all well and that the ladies are enjoying themselves with their picnics on the mountains and their tea and evening parties, in which pleasures I had the good fortune to be a participant one year ago - but from which I am at present debarred. How often when my mind wanders back to old associations and past pleasures I have wished that I could at that time enjoy them again and in fact it has at times made me discontented with my situation; but when the circumstances of my being here, and the cause which has placed me in my present position, were taken into consideration, those idle thoughts would soon vanish and I felt proud that I was able to lend my feeble assistance in helping to put this rebellion to an end, even though it was at a sacrifice of many personal comforts. And I care little for the opinion of the world or of its judgment, not soliciting praise from any, but am conscious that I am doing what is demanded of every young man - and this fact alone is a source of great satisfaction to me - and in future years we can be able to say at least that we have borne a part in this great war and if we live can revert with pride to the fact that our family had its representatives amongst those who defended its governments, which will be more than many families will be able to say who are now at the present time so lavish in their expressions of "love of the dear flag," "death to traitors" etc. and who have as yet made no attempt to administer that death. The pill will be most bitter to them in after years when our land is again at peace, knowing they had done nothing towards restoring it and then and only then will justice (if there is such a thing) be done those to whom justice is due. But enough - let the howlers howl and let them cast their slurs and insinuations where they will and they will fall harmless to the ground only to rebound with double force against themselves in the future.

In my letter of Sunday last I stated that our attack upon Petersburg had been unsuccessful and that we had failed to accomplish our object. "Tis true and pity 'tis, 'tis true" - and oh! Who is accountable for this immense sacrifice of life? On whom shall the world's condemnation fall for its failures? Who can restore peace and happiness to the thousands of families, which have been

made desolate by the terrible disaster of Saturday, last? Who can alleviate the Sufferings of the thousands who are now laying the victims of the mismanagement of some of their superiors? Echo- answers whom? The attack upon Petersburg, which augured so favorably for us at the commencement, resulted badly and instead of a victory and the occupation of that city, together with a complete demoralization of the rebel army, we were compelled to fall back to our old line of works after having been compelled to submit to a very heavy loss. I have the Herald of yesterday and in it I find full and interesting particulars of the whole affair with little desire on the part of the correspondent to hide the truth.

In it you will find enough to convince the world that Negro troops, except when in a charge where all is done under excitement, are far inferior to white soldiers. I have said in former letters that the Negro troops in all the operations in this neighborhood had performed nobly, all that which was required of them - but I failed to say that their conduct was only tried in sudden advances, under momentary excitement and when unable to realize their position - but when as was the case on Saturday, they may be required to hold a line~ being subjected to a heavy fire, demoralization soon seizes them and they no longer remain masters of themselves.

I have been told they behaved shamefully and endeavored to find protection behind the white troops very soon after they had found out with what they had to contend. They suffered terribly however and there losses testify to the fierceness of the conflict. There can be no earthly use in denying the fact that we met with a very severe reverse as is plainly shown in the statements, which I now have before me in the N. Y. papers. We exploded the mine and inflicted a loss upon the enemy but to what extent is not fully known. This we do know however that we suffered a heavy loss and were compelled to resort to a flag of truce in order to rescue our men who lay where we were unable to reach them otherwise and which flag of truce the rebels refused to admit in a couple of instances, which resulted in loss of life to many who might otherwise have been saved. See the Herald and in it you will get full particulars. It is indeed sad that this affair should have resulted as it did. The Chief. Signal officer of the corps told me today that a court of inquiry had been instituted in the matter, whilst the Herald says that it rumored that there will be a change of commanders, which is I think rather premature. You may expect however to hear some important news from this neighborhood before long if I may judge from what has been intimated in my presence today.

The news of the return of a part of the rebel army and the accounts of the raid into Pa., with the burning of Chambersburg caused little surprise here for all expected that would be the program. The people of Pa. can now have a more complete realization of the horrors of war and it is only when their own homes are devastated, their mothers, wives, and children turned destitute in the streets and their property destroyed, that they can be brought fully to the realization of the fact.

I have no doubt that so long as the enemy was south of the Sharp Mountain the people of Pottsville evinced not the slightest anxiety in regard to the movements of the Army, but were and still are I suppose, all absorbed in the one idea as to how and in what manner they can avoid the draft. Ha, Ha how it must worry some!! I am afraid they could not say if drafted "Barkis is willin" - but I should think rather unwillin". I only hope it makes a clean swap of the howlers and that if drafted no substitute could be found. They could however console themselves with the fact that when they don the Blue and shoulder the musket that there are thousands who will welcome

their advent into the army, even though they were welcome no where else!!! I should like to have control of the wheel, which seals the fate of those enrolled, and I'll guarantee that many a loyal man would go to war, which under any other circumstance would remain at home.

I am happy to hear that Kate and Gerty are enjoying themselves as usual. One thing we can say is that our friends have always treated our cousins with the greatest kindness and it is certainly a source of great gratification to me to know that this visit is a pleasant one to them. Sallie Beck has, as always, shown herself a kind friend and I am delighted to know that she has invited Kate to spend a part of her time at their house even though she has a baby with her!!! But then I believe Kate's baby is a good one and an exception to the general rule and does not come under the head of "nuisance". Tell Tim, the dear boy that I shall endeavor, if only for his sake, not to fall overboard into the river with my clothes on, but tell him I have jumped overboard many times this summer when undergoing my daily wash. Just as I had gotten this far the "Master at Arms" an old sea dog of over thirty years service came into my room and told me in his usual quiet manner that it was "past ten o'clock" and of course my light must go out, but I immediately asked permission of Capt. Smith to allow it to burn in order to finish my letter, which request was granted and I shall attempt to bring this to an end. It is the custom aboard ship to have the lights out at 10 p.m in order that all may be quiet, to allow officers who go on watch through the night, to have undisturbed rest, otherwise it would be impossible for anyone to sleep, confined as we are to so close quarters.

I cannot understand why Mother is desirous of a few remarks on the subject of Sallie W. Before I went into this service I was cognizant of the fact that Michael C. and she were very intimate friends, such intimacy which might sooner or later lead to an engagement and marriage, but let me here say that an engagement having existed I am astonished to learn that it has been "broken"! off and I agree with you that she must indeed be a very "fickle young lady" - but however not knowing the circumstances of the case I am hardly able to judge. This much I do know that with her consent I wrote to her and never rec'd an answer and she certainly receives very little sympathy from me, even though she may have been badly wronged - "Requiescat in peace" I would say in her case.

This afternoon we had Gen. Meade and Butler along with their staffs aboard, who came only on a visit to Capt. Smith. They remained long enough to visit all parts of the vessel with which they were no doubt much pleased.

I hardly think the vindication of Jake Frick was worth the paper used in writing. I believe him to be what he was at first represented and that he always tried to injure me if possible. I am glad you do not notice him and hope he gets the lady you mentioned in your letter for then there would be a pair of ----- well matched.

Tell Annie Evans I am ashamed of myself for not having written to her as I had fully intended before I left home. Give my love to her and remember me kindly to George. Give my love to Mother, Tillie, Kate, Gerty & Sallie Beck and all at home. Write soon.
I am your Affec. Son Will

Enclosed herewith you will find General orders No. 30 in reference to the death of Lt. Morrill of whom I have written before you will see by it in what estimation he was held and how his services have been acknowledged. Preserve it among my papers.

U.S.S. "Onondaga"
Aug 7th 1864

This has been one of the hottest days this season and now whilst I sit down to write, 8 p.m., it is warmer than I have ever, yet experienced it since I have been aboard this vessel. Although the engines are kept constantly at work and although there is a steady current of air coming through the ventilators, yet it has been so warm below today that it was almost insufferable and all remained on deck endeavoring to catch the least air which might stir. Now whilst I am writing the perspiration streams from me and I can assure you that all letter writing would be deferred, if I did not think it was my duty to write home.

Your letter of the 1st as also Tillie's of the 2nd have both been received, but I have not yet received the papers of which you spoke as having been sent. I am exceedingly anxious to get hold of a Journal, as it has been a month since I have had one. I shall answer Tillie's letter in a day or two; would have done so tonight but I certainly did not feel like writing much of a letter, beyond that of informing you of my existence and condition.

There is nothing in the way of army movements going on, beyond that a portion of Grants army is being moved but where I do not know. Everything is quiet here where we are and has been so for a long time, with the exception of Friday evening last when the enemy opened on the battery at the signal station which met a prompt response and was immediately followed up along the whole line of Butler's Fortifications. The firing lasted less than one hour when it was discontinued, resulting in no damage to either party; being as it were only a discharge of the old loads which must by that time have almost rusted in the pieces!! The gunboats did not fire.

There is considerable sickness amongst all hands doing duty on and near the river and one must certainly be very careful here on account of the malaria off the river. Quinine is very extensively used by the sick and recommended to be taken daily by all as a preventative against the chills and fever. I have as thus far been well indeed and can only hope I may be permitted to still continue in the enjoyment of such good health as I have at all times been blessed with since I have been in the army. I had this evening for tea for the first time this season peaches and without cream. Although I was never particularly partial to them at home, yet here I found them anything but unpalatable. In the afternoon we had a fine watermelon, which was also the first of the season. We could have these fruits daily if the caterer of the mess chose to get them as we have a tug boat making two daily trips to City Point where they are in abundance although not, as the saying is, dirt cheap - but I think it is false economy not to purchase them as we here need such things and all the vegetables to keep us in good health, for without these one finds himself very soon unfit for duty.

I should like very much to make a trip home for a few days to see you all and get a breath of pure fresh air, but there is not the least probability that I will do so although I think I could get a leave if I tried - but I do not care particularly about it at the present time and would much prefer doing

so late in the fall - when at that time or in the winter I expect if living to be able to visit you. There are officers from the corps now at home on leave. I am anxious to see the three youngest boys. I suppose the girls are enjoying themselves hugely. Give my love to all of them. Love to Mother & all at home. Write soon and send paper.

I am your Affec Son, Will

U.S.S. Onondaga
James River August 14th 1864

I received your letter a few days since and as you surmised I was somewhat surprised by the fact, for I had long since given up all ideas of receiving one from you. Now that you have written it certainly deserves an answer and I have concluded, this Sunday afternoon, to devote a portion of the time in so doing.

To begin with let me tell you I am writing under great difficulties as I am nearly melted with the heat, which here below decks is intense. You must bear in mind that on this kind of vessel in order to live at all it is necessary to have a number of steam engines going night and day, forcing currents of fresh air in all directions and even with these unless standing over the ventilators, it is impossible to arrive at any degree of comfort. We however, live mostly on deck where we have awnings, which shield us from the sun and where we obtain full benefit of all stray breezes. We have been having the hottest weather this summer during the last two weeks. The thermometer indicating hardly at any time less than 90 and many times up to 100 which figures are certainly high enough for anyone. This afternoon we had a pretty heavy shower of rain, which lasted a few minutes and made but slight difference in the temperature, the sun is out and it is again as warm as ever.

We have had some little excitement during the last few days, which relieved the monotony of the life in this neighborhood although it was at the cost of some lives and many wounded. In order to explain to you our position as well as that of the enemy, I have rough sketched the James River in this vicinity, which will be sufficient to show you the positions held by us, and the enemy. The River makes a great many bends between here and Richmond and whilst we are only about twelve miles distant from that city in a straight line yet by the river it is nearly thirty. A few days since Butler threw a portion of his forces across the river and landed them at Dutch Gap, for the purpose, it is said, of cutting a channel through at that point, thus turning the river through at that point and destroying the channel which now includes Farrers Island.

Yesterday morning about six, the Rams in conjunction with the battery on Signal Hill opened on our forces at Dutch Gap with a terrific shower of shells. Their range was excellent and it was soon evident that our troops were in a pretty hot place. Our land batteries immediately replied and a steady fire was kept up all morning and a greater part of the afternoon. The Rebel Battery at Howletts did the most serious damage by killing and wounding the majority. We were ready for action but only fired eight rounds, as it was only a waste of ammunition to fire at the Rams at the distance, which they were from us. Many of the enemy's shells fell near us but there was no damage done on board our vessel.

Our loss at Dutch Gap was about twelve or fifteen killed and forty or fifty wounded. On the vessels lower down the river we had a loss of a few killed and six or seven wounded. The enemy had great advantage over us as they as they had a camp of soldiers confined to one locality to fire at, besides which they could see where and how to fire correctly. It was reported last night a large portion of the army would cross the River at Deep Bottom and this morning there was very heavy cannonading and musketry indicating that there is a sharp and severe engagement there going on. You will no doubt get particulars in the papers as soon as you receive this.

You have I suppose read the account of the explosion of ammunition at City Point whereby there was so much loss of life and destruction of property. We heard the explosion here, which sounded more like an earthquake than of any amount of powder. The loss was nearly two hundred - killed and wounded. The bodies and limbs of the victims were scattered over and around acres of ground - whilst commissary and Quarter Master stores were thrown in every direction. A great many of the government buildings were also blown to atoms. The accident was caused by the falling of one shell into the hold of an ordinance barge which when exploding, communicated the fire to the balance.

On Friday the Flag of Truce Boat, New York came up the river with about forty Rebel officers aboard to be exchanged for some of our men in the hands of the enemy. Major Mulford U.S.A. who has had charge of the exchange of prisoners for the last two years, made the arrangements for exchange to be made at Aiken's House. In the afternoon four of us went down in one of our boats to witness it. Aiken's is about two miles below us and when we arrived there we immediately went on board the steamer. The Steamer is a magnificent one and is fitted up in the most elegant style - and we were told that they had already carried as many as sixteen hundred at one time. The beds for the reception of those who are unable to travel otherwise were all so nicely made and the pillow cases and sheets as white as snow whilst everything aboard indicated comfort for our poor boys. When we arrived there our men had not yet arrived and we spent the time in examining the vessel. The Rebel officers were a very fine looking set of men and were mostly dressed in citizens clothes of the latest style and colors - which clothes they no doubt bought whilst prisoners in the North. If I had my way I know they would not buy much clothing but I would compel them to wear what they had and purchase new clothes when they got back in Dixie. In a short time the ambulances arrived loaded with our poor fellows who had been in the hospitals in Richmond for some time. There were about four hundred, mostly the worst cases who could be moved.

The majority of them had lost a limb and indeed it was an effecting scene to see them hobbling along on crutches and when arriving in sight of the vessel bearing our national emblem they could not refrain from shouting with joy. One poor fellow, who perhaps is dead ere this, was being carried on a stretcher to the boat and seeing the vessel asked to be told the truth in answer to the question if that was a Union Boat. Upon being told it was, said they "should hurry and take him aboard" They all said they were well treated, that is as well as it was possible for the Confederate Govt. to treat them. They of course looked bad as might be expected after suffering as much as they had. There were also on board several ladies and families who had left Rebeldom and were on their way North glad enough they said, to get away.

The extreme high prices of everything there appears almost fabulous and dollars now (in name) are not worth as much as a nickel was before the war. One lady told me she paid two hundred dollars to be brought four miles in a wagon!!! Rather dear travelling.

I have not heard from or seen John since the time of which I have already written. I expect however that I will get to see him before he goes home. I suppose you have been enjoying yourself this summer the girls having made you a visit and no doubt you had a pleasant while visiting them in the city. There is little else to write about and as I said in the beginning of this letter, I am far from comfortable it being so very warm. Tell Father I have received, I think, all his letters and papers they having been delayed somewhere on the road and I got them within a few days of each other. If you should see Fred Brown tell him I received his letter.

Give my kindest regards to Mr. & Mrs. James Patterson & family.

Love to Gerty and Sallie Beck.

With much love to Mother and all the boys and with the expectation of hearing soon from you.

I am your Affec. Bro

Tell Tim I had a dream about him last night, That I was home and he came running to kiss me, but that as soon as he had reached me I got awake. Give him a kiss for me.

U.S.S. Onondaga
James River August 18th 1864

I received your letter dated the 10th only this morning as well as the "Press" and "Inquirer" of the day before. I cannot understand why letter should be so long on the way when they should reach me in two days after being mailed at Pottsville. I think it possible they may be delayed some time at Hd. Qts. before being sent to me, but then not more than a day or so at the most. I would have you direct your letters to me here aboard this vessel, were it not that I am liable at any moment to be ordered from here and then I might never get them, however I am glad to get them even though they are sometime on the road.

I wrote to Tillie on Sunday last in which letter I stated we were having lively times in this neighborhood. Ever since Gen. Butler has thrown a force across the river to Dutch Gap where it is intended to cut a canal through, we have been subjected to more or less shelling from the enemy who is determined to annoy us as much as possible. I enclosed in Tillie's letter a rough sketch of the river in this vicinity, which will give you a fair idea of our positions as well as the situation of the rebel works which are brought to bear against us. Yesterday morning three of the Rams came down again and in the afternoon opened upon our forces at Dutch Gap. Their land batteries also opened and ours replied rapidly. A heavy firing was kept up until about four o'clock when a tremendous thunderstorm came up, which caused a lull in the firing, when Heaven's artillery advanced full sway, drowning all other sound in its heavy thunder. After the storm cleared away, firing was again commenced and a desultory fire kept up until nearly midnight. They fired on this vessel, but their shots passed well over, but not without creating that unpleasant sensation, one always feels when in close proximity to a passing shell.

The forces at Dutch Gap are working night and day~ digging the channel which will be about one hundred and forty yards and will, if it is successful cut off about seven miles of the river. We have a pilot aboard who has lived in this section all his life and he says that the cutting of this channel was a subject talked of for the last twenty-five years. There must necessarily be a loss of life attendant upon this undertaking, as the enemy have good and easy range, from several points, upon it and they throw their shells with remarkable precision.

There has been and still is considerable activity along this river from this point down to Deep Bottom. At the latter place Hancock crossed with his Corps (2nd) and the 10th Corps, which in conjunction with Foster's forces already there, Corps have had several severe fights resulting thus far in our favor. We have captured several lines of works, some guns and over a thousand prisoners. At last accounts, which I have had, we were holding our position, which is about five miles from Richmond. Reports say that the enemy is rapidly sending reinforcements to that point in order to drive our forces back, but I believe we have sufficient numbers there to repel all assaults they may make. The enemy no doubt will strive hard to prevent all advances in that direction.

It is warm, thermometer in my room above 90 degrees. We have been having extremely hot weather all this summer and it is indeed a great relief to have such a nice cool shower as we had this morning.

I am glad to hear that Tim was pleased that I had mentioned him in my letter; if I do not mention him or Frank or Jim it is not because I have forgotten them for there is not a day passes but that I think of them as well as of all at home. Tell Tim I am afraid I will not know him when I get home, as he must be quite a man by this time!!! Frank and Jimmy I have no doubt are good boys and learning fast whilst the two roarers Charley and George I suppose are the same old boys.

I received my commission a few days since and I send it herewith. I wish it to be kept clean and preserved carefully for me. But few of the commissions have as yet been sent, but they will all come in time. I wish you would, when you write to John, tell him that he shall write to me a few days before going home in order that I may see him. I may have some things to send.

With much love to Mother, Tillie, Gerty and all at home.

I am your Affectionate Son,

Direct your letters to

Hd. Qrts. 10th A.C.

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River, Va.
Aug. 25th 1864

With little or nothing at all wherewith to write a letter, I commence this. Although I am in receipt of no letters at all and am unable to know whether you are all still in the land of the living or not, I thought it would be no harm for me to write you informing you of my whereabouts and condition. It has been a long time since I have had a letter from home and knowing that you must certainly write to me regularly, I can not comprehend why I do not receive your letters when they should reach me in two days. The last letter I had from you has been acknowledged by me in a former letter and it was dated somewhere in the beginning of this month. Now you certainly can not wonder at me when I seem to be anxious to hear from home; for as I have said you are almost my sole correspondent and when so long a time intervenes between the receipt of letters; how can it be otherwise than that I should feel neglected. I will not find fault with you for not writing oftener for there may be other things more important to occupy your attention but I do think there are others, to whom it would be but little trouble to occasionally write me a few lines.

Under these circumstances, living so far away from home and receiving little or no tidings of affairs there is it any wonder that I should be, as it were, weaned away and feel as though there was little or nothing for me to expect from that quarter; but rather as it were had become, not of my own free will~ estranged from every tie which should bind me to my own home. To those persons who are in duty bound by relationship and friendship, to feel that they are indebted to me in some degree for favors solicited and unsolicited I have little to say and if I am compelled to beg their continuance of a friendship supposed (at least) to exist I would much prefer that matters should remain as they are; for you know, I was never much prone to court favors from any, but on the contrary have at all times rather avoided becoming indebted to others for any act of theirs performed for my benefit.

Do not think me despondent over this, but let me assure you that I have become so that I care little about it and have concluded to take matters as they come, good or bad, in the same spirit. But enough, I get no letters, have no communication with anyone; but I am in the enjoyment of good health am comfortably located and am enjoying myself I think about as well as the majority in the Army. I have little or nothing to complain of, except that I do not hear often enough from home. I received this week the Journal of last Saturday and the Press. You need not send me any papers except the Journal unless there is something you wish me to read, as we get every day a full supply of the N.Y. papers.

There is little or nothing going on here. Our picket line & Butler's was attacked this morning at daylight but we repulsed them soon with slight loss. The occupation and fighting over the Weldon R. R. is the latest movements in the neighborhood of Petersburg, particulars of which you have in the papers. We are having hot weather yet although we have had considerable rain.

U.S.S. "Onondaga"
Aug. 31st 1864

I am in receipt of no letters' and can not understand why it is so; so I thought I would have you direct your letters to this vessel for I have no doubt that you have written me and your letters have gone astray under the other directions given you. The mail comes to this vessel every evening and letters are only two days coming from the North. I would have had all mail directed to me here from the first, did I not think I would not remain long; but I think now it would be best to do so, taking all things into consideration. The last letter which I have had from home was dated the first week of this month (August) and of course I anxious to hear from you. There is little news for me to write, as there is nothing of importance going on in our immediate vicinity. We still lie in the same place and beyond an occasional shelling, there is little to break the monotony.

The canal at Dutch Gap is progressing slowly, but not without interruption from the enemy, who seems to be determined to annoy the forces there as much as possible. We have erected two or three formidable batteries of rifle pieces and mortars and all firing from the rebs meet with a prompt response from us. Firing is kept up at that point all the time day and night, but without inflicting much damage on either side. A few days since the rebs opened on the battery just in front of my old signal station, of which I have written you, and made that immediate vicinity a very unpleasant one indeed. The shells fell around the station in all directions cutting down some of the largest trees and destroying things generally. One passed through the tent, which I had occupied and passed through the floor knocking every thing sky high. There was no one injured; but some of the horses were struck.

I suppose you have read the full accounts of the operations on the Weldon Road and know what heavy fighting has been and is still taking place for its possession. We hold the road still, which is a most important matter as it cuts off their main line of communication with the south and is the only rail road on which they depended for the transportation of supplies and troops the Danville road being so much out of repair that it is almost useless to them. There has been indeed very severe fighting resulting in immense losses on both sides, but there can be no doubt but that the enemy was by far the greater loser as from all accounts they were mowed down by thousands in their desperate charges to retake the road.

It is now a current rumor that the enemy has laid another road around our forces, connecting above and below them and is now using it for transportation; but then this report needs confirmation. If it is so, I do not think Grant will allow it to be in running order long, but will cut that for them.

We are having splendid weather and is getting much cooler although the sun is still very hot through the day we have a breeze and at night it is quite cool. So much so that it is unpleasant to sit on deck. I get ashore pretty often and as possible.

I am your Affec. Son Will

Direct - Lt. W.W.C.

Signal Corps U.S.A. U.S.S. Onondaga James River, Va.

Head Quarters Dept. Va. & N.C.
Sept 1st 1864

Your note of this day is just received about the things. First the two gum blankets, the one with the name on it in old English letters I brought along not thinking about its being yours and inquiring of everyone about if they knew whose it was and no one knew. The one marked with your name must be just where you left it, as I have never touched it.

I brought away only one iron pot, no kettle, and the pot being mine. The pro spurs I put under Mr. Partridges bed and told him whose they were and he seen me put them there. Armour handed them to me just as we were leaving and said they were yours.

I have your pillow and will keep it till you come ashore. The curry comb Armor says was blown away by a piece of shell and the straps you speak of says he used on the halter of your horse and were broken. I did not signal you the day I left because I was too unwell to go on the tower.

Am feeling better today and think have broken the chills.
Ireland is quite sick.
Your Friend, Bryan

U. S. S. "Onondaga"
James River, Va.
September 2nd 1864

I received your letter of the 29th only this morning and you may depend upon it I was delighted upon its receipt, particularly so as it contained the pictures of the boys. Let me assure that I can recognize them and consider them good and have already placed a money value upon them so high that few are rich enough to buy them. If I were one of the feminines I might denote my appreciation of them in such an expression as sweet or some similar word but as I ain't - I'll use the expression anyhow for lack of a better. I made no hesitation about showing them to the officers here aboard and I certainly felt a pride upon finding that they fully agreed with me that they were a fine looking trio!

You have no doubt ere this received a couple of letters from me expressing anxiety at my non-reception of news from home. This today was the first letter I have had from you since the first week in August and you can not find fault with me for having become somewhat anxious to hear from you. But I got your letter today and all uneasiness on that score has been dispelled. I have little or nothing to write about as there is little transpiring in our immediate vicinity, although there have been extensive operations going on in the neighborhood of Petersburg and on the Weldon Road, particulars of which you have in the papers. The canal at Dutch Gap is progressing slowly and the enemy seems still determined to annoy our forces there as much as ever. Although the shelling is kept up at intervals day and night, strange to say none of our men have been injured since the day, of which I have written you~ when the rains came down.

I was down to Bermuda Hundred and City Point twice this week~ once in the tug by way of the river and once on horseback and had a pleasant time on both occasions. On the latter in company with several officers, I crossed from B. Hundred over to Carter' Plantation on the opposite side of the river. This Plantation is a magnificent one, beautifully located on the banks of the James and has on it a very fine old mansion and out buildings. The old gentleman who is now living on it with his two daughters, is with out doubt _____, but is wise enough to remain silent and has a small guard of our men for the protection of his property and we have the guard there to watch the old gentleman himself. Mr. Carter told us the mansion was built previous to 1700, but it certainly at the present time appears to be of recent construction everything looking so clean and new - although the architecture indicates a more ancient period. He said there was three thousand acres of land on the estate and before the war, he owned about one hundred and fifty Negroes, but at the present time he can not boast of any property in slaves for many of them, as the old song says, "are digging mud in the Union Army camps".

He took us through the building, which was elegantly furnished, and in the parlor showed us a full length portrait of Washington painted by Chas. Peale in 1780. He seemed to prize it very highly and considered it a great souvenir, which indeed it is.

After partaking of some delicious pears we left much pleased with our visit. We did not get to see the ladies, as I understand they "scorn the idea of any association with the detestable Yankees" - to use their own expression, but the sight of these southern beauties (so their portraits say they are) was not particularly desired by any of the party and we left quite as happy as though we had had that pleasure.

We have news tonight that Sherman has captured Atlanta, but it is not contained in the papers, which we have just received. It is good news and all hope it may be true. The papers contain the news of McClellans nomination which is now a topic of conversation amongst many.

We have been enjoying delightful weather, which is a great relief from the oppressive heat to which we have been subjected during all this summer. In the evenings now it is too cool to sit on deck and through the day we have a cool breeze nearly all the time. I wish you would have the pictures of the other boys taken and sent to me as well as Mother's and your own as I want to have all the family. Tell Doc. Smith I have not as yet received any letter from him.

Remember me kindly to him.

With much love to Mother and all at home.

I am Your At. Son Will

Pottsville
Sept. 27th 1864

Dear Will,

I think it is now my turn to complain of the non-receipt of letters as I have none from you since yours of the 5th or 6th. I have been waiting and put off writing from day to day expecting by each mail to be in receipt of a letter from you. It is true I received the latest from you but Tillie wrote you to which she received no answer. We always received your letters, which were directed to me as intended for the whole family - and mine to you, as also Tillies as coming from all at home. Upon that base - you owe us one. We have however heard from you through your letters to other persons as well as from Theodore Patterson who has resigned and returned home and we are glad to hear that you are well, although you have not communicated that fact to us yourself lately. I hope you will again resume your correspondence, and I will endeavor to be more punctual myself.

John we expect home on the 2nd or 3rd Oct and we would be much pleased could you get home on furlough for a visit. You have now been from home nearly a year and perhaps you could be spared a short time now. What remained of the 96th came home last night and was received by the Citizens with the firing of Cannon, illumination of Centre, fireworks, a celebration etc. Their reception ended in a Republican Political meeting with speeches denouncing Gen'l McClellan and all those who intend voting for him. I suppose you intend voting at the state and presidential elections. If you do you will have to be prepared with the proper documents. I suppose however that you are posted as to the manner of voting. You vote if near a place where an election is held in person, and if not near a poll you can send you vote home to some elector to vote it for you sealed up at the election district where- your residence was at the time you entered the service.

You must have paid a County or State tax within two years - and if voting in camp it will be necessary for you to have your tax receipt. If you wish to have anything done to enable you to vote, I will attend to the matter for you. John was anxious to see you before he came home but I expect he could not get leave to visit you. We have not heard from him for sometime.

John G. Brown enquires after you frequently and also Rev. Mr. Lewis who wonders why you have never written to him. I see by this morning's Phil. Enquirer that George W. Weiser of Minersville, was married in Phil. on the 25th to a Miss Hummel. We are all well except Charly, He has been sick since Sunday last and his face and hands are covered with sores which come upon him wherever he has the smallest scratch or bruise. I do not know what to make of it but hope it will not last long nor be a serious matter. He is in bed only part of the time, walks out, but does not go to school. I noticed by the paper that your friend Paul Brodie is in Gen'l Terry's staff and I suppose he is near you again with which no doubt you are pleased. If you should see him please give him my respects as I was much pleased with the correspondence which took place between us after you left Hilton Head.

I suppose you have heard that Frank Pott is in the lunatic asylum at Phil. His friends were obliged to send him there, as he was not fit to be at large. His mind has been affected somewhat for the last 6 mos. and there is but little hopes of his ever becoming sane again. His body as well

as mind is failing rapidly. I have sent the Miners Journal regularly to you - have you rec'd it? I have commenced in too large a sheet of paper and must close without filling it.

Expecting to hear soon from you
I remain your Affectionate Father
Chas. W. Clemens

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River, Va.
Tuesday eve Sept. 27th 1864

Within a few moments I made up my mind to write home, notwithstanding the fact that another month has again passed by without a line from any of you. I sent you yesterday a week ago, per express a package containing one hundred dollars and not yet having had any information from you, I was anxious to know whether it had reached its destination. I do not know whether anyone has written me from home during the past month or not for I have rec'd no letters from there except one from Tillie dated 4th - and it is not my fault if letters are written and I do not receive them, because I have repeatedly stated how they should be directed. Now if I want to write to a man in Pottsville, I do not direct my letters to Pottsville, Minersville or Reading, Philadelphia neither should anyone direct to me Hd. Qrts 10th A.C. U.S.S. Onondaga for the 10th Corps is in front of Petersburg and the Onondaga is here in the James River.

By luck I got one paper from Father here but it was mere luck that I got it at all. If there is a desire to write to me, and I hope there is, why not follow my instructions as regards directing the letters. Yesterday I was over the river and was told at 10th Corps Hd. Qrts that there had been a paper there directed to me and that they had sent it to me, but I have not as yet rec'd it - and this paper has been sent since I gave instructions to direct to this vessel. I receive other letters in two and at the most three days from date of mailing and I can not see any excuse for my not hearing oftener from home.

This is my last appeal and although I am sorry to say it, it shall be my last letter home until I hear from there. I am anxious to hear if you have rec'd the package by express. In regard to the underclothing, which I sent for, be sure and have the shirts made large and long enough. I was yesterday to see John and found him looking well and in excellent spirits. He expects to leave City Point on the 30th. I will endeavor to meet him there.

I was thrown from my horse yesterday or rather he fell and I in jumping from him fell over a stump and before I could get out of the road the horse fell on me, the main weight coming on my hip and knee. I was somewhat bruised and suffered not a little at first and I am thankful that it was not more serious for I can hardly see how I escaped a broken limb. I mounted my horse again with assistance and went on to see John although before I got back home I was completely worn out. Today I am quite stiff and sore and manage to hobble about but as my duties are not very onerous it causes little interference.

With much love to all at home.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

If anyone will write to me let them direct as follows D.S.S. Onondaga, James River, Va.

Pottsville Oct 1st 1864 2 o'clock p.m.

When passing the Express Office a few minutes since I was told that there was a package for me, which upon examination I found, had been laying there nine days, aA gross negligence upon the part of the clerk in not informing me of the fact. I found it to be for your Mother and contained \$100.00 for which she directs me to return you her thanks. Your requests will be attended to.

There is great excitement in Town today. The Republicans are holding a County Meeting, and fireworks and illuminations with a torch light procession are in the programme of the afternoon and evening. Lt. Armstrong of the 129th is to make a speech this afternoon.

We are sorry you cannot get a furlough but, as we have news today of an advance of Grant's Army, now being in progress you cannot expect to get one. At least not until Richmond is captured which event judging from the deplorable accounts given by deserters who are continually coming into your lines cannot be far off.

John I suppose was mustered out yesterday and we look for him Monday.

Eliza is afraid the chickens will all be eaten before you come home.

They are now in good order.

I must close abruptly as the mail will close in a few minutes.

I remain your Affectionate Father Chas. W. Clemens

U.S.S. Onondaga James River, Va.
October 9th 1864

My Dear Sister,

You have I suppose long concluded that it would be useless to expect a letter from me, as so a long time has elapsed since I received your last letter~ Several times I had concluded to write to you and as often it was deferred, but without any reason therefore and I should have answered your letter long ere this. I received your letter in the beginning of last month and until within a few days since when I rec'd Father's letter dated 1st, I had not one single line from home and it was from this cause I concluded not to write until I heard again from one of you.

Yesterday morning Pres. Carpenter came into the Ward Room very unexpectedly and he gave me a letter from Father dated 27th. He had gotten it at Hd. Qrts. on his way here. He staid to dinner with me and in the afternoon I went ashore with him.

This is Sunday morning and as usual is a quiet day on ship-board. Nearly every Sunday there is a Minister sent here, to hold service, by the Christian Commission and I can assure you many a dry-stick is imposed upon us and when we do attend are compelled to listen to such discourses as you can imagine may be offered us by the worst of itinerant ministers, and as is oftentimes the case have the doctrine of the beloved Negro thrust upon us - which I can assure you is not desired by all in the dispensation of religion.

There are many of the officers, in fact the majority, are Episcopalian and I have often heard them say if they could have that service ready they would attend with satisfaction, but that it is hard to be made to listen to some of the eloquent discourses which are here offered us. We usually hold service on deck, but it being so cold this morning it is now being held in the Ward Room whilst I am in my room writing this. The doors of all the rooms open into the Ward Room and when in the rooms one can hear and see without being seen all that is going on without - so you see I perform two things at once, hear the sermon and write to you.

Speaking of cold weather reminds us that we are indeed rapidly approaching winter. In the beginning of the week we had some very warm days but now it is quite cold and too unpleasant on deck. The thermometer last night was as low as 40, which is only 8 above freezing point, whilst the trees and shrubbery on all sides indicate the rapid advances which autumn has already made. We are of course beginning to find the nights increasing in length and instead of, as in the warm weather, being able to sit on deck and enjoy our evening smoke, we must remain below and unless one is particularly interested in something, time begins to hang heavily on ones hand and life here certainly becomes monotonous. I have however plenty of reading matter and I may say here I have read more during the last few months than I have during the same length of time before. We have a variety of books belonging to the different officers and they become, as it were, common property. There is an edition of Scott's works here and I have been reading the most of them lately, reading some, which I have read before, but I think no one can reading Scott, interesting as they are, boats, both row and sail, we pass many a sailing up and down the river, whilst an against wind and tide, affords plenty of who desires it.

You have no doubt read of the advance of a portion of Butler's forces on the North side of the James and engagements, which have there taken place. The move was a sudden one and the enemy was taken by surprise and we are able to possess their first line or outer line of works and capturing about fifteen pieces of artillery, but we have as yet made no advances beyond that line which we have strengthened and still hold. The enemy made a desperate assault a few days since upon our lines but they were repulsed with heavy losses. They also made a sudden and heavy attack upon Kantz Cavalry on the extreme right flank and succeeded in driving him in confusion, capturing as we hear eight pieces of artillery and quite a number of prisoners', but that has not endangered our position in the least.

From the high tower, just abreast of us and upon which the enemy has already expended several hundred shells in the vain attempt to knock it down, the enemy can be seen by thousands at work in and around their line of works, but our forces cannot be seen from there as they are behind a belt of woods which screens them from our view. It is indeed a strange and yet a magnificent sight from the signal tower. As the enemy have their line of works and Forts extending across a most beautiful piece of land known as Chafins Farm, which stands in full view and all their movements in that locality are plainly visible and their long lines of infantry with colors flying indeed presents a fine appearance, but one to be regretted as these lines are those which must cause so much death and destruction in the attempt to drive them from their position. It is a fact regretted exceedingly by all, that we are unable to move up the river and attack the enemy's rams which have occasioned some trouble to our forces, with their shells - but there is a bar in the river just below Howletts which forbids vessels drawing as much as fourteen feet to pass over. Whilst we are unable to ascend the river beyond that point, the Rams can not descend below -

but in their present position can occasion trouble to Butlers line above. However the Rams have done little damage as yet.

I wrote to Sallie Beck some time since and have not yet heard from her. Ask her if she has received my letter and remember me kindly to her. Remember me to all my friends. Kiss all the little boys for me and tell them I often think of them. I will close as I want to write another letter to Father. With much love to Mother and all and hoping to hear soon from you.

I send by this mail, letter to Father enclosing twenty dolls.

To purchase some clothing for me.

Let me know at once if rec'd.

U.S.S. Onondaga James River Va.
October 9th 1864

I have just finished a letter to Tillie but I write this to have you purchase and send me the articles to me, a list of which I send herewith. I enclose twenty dollars (\$20) with which to purchase the things, which amount if insufficient I shall increase and send it to you, if you make out a bill of expenditure and send it with the articles. I want you to get the things ready immediately and send them to me as soon as you can by Express. The outside shirts I want made of black & white cross-barred flannel best, Mother can pick out a pretty pattern and I will abide her taste. I want them made large and good. Send the following articles-

2 outside woolen shirts (cross bar black & white)

2 pro Woolen Drawers

2 pro Woolen Undershirts

White handkerchiefs. Those, which I may have left at home, or 4 new ones.

Stockings white. Those, which I left, or 14 pro new

2 Quires Letter paper (good)

1 Pack Envelopes (good)

1 Box Hair Pomatum

1 Box Jockey Club

1 Box Shaving Cream

4 cakes fine toilet soap

3 doz. solace tobacco

2 or 3# smoking do (good)

50 paper collars 15 in. square chokers marked Lockwood & Co.

Pack these and direct to Lt. W.W.C.

Signal Corps D.S.A. D.S.S. Onondaga James River Va.

Write me immediately upon receipt of this

Will

I rec'd your letters one of the 1st several days ago and the other 27th yesterday. In reference to my vote I do not intend to vote and have taken little or no interest in the election. I suppose however the Democratic party will succeed in our district but I think that old Abe's election is a foregone conclusion, as I have always thought that there was no man at the present time who can

defeat him. However I am satisfied and in consequence have not troubled myself much about it. I have no doubt there is a spirited contest now going on and possible McClellan may have some show, but as I have no chance to hear much~ I am led altogether by the N.Y. Papers. By attending to getting the things for which I have written and sending soon as possible I'm much obliged.

Your Affec. Son
Will

I suppose John has arrived safely at home by this time and well may he congratulate himself that he was not tempted to reenlist.

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River, Va.
October 10th 1864

I wrote you yesterday, as also to Tillie, but in addition to the articles written for I find that I have omitted some which I had forgotten. I want to have my overcoat fixed up and want you to send

One Piece of Black Velvet 21 inches long by 4 (four) inches wide to make a new collar
(one & half) yds. Blk Silk Binding (2 in. wide)
6 buttons such as will suit the overcoat
4 towels (white & good)
1 Pro Military boots fashionable, heavy –
Good Riding Bots, Size 7 or small 8 is my measure, but get them where you can nicest.

I enclose you fifteen dollars in addition to the twenty already sent. Pay expressage and if the amount sent is insufficient I will send more; if any balance is left give it to Mother. I was down to City Point today; went in the Tug after dinner and have just returned. It was very cold all day but it has moderated tonight. Last night the thermometer was as low as 35 so you judge we are having a touch of winter already. Notwithstanding all the contradictory reports as regards a change of the Commander of the North Atlantic Squadron, that Farragut is to take command etc, the fact has become settled that Admiral Porter has assumed the command.

He was aboard this vessel last night a short time and left at daylight this morning. What can be expected of him in this neighborhood is hard to foretell, but I do not think there will be much here to attract his attention, but will devote it to Wilmington, N.C. in all probability as there is a large fleet of our finest vessels of war now congregating at Fortress Monroe preparatory to a movement upon some point which is likely to be the one above mentioned. There has been nothing going on today beyond the regular shelling at the Gap which is kept up at intervals as usual.

Whilst at City Point I met Capt. Devers. I suppose you remember him, as he was once a Capt. in the 129th and was brought to your notice whilst he was in Pottsville. He is attached to the 21st Pa, Cavalry as 2nd Lt. and he told me that Martin Cohn was also in the same Regt. They are encamped about a mile below the Point and the Regt. is about receiving horses, they having heretofore been doing duty as Infantry.

I suppose tonight, now whilst I am writing all Penna is ablaze with excitement over the coming election tomorrow ere this reaches you the result will have been known and Pa, will either have been loyal or disloyal according to the views of some. There will no doubt be a heavy vote polled and that both parties are make the greatest exertions to carry the state in their favor. As it is late I must close. Please attend to getting my things ready as soon as you can. Get me a nice pair of boots Military pattern.

With much love to Mother and all at home,
with the hope that I may hear soon and often from you.
I am your Affec.
Will

Tell Eliza not to kill all the chickens as I may be home some time in the winter. Write me immediately upon receipt of this.

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River Va.
October 11th 1864

I suppose you will be sometimes surprised upon receiving a letter daily from me. I wrote you Sunday enclosing twenty dollars and last night fifteen dollars, in all thirty-five dollars to purchase the articles written for. I found out today that I had forgotten to write for a cap and as I cannot get a decent one or in fact any kind here, you will have to send me one with the rest of the things. I want an officers cap and if John is home, he will know what kind I want - size 7 1/8. I suppose he has arrived safely home ere this, and can congratulate himself that he was not tempted into a reenlistment for another three years. Tell him to write to me and give me what news he has of the Regts. etc. and what officers have resigned since I saw him

This evening whilst I am writing 9 p.m. I suppose the whole state Penna. is in uproar and certain parties congratulating themselves over victory and certain parties lamenting defeat. I feel homesick tonight and as though I would like to be there. Do not fail to send me the Journal of Saturday next.

We had a lively time for a few hours this afternoon. We opened on the Johnnies from one turret giving them a few 15-inch shells and several from the 200 H rifle, the land batteries immediately replied to our firing, but either party failed to do any damage. The shelling at Dutch Gap was kept up however with more vigor today than usual, no doubt they became exasperated somewhat at our firing and spent their wrath, on the poor niggers at work there. I did not hear if they inflicted any damage or not.

We had a lovely day, quite warm and a quiet change from yesterday and the day before. It is however quite cool tonight and almost as bright as day.

With much love to all at home,
I am your affec. son
William W. Clemens

U.S.S. "Onondaga" James River Va.
October 22nd 1864

This evening I rec'd a letter from John dated 15th and I can not understand why letters from home are so long on the way, as I generally receive others in two and three days at the most. I would have written this to him, but as he speaks of going away for a few days, I thought I had better write to you. He makes no mention of your having received either of two letters which I wrote you, in which were enclosed twenty and fifteen dollars. Let me know if they have been received by you, as until I hear that fact, I do not know whether they have been lost or not.

Please have the things gotten ready as soon as you can, because it is probable that this vessel will be ordered to Fortress Monroe or Norfolk for repairs and I would like to get them before she goes. If she should go before I receive them, they will reach the vessel wherever she is and they then will be sent to me, but in that case it will be sometime before they reach me. I would have them sent to Dept. Head Qrts. but express matter is slow in reaching its destination in the army.

There have been quite a number of changes in vessels and officers in this fleet since I last wrote, occasioned by the great preparations now being made for an attack upon Wilmington N.C. by Admiral Porter. An immense fleet consisting of the greater part of our finest vessels is now anchored in and near Hampton Roads and the navy at Wilmington will strike a tremendous blow.

Capt. Smith has been detached from this vessel as also other officers who left this p.m. Capt Smith is to take command of the Wabash (Frigate) and will take an active part in the movements as it is generally conceded that he is a good fighting man having had considerable experience since the war. This vessel does not seem to be the same since he left and everyone here goes moping about as though they had lost their best friend.

All regretted his departure and when he bid farewell to the crew and officers he was completely overcome. Commander Nichols of the "Mendota" assumes command of this division now and will remain on his vessel as the Flag Ship; he told me today that I would have to go with him and I suppose on Monday I will have to change my quarters to his ship. I would prefer remaining here, as it has become a kind of home, which I rather regret leaving - however, I think I will be better satisfied there in a few days than I am now. The Mendota is a vessel of a class called double enders (side wheels steamer). Until further notice however direct your letters as usual. There is little news in this neighborhood except that the enemy is still hard at work, erecting fortifications in all directions and in front of Butler's new line on the North bank. Firing is still kept up at the Gap as usual.

The weather has been extremely cold today and decidedly winterish in fact it was and is still very unpleasant out. I suppose you are also having cold weather. By the way on the Mendota is a young man by the name of McElroy, asst. engineer; he is a nephew of the Reppliers and a cousin to John Hagerty.

Mother and you I suppose know his Mother. He is a very fine young man and he often visits me. Has Charley gotten well yet? I am anxious to hear of him.

With much love to Mother & all at home
and with the hope that I hear soon from you
I am your affec son
Will

I do not think I will get home until Christmas or some time after, as it is impossible to get away now. In fact I do not want to Let Mother buy my underclothes ready made if she can get a good article. Excuse this letter as it was written in a great hurry.

Pottsville Oct 23rd 1864

Your box containing the articles written for will be sent by express tomorrow morning. I hope you will receive it soon, and that the articles will prove satisfactory. Emhart who had your measure copied from Fosters books made the boots for you. Your old measure was 7's but your Mother who superintended the making of the boots and John, had them made short 8's. The only question will be as to their being large enough across the instep. You ought to have had your foot measured by a shoemaker and sent your correct measure or you could easily measure it yourself with a strip of newspaper taking the measure around the heel around the instep and across the toes or around the foot at as many places as you please - cutting the strips of paper the exact length. If these boots should be too tight or not fit in any way - no doubt you can sell them for fully the amount they cost and expenses of getting on another pair, which I can have made for you having your measure sent to me.

Contents of box:

One pair boots (Emhart)
Two woolen undershirts
Two pr Drawers
Two flannel Over Shirts 7yds.
Buttons for .25 making 1.00
Four pocket hdks
Five pair stockings
One Quire letter paper
Two packs envelopes
1 Bot. Hair Pomatum
1 Bot. Jocky-club
1 Box shaving cream 4 cakes soap
3 Doz Solace Tobacco 2 Smoking Tobacco
50 Lockwood Co. Collars 4 Towels
1 Cap
1 yd. velvet, binding,
Buttons

Everything has been bought as low as it could be made but it has overrun your calculations. As the velvet could not be had as wide as 21 in., we had to take 1 yd., which can be made to answer. The cap perhaps is not as fine a one you would like to have - but it is the best I could get in Pottsville. The perfumery I bought of your friend Fred Brown and he thought it would suit.

John and Jimmy intend going to Philad. tomorrow morning for a short visit. Tillie has the Doctor attending her. She has been quite sick for 2 or 3 days. A very bad sore throat - she is now in bed but I am in hopes she will soon be well again. I will write you by tomorrow's mail.

D.S.S. Onondaga James River, Va.
October 24th 1864

I received a letter today from John dated the 19th and I would write him in answer, but I suppose ere this reaches Pottsville he will have gone to Philadelphia, and for this reason I write you as I consider my letters for all at home. I shall give you little in'news as I have none and affairs are quiet indeed in this neighborhood. I wrote you Saturday night last, which letter I suppose you have received. I am glad to hear that Jimmy intends making a visit to Philadelphia as no doubt he will enjoy the trip very much and our cousins there will do all to make it pleasant for him. I wrote you that Capt. Smith had been detached from this vessel and has taken command of the Frigate Wabash now lying at Hampton Roads; Since his departure, it seems lonesome enough here, and all go about with long faces, for he was a fine old gentleman, good officer and liked by everyone. I suppose now that this vessel is no longer the flag-ship, I will be ordered from her and will have to move my traps to the Mendota, a side wheel steamer, I may however remain here, which for many reasons I would prefer, although I would be quite as comfortably located there as here.

Today we moved down the river about one mile and came back this evening; quite a pleasant excursion!!! I go ashore almost daily, but have not yet been along Butler's new line near Chafins Farm although I have concluded to do so procrastination thus far has prevented. I have not seen Brodie since your mention of him in your letter. I will of course give him your regards when I see him. How fortunate that "Sheridan" at the last moment and when his army was so dangerously situated after being almost totally routed, that he himself should be able to rally his men and accomplish such a victory over Longstreet!! I have read the accounts given and although the losses on both sides have been terrible, yet he, has inflicted a serious blow on the army opposed to him, completely routing them and capturing so many pieces of artillery, flags, stores, etc. His army indeed has had hard fighting and has suffered great losses, but we have consolation in the fact that he has thus far proved himself superior to both Early and Longstreet. I have been expecting daily to hear the booming of cannon, which would indicate a movement of this army here, but thus far, since the occupation of the north bank of the James, nothing has occurred.

I think something will be done before long or else operations will have to cease for the winter for the time is rapidly approaching when we may expect such weather as will forbid all army movements. We have had some quite cold weather, but today it was pleasant and quite warm in the middle of the day: the nights however are decidedly winterish. The soldiers in every direction are busy, making themselves as comfortable as possible, by erecting log huts (in which I have had some experience) and they generally speak of winter quarters. Please give the enclosed (five dollars) to the boys, as pocket money and give my love to all of them.

With much love to Mother, Tillie & all I am your Affect son,

Will

Remember me to Eliza.

John in his letter thanks me for the clothes. I told him that he might have the pants, but I did not say he could have the vest, as I desire to retain that and want it myself. Please inform him of that fact. If he needs it he can wear it to the city, but I do not want him to keep it. I do not think I will be able to get home until after Christmas; but at that time I will get a leave of absence if I can.
Will

Pottsville October 24th 1864

I sent your box this morning by express. I enclose with this note a memorandum of the articles and their cost. They amount to more than you calculation but everything was bought as low as such articles could be had. The express co. would give me no receipt -neither would they be responsible for the delivery of the box further than Washington although they charged me with the freight all through for 5 routes 40¢ each and 50 cents Gov't tax to Phil, Balt, Wash, Fortress Monroe & City Point. From the last place I suppose you will have to have it brought by some person going up.

I enclosed a short letter in the box giving some explanation about the boots and some of the other articles. John & James went to Philad. this morning to spend a short time in visiting our friends and seeing the sights. John intends also looking around for something to do - but it is almost too late to get a business situation. Tillie has been quite unwell for the last 3 or 4 days. Her throat is in bad condition. She is now confined to her room and bed but I think she will be about again in a short time. The rest of us are tolerably well although Charly was under the weather for a week or 10 days, and I had an ugly breaking out on my face and head - but am now nearly well again.

I think you do right in not taking an active part in political affairs, particularly as you hold your commission from the President, who as well as being a candidate for the Presidency again is also your superior officer in the army, and who holding the position he does - you have no right to oppose. The voting in the Army and Navy is in my opinion a complete farce - particularly at this time - when the present incumbent is a candidate for re-election.

The State of Pa. has gone democratic on the home votes and there is not much doubt but that in Nov. the vote will be given for McClellan. Many politicians are sanguine enough to believe that McClellan will be our next President - but I am somewhat doubtful. If he should be I will be appointed Postmaster in Pottsville - so Strouse has promised without my asking for it. The salary is now \$2400. per annum - which is pretty good pay and I think it would suit me pretty well. This is a matter however that I do not say anything about at home. What are your prospects with regard to a furlough?

It is now nearly a year since you left home, and we would be all glad to see you - perhaps you could manage to be at home about Christmas. We will save some of the chickens for you. Hoping to hear from you soon, and of the safe arrival of your box.

I remain yours affectionately
Chas. W. Clemens

U.S.S. ONONDAGA
James River, Va.
Oct 26, 1864

I write you this only to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 24th and to let you know that I am ordered from this vessel. I received orders this morning to report to Admiral Porter, Commanding the North Atlantic Squadron on board his flagship Malvern - now at Norfolk or Fort Monroe. The Secretary of War ordered an officer to be sent to the Admiral for the purpose of arranging a system of signals and also to keep up communication with the army, which is to assist in the attack upon Wilmington, N.C. and the Chief Signal Officer selected me in this dept. I suppose I will have to instruct some of the regular Naval Officers, having been so ordered to do, I am the only officer of the Corps ordered with the expedition. No doubt we will see hard and heavy fighting and I can only hope that my heretofore-good fortune may attend me.

The Expedition will sail in the course of a couple of weeks. I will be with the Admiral and in the association of the higher officials of the fleet and barring the fighting will no doubt have a pleasant time. I leave tomorrow morning at daylight and expect to reach the flag-ship on the same evening. I am sorry that I was ordered away before I rec'd my box, but I will call, myself, for it at the express office at Fort Monroe - and if it should be sent to this vessel it will be forwarded to me from here. I will receive it rather later on consequence of my leaving. The balance of the amount due I will forward you soon. I believe I sent you thirty-five dollars thus making me twenty-five dollars in debt. Excuse the hastily written letter, as I am overhead and heels in getting my things ready to start in the morning. I will write you as soon as I again become located and let you know how to direct letters to me. I am delighted that I have been ordered with the expedition and am in the enjoyment of good health.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all at home
and with the hope that all may still be in the enjoyment of good health.

I am you Affec. Son
Will

Fortress Monroe Va.
October 27th 1864

I arrived here this afternoon having left the Onondaga at daylight this a.m. Upon my arrival here I immediately went to the express office and there found my box, which I was delighted to receive as I was somewhat afraid that it might be sent up the river and some time elapse before I would receive it. I have not yet opened it, as I have been so busy that I had no time - but I suppose it is all right. I was unable to get a boat to report to the Admiral on the steamship Malvern lying here in the harbor, until after dark when in the midst of a heavy rain and a heavier sea I got a tug to take me out and I returned ashore in a small boat.

Upon reporting to the Admiral he received me very courteously indeed and promises to make me as comfortable as possible; he immediately ordered a room to be put in condition for me and told me I could come aboard as soon as I desired and have as much time ashore as I wanted; I however will go aboard in the morning to remain. My duty there will be to regulate the signals between vessels and also to keep up the communication with the land forces working in

conjunction with the navy - and I will necessarily have to instruct several of the Naval Officers sufficiently to be able to work when needed. The "Malvern" is a magnificent vessel and is fitted up most handsomely, having just come from the dock where she has been undergoing repairs.

The officers of the squadron and I have no doubt but that I will have a fine time of it. I am writing this in the Hotel and there is so much talking going on that it is impossible to write much of a letter. After I get fixed aboard I will write you more at length. I cannot say how soon the expedition will sail.

Direct your letters to Flag Ship "Malvern" North Atlantic Squadron, Fort Monroe Va.

I am mighty glad that I received my things.
Write very soon and with much love to Mother & all
I am your Affec. Son
Will

I will send you balance which I owe in a few days.

North Atlantic Squadron,
U. S. Flag-Ship "Malvern,"
October 30th 1864

I was just preparing for bed but I thought I had better write you tonight, for if I did not do so now, I would be unable to write you before Tuesday's mail as I expect to be pretty busy tomorrow. I wrote you a short letter immediately upon my arrival at the Fort, which I suppose you have received ere this. The following morning -(Friday) I came aboard, where I am most comfortably located and tonight shall occupy my room, which has been newly painted since my arrival.

I am much pleased with my present situation and only wish that you were here that you might see how we are suffering for our country. I thought we lived aboard the Onondaga, but I am satisfied now that she was only a second class hotel - for our table here is as fine as any to which I ever sat down and whilst we have everything which the market here affords, it is at the same time properly served up and this morning I had broiled steak for breakfast, as fine as any Eliza ever sat before me, I think. However let me say that the table is an elegant one and all that anyone could desire. I mess of course with the Admiral's staff and live in union with them - they doing all they can to add to my comfort and well sustain the reputation they have acquired amongst all the officers of the fleet. This vessel was formerly a blockade runner and is a side wheel steamer and has been completely refitted by the Admiral for the use of himself and staff. It is by no means a fighting vessel and will not be used in the coming engagement as such, but it is probable the Admiral will transfer his flag to one of the other vessels for the time being, but retaining this as his head quarters and as his vessel.

I suppose I shall be kept with him where ever he goes, in order to keep up the communication with the land forces. This vessel is of very light draught and stands very high out of water and

when at sea rolls fearfully; I suppose I will get my share of those horrible feelings, before we get out of sight of Fortress Monroe.

In the morning I commence instructing one officer from each of the larger vessels, in our code of signals, the class having been ordered aboard this vessel at 10 a.m. tomorrow to receive its first lesson in the mysterious art. I am afraid however that the fleet will sail before the students will have had sufficient time to be sufficiently learned in the code to be able to do much in the transmission of messages; but at any rate they will have been started in the use of the signals, which the government is now teaching all the members of the naval school.

I instruct only officers in the regular naval service and many are anxious to learn and pleased to have this opportunity offered them. There will be a dozen or more of them and I think some will find it a little harder than they imagine. I shall however acquaint you of the progress of my class.

Yesterday morning we went up to the Portsmouth Navy Yard to take in some stores and returned in the evening. It was a most lovely day and as it was my first visit to that neighborhood I enjoyed the trip very much, I suppose we will go up often before the sailing of the fleet - when that will be, it is impossible to say; but there are vessels daily putting out to sea, en route, I think, for the North Carolina coast.

I have been told that the fleet is ready to sail at any moment, but that we are now waiting for the land forces, intended to operate with us. I have opened the box and must say I was much pleased with all the purchases. The shirts and underclothing I think are splendid and I now am in the enjoyment of some of them. I wore the boots today and think they are a fine pair, but I found them a little too tight across the instep. I think however they will be large enough in a day or two. I wanted heavier ones, that is, stouter in the tops, but now I am glad they are not so heavy, being situated as I now am. The balance of the things are o.k. and flatter myself I can make myself comfortable during the coming cold weather. Outside clothing I can purchase here although at rather high prices but I can purchase, as I want them. Don't forget to write regularly to me and send the Journal as usual. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys. I suppose John and Jimmy are enjoying themselves in the city now, I hope they have a pleasant time. Kiss Frank and Timmie for me and say to them I hope to be able to see them shortly after Christmas and that they need not save me any of the chickens, but that they shall have my share, for they are dear boys and I hope they are good ones. Remember me to Eliza and say that she need not pity poor Will, because he has none of her good things, for he has plenty of everything.

With love to all I am your Affec. Son

Pottsville Oct. 30, 1864

Your letters dated 22 & 24th have both come to hand. One on Thursday and the other on Friday. It puzzles me to know the reason why so much time is required to carry a letter between the two points when it really ought not to require more than a couple of days. A letter mailed in Pottsville at noon reaches Baltimore & Washington as you well know the next morning at 4 ~ 6 o'clock and if the mail is carried from either of those points daily to City Point wherein lies the difficulty. I have no doubt ere this you have received the box sent you last Monday morning by express as well as my letter of the same days mail.

With regard to the sums of twenty and fifteen dollars sent to purchase the articles written for. I supposed that John had mentioned that they had both been received but it seems he neglected to do so - but as he wrote you for directions as to the kind of shirts wanted he presumed no doubt that when you were aware of the safe arrival of both letters, you would be satisfied that the money was also received, for if the money was missing we would certainly apprise you of it.

Since I come to think of it I believe I did not say anything about the money in my last letter to you when I sent a memorandum of the contents of the box. Thirty-five dollars was the amt. of cash rec'd. The five dollars sent the Boys, was also received. They are much with the remittance. I intend adding sufficient to it to buy each of them a new hat for the winter. Speaking of money puts me in mind of what I intended writing about some months back. Fred Foster told me that you owed him for a pair of boots got from him in the summer of 63, whilst you were at home, and which he presumed you had forgotten. I think the amount was \$6.10. I would have paid him but did not know whether it was right or not. Let me know whether it is correct and I will pay the bill. I believe I wrote you that Tillie was sick. She had a bad sore throat. She is better now, and has been out yesterday and today. Charley is well of his sores, and has been attending school all last week but was attacked last evening with one of his old spells of sick stomach, severe headache, and vomiting and was up nearly all night, and has been very sick all day. Is rather better just now nine o'clock p.m., having had a good sleep towards evening. I presume he will be able to go to school tomorrow, as these spells of his do not generally last more than a couple of days.

I had a letter from John on Friday. He and Jimmy were enjoying themselves much as they had pleasant weather up til that time. They are staying at Pierres and McNeelys. They went to Green Street, and John thought they were treated coolly. Ben was in the house but did not come into the parlor to see them. You perhaps remember some difficulty which took place between John & Ben, about 8 years ago - in the store in Pottsville in which I think took a part in favor of John. John supposed however that, Benny had forgotten all about it - but it seems he was mistaken. No doubt that was the reason why he did not see him. John thinks he will not call soon again.

I have written to him not to go there again unless some of the family gives him a direct invitation, such as one as he is sure is given with the proper feeling. I do not see why your Aunt Amanda and the girls should be cool towards John and Jimmy, unless it is for the reason that they are stopping with Mrs. Pierre's between whom once the Clemens' there has not existed a good feeling for many years. He did not feel at liberty to stop at his Aunt Amanda never having been invited so to do - but no doubt would have stopped with them part of the time had they chosen to invite him, when he called there - but between you and me I think the whole family are extremely selfish and do not like to be troubled with company.

Your views with regard to your not voting are perhaps in the main correct but as the amendments to the constitution of this state were made for the purpose of giving all, qualified persons either in the Army or Navy an opportunity of voting either at Potts. to be opened in their regts. or on board vessels or to send their votes home sealed to be voted by a person to whom they may choose to direct them. I do not see any objection to you availing yourself of the privilege. I am aware that holding your commission directly from the President, and as he has it in his power to revoke it at any time it would be a delicate matter for you - that same President being a candidate

for reelection to vote for any other person to fill that same office - particularly at the present time. When all persons who chance to hold different opinions with regard to this great struggle in which we are now engaged and the manner in which it should be conducted are continually denounced as traitors to their government, and as aiding and abetting the Rebellion.

In my opinion there is a great difficulty about to arise out of the voting of the soldiers in the field existing as there does such great chances for fraud, and the difficulty there will be of a fair expression of the wishes of the soldier situated as he is - pledged by his oath to do nor say nothing against the President of the United States nor against any of the Acts of Congress. I believe one of the articles of war binds him to silence whatever may be his feelings on the subject. Your advice to John with regard to his actions during this political campaign I approve of. I had previously given him the same advice and he had made up his mind before coming home today but little on the subject of Politics. He voted at the October election, made up his own ticket, I did not ask him how he voted, nor do I know. You pretty well know the temper and feelings of the Republicans in Pottsville particularly since this war began. You have some evidence of it, in the "Miners Journal". Anyone belonging to the Democratic Party - who does not forsake that Party, or join in the cry of extermination of the whole white population of the south, and the emancipation of the slaves, scarcely feels himself free from danger at anytime.

Since however the election in Pa. has gone democratic on the home vote - showing that that party has yet great strength and that it's members cannot be insulted with impunity - we feel more secure. You know I have never been an active politician and although voting uniformly with that Democratic Party for more than thirty two years - I have never felt cause for regret in having so voted. And I do most sincerely believe, that upon the success of that party at the coming election for president - depends entirely the perpetuity of our institutions the re-union of the States and the return of Peace - to our now distracted country.

Say what they please about that part of the Chicago platform, which speaks of the conduct of the war, and pronounces it a failure so far. It is not the truth. How much nearer are we now in case Abraham Lincoln should be re-elected to its termination should his present policy be pursued - than we were when you first started out on you 3 months campaign. You saw our Army driven into Washington after the first Bull Run disaster. You saw it again returning broken with Pope's defeat - when McClellan was called the second time to reorganize it, and you followed with the Army to Antietam in time to see the Rebels defeated there and driven out of Maryland and you followed the retreating Rebels. McClellan commanding our Army of the Potomac until suddenly without any reason being given, the command was taken from him and given to Burnside - by whom the Army was lead to slaughter, almost at Fredricksburg in the thickest of which fight you took an active part and again under Hooker at Chancellorville. What a repulse did we meet with - and now after almost four years of fighting our Army of the Potomac commanded by the veteran Grant seems to be held at bay within sight of Richmond. The city towards the capture of which, an immense Army has been directing its efforts for more than 3 years. You know better than I do the hopes, which we have sustained in this campaign, which has been carried on since last April. Looking to the capture of Richmond, and the destruction of Lee's Army.

With regard to the operations of our Armies in other sections I will make no remarks. You can judge for yourself. I have only referred to the Army of the Potomac, as it has been always under

the eyes and control of the authorities at Washington. With regard to the election of Gen. McClellan you think there is a possible chance of his success. I am doubtful myself of the result, although numbers of leading Democrats here seem to be confident of his election. They cannot see how a majority of the people in the North can blindly rush to their own destruction of voting for the present mode of carrying on the war and of administering the government. I have been asked several times whether you voted or not, of course I could not say - but as your name was not amongst the list of voters which was before the return judges on Friday last - the fact of you not having voted was manifest - but I have heard not remarks on the subject. My opinion is that at the present time, it is the duty of every one, who has the opportunity to express his views through the ballot box - one way or the other.

Should you conclude to send your vote home, I suppose you will have time to do so, and understand the requirements and you no doubt have the names of the electors to be voted for each party. You must excuse this long rambling letter. I did not intend it when I began- but I feel deeply interested in all which I have written and you must excuse the length and scrawling manner in which it is written - expecting to hear an answer to this as well as expecting to receive one tomorrow or next day.

I remain your Affectionate Father

If McClellan should chance to be elected I am to have charge of the Post office in Pottsville for sure. It is now salaried at \$2400. per year, and I think it would suit me and would be employment for John and the other boys (this is private).

Pottsville October 31, 1864

Your letter of the 27th came to hand at noon today. I am much pleased to hear that you have so important a position, and that you also are pleased you were in luck in getting your box at Fortress Monroe. I mailed a letter for you the same day the box was sent but I presume you have not yet received it, as it was directed as heretofore. Last night I wrote you a long letter covering ten pages (10) and mailed it this morning - to the James River, and of course have not much to write about now. Tillie has been sick but is well again. Charly has got well of his sores, and was at school again last week, but was taken very sick again Saturday night with sick headache and violent vomiting, was in bed all of yesterday. Is about again today but has severe pains in his stomach. John & Jimmy are in the city enjoying themselves. I wrote to you about your voting. I think if I were you I would send home my vote. Vote whichever way you please. I have strong hopes of the election of Gen. McClellan. The tide seems to be changing in his favor. If it should happen that he should be elected, I have the promise for certain of being appointed Post Master of Pottsville. It is now a salaried office of \$2400. per year, and I think it would suit me first rate.

John and the other boy with myself could manage it. I suppose you will not remain long at Fortress Monroe. Porter is Admiral of the Fleet, is he not? You do not mention his name. This is a stormy season of the year to be on the coast, but I hope you will have good luck - your destination I suppose is Wilmington, N.C.

We are all well except Charly and all wish to be remembered to you.

Expecting to hear again soon from you I remain

Your Affectionate Father

Pottsville Nov. 14th 1864

No doubt you have been looking for a letter all of last week. Somehow or other it being Election week it passed without my writing - and even now I have but little to write about. Yours of the 5th came to hand on the 8th - Election Day.

McClellan has been badly beaten, and I am sorry for it - but perhaps it is all for the best and I hope that the Administration will soon succeed in bringing about peace and a restoration of the Union. The summer is past but I cannot see that we are much nearer the end of the struggle than we were 12 months ago. Your fleet it appears has not left for Wilmington yet. If it should leave and you go with it how will you be able to spend Christmas with us? John & James returned from Philad. last Saturday a week. John has been troubled with sores on his face and neck just as Charley and myself were a few weeks since. He has been confined to the house, all of last week and is not fit to go out yet. I am in hopes it will not be long until he is well again. The difficulty now seems to be for him to get some employment. It is the wrong time of the year to look for a situation. If he were competent to take charge of a set of books, he would be much more likely to find an opening, but he is not, not having any experience in that line. However we must hope for the best, perhaps something will turn up soon.

We are having very cold weather today. The ground is hard frozen, and winter is close upon us. Charley was hit upon his nose and eye last week and severely hurt - but is now at school again, although his face is looking badly. He seems to be one of the unfortunates. The rest of the family is in our usual health and all wish to be remembered to you. I suppose we will receive a letter from you this evening or tomorrow.

Excuse this hasty and short letter but I have no material for a long one.

With much love I remain your Affectionate Father,

Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Hampton Roads, Va.
Nov. 18th 1864

I received your letter of the 15th this a.m. and answer it this evening, as it has been some time since I wrote you. As you say, I have been looking for a letter from you for some time, but I suppose that the excitement incident to elections has deferred your writing to me. The election is over, and the result is exactly as I predicted, as you know per my letters. I am perfectly satisfied for I took no interest whatever in it, for I saw, there was no chance for any one but Mr. Lincoln and made my calculations accordingly. I hope and pray, as you do, that, as the President has served out his coming term, this country may be blessed with peace and that this destruction of life and property may have ceased. But looking back over the past four years and after carefully examining the transactions and workings of the present administration during that time, such result can hardly be anticipated. However I hope for the best and that before another four years have rolled around, all of us may return to our homes and enjoy the pleasures of civil life. It may be pleasant enough as some persons imagine, to hold a position alike honorable and lucrative in the army, but when all the sacrifices are taken into consideration and the enjoyments from which we are debarred, there is little in the position to be sought for. It is true I have little to complain

of, for I have had certainly good positions and easy berths, but then the comforts of a home are withheld and there is hardly any one who does not wish for the enjoyments of civil life.

As I wrote you in my last the Admiral and Mrs. Porter have been very kind, showing me not a little attention. This morning the Admiral, Mrs. Porter & three of us of the staff, went ashore to pay some visits to the Ladies at the Fort and we had an elegant time. We called upon Miss Blanche Butler, daughter of the General and spent a few hours there. Miss Butler is a beautiful young lady about eighteen and has just left a convent where she has been educated, she is I assure you quite a belle in this vicinity; after visiting several other ladies we came aboard about five o'clock and Mrs. Porter invited me to take dinner with her and as our dinners aboard here are served up in style we did not get up from the table until after seven. I would like very much to get home and take dinner with you on Thanksgiving, but I do not think it at all probable, but will have to wait until Christmas or after.

With much love to Mother, Tillie & all at home,
I am your Affec. Son,
Will

Pottsville Nov. 21st 1864

Dear Will,

It has just occurred to me that perhaps you might whilst on one of the U.S. Steamers have an opportunity of introducing my lubricating compounds by getting the engineers to try it upon their engines. I am satisfied that should they give it a fair trial, it might be introduced upon many of the Steamers and a good profit might be made by furnishing the article to the Navy.

You perhaps know that 10 or 12 years since I had it tested upon several U.S. Steamers, one of which was the Savannah of which vessel at that time, W.W. Wood who now is Chief Engineer in the service of the government, was acting as first engineer, and who gave a certificate in its favor. That certificate, I have not now in my possession. I had also scores of certificates from other engineers in its favor, which E.Q. Henderson carried away with him. Mr. Williamson who is now in the Rebel service, but who had charge of the Phil. Navy Yard when Mr. Polk was President, gave me a letter to the then Sec. of the Navy Mr. Preston recommending its use generally by the Navy, but from want of proper attention to it on my part it amounted to nothing.

If you ascertain that you can have a trial made and write to me I will send you a sufficient quantity for trial, with more full instructions on the subject. As I have no patent it will be necessary to keep its composition a secret.

Yours Affectionately,
Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship Malvern
Hampton Roads, Va.
Nov. 29, 1864

I arrived here safely yesterday morning, that is I arrived at Old Point, but the Malvern was up the river at the time having gone up on Saturday last. The Admiral was here however and I reported to him on board the Brooklyn and then went ashore and awaited the arrival of the Malvern, which was towards evening when I went aboard and am again ensconced in my old quarters. The Greyhound, Gen. Butler's boat was burned to the waters edge, night before last, whilst on her trip

down the river. The Admiral & Gen. Butler were both on board at the time and all hands saved themselves in small boats. The "Greyhound" was one of the most magnificent vessels on this river and she is a great loss to some parties. Many suppose it was the work of incendiaries, in conjunction with the fires in New York City. The Florida was sunk same night off Newport News in nine fathoms water and is a complete loss.

Her sinking was of course purely accidental. I believe I told you that I thought she would never be permitted to leave this harbor. Now that she is out of the road there will certainly be an investigation in her case. There is no news here and I found matters as I left them, and I am again settled in my old routine of duty with little or nothing to do. Tell Tim that if he can find a nice jumper I will send him the money to buy it.

I am well and with much love to all.

I am your affectionate son

Will

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Portsmouth Navy Yard
Dec. 4th 1864

I have already written two or three letters tonight and you will excuse me if I write you very little this time. As you see by the heading of this we are now at Portsmouth. We came up the river today for repairs. Day before yesterday we went up the James River as far as Eakins Landing just below Dutch Gap and started down the river yesterday morning, but we had hardly been on the way an hour before a steam pipe burst and the consequence was that all the steam escaped and we were compelled to come to an anchor. It was supposed that it would take several hours to repair damages and I obtained permission from the Admiral to go up the river to visit my friends on the Onondaga, where I went and where I had a splendid time. I had seen one of the officers, since I was ordered to this vessel but when I got there they nearly tore me to pieces and said that I should remain with them at least a day or two. I was much liked aboard that vessel and indeed I was sorry to leave them as I never met a finer set of men in my life than they are.

I took dinner with them, after which I obtained a tug to take me to the Malvern but what was my surprise to find that she had been repaired in the mean time and was far on the road to Old Point. The tug took me to City Point and I was fortunate enough to find that a steamer was about leaving for Fortress Monroe and I immediately got an order from the Chief Q.M. there, to go on board of her and take passage and I arrived at Fortress Monroe this morning about nine o'clock. I was not onboard the Malvern more than a half hour before we were en route for this place where we expect to remain a day or two to make some repairs to the engine.

By the by - I had a conversation today with Mr. Zeller the fleet engineer in regard to the lubricator. I explained to him what it was and what had already been done in the matter and where it has already been tried and that Wood and Williamson had given you certificates in reference to its efficacy etc. I asked him if he would give it a trial here and he said he would if he had the time to do so, but that he was engaged all the time and he would under any circumstance have to place it in the hands of other parties on board some of the vessels and if that was done, the experiment would amount to nothing as any report the engineers here might make, would avail nothing with the department at Washington. He is a friend of mine and I have been with

him often and he advises me that the only way anything could be done would be to apply to the Chief of the Bureau at once and have him order a board to experiment with it and that you will have to submit to such report as they may make, which if favorable will be a guarantee for its adoption and use. He says that anything, which he may do, will have no weight with the department at all and that it would be useless to waste time in this way, but says you had better apply as above stated. I think he is right, for although he is fleet engineer, he has little or no influence with the department and is only in his position by virtue of his rank and as a consequence has little weight beyond the routine of his duty.

If you can do anything at all by way of having it introduced, do so and if you can have experiments made with it by order of the Navy department do not delay it. Could you not get another certificate from Wood? I would write to him reminding him of the former trial, to which he was a witness and endeavor to get him to assist you. There is nothing lost by trying and I would do all, to get it in use for it would be no small thing if it is adopted. Let me hear from you on the subject and what you think can be done.

We are expecting now daily to be on the road to Wilmington, as it is understood that all arrangements have been completed and the Admiral said he expected to be off before four days. It may be later but I do not think the attack upon Wilmington is far distant. You may expect ere long to hear of news from Fleet.

We have been having the most lovely weather, more like summer than winter, as it is, today was indeed a lovely one and I took a long walk all around Norfolk and Portsmouth. Did you get my letter I wrote immediately after my arrival? I am well and in the best of spirits. With much love to Mother and all at home and with the hope that I may hear soon. Direct as usual Fortress Monroe, Va.

Pottsville
Dec 9th 1864

Your two letters have come to hand, the one dated Dec. 4th yesterday. This is my first to you since you left Pottsville - not having anything of interest to write about is the reason I so long deferred writing.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you have taken in regard to the lubricator. I am aware of the difficulties in the way of introducing it into use by the government as I have heretofore experienced them - and for the present will have to remain idle so far as the government is concerned. It has been so long since Mr. Wood made no trial of it, that I suppose he does not remember the results of his experiments and it would be altogether new matter to him. I intend however endeavoring to introduce it to some of our coal operators for use at the mines upon the cars and other machinery. Mr. Hughes has promised to give John something to do next week. I do not know exactly what it is to be but I think he intends sending him into the Oil Region to superintend the boring of oil wells. Mr. Hughes has been out there, and has purchased some land and is forming a company to engage in the business. I hope that John will not be disappointed and that he will be competent to perform the duties, which will be required of him. The oil fever is raging in Pottsville and vicinity. All who have means seem anxious to engage in the

speculative movement now going on and which seems to pervade the map of the married men in the North. I am in hopes that oil will be found in the neighborhood of our land in Armstrong County, and if it is - the land will sell for a high price. I see no reason why it should not provide oil.

I believe Mrs. Lewis wrote to you this week and if so she no doubt has given you all the local news. Lin Bartholomew met with a serious accident, on Tuesday night which perhaps may cause his death. He fell from the porch at Fa. Hall, on to the stone steps, and received a severe blow on his head which has caused him to lie in almost a perfect stupor ever since. There are however hopes of his recovery. He lies at the Hall, not being well enough to be removed to his boarding house.

We have now extremely cold weather, and I expect you also have had a change since you wrote. You spoke about sending home some of your old shirts etc., should you do so they could all be made available for the boys, and I suppose they are of no use to you. If however your fleet has sailed as you expected it would you will have had no opportunity of doing so.

We are all as well as usual, and all wish to be remembered to you.
Expecting to hear often from you
I Remain your Affectionate Father
Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Fortress Monroe Va.
Dec 12th 1864

I shall write you only a short letter this evening merely to state that we expect to sail tomorrow, as everything is now in readiness for the attack upon Wilmington and we are now only delayed by the very rough weather. The troops are all here on board transports ready to sail at a moments notice. It is expected that it will be a hard fight as the fortifications to be attacked are of the very strongest in the whole confederacy whilst the number of guns mounted in them are nearly three hundred. The Admiral said the other day that he had never yet failed in anything he had undertaken and that he had no fears of success on this occasion. I can only hope and pray that he meets with success and that I may be permitted to pass safely through as heretofore.

This is a wild night, it is blowing a perfect gale whilst it is bitter cold and this vessel rocks like a cradle with a motion sufficient to create a sense of seasickness on the part of your humble correspondent. I suppose that as soon as we leave and are out of sight of land I will again suffer dreadfully. I am not alone for many of the officers here anticipate the same results as myself. I am satisfied for misery loves company.

I wrote you yesterday which letter I suppose you will receive in due time. I enclosed ten dolls. to purchase Tim a jumper which please acknowledge when received. I sent you also today by express a box containing some clothing which I do not need, Mother can do with them as she wishes.

Excuse this hastily written letter, as it is almost impossible to write with comfort. If we do not leave tomorrow I will write again. Do not neglect to write me as the letters will be forwarded immediately to this vessel and I will get them in due season.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and remembrance to Eliza.

I am your Affec. Son.

Pottsville
Dec 15th 1864

Dear Will,

Yours of the 11th containing ten dollars for Timmy came to hand yesterday and he was delighted and could scarcely express his joy when he saw the contents. He is not sitting aside of me in the sitting room upstairs where I am now writing just after supper. He says I should tell you that his Mother intends having a nice warm overcoat made for him and the jumper purchased to be paid for out of the \$10. He and Frank were at the Town Hall yesterday and this afternoon and Tim invested part of his loose change in candies and wants me to enclose some in this letter to you - but I cannot well do it.

I forgot to say that Trinity Church folks are holding a Fair there this week and Tillie is keeping the cake table and has been busy all the week. John was there last evening and also George, Charly & Jimmy. George & Jimmy have gone this evening for the purpose of delivering a couple of loaves of bread being our contribution to the supper table. I believe the Fair is well attended and I expect a handsome sum will be realized. Yours of the 12th also came to hand at noon today and the box was delivered this morning. The articles contained in it will be all useful and it would have been a pity to have thrown them away. We have had very rough and wild weather for sometime - good sleighing for several days and at this time is snowing rapidly and has been doing so for 3 or 4 hours. I have no doubt but that you are still lying in the ready, detained by bad weather. I have no idea that your expedition will start for sometime, as this month is likely to be the worst time, which could be selected for operations on the coast.

I hope you may meet with the anticipated success and that Admiral Porter's unmarred good luck may still attend him. I hope you may not experience as much sea sickness as you have heretofore. I enclose a card, which came by mail in an envelope directed Captain Clemens Pottsville, which also contained two cards directed to Miss Clemens, one containing the name of Miss Wayne and the other Dr. & Mrs. John Ashuist, Jr., 225 S. Sixth St., I suppose this is the latest mode of sending cards.

Mother, John and myself were slighted. Should you go towards Wilmington an end will be put to your hopes of getting home again soon. Lin Bartholomew is improving slowly but is not out of danger. Tim says I must tell you that he had a sleigh ride on Sunday with Smiths to Port Carlson and home by Pots. I think he will soon be able to write a letter himself. John is still waiting on Mr. F.B.Hughes who has promised to send him to the oil region. The oil fever has attacked the Sch. County folks badly. Scores are visiting the oil regions and investing their money. I am in hopes our land in Armstrong will be found to contain the articles. The prospects grow higher daily. Speculators are branching out in all directions, and if wells should be bored and oil found in the vicinity I will be able to make a future out of our tract. I wilt let you know when the oil

begins to flow and then you can leave the service if you are a mind to. I suppose you will begin to think that I have got oil on the brain as the common saying now is.

I expect you will receive this before you leave, and will be able to answer soon.

With much love from all at home and best wishes for you future welfare.

I remain you Affectionate Father

Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"

off Coast N.C.

December 23/64

Dear Father

I write you but a line now merely to let you know where I am. I have no time to write much as the steamer is now ready to go North. A mail was brought this morning, but there were no letters for this vessel as our mail is now on the way by another steamer. I rec'd your letter of the 15th a few days since and was delighted to hear from home. I had supposed that long ere this we would have engaged the rebel batteries, but the very rough weather has prevented all movement on our part thus far. We now have been laying off the coast for over a week, tossing, bumping, pitching about without mercy.

We have been during all this time from ten to twenty five miles off shore. We have had extremely heavy seas and it has been nothing but toss and roll, from morning till night and from night till morning. I have been a portion of the time in bed, not seasick, but fearful lest I would be by remaining up. Some nights it would be impossible to keep in our bunks whilst at meals all hands stood up to the table and held on the best way he could. On more than one occasion everything on the dinner table was pitched on the floor whilst we went flying in all directions. Happy time of it!!! I suppose we will soon go in and attack the batteries, as there are indications of better weather. We expect to run in today and take a look at the fortifications.

Christmas is near at hand and we hardly know it here. I suppose the children are all a tip toe and anxiously awaiting its arrival. Enclosed please find ten dollars for the boys. Would send more but I think I had better defer it until another time.

Excuse this and I will write you first opportunity a long letter and give you full particulars of our whole trip.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all at home.

I am your affec. son

Don't neglect to write often.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy time. It is very probable that on Christmas day we will be engaging the enemy, as it looks so at present.

Flag Ship Malvern

In Front of Batteries Near Wilmington, N.C.

Dec. 24, 1864

A steamer is just about leaving for Beaufort for ammunition and I thought I would write you a line. We have been engaging the enemy all day and have had a hot time, but up to the present (5p.m.) we have not accomplished much although we silenced their batteries a great part of the

day. We are now retiring and will renew the fight in the morning. I have been in the hottest parts and have escaped thus far. Our losses are very slight but three rifled pieces burst on three of the vessels killing and wounding quite a number. Butler is not here with his forces, he having gone back to Beaufort. All think if he had been here we would have accomplished more, as it is highly necessary to have land forces to cooperate with us. We are all hopeful and are confident of success. The weather and sea were all that could be desired by us for the attack. Christmas eve and I suppose the visions of sugarplums are dancing in the heads of the youngsters.

I wish you all a Merry and Happy Christmas.

Write soon and often.

Love to all

Flag Ship "Malvern"

New Inlet, N.C.

Dec. 27, 1864

A mail leaves here tomorrow for the North and I write now in order to have it ready in time. I would like to write you a long letter now giving you a detailed description of all our movements from the time of our leaving Fort Monroe up to the present which includes our attacks upon the defenses of Wilmington, N. C. but there is such a heavy swell on and the vessel is rolling so badly that it is almost impossible to write at all, without saying anything about writing with comfort. If you have ever been on a vessel during a heavy sea running, you can readily imagine the difficulties one has to contend with, and readily perceive how unpleasant it is to attempt anything like writing. I wrote you a couple of letters lately, the last the evening after the first day's fight which letters I suppose you have received ere this.

Well as you are already aware we, that is, the navy have attacked the Forts and have done all that could be expected of us, but when I attempt to speak of success I hardly know what to say. You are well aware that it was not supposed by anyone that these works could be reduced by the Navy alone, but that it was necessary to have a sufficient land force to operate with us and without which troops being furnished we were kept so long in Hampton Roads. On the 13th we sailed from the Roads the troops under Butler having preceded up - and come to anchorage off Frying Pan Shoals, N.C. Our fleet put into Beaufort where we remained until the morning of the 17th when we again put to sea and joined the whole fleet of N.C. the same afternoon.

Preparatory to our attack upon the Forts it was intended to send in a steamer filled with powder which was to be run under the principal fort and exploded the effect of which explosion would be a demolition of their works and the dismantling of their guns to say nothing of the destruction of life for miles around!! On the night of the 17th the steamer was to be run up but owing to the roughness of the weather the parties in charge were afraid to venture over the bar with her. The bad weather continued until the 23rd when it subsided and it was concluded to run the vessel in that night and follow up with our attack at daylight the following morning. In the mean time let me here say, Butler had gone back to Beaufort N.C. with all his transports and of course his troops were unavailable to us. He says he was out of coal and water and his turning back was a matter of necessity, although we all thought it still strange that nothing was said.

I might here give you a description of this powder boat, which was to accomplish so much. She was a steamer called the Louisiana and was a good boat apparently. There were between two

hundred and thirty and two hundred and fifty tons of powder put onto her, which has to be exploded by four or five different ways, so that in case one should fail the other would not. As the amount of powder to be exploded was so great, it was a matter of conjecture as to what would be the effect and as never before had any explosion ever occurred where more than one fourth that amount had been exploded it was supposed that this would prove very disastrous in its effect. The vessel was run, within four hundred yards of the Fort (Fisher) without molestation from or suspicion on the part of the enemy and was fired in such a manner that she would not blow up before an hour and a quarter after - thus giving the parties in charge plenty of time to escape its effects. Whilst the party was taking the vessel in a blockade runner came in from sea and was signalling to the forces on shore and also to the powder ship, which latter, of course, did not answer. However our party had the satisfaction of seeing a fine large steamer laden with valuable stores run into Wilmington passing them within hailing distance, and they did not dare to molest her passage on account of the matter then in hand. All the fleet was anchored off from ten to fifteen miles for fear of damage at a closer distance!!

We waited with excitement and impatience for the explosion and at one and a quarter on the morning of the 24th an immense flame shot up, illuminating the heavens in the N.W. and in a few moments we heard the explosion. There was little or no concussion of the air and the report was very like that of the discharge of a 100 pounder at close distance. From what we can learn the explosion did not cause much damage, except to demoralize the rebels for the time being. Although the explosion was a terrific one, yet it has disappointed many who were interested in the experiment who thought that this immense amount of powder would when exploded prove very disastrous in its effects not only to those close at hand but for miles distant. It has cost Uncle Sam a pretty good sum but the experiment is a useful one to science.

On the morning of the 24th Saturday, all hands were under weigh and at 10 o'clock as fine a Fleet as ever was collected in the history of the world steamed in to attack the Forts which seemed to bid defiance to anything. The vessels came up in magnificent order in the positions assigned them in their different lines and no one, who did not see it, can imagine what a truly beautiful sight it was. The Minnesota one of the magnificent vessels in the world, with her broadsides of twenty four nine inch guns each, led the line and soon took the position assigned her about one and a quarter mile from the Fort. The Colorado and the Wabash sister ships to the Minnesota and her equals - led the other lines. Then came the double enders, side wheelers gunboats of all descriptions and sizes, with the Ironsides and the Monitors in advance. Upon arriving at about two miles distant from the Fort, the Fleet stopped and the New Ironsides followed by the Monitors Monadnock, Mahopac and Cononicus, steamed on slowly to take positions close under the Fort and open the action. All stood with breathless anxiety as these vessels steamed steadily forward and the decks of all the vessels were crowded with the crew as they witnessed the slow but sure advance of the ironclads. Who will fire the first shot? Some said the Fort others said our boats - and thus impatiently we waited until after twelve noon, when the Ironsides commenced work by firing one of her eleven inch guns which was immediately followed by thee Monitors. Signal was immediately made for the whole fleet to take their positions which was done as soon as possible and in less than an hour our vessels were pouring a perfect torrent of shells into the Fort. Our fire was so severe that it prevented the enemy from doing us much damage and silenced their batteries a portion of the day. During all the fighting

we, in this frail vessel, were everywhere amongst the different vessels and it made no difference to the Admiral whether the shells were flying or not.

We were as close to the enemy's works as any of our ships except the Monitors and although the shells flew in every direction around us we were struck but once and that did no damage. Our fire was terrific, but it did not meet with as vigorous a reply as we had anticipated and I can not understand why the enemy did not use their guns more than they did and can only account for it, that our fire was too severe for them which prevented them.

During the afternoon our shells created a very heavy fire in the Fort which we supposed was the barracks. At nightfall we withdrew, as I wrote you last, to renew again in the morning after expending about thirteen thousand shells none less than seven inch!! and without accomplishing what was expected~ but I do believe that had the troops been here and landed that they could have taken the Fort by assault.

Our casualties were slight indeed very few being killed and wounded. One hundred will cover all the loss of the first day. The Colorado was struck twenty times and all the vessels more or less and it is strange indeed that there were so few casualties. Christmas Eve just after the fight Butler returned from Beaufort with his forces ready to land in the morning.

Christmas morning came into upon us the most lovely day imaginable the sea still as a mill pond and with but a slight breeze blowing and that soft and warm as in summer. Nothing better could be desired and no one doubted but the ere night could close in upon us that the Fort would be in our possession. Christmas morning we were again ready for the fight. When I got up I could not help turn my thoughts homeward and think of the children, happy in the fact that it was Christmas and I easily could imagine their feelings upon discovering what St. Nicholas may have done for them during the night trivial as it may have been. I say I could not help but think of home and an involuntary wish would arise that I might be permitted to be there and enjoy the day with them - but fates had otherwise decreed and our Christmas day was to be spent in battling with the rebels.

We were early under weigh and before eleven o'clock had again engaged the enemy, the vessels occupying the same positions as upon the day before. The firing was kept up all day with more disastrous effect upon the rebels than on the 24th as our firing was superior and few shots were wasted. Again the Fort was in flames and from the extent we are led to believe that there was great destruction going on. Butler in the mean time had commenced landing his troops about two miles and a half above but when night came one half of his forces or more had not been landed, why he did not make more progress we could not understand. The few troops, which were landed, advanced down the beach and some of the more daring went close up to the Fort and one man captured a rebel flag, from the Fort he says, and another a horse and both came back on the beach with their trophies.

The troops upon landing also captured a large number of rebel soldiers who were on duty there. Our fire as night approached was, if possible, more terrific than that of the day before and we were anxiously awaiting an advance of our troops but there was none. At nightfall we again withdrew and only to hear the astounding news from Butler that he intended to re-embark his

troops as he had heard that a large force was coming down from Wilmington. We were all astounded and dumbfounded and could hardly realize that he really intended to do so as our fleet could keep off any number of men the enemy could bring against him as we commanded the whole peninsula over which the enemy must come to attack him. However he did commence to re-embark his troops and when Monday morn came he had but a small portion of them off as the sea had commenced running pretty heavy and it was impossible to get boats to them.

Butler left in his ship for Fortress Monroe yesterday morning with his troops still ashore. They had taken but a small amount of rations with them and here they were lying on the beach and we unable to get them off or get to them. Last night they commenced to re-embark them and by noon today ~ got them all off and Butler and his army is now on the high seas enroute for Fortress Monroe.

I have given you a very plain unvarnished statement of all the affairs and if we here can not assign any reason for Butler's conduct how can you at home be expected to do so? These are the facts and you can draw your own conclusions from them.

One of the Generals came on board to see the Admiral last night and he said that it would be impossible to carry the Fort by assault and in the same breath he says that the soldiers went into the Fort captured a flag, a horse and a mule and killed a couple of the rebels and yet the Fort can not be captured. There seems to be a mystery to the affair and we at present are involved in. I want you to send me anything, which you may see in the papers in reference to this affair, as I am anxious to hear what will be said in defense of those particularly interested.

We are still here with the Fleet and I have no idea that the Admiral will leave until he accomplishes his object. I think we can do it and I do not wish to leave until we have captured these works for I think it is a great shame that this should have terminated as it did. The Navy certainly did its duty and if there had been a proper cooperation by the Army I think the results would have been different. What will next be done is a matter of conjecture but one thing is certain we can not expect such weather we have had during the past few days and there can be no certainty or dependence placed upon it at this time of the year.

We received a mail today from the North and I received letters from Pottsville of the 18th date and the Journal of the 17th but no letter from you in which I was some what disappointed, but I suppose I will get one in a few days. Well I have written much more than I had intended and considering the constant motion of this vessel it is rather a matter of wonder to myself that I have done so much.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and with the hope that I hear soon from you
I am your Affect. Son
Will

"Beaufort" N.C.
January 1st

We are again at this place where we arrived a few days since, the attack upon Wilmington having been abandoned for a short time. Butler as I wrote you, having left us with the troops, I suppose you have received, my letter written you after the second days' attack in which I gave you

particulars. It is indeed a great pity, that after so much preparation by the Navy and when all ahead looked so bright, it should have terminated as it did, but I cannot help again saying that if Admiral Porter had been supported as he had every reason to expect he would, the result would have been very different. There can be no doubt of the fact that the terrific fire of our gun boats completely silenced the enemy and drove them from their guns, forcing them to seek shelter in their bomb proofs and forbidding them even to wish the entrance of two or three of our daring soldiers, who not only went into the Fort, under our own fire, capturing a horse, a flag and killing an orderly bearing dispatches, but even went up to the bomb-proof in which some of the enemy had concealed themselves opened the door and fired their muskets in amongst the rebels!!!

Now if a couple of men could obtain almost absolute possession of a Fort, deemed by Butler impregnable, is it not natural to suppose that five thousand men could have captured it? As I said before it does appear mysterious and you can form your own conclusions in the matter. I enclose herewith a copy of Butler's letter to the Admiral in which he notifies him of the fact that he intends re-embarking his troops and his reasons therefore.

The Admiral replied to this letter, but I have no copy at present, but I think it published in the Herald, with the whole of the Admirals report to the Dept. The Admiral told Butler in it, that it was a pity there were not a few more brave men to follow those who entered the Fort etc. All here seem to think that the feelings and spirit which animated so many of our political Generals at the beginning of this war where country is a secondary consideration to personal aggrandizement, had not a little to do with the circumstances in this case and you may depend upon it that many a prayer has gone up for an infliction of punishment on him who deserves to be treated in the manner prescribed in the articles of war in relation to deserters.

However the affair has only begun and it is very probable that before one week has rolled away, another attack will have been made upon Fort Fisher, for troops are being prepared for this attack and we expect them here in a day or two. An officer arrived here today from Lt. Gen. Grant with dispatches and the information that Gen. Grant is fully aware of the course pursued by Butler and that he is determined to show the people that this thing can be accomplished and that he is ready to furnish as many man as is necessary. The greater part of the Fleet is here and they have all been ordered to be ready for sea at any moment. I do not suppose we will get off for three or four days yet, but no one can tell, it may be sooner or later.

Our mail communication now is rather irregular but we are expecting one hourly. The latest letter I have had from you is on the 16th. ! I suppose you have written since but I have read nothing further from you. I am exceedingly anxious to hear again from home. I am in the enjoyment of good health, but I must admit that at times I get rather tired of this kind of life, as it is in a great degree monotonous, but then it would be about the same if I was stationed ashore and I have this advantage here that I am more comfortably located. Whilst here, I go ashore pretty often although there is nothing to be seen as it is the most forlorn place imaginable; a few ricketty frame houses built on a sand heap. Whilst the few people seen are of that low class of North Carolina snuff dippers, the sight of whom suggests the query as to whether we are not in some foreign port, as they look, certainly, unlike Americans.

The weather the last day or two has been cold and very suggestive of winter although we can hardly realize that winter is really here as we have had the most delightful weather except an occasional blow when we were out at sea.

Do not make much exposition of this letter, as, no doubt, there are some fools who might take exceptions to the remarks made in reference to Butler, but I have never yet heard since I have been in the service, one officer or one man who said one word in favor of him as a soldier but whether he is or not there is one thing very certain that he is a man who wields a powerful influence, a stronger one than any other General in the service, and a man who does not hesitate to assert his rights and inflict a blow when he chooses and in the long run it is better for an officer, no matter what his rank, to differ as little with him as possible. You know there are some who idolize him and what I say of him would stamp me, in their estimation, as one unfit for his position, but what I say is only the echo of thousands of other voices. Be careful to whom you show this, but I have given you only facts.

I shall not close this letter tonight but shall wait until morning as it is possible that before that time a mail may arrive, with a letter from you, which I hope may be the case. I send much love to Mother, Tillie and all the boys and only wish that I could pay you another visit.

Jan 2. A mail has arrived but I recd no letter. Journal of the 24th came. Am sorry I rec'd no letter.

Pottsville
Jan. 2nd 1865

Yours of the 23rd & 24th Dec. came to hand by the same mail Saturday evening the 31st. The one dated the 23rd containing ten dollars as a Christmas present for the boys. Charley at once invested his share in a hat and Jimmy invested his in a skating cap. The other boys have not yet appropriated their shares yet. They will also purchase something useful. They all desire me to thank you for your present. Tim has not yet bought his jumper, as he has not been able to find one, which pleases him and will use his old one for the present. He has just mounted a new cloth overcoat, which reaches, down to his heels, with a cape reaching to his knees. He looks to use an expression of his own "Bully". He dined yesterday by express invitation at Mr. Boyles, and spent the balance of the afternoon with him. You perhaps think it strange that you have not received more letters from me since you sailed from Fortress Monroe but I was so much surprised in the beginning of last week - with the news that the whole fleet was back again and I looked daily for a letter from you announcing your arrival that the time passed almost without my being aware of it.

We have had a full account of the bombardment during the two days the 24 & 25 from the accounts of the different correspondents of the papers - as well as the report of Admiral Porter to the Navy department and I am sorry that it resulted as it did in a repulse of Butler's troops. I think that the Admiral was rather severe upon the General - who I perceive is back again in front of Petersburg. The fleet it appears is still in the neighborhood of Fort Fisher. Porter seems determined to stay there, until ordered away. A happy time you must have had on your way down and whilst waiting for mild weather, the troops who were not accustomed to the sea, must have suffered awfully. According to the newspaper accounts you must have had a splendid view

of the attack - as I notice that the Malvern did not lie quiet long but put in when shot and shell were flying thick.

John is still waiting on Mr. Hughes who has promised to give him employment in the oil region. He is just now between 12 and 1 o'clock busy making his New Years call; that you know suits John first rate. He has been enjoying himself much the last 2 or 3 weeks, as he has been attending a number of private parties, and has been out to dinner 4 or 5 times during the Holy days. I hope he will not be idle long.

Eliza particularly requests me to wish you a happy New Year and says she hopes you will get through safe. Charley is one of the unfortunates, always something or other happening to him. Yesterday on his way home from Sunday School, he fell on the ice and sprained his wrist and suffers much from it today. The balance of the family is well and all wish to be remembered to you. The weather is very cold. Expecting to hear soon again from you.

I remain your affectionate Father
Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Beaufort N.C.
January 6th 1865

I rec'd your letter of the 2nd yesterday, that is your letter had the P.O. mark of that date, which was very quick in reaching me and I was glad to hear from you.

We are still here awaiting the arrival of troops, which are expecting daily when another attack will be made upon the defenses of Wilmington. It is a great pity indeed that there should be any necessity for another attack, as we should have taken the works in the first instance. I see by the papers, which we have, just rec'd, that a fair statement has been given to the public and the conclusion arrived at by the press is, as I had hoped it would be. I think the circumstances connected with the whole affair should be sufficient to convince the most ardent admirer of the Commanding General that the cause of the failure to occupy the works did not lie with the Navy.

Since I wrote you last a Rebel Marine who was in Fort Fisher during the bombardment, deserted to our fleet and he was here on board this vessel before being sent North. The description given by him of our firing is fearful and that we not only drove the enemy into their bomb proofs and away from their guns, but that many of the guns were dismantled and destroyed. He says the terror of the men can not be described as the bomb proofs were not large enough to hold all the garrison and that many were compelled to remain outside subjected to our fire. He also says that the Fort was about to be surrendered but when they discovered that our troops were being withdrawn and our fire was about ceasing they changed their minds and they still possess that which they considered as lost.

If you have not already concluded that the Navy is free from all censure from what I have written you before, I think the statement above given should be enough to convince you that to capture Fort Fisher was not as hard a task as Butler supposed. But enough we must make another attempt and although I think there is harder work before us, yet I do not think we will fail this time.

We have been in the enjoyment of the most delightful weather for the past few days, more like summer than winter as it is, and all are sorry that the expedition was not ready to sail and take advantage of it. Today there is a strong southerly gale and whilst it is pretty rough outside it is very pleasant here in the harbor.

I am glad to hear that all had a pleasant time during the holidays - of course John could not think of missing his New Year's calls!!! I hope that he soon obtains the situation offered him and that he may not remain long idle.

Tell Eliza that I had a very quiet time New Years, rather more so than on Christmas day when we were engaged with Fort Fisher, and that we did not have a turkey either day.

With much love to Mother, Tillie and all.

I am your aff. Son

Will-

Pottsville
Jan. 11th 1865

Dear Will,

Yours of the 1st came to hand on Monday the 9th and yours of the 6th by yesterday (Tuesdays) noon mail. I wrote you a short letter on Monday morning, previous to receipt of either of your letters - and now write more as acknowledgement of their receipt than because I have anything particular to write about.

With respect as to who is to blame for the want of success in the attack upon Wilmington. The people of Pottsville can care very little. You know that the intensely loyal ones never admit that either our army or navy ever meet with defeat. I heard on Monday in Pa. Gen'l Butler praised by 3 or 4 persons as the greatest man of the age. They placed him far ahead of either Grant or the President and thought it a pity he could not occupy the Presidential chair.

I see some statements with regard to the action of the fleet under command of Admiral Porter, which censure him for not being on hand early enough. In the meantime the transports with the troops getting out of coal & water, were obliged to go to Beaufort and that the fleet attacked Fort Fisher before the return of Butlers' troops which should not have been done. That the fort was very little damaged by your fire upon it and that if great injury had been done, some few of your Ironclads should have run past the Fort - when the firing had ceased in consequence of the men all having been driven into the bomb proofs. You must not understand me as intending to find fault with or criticize the actions of any one either in the army or navy - but as you have asked and were anxious to know what opinions were expressed on the subject I have made these remarks. I as well as many others have ceased making remarks of any kind, with regard to the manner in which this war is conducted.

The war in fact does not occupy the minds of many persons just now, except it so happens that members of their own families happen to be in service as privates, and exposed to dangers and fatigues, and themselves at home struggling for bread. Some others however just at present have their minds exercised as to how they shall escape the coming draft, and fill the quotas of the wards and townships with the same class of men, with which previous quotas have been filled.

Our weather has been very changeable. Yesterday it rained all day on top of the snow, and water ran from all the hills but it cleared up cold last night, and now this morning the streets are covered with a coat of ice and the boys and girls are skating in all directions. Skating has become as you are aware a very fashionable amusement for the ladies as well as for the male sex.

We are all well and all wish to be remembered to you.

Hoping that you may have better luck next time you attack at "Fort Fisher". I

I remain your affectionate Father,

Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"
off Fort Fisher, N.C.
Jan 11, 1865

I am in the midst of excitement and am so completely worn out and tired that it would be impossible for me to write much. We have been fighting all day and fighting hard and I have been kept busy from daylight until now and even now I may be called at any moment to receive messages.

At daylight we, that is the navy, commenced shelling the Fort and after a vigorous shelling until about two o'clock the troops as well as a force of sailors and marines made an assault upon the works. The advance was badly cut up whilst the sailors and marines were driven back with heavy loss but the soldiers kept steadily forward gaining traverse after traverse of the Fort until finally at eleven p.m. the signal was made to me "Cease firing on the Fort we have possession".

The fighting has been severe and hard and many a poor fellow has gone to his last home but we have possession of Fort Fisher but I cannot say anything about the balance of the works beyond, although it is natural to suppose that it is all a victory. The soldiers captured the Fort inch by inch and only have gained it after a desperate struggle.

I am now awaiting further developments, that is I am waiting further information from shore in reference to particulars of the capture which, we here have not yet rec'd. I have lost several friends in the Navy who have been killed today, two out of our mess being killed and others wounded. Altogether it has been a tough fight, but we have gained certainly a great victory as this point has been the mouth through which the whole confederacy has been fed during the last four years and it is certainly a great loss to the Rebels.

We had the most elegant weather & everything was certainly favorable for us. I am well but very tired and feel as though about twenty-four hours good sleep would do me no harm, I will write you in a day or two and give you full particulars.

With much love to all at home.

I am Your Affec. Son

I wrote you last on the night of the 15th whilst the fighting was in progress at Fort Fisher and although I might have waited and have told you in the same letter that we were victorious yet I was uncertain how soon the mail would leave and I being very busy was compelled to write and close it very hastily in order to get it off in time for that mail which would leave some time during the night. You are of course fully aware of our operations here and have no doubt read all the graphic descriptions given by the more able correspondents of the Press, but, were it not that this comes from one in whom you have some interest and one who has been a participant, I would not think you would find much interest in reading this.

I would like to give you such a description of the attacks, assaults, bombardments, and final surrender of the works as they occurred and as they are pictured now before me, but my pen fails me and I am unable to find words to express it in such a way as would seem satisfactory to myself. Whatever it may have been the joy of the North upon the reception of the news, it must certainly have been far inferior to that manifested by us, who after the, long days work, doubtful and fearful at times lest we might fail, found that our labor had repaid itself and that we had, accomplished one of, if not the greatest victories of the war.

The capture of the Fort itself was not the victory alone but it proved to the world that we were able to the task, and it has shown that to often have the lives of thousands of brave fellows been placed in incompetent hands and that when men able to perform the duties of their position are entrusted with the work they can perform it satisfactorily, and how could the President act more wisely than when he issued the order for the removal of Gen. Butler, prompted, not only by his conduct during the first attacks upon this place, but also, as it is alleged, for acts not altogether consistent with his position as a Major General?

Now that Fort Fisher is taken, and taken without siege to it, as according the opinion of that wise Engineer Gen. Weitzel must be done before we could obtain possession, I think the people should by this time be convinced that such men as Gen. Butler will never conquer the enemy, but on the other hand will only prolong the war and exhaust the very resource of the government and the sooner (so the President thinks) that such men are relieved from important commands the better it is for the country.

Any General with a sufficient number of men and possessing a strong determination and courage, which urges him to go in and win, finds in Admiral Porter a man ready and able to assist him - and when Gen. Terry arrived at Beaufort with his troops the most hearty feelings were manifested between the two commanders, and each seemed to strive to out do the other in readying every assistance possible It was with this feeling and with an entire satisfaction pervading every officer in the fleet, that we left Beaufort en route for this place.

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Cape Fear River, N.C.
January 18, 1865

As I said in my last letters home, that we were favored with the most delightful weather and from the start everything foreboded success and when arriving in sight of Fort Fisher all looked upon it as a doomed spot, although the enemy boasted that it would be impossible for us to dislodge them and even said in their papers that they did not know who was the bigger fool Porter or Butler for making the attempt, but I suppose at least by this time they are satisfied that Admiral Porter is not.

I said from the beginning that we consider it one of the greatest and most important victories of the war and any one thinking carefully over the matter will soon find it to be the fact. It was through this channel the enemy has been receiving all the necessaries for carrying on this war, and is the channel through which she has had communication with the outer world. To prevent the possibility of our obtaining possession of this river and outlet the enemy built the strongest earthworks in the world, placing an officer Maj. Gen. Whiting, who before the war was one of the finest engineers in our army in command and leaving him here ever since the war began in order that he, with his superior knowledge, would be able to hold the point open for them so long as the war may exist. For over three years has Gen. Whiting been building and strengthening these works, which in two days, were taken from them by Terry and Porter.

As I said, Fort Fisher is one of the most magnificent earthworks, as well as the strongest that all here have seen protected by traverses which are themselves, mountains. In each and everyone of these traverses there are large and commodious bomb-proofs and connected with each other by innumerable passage ways which are also bomb-proofs of themselves, whilst magazines filled with all the munitions of war are at hand on every side. Beside Fisher on the extreme south eastern point of the Peninsula and adjoining the Fort is Bat Lamb or the "Mound", which is an immense pile of earth, sand and sod sixty-feet in height and on which were placed two heavy 11 inch Blakely Guns. The "Mound" was always a terror to our blockaders and whilst commanding the entrance to the river and the sea in all directions, it at the same time can be used upon any assaulting party advancing upon Fisher.

Behind the Mound and about twelve hundred yards distant is Fort Buchanan (named after an Admiral of Mobile fame), also a most magnificent works though not so high as the "Mound", and mounting three immense guns - two pointing out to sea and across the river and one which can also be used upon Fort Fisher - and this gun as well as those upon the Mound proved very destructive and caused a great bit of trouble to our forces during the attack upon the Fort.

The first day the troops landed and were getting into position the Navy pushed forward and kept up a heavy fire upon the works all day, withdrawing at dark, leaving only the Monitors and the Ironsides to fire slowly during the night. We landed artillery that day also and the troops entrenched themselves in order to have a position to fall back upon in case they were repulsed.

Bright and early Sunday morning, which by the way was a most lovely morning, the Fleet was again steaming in towards Fort Fisher and at ten o'clock here throwing a perfect torrent of shells which kept the enemy covered in their bomb-proofs and prevented them from using their guns a greater part of the time and I do not wonder at it, but can hardly conceive it possible for any human being to have the courage to stand by those guns whilst out firing was at its heaviest. At the same time the Fleet was about to commence the actions the sailors, Marines and officers (all volunteers) began to disembark in small boats from their different vessels and to collect and organize upon the beach, preparatory to taking part in the assault which was to come off at two o'clock p.m. if nothing prevailed. In the mean time Gen. Terry was getting his troops in position in front of the N.E. face and it was with the most intense anxiety that we waited for the appointed time. We had signal communication with Gen. Terry and I was momentarily in receipt of messages from him in relation to every, and the slightest movement he made. At the same time the enemy was busy sending down troops from Wilmington and landing them, many had already marched into and reinforced the Fort.

The excitement was most intense and minutes seemed like hours in waiting for the assault to commence. Before leaving Beaufort he arranged a system of signals by which a motion implied a whole sentence, and thus in an instant all information was conveyed. At two o'clock, the hour appointed, the General was not ready and we waited almost impatiently for him and thus one hour passed or until at 3 precisely the message came "My preparations for the assault are made and my troops are in position" - Then the whole fleet was notified of the part which it had to perform. At 3:15 the message came "Change the direction of your fire" which was the information that his troops were at that moment advancing. The man stationed at the steam whistle at our vessel started, and at the next moment as it were, one vessel after the other took it up and the roar of artillery, which had been incessant during the whole day, ceased and the din of steam whistles was substituted. It was a wild and exciting scene, the air resounding with the noise of over a hundred steam whistles, whilst breathlessly we watched the assault of our troops.

The sailors and marines changed the sea face and starting down the beach, they were in full view, as they were but a very short distance from us, and we could distinctly see the movements of all of them. They advanced in full sun with cheers but never having been organized in so large numbers (nearly two thousand) there was not that steady onward march of a disciplined soldier, but as I say they ran towards the Fort, more as it were like a rabble, with their officers leading them on.

From the start they became disorganized and the enemy who by this time had mounted the parapets of the Fort lining it as, thickly as bees, opened a terrific fire of musketry upon them and in an instant many a poor Jack Tar and many a gallant naval officer fell on the beach either killed or wounded. They still pushed forward but it was for a short distance, for they immediately began to retrace their steps through this withering fire which the enemy kept pouring into them from the tops of the parapets, where, knowing that the sailors were not firing at them they could with impunity load and fire deliberately.

At this time our spirits began to droop as we were not yet aware of the progress of the soldiers or what they had been able to accomplish, but directly a shout arose on the ship that the soldiers had gained the first parapet and were fighting their way inch by inch. Directly we saw them cross the

first and gain the second and thus they fought over transverse after transverse until when night fell they had gained eight of them and were in reality fighting the rebels in the Fort, each party holding possession of one half. After the repulse of the sailors our ships again opened upon the sea face and at Buchanan over which reinforcements were coming to the relief of those in the Fort.

The fighting was most desperate and the two forces were at times almost trouncing each other, but our troops did not give one inch but kept steadily gaining upon the enemy fighting on through, the darkness. The shells from the gun boats fell at times amongst our own men but that was unavoidable in the darkness, however we did not injure many and the fire was soon changed.

At eight o'clock I rec'd a message from the Gen. that he had a "fresh brigade drawn up and expected to finish the job with them". All this time the men were fighting hard and steadily gaining upon the rebels, but the greatest fear was that the enemy would get certain reinforcements which were then landing and a heavy fire was kept up by the gun boats in that direction to prevent them reaching the Fort. At 9 p.m. a tremendous cheer arose from the Fort and the musketry ceased, we knew that the Fort was ours. Presently the message came from the Gen. "Cease firing we have possession". Immediately every man aboard was assembled on the quarterdeck, amidst the glare of rockets shooting in every direction and Coston Lights burning on all sides, the welkin rang with the cheers of officers and men. Signal was made to all the fleet and for an hour the air was filled with rockets and fireworks whilst it rang with the cheers of the men, the ringing of the bells and the whistling of the steamers. "Joy was unconfined" and the sight I witnessed that night I shall never forget.

The old tars fairly cried with joy and threw up their tarpaulins in the excitement and only withdrew in anxiety to know whom we had lost. The losses on both sides were heavy, but the sailors suffered the worst considering the time they were under fire. We lost many valuable officers - two from this ship and two as fine young men I ever met. Lts. Preston & Porter (no relation of the Admiral) both of our mess were killed in the first advance. After we had possession of the Fort we sent a boat over to the beach and they were found where they had fallen - and at midnight we had their bodies on board. They were carefully prepared and sent north the next day. Lt. Preston was one of the most talented gentlemen in the Navy, and besides the loss to his own family, the country has lost a man whom it is hard to replace. Poor Preston & Porter the ship seems deserted without you!!!

It is a remarkable fact that both these officers at the beginning of the war were together at "Roanoke" where they were successful, and in Charleston where they were taken prisoners and after suffering a years imprisonment they were released together and came to this ship at the same time and then again to fall almost side by side on Sunday last.

In the morning we awoke to find our flag flying over all the Forts and men scattered in all directions busy gathering up the wounded and burying the dead. I went ashore and the sight in and around the Fort beggars description. There is not a place any prominent object which is not literally torn by our shells, whilst more than half the guns were dismounted or knocked to pieces, and every passage way and bombproof contained its quota of Rebel wounded. Outside on the traverses and in the Fort were evidence of the bloody struggle of the night before in the shape of

dead and mangled bodies of Union and Rebel soldiers -and the track of our forces might be noticed by our dead.

The most lamentable thing of all is the explosion of a magazine in the Fort, when about, as is supposed, two hundred of our men were killed on the morning after the fight. It seems that a large body of our men had collected there and were busy removing dead and wounded in that neighborhood, when some ignorant man went in the magazine with a light when in a second the whole thing blew up killing and burying all who were near. Our loss in killed and wounded in the fight will not exceed five hundred. The enemy I do not think lost quite as many as we did, but we took them all prisoners and this morning put over two thousand five hundred well men aboard steamers to be sent North, whilst we have all their wounded here yet, besides ninety well officers. Our occupation and capture of Fort Fisher has frightened all the rebel forces in this vicinity and yesterday morning they blew up nearly all their fortifications.

Fort Caswell, an immense stone structure built by the United States, mounting thirty or forty guns, the Battery at Smithville on the west bar and other important works have all been blown up and the enemy has left for parts unknown.

Our fleet is now busy taking up torpedoes from the river, which is full of them and are connected with the shore by submarine wire and to be exploded by electricity. When the obstructions are removed and buoyed out, we will move up the river. The Gen. sent out a strong reconnoissance up the Peninsula, but I have not yet heard anything from them.

Too much praise cannot be awarded to Gen. Terry and I do think, as I always did, that he is without a doubt one of our best Generals whilst he is at the same time one of the finest gentleman I ever met! The country owes Gen. Terry a great debt for his achievements here and the results accomplished stand boldly in the list of great deeds. What a contrast to such a man as Butler! How absurd that Terry should serve in a subordinate position to the latter!! But times and circumstances have changed and whilst the name of one is being praised by all, the other sinks in degradation.

Secretary Stanton, who has been down to visit Gen. Sherman stopped here to visit the fleet on his way home on Monday when he discovered the fact of our victory and immediately issued an order thanking the Admiral and General as well as the soldiers and sailors for their conduct. The Gen. has been a full Major Genl - Genl. Ames a Brevet Major Genl and Brevet Gen. Curtis a Brigadier - the latter was wounded and has been sent North. We have Maj. Gen. Whiting and Col. Lamb commanding Fort Fisher both prisoners and both wounded.

We have captured everything here, horses, wagons, artillery small arms, ammunition, stores and steamers and in all probability will capture some blockade runners, who of course are not aware that the Fort is in our possession. Two came in from sea on the night of the fight, but arriving at Smithville discovered the news and immediately put to sea again, satisfied that this was a wrong port for them.

Every body here is in good humor and high spirits and when Sherman moves up from S.C. and we have established ourselves here upon a strong footing - you may expect to hear of a tottering confederacy, if it is not so already. As it is getting late and I have written much more than I had any idea of doing, I think I had better retire. Excuse the extreme length of this, but I could hardly say less and when you consider that it is not, often that I inflict a long letter upon you, I know you will, excuse it. I want you to send me what articles you may find of interest on this affair as we do not get papers of all places here and there is much that we lose. I asked you to send me them on the occasion of our first attack but you neglected to do it.

I forgot to mention that in the Fort is a most magnificent Armstrong gun, which was presented to Jeff Davis by Sir Wm. Armstrong and it is mounted on solid mahogany carriage. It is a most complete and handsome affair and no doubt the Yankees feel much obliged to the noble gentleman for his gift and will put it to better use than he had intended it should.

January 20th 1865

I wrote the foregoing two days since but there was no steamer going North, so I left it open.

We came to Smithville yesterday and now whilst I am writing we are again enroute for Fort Fisher. Last night as we expected we captured two blockade runners. It was a most exciting time about midnight we discovered lights at sea which we knew at once to be a blockade runner and we waited impatiently for her to come in. In a short time she made her appearance and hailed us.

When she was answered by United States gun boats she replied "It's all up" and immediately came to anchor. In about half an hour after the "Charlotte" one of the finest steamers came in and she also was captured. When the latter was on the way in I in company with an officer started in a small boat to meet her and after she had passed we followed and and soon as she stopped we boarded her and took all hands prisoners. You can hardly imagine the surprise of all on board for they thought they had come safely in and did not anticipate meeting our forces here. She is an English vessel and all on board were Englishmen most of them passengers and the balance traders. There was any quantity of stores aboard and you may depend upon it that I did not come back to the Malvern empty handed, but brought several cases of fine champagne, wines and cigars for my own private use and have them all in my room now!

As the mail is about leaving I shall close with love to all at home and with the hope that I may hear soon from you.

I am your affectionate son

Will

Flag Ship "Malvern"
off "Fort Fisher" N.C.
January 20th 1865

Dear Father,

I commenced a letter to you on the 18th and as there was no mail left here for the North since I closed it this a.m. and you will, I suppose, receive it in the same mail as this.

A steamer leaves tomorrow so I thought I would give you the latest news, as I suppose you are glad to hear as often as possible from me. The capture of the two blockade runners last night at

Smithville was one of the neatest and most mortifying (to them) affairs of the war. We had gone to Smithville yesterday morning merely to look at the place and visit the abandoned Rebel works and the Admiral concluded to remain there overnight. We expected that there would be one or two vessels run up when we would be able to capture them without trouble. I went to bed early but I could not rest very well, I got up and went on deck at one o'clock. Just as I got on deck a steamer was seen coming in which we knew at once to be a blockade runner. Presently she was hailed by the "Maratanza" and she answered "Stag" and was told in answer to her enquiry who we were, "U.S. Gunboat", when she immediately replied "we are gone up" and come to anchor at once when we sent a boat and took possession of her. Presently another one was seen coming in at a rapid rate, little thinking that she would in a few moments fall into the hands of Yankees. A boat was at once lowered and Capt. Adams & myself with a boat crew all around dropped down the stream to await her coming, which occurred in a few minutes.

As soon as she had passed us a short distance we pulled rapidly toward her and boarded her at once taking all hands prisoners and possession of the vessel. You cannot imagine the mortification and surprise by all on board, for they felt sure that they had successfully evaded us and here now all right to run up to Wilmington in the morning.

This vessel is the "Charlotte" a Clyde built steamer and her captain says she is one of the fastest vessels engaged in the trade, and she is a handsome ship, costing fifty thousand pounds to build. They had already rolled several barrels of ale on deck to give the crew for the success in running in, whilst the officers and passengers were all in the cabin merry over champagne in which we Yankees joined them rather unexpectedly. Both vessels were freighted with assorted and valuable cargoes. The Stag is a Government vessel and the Charlotte belonging to private parties.

On the latter they were all Englishmen many of the passengers who had come to look at war from a Southern side but now they will have to view it from ours. Those fellows live well and any quantities of wines on aboard are all of the finest quality, being purchased right-in the countries where it is made. I now have in my room for private use. Three cases champagne, Four cases sherry, a couple of cases of brandy and other nick nax, but do not think I will begin tonight on it, but will have it for dinner as our mess was about played out of wines. I am in hopes that I will be able to share in the prizes, but it may not be although my name has been sent in as one of the ships officers and the Admiral says I am entitled to it. If I do share and the vessels and cargoes bring a proper price, my share will be about fifteen hundred dollars or very little less. So if it is given me, I certainly shall not object.

By the way, a day or two after the fight the clerk in the office showed me a letter, which the Admiral had written to the Secretary of the Navy concerning my conduct since I have been with him and during the two engagements. It is not intended that I should know anything about it and saw it only as I mention above. It is a splendid letter and praises my conduct and department it states the implicit confidence, which he has in me etc., and asks that the Sec. of the Navy furnish a copy to the Sec. of War that it may be placed on record as a testimonial. It is a fine letter and I suppose I will hear of it soon and if I am able to get a copy I will send it to you. I have no doubt but that the Admiral is pleased with me and likes me, for his conduct towards me is of the very kindest nature. If my name does not appear in his report, it is because he has chosen the other

method, of better to bring my name before the departments, having made a specialty of it. It will always stand as a record in my favor and I consider it of great value.

This is a wild night and is cold, raining and blowing hard. It is the first bad weather we have had since the expedition sailed. We have news tonight that Terry has been made a Brigadier in the Regular Army and everybody is rejoiced here for all fairly idolize him. I received your letter of 11th today but no others. I thought I ought to receive some of later dates.

How is the oil, is there any prospect of your selling it for a good price?

I shall close with the hope that I may hear often from home.

I send much love to Mother & all at home.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Flag Ship Malvern
Cape Fear River N.C.
Sunday Jan 29th 1865

Dear Father,

I received your letter of the 21st last evening and was glad to hear again from you, as the last letter before that which I had from you was that dated 12th and when more than one week elapses between your letters, it seems a long time and I begin to get anxious for news from home.

You do not give me much home news or what is going on Pottsville, but I suppose there is little transpiring, that it may be difficult to find material for a very interesting letter. I have very few correspondents, in fact but one or two besides yourself and I only hear from them but once in a great while and your letters are about the only ones I can with certainty look forward to and it is on this account that I am so anxious to receive them.

I received the Journal of the same date as your letter and it also mentions your having "an old fashioned winter," plenty of sleighing, skating and all amusements incident to the season. Up to within the last few days we have experienced but little of winter, but at present it is extremely cold and we here feel it so much the more being as it were, not sufficiently acclimated. Last winter I was in the Dept of the South where we had very little cold weather, so it has been two years since I have had my fingers numbed until the past few days - and as we live all together below, where it is as comfortable as any where the cold is so perceptible upon going on deck, and I can assure I spend as little time there as possible.

I have very little to do at present as the army and navy are lying idle, resting after the hard work in front of Fort Fisher. However I still have something to occupy my attention and sometimes when called up through the night, I think it sufficient.

Last night Gen. Grant, about twenty other generals of more or less magnitude, Asst. Sec. of the Navy Fox and a host of Naval and Army officers came down to see the Admiral. Of course Gen'l Terry was sent for and a general congratulation was the result. They all left last night for the North with the exception of Maj. Gen. Barnard (Engineer) who with the Admiral has gone ashore on a tour of inspection round and about Fisher. Their visit means something and no doubt plans for our future operations in this vicinity have been adopted, but what we of ours do not

know, although I know this much, that reinforcements will be sent here and some general of note (not Terry) will have command, but I do not think that any more will be made from here at present, but that the operations of Sherman will be awaited and should he continue successful and move up towards this point, then I think we will push forward and possess Wilmington. Our vessels are gradually getting farther up the river but nothing can be done then until the obstructions in the shape of torpedoes etc. are removed. Shots have been exchanged between some of the vessels and the batteries above, but amounting to nothing of importance. You need not expect to hear much of interest from this place for some time yet.

I have been ashore but twice since we took Fisher and I was not aware until afterwards that Will Moorehead's regiment took part in the fight or I would have hunted him up. I have heard nothing of him and do not know where he is but I expect to go ashore again tomorrow or next day, when I will make inquiries about him. I do not think he is hurt, as I have not seen his name in the papers.

Tell Timmie that if I do not mention his name in all my letters, it is not because I have forgotten him, for I think of him every day as well as all at home. Tell him to be a good boy and you will give him a part of the enclosed ten dollars (\$10) which I send to him, Frank & Jim. Kiss him for me and give my love to all the others.

Tell Eliza I am glad to hear that she still thinks of me and say that I have not yet forgotten all home associations, but if I have good luck as here tomorrow I will get home soon for I am determined that I will not remain away any longer than I can help.

Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all and do write oftener for if you do not I think the only way will be for me to retaliate. I hope John gets something to do soon and that he has not the most remote idea of going in the army again for I would rather see him anywhere than to have him again enter the service.

I am your Affect Son

I send by this mail a pack of playing cards for Tillie, they were captured or board one of the blockade runners - and I thought I would send them home as a relic. They are of fine English make and have Flags on the back and are quite a curiosity. Keep them without using as they are worth preserving as trophies of the war.

Pottsville
Feb 7th 1865

Yours of the 29th came to hand yesterday noon with ten dollars enclosed for Tim, Frank & Jim. The cards have not come to hand. I expect some thief in the service of the gov't has appropriated them to his own use. As was done in the case of a registered letter, sent to me from Armstrong County in Nov. last and which, contained seventy dollars in money sent by one of the tenants. The letter containing the money was stolen on the route somewhere certainly. I must suffer the loss.

You complain of my writing so seldom and giving you so little news. I write as often as you do. I never fail to write immediately upon receipt of letters from you, but have not much news to give you.

Your Mother has gone to Minersville to attend the funeral of Mrs. Higley's only remaining son, Isaac, a boy the age of our Jimmy. He died after an illness of one week. He overheated himself whilst skating. The blow is a heavy one for her and his sisters. You perhaps know that her other two sons James & Harvey, have both died within the year, both having been in the army. The Higleys' moved to Minersville last fall, and took Mrs. Fall's stand and business, and have been doing well. The funeral will be at Mount Laurel this afternoon.

It is now snowing (12 o'clock) very fast and I expect we will have a large addition to our present stock. Young Bob Palmer died last evening with small pox, one of the most awful cases ever heard I of. Our John & Joe Moorhead came in last evening to attend a large party. Expenses of which being paid by Joseph Patterson, who don't regard the cost and they are gotten up in first-rate style. Will Patterson has bought a house out on Green Street Phil. and has moved into it. Mr. Geo. Patterson has bought one at Morristown and moves 1st of April. James Patterson has also bought one at Morristown and moves May 1st., a considerable clearing out of the Pattersons' you will no doubt say. Mrs. Geer the wife of Seth W. Geer and sister of James Campbell was buried last week. She died of consumption, and left a baby 6 weeks old. Your old friend John Brown has been sick confined to his room for about 6 or 8 weeks, and is still unable to come into the store. He has a hard time of it. I am pretty well spoken out of news, but I had almost forgotten to say that the boys I said I should tell you that their hens were laying in spite of the cold weather and the high price of corn - from 5 to 8 eggs per day - which whilst eggs are worth 48 cents per dozen seems to pay pretty well. Your hen has laid about 2 dozen eggs this winter. Your dog Dick is a queer fellow, and he don't behave better, we will have to give him a dose of small children, if strangers happen to put their hands on him in the house, he is sure to bite them. He has bitten 5 or 6. So don't be surprised if you should hear of his coming to an untimely death. Eliza always tries to make some excuse for him. That I think is about nonsense enough for one letter.

To come to something more serious - I suppose you have heard all about the Peace Commissions, and their meeting the President and Sec. Steward and of the failure to negotiate a Peace. It seems to me that so far as we have any knowledge of their meeting and conference that the President was pretty well sold. I think that if I had been there, I would not have met them, unless I had been pretty well assured that they were about to offer other terms than these they asked for, namely, a recognition to the party of the north, of the independence of their confederacy. I hope however that the meeting will not have been in vain, but that something yet looking towards the reestablishment of the Union may still grow out of this apparently unfavorable beginning. Judging by the tone of the Pres. generally - whilst they were on their way, and whilst the conference was being- held, the most radical of them seemed to be willing that our gov't should secede somewhat from the hard conditions, which heretofore it was said would be imposed on the south whenever we had it in our power to impose them. Did you see Butler's speech, which he made at Lowell, reported in full? I did not send you the full speech for I thought it being too hard on your Admiral as well as upon the President and the officers of the Army of the Potomac. He calls Gen'l Grants battles, which took place from the Rapidan to the

James a series of disasters. The Administration and its particular friends have been trying to make the people believe that the march was a triumphant one.

All the family wish, to be remembered to you, and hoping that whilst you remain in the service you may have as pleasant a position as you now have.

I remain your affectionate Father
Chas. W. Clemens

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Cape Fear River, N.C.
February 12, 1865

Dear Father,

I have been daily in expectation of a letter from you and have deferred writing until after the receipt of one from you. The last letter I have from home was that of the 30th. Indeed now that I have commenced this I may say that there is little news to write and so little going on here that it is a difficult task to find material for an interesting letter and were it not that I only wish to acquaint you of my whereabouts and condition I would not write at this time.

The excitement attendant upon all the movements against and capture of Ft. Fisher has subsided and our thoughts are now turned impatiently towards the work, which is now before us. That there is much yet to be done in this neighborhood and much hand fighting to be performed we will be able to take possession of Wilmington is certainly very evident.

The enemy has strong works just three miles above us mounting heavy guns which command the river, to pass which would be a difficult matter even though there were no torpedoes or obstructions to prevent the movement of our vessels. The enemy also maintains a strong front, protected by his earthworks in front of our troops on the north side and although I do not doubt but that we shall be able to drive them out, yet I say it can not be done without hard work.

We have been engaging Ft. Anderson, which is their strong hold mentioned above, during the past week, which has amounted to nothing beyond the fact that it has shown us the caliber of their pieces and at the same time has given us the range.

A couple of the vessels have been struck but no damage done whatever. A few evenings since Lt. Cushing went up the river with four or five boats passing Ft. Anderson going to within a few miles of Wilmington. He sounded the channel, made examinations of the obstructions and gained all the information possible under the circumstances, returning to this vessel at daylight the next morning. Last night he started again but when he got opposite the Fort his party was discovered and immediately the "long river" was sounded and in a few moments the whole face of the fort opened on the party, but they all got safely back without the loss of a man.

At Fort Anderson they were having a kind of a jubilee, speech making, cheering, music by the bands and a general glorification over something, but when the sentry gave the alarm of Cushing's approach there was a speedy termination of that, and they soon gave him the warm reception mentioned. Cushing is without a doubt an extraordinary man, fears nothing. He is constantly making opportunities to distinguish himself, whilst at the same time he has the abilities to sustain drive in anything he undertakes, a couple of years since a certain Capt. in the Navy reported him as "utterly worthless and unfit for his position" but, the Secretary of Navy

said that "he only wished we had many more such worthless man". A week or so since he went ashore at an Inlet about twenty-five miles up the coast and captured a lot of prisoners, arms and destroyed a quantity of provisions belonging to the U.S. Gov't besides bringing off about thirty bales of cotton!! - and this it is that he is constantly on the look out for something to do. He commands the steamer Monticello, but he is a great deal aboard this vessel. He has another scheme to be undertaken soon which I hope may be successful.

Since I last wrote you we have had large reinforcements under Maj. Gen. Schofield from the west, upon whom now will rest all credit or blame which may occur from any movements hereafter in this vicinity. It was intended that a heavy force should be landed on the south side of the river last night and were to march up to attack "Anderson" this morning, but for some reason or other the plan was changed at 10 o'clock last night, and now whilst I am writing (11 p.m.) troops are being embarked aboard transports en-route for a point, from which it is supposed the enemy can be taken by surprise.

When I had just finished the last page, the orderly knocked at my door and said Mr. McClemens, they are calling you at Hd. Qrts. and of course that was a signal for me to stop writing, I repaired on deck and rec'd the following message "no movement tonight" and so there is no embarkation of troops at present but you will hear news from here soon. This is a beautiful night, but it is bitter cold and the wind is blowing a perfect hurricane, whilst this ship, which would roll in a calm, is racking to and fro that I can almost imagine myself at sea. I no doubt this intended movements has been delayed on account of the rough weather, for now it would be impossible to land troops anywhere along the coast.

We are lying now in Cape Fear River about thirteen miles from Wilmington and with the glass can distinctly see the rebels and their fortifications. There is no doubt but that they are ready to give us a warm reception at anytime we may choose to advance upon them and when parties speak of walking into this or that place with so much ease and without resistance, I pay no attention to them, but always am willing to give them credit for a certain amount of ability and strength, but at the same time weighing our power against them, which leaves a balance in our favor - for I sincerely believe that we can accomplish our object at all times when our movements are directed by one possessing the ability. Whilst Gen. Schofield may be a man possessing all the qualifications of a soldier, educated for the profession and may be thoroughly acquainted with all the routine of a soldiers duty, I am inclined to the belief that Terry would be a better man to command the Army here in its present position; for if even Terry is an inferior tactician (which is doubtful) he possesses certain qualifications which are sufficient to convince me that he is able to conduct any operations which may be proposed against Wilmington. He is to say the least, a man who can and will fight his men and one who is not to be scared at doubtful things and, judging from his previous conduct, he is a man who is capable of resisting any obstacles with which he may meet. However, large reinforcements must necessarily be sent here in order to accomplish a thing and as Gen. Terry is but a young Major General, there must be some Generals who are senior to him and over whom he could have no command and I suppose, that the powers which be, have sent a man in whom all confidence may be placed.

Schofield has a good reputation and I can only hope that he may here add many laurels to his fame, for the least honor which is conferred upon anyone is an indication of favorable results to our cause.

The late peace movements resulted as I had anticipated and it is certainly hard to conceive how two parties with views so widely different could come to any agreement without a sacrifice of some great principle upon which this war has been waged during the last four years. Since the Rebels are unwilling to concede to any proposition on our part, no matter how much we must concede to them, I say let it be a war of extermination, if it must be so, and let us, with the balance of power and material convince them practically that we mean to assert the rights and laws of our country. But enough it is now nearly 1 o'clock and I shall close for tonight.

It is expected that the mail will leave for the North tomorrow and I shall keep this open until the last moment, but I am in hopes that we will receive a mail before we send another steamer off. I wish you would write oftener for I am at all times anxious to hear from home and as I have but very few correspondents it makes me only the more anxious. Give much love to Mother, Tillie and all at home. Kiss the little ones for me and tell them that I think often of them and hope that they have not forgotten me entirely. Remember me kindly to all inquiring friends. Let me know if anything can be expected of the land in Armstrong and whether there is any probability of oil there.

With much love to all I am your Affect. Son

Will

I

Remember me to Eliza and tell her I am in good health and spirits.

Flag Ship Malvern
Cape Fear River N.C.
February 14th 1865

I wrote you a few days since with the expectation that the mail would leave the following morning and have been daily anticipating its departure, but up to this time no steamer has left but one is under orders to leave at daylight in the morning. My letter still lies in the mailbag in this office and I suppose you will receive that and this at the same time.

I have little to add in the way of news. We are still anchored in the same place with little likelihood of our moving up the river for some days, although a portion of the army here is now en-route for some point on the coast, from which it will move towards Wilmington.

We are having very cold weather indeed. We having a touch of what you at the North have been enjoying all winter. The wind has been blowing a perfect gale during the last two days and it is at times too rough for vessels to cross the bay. I have been kept pretty busy, which is not altogether very agreeable owing to the cold and I am, I may say, not use to it having been living all the time indoors. We have been daily looking for a mail from the North and can not understand why we have not had one, three or four days since, however as we say every night, tomorrow we will get one.

I enclose herewith two dollars with which I wish you would purchase me one dollars worth of postage stamps and 3 "E" strings (violin) 2 "A", 1 "D" and if the dollar will purchase any more get as many, E strings as you can for the balance, but I think you will not be able to get more than 6 if so many. Send them in a letter. I am well and in good spirits.

With much love to Mother, Tillie & all at home

I am your Affec Son

Flag Ship Malvern
Cape Fear River, N.C.
February 19, 1865

Dear Father,

We received the first mail, which we have had for over a week this morning and I received your letter of the 7th as well as quite a lot of papers. As I told you in my last you could expect to hear of a movement in this vicinity. Yesterday morning the fleet commenced moving up the river, the troops having landed on the west bank the night before, and attacked Fort Anderson, which is the next most formidable work to Fisher. Our gunboats kept up a vigorous shelling all day, completely silencing Anderson from which place few shots were fired considering the number of guns there. The troops did not assault although it would have been done today had not the enemy evacuated during the night, which they did without loss and taking with them their smaller guns, but left ten heavy pieces. This morning at daylight the troops advanced and discovered the fact that the rebs had skedaddled and we took immediate possession. Notwithstanding the fact that the river had been filled with torpedoes, the Admiral immediately pushed forward in the Flag Ship and we are now about one mile above the Fort with all the small boats of the fleet dragging for torpedoes around us. The largest torpedoes were to be exploded by means of galvanic batteries, but as we have the instruments in our possession they are now harmless but there are many percussion ones which must be taken out before we can cruise around in safety.

The troops under Hoke fronting Terry on the East Bank and Fort Fisher side have also left winding their heavy way towards Wilmington and Terry's troops are now pushing rapidly forward. Now is the time to strike for I believe we could take the city now with little trouble and I only hope that there may be no delay on the part of the Army or Navy. However Schofield is in command and we are not sufficiently acquainted with his abilities to anticipate anything, but we believe that if Terry was in supreme command there would be but little time lost for he is a man to take advantage of all circumstances in his favor. This is a beautiful day; sun Shining brightly and quite pleasant. We thought that we would again be fighting on our usual day (Sunday) but up to the present time there has been no firing - however we may have work before night.

I enclose herewith copies of communications from Admiral Porter, the Sec. of Navy, Sec. of War, Chief Signal Officer, etc. thanking me for the part which I took in the recent operations against Fisher. They are certainly complimentary and of course I feel somewhat proud of them, for there are very few officers who obtain such virtual recognitions for services in line of duty. I have kept the originals and have sent you copies in order that you might know exactly what has been done in my favor. I shall not let the matter rest here, but if I can not get promotion I shall endeavor to get, at least, a brevet which is equally as good as there is no difference between the pay of Lieuts in our Corps whilst it will give me the positions accruing to a 1st Lt. Don't you think that these testimonials redound to my credit?

As the mail is about leaving I shall close, there is little else, except what I have written going on. I shall write by next steamer again and give you particulars of all. Write often and give much love to Mother, Tillie & all. I am in good health.

I am your affect. son.

Flag Ship "Malvern"
off Fort Fisher, N.C.
Feb. 23, 1865

I received your letter of the 16th yesterday and also two papers and I hasten a reply although it is uncertain when a mail will leave for the North, although I suppose that we in this vessel will carry the next mail. Ere you will have received this the news of the capture of Wilmington will have been proclaimed throughout the North and the hearts of the nations gladdened by the series of successes and the victories which have crowned every effort of the Army and Navy sent to operate in this vicinity. We have at last accomplished that, to which we have been so anxiously looking forward for the last three months, and have finally established the authority of the government in another of the enemy's largest cities. The capture of this city will have a most dreadful effect upon the people of the Confederacy and they will begin to see the hopelessness of their cause and be made to know that sooner or later they will be compelled to submit to the stronger party.

You cannot imagine the condition of affairs in the South no matter how much you may read and only when you will see for yourself, will you be brought to a realization of the situation and the manner in which the people have been living during the last three years. With a depreciated currency a scarcity of even the necessaries of life and sweeping conscriptions that drags the old and the young from their homes, how easy it is to imagine the suffering, which must necessarily follow!! Whilst the rich are compelled to adopt as it were, an entirely new mode of living, the poor, who are the great majority, bear the burden and upon them falls the lions share of the sufferings, and upon the very verge of starvation, these people lift up their hands in praise and thanks for our arrival and in truth old men and women and children cried for joy as they saw the stars and stripes unfurled from the different buildings yesterday.

Yesterday the anniversary of the birth of Washington, is a day which all here will remember to the end of their lives and the scenes witnessed by all can never be effaced from our memories. The capture of Wilmington was a glorious reward for all our efforts and whilst we at no time, despaired in the task which we had undertaken, yet still we did not think we would have been able to capture as easily or as soon as we did. I wrote you Sunday last just after we had taken possession of Ft. Anderson and that we were pushing slowly up the river Whilst the Army was advancing on either bank "Cox" on the east side and "Terry" on the west with the main body of the army, where we supposed the heaviest fighting would take place. Gen. Cox moved more rapidly forward and on Monday attacked the enemy behind their works and succeeded in capturing the office commanding the rebels together with about 350 prisoners and advanced to almost within sight of Wilmington. This fact alone was sufficient to intimidate the rebel forces as well as to convince the people in the city, that they would soon fall into the hands of the Yankees. But with Terry the progress was not so rapid, as he had a strong force to confront him as well as strong and powerful batteries, which would have to be reduced before he could enter the city.

On the night of the 20th and on the morning of the 21st the enemy showed a strong front and advanced upon our lines, succeeding in driving our forces back - but without inflicting much loss upon us. On the afternoon Gen. Ames moved a portion of his division to the extreme left of our line to try to turn the right flank of the enemy and thus relieve Terry of the supposed difficulties with which he had to contend, but at 4 p.m. he signalled that he found the enemy in strong force behind an entirely new line of earthworks and had concluded to entrench himself for the night.

During all the time those movements were going on with the troops the fleet had moved up and kept up a heavy fire on the forts during the whole of the afternoon. The following morning, the 22nd, our troops would have assaulted the works, but when day broke we found that the enemy had all left during the night and leaving all their batteries and guns behind. Our troops immediately pushed forward and soon occupied the city and long before we arrived at the city we could, see the stars and stripes floating from the houses in Wilmington. Our progress up the river, of course was slower, as every inch had to be dragged for torpedoes and obstructions, but at noon we had discovered a clear passage for the vessels and at 2 p.m. we arrived at the city, where we fired the national salute in honor of the day and no doubt to the terror of many of the women and children who had flocked down to the wharf to witness our arrival.

You can not imagine the scene presented on the wharves, there were it seemed thousands of people, young and old, white and black of both sexes, jammed into one moving mass of humanity each eager and anxious to get a glimpse of a live and unfettered Yankee. I never saw so many niggers in my life and they certainly gave vent to their feelings and fully realized the fact that the "day of jubilee" had come for them - much to the disgust of those, whose sympathies are with the South.

There can be no mistaking facts however that the majority of the better class of the residents are intensely racist., but there are some who hailed our advent with joy, whilst the poorer classes are forced to realize the benefits which they will derive from our presence. Wilmington having been a port so long for blockade runners has been always better supplied than most of the other cities and those who had their cart loads of confederate scrip were able to get many luxuries and comforts, which were denied to the great majority of the people in the South - but notwithstanding this fact there is not a store in the city, which if it were open today, could supply you with one tenth of what you might be supposed to want to purchase.

There are many fine and beautiful residences and those who owned them certainly knew how to appreciate them and those, in which I have been, are most sumptuously furnished. The two most elegant residences have been deserted for some time by the owners, who have gone deeper into the Confederacy, and they are now occupied one by Gen'l Schofield and the other by Gen. Cox, as headquarters - the former costing to build alone over seventy thousand dollars whilst you can judge how luxuriously these people have lived before the war. I have visited a couple of families here by invitation, union people of course, and was handsomely entertained by the young ladies, who certainly bear up the reputation so long accorded to the ladies.

Flag Ship "Malvern"
off Fort Fisher N.C.
February 26th 1865

I wrote you a long letter on the 23rd which is still aboard this vessel as no mail has gone North since then. We had intended going out to sea that night or next morning but there was a heavy gale and rain-storm set in which prevented and we are still here. There will be another vessel go over the bar on the next tide and our mail will be sent by her, as she is going direct to Hampton Roads while we may not get off for a day or two and they may go up the sounds of N.C. first.

We are having a dull, dreary time present and it is rainy and so foggy we can see but a short distance, besides as we are lying inactive and with no excitement ahead of us, the time drags slowly on; I thought I would write this merely to let you know where I was and so to give you later information than my other letter of the 23rd which you will, I suppose, receive the same mail as this.

I am right well, although I have hardly become again accustomed to the rolling of the ship, we having lain so long up the river. I suppose I will catch it again when we get outside.

With much love to all I am Your Affec. Son
Will

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Norfolk, Va.
March 5th, 1865

I wrote you last from Cape Fear River, which letter I suppose you have rec'd ere this. We left Wilmington on the 23rd and remained off Fort Fisher until the 1st when we sailed for this place. The weather was very impropition and when we arrived off Beaufort the Admiral left this ship and went aboard the Rhode Island as it was not deemed advisable to proceed any further in this vessel and we put into Beaufort Harbor to wait for better weather. The Admiral was in a hurry to get to Washington on business and took the Rhode Island she being a fast ship.

On Friday last the 3rd we sailed from Beaufort and arrived here last night at seven o'clock. We had a very heavy sea the first day out and this vessel, as usual, rolled fearfully it being as much as we could do to keep our feet - but yesterday it was much smoother and had a pleasant time until we arrived off Cape Henry when a sudden and severe squall struck us; it did not last long however and we entered the roads at six o'clock with the sun shining brightly. Contrary to all expectation I did not get sick nor have I been since I have been aboard this craft although I must confess that I do not at all times feel as well as when I am on shore.

When looking back on the past three months I can hardly realize we have accomplished so much and the objects of our expedition had succeeded in every particular. We have captured eight large forts and about eighteen batteries, have cleaned out Cape Fear River and captured Wilmington and now our attentions will be turned to the batteries on the James.

You must not be surprised if you see me in Pottsville in the course of a week or two for if it is possible I shall make another trip home. Do not expect me for certain, as I cannot say whether I

will be able to get a leave or not. I did not receive any letter from you yesterday in the mail, which has been accumulating here for the last week. Why was it?

I suppose however I will get one in a day or two.

With love to all. I am your affect. Son

Will

Pottsville
March 6th 1863

Yours containing testimonials or copies I should say from the Admirals letter and the Navy and War Department came to hand on Saturday week last, and you may be sure that we were all much gratified. You may well feel proud. They are worth as much as a year's pay at least. I have shown them to a number of your friends, who were all much pleased that such notice had been taken of your services. I handed them to Frank Wallace of the Miners Journal office with the remark that as great fears had been expressed by Mr. Bannan and some other of the intensely loyal ones, that you would not be true, I wished to set his mind at easy by showing him certificates that so far the government had not been damaged by reason of your appointment telling him at the same time I had not shown them to him for the purpose of publication. He said however that he should notice the fact, which you will see in the "Miners Journal" of last Saturday. He has done it however not in the way to please me. He heed not have referred to you as a Pottsville Boy - as you have passed out from your days of boyhood for a considerable space of time. He however did not mean anything more I suppose than that you had grown up from your birth in Pottsville.

I met Charles Fraily in Mr. Browns' when I went in to show them to Mrs. Brown. He said, they were first rate but did not seem to understand which of the boys it was, whether you or John. I did not mention to him that it was the one he had refused to introduce to Gov. Cartier. I don't believe there will much be said now, against your appointment, Since the receipt of your letter we have had news of the capture of Wilmington and suppose that you now are lying in the vicinity of that place, and that the fleet cannot much farther go.

Pottsville has been much excited for the last few days, on account of the drafting. Great efforts have been made to fill up the quotas but it could not be done entirely only in part - and in consequence a draft for the balance took place today. Eighteen were required from the ward we live in and 36 were drafted. Kline was the first - George Beck, also the photograph man Pete Oewall, Charly Kimmal, Hiffner and others, I do not recollect were among the lucky ones. Volunteers and Subs are getting scarce. Subs for one year want \$1,000 and are hard to get at that price. Harry Gorgas brother of Gertrude died a prisoner at Salisbury in Jan last. It will be a hard blow for his mother. Old Mr. Palmer (the judge) had a stroke of Palsy last week and is lying quite low - not expected to live many days. Miss Hays was at our house this morning and wished when I wrote to you to give you her respects. Tim dreamed last night that you came home with a Captains uniform on, and that you had your violin and played several tunes for him. I suppose you received the stamps and violin strings. I have been looking for letters from you today but have none. I somehow missed writing to you last week as I should have done - but you must excuse me for it, it was not because I do not think daily of you, it was only procrastination. We are all well and all send their love.

March 7th, Mrs. Dr. Robbins of Minersville was at our house a few days since, and wished to be remembered to you. Tillie intends going to Minersville tomorrow morning to spend a day or two with her and others. Frank Falls has enlisted again into the service, for one year. He received \$700 Bounty. His Father is very much worried about it.

I left my letter open until this morning Tuesday thinking that perhaps I would get one from you last night but did not.

With much love!

Flag Ship "Malvern"
James River, Va
March 26, 1865

Dear Father,

I would have written you before this but there has been nothing of interest transpiring and I have deferred writing from one day to another until now over a week has elapsed since I left home. It was a great pity indeed that I should have been ordered away so suddenly as I was for I had calculated upon having a much longer stay and upon my arrival at the ship I found matters as I expected they would be, that is, that the telegram ordering my return was rather premature and that my services were not in so urgent demand as the dispatch indicated. However it was supposed that a forward movement would be made immediately and the Admiral had also returned post haste from Washington one day before I arrived. Even since my arrival I have had nothing to do and there has been nor is there at present the least sign of a movement on the part of either the army or the navy and I might just have well have been allowed to remain in Pottsville during all this time.

Upon my arrival at Fortress Monroe I found that the Malvern had gone up the river and so I had to take passage in the army transport to City Point where I caught the ship. The next morning we left City Point and came up here, just below Dutch Gap where I laid so long in the Onondaga last summer and fall. On Monday last the weather was extremely hot and indeed quite uncomfortable, but ever since then it has been very cold and so windy and dusty it is almost impossible to go aboard, it seems however to be moderating now and I suppose that during the coming week we will have warmer and more pleasant weather.

I have been riding around considerably since my arrival and have been enjoying myself as much as possible. On Tuesday I was over at Cox's Landing where the exchange of prisoners is made and saw the transfer of about four hundred rebel officers. The rebel flag of truce boat came down the river and received their men with band playing and secession colors flying. The Johnnies set up their usual demoniac yell when once fairly under their National colors and seemed to try to convince lookers on that they were glad to be again once more under its protection but I think that, if the truth was really known, there were many of them would rather have remained on this side than to again to take up arms in their hopeless undertaking. There are many prisoners being exchanged at present and steamers are constantly passing us freighted with subjects going both ways.

We have been having quite an influx of visitors the last couple of days. On Friday, Gens. Meade and Humphreys together with a score of lesser stars accompanied by about a dozen ladies and over a hundred officers of all grades visited the Admiral and overrun the ship. As may be supposed any quantity of edibles and liquors were consumed.

Today, President Lincoln and lady, Gens. Grant and Ord with their wives and about a dozen other officers visited us and afterwards went to the front of Gen. Ord's lines to witness a review of colored troops, the Admiral going with them.

The great raid of Phil Sheridan around Richmond and the accounts given of the immense amount of property destroyed doing so much material injury to the Rebels has no doubt attracted your attention. Sheridan's forces reached the James River at Deep Bottom this morning having started from the White House yesterday - and crossed the river this afternoon, encamping close by as on the south side. I was at Sheridan's Hd. Qrts. just before dark and saw the Gen. He is a very plain unassuming man indeed and as I saw him today with his citizens hat on and covered with an overcoat devoid of all military embellishments, there was little to impress one with the idea that he was the dashing general who can and does make such extensive inroads into the enemy's country. He is a small man, not heavily built, high cheekbones, spare face, sandy hair and a slight dark mustache; altogether I was much mistaken in my idea I had formed of him. He's what you might call him a rather bright looking little Irishman, and he is no doubt all that his men say that he is and they fairly worship little Phil. Will Thompson, Ed. Leile and others of my acquaintance are with his forces but I did not get to see them.

Will Hazzard is here in the river about a mile above us on the monitor "Sangamon". I was up to see him the other day but he had gone ashore and since then I have not had a chance to go up again.

Flag Ship "Malvern"
off City Point, Va.
April 3, 1865

Your letter dated 30th was rec'd aboard this ship yesterday, but I did not receive it until this afternoon, I having been away. In reference to the check which I sent to Mother's order, I would say that I thought it was correct and the money could be drawn on that order, as when I drew the \$1000 mentioned I merely filled up a check in their office and the money was handed me by Mr. Dengler, who made no reference whatever to the certificate of deposit nor did he endorse it as you can see. I enclose herewith the certificate with my signature, endorsed, over which you can write what may be necessary in order that the amt. (\$120) can be obtained by you. I desire that one hundred be given to Mother and the balance to Eliza informing her of my remarks made in my last letter. It seems strange no mention was made of the certificate of deposit when I drew the \$100 on my check and if they refused to honor the last check without having the certificate before them, than of course the amt. already drawn was unlawfully paid out and I can still hold them responsible for the whole amount. However, I send you the certificate and do with it, as I have desired. The balance still remaining to my credit I want you to have remain in the same institution.

This has been a great and glorious week to our nation and now can the most doubtful see a termination of this great struggle and a return to peace, not far distant. Ere you will have received this the brilliant victories of our armies will have reached you by telegram - and it would be useless for me to attempt to give you elaborate descriptions of what I did not see and of what has only reached me through the various channels of rumor. Suffice it to say however that there has

been much hard and desperate fighting during the last week and although we have, of course, suffered heavy losses, yet we have inflicted upon the enemy, such injuries from which he can never recover. The whole of this vast region here over which there has been so many struggles and upon which the two great armies have been looking defiance for so long a time has at last come into our possession and the whole Southern Confederacy is now seeking a place where it can lay its head.

Petersburg was occupied by our troops at four this a.m.~ and Richmond was entered by Weitzel with his colored troops and the American flag floated from the buildings there at 8 o'clock. To think that at last Richmond so long withheld from us should at last be occupied by colored troops who were the first to enter and take possession.

Where Lee has gone with his army I can not say, but you may depend upon it that Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas do know and will acquaint the rebel forces of that fact at once. Our victories here have been most complete and we have captured an army of prisoners and hardly know what to do with them. Instead of, as in the usual way, capturing them in squads we hauled them in by brigades and steamer load after steamer load is being sent down the river freighted with the Johnnies.

Yesterday afternoon the Admiral was requested to furnish as many sailors and marines as he could to be sent down to the extreme left of the line to act as guard over prisoners taken, as there were not soldiers enough for the purpose, almost everyone having been sent to the front. Whilst I was at dinner the order came and the Admiral ordered me to take command of all the marines of the fleet which should be sent ashore and proceed immediately in the first train going to the left.

After we had gotten only about one hundred marines and one hundred- fifty sailors ashore, we were compelled to go on at once without waiting for the balance. An old navy officer, who had been sent ashore in command of all, did not go with us and I was in, fact in command of the party. We went to extreme end of the line a distance of about twenty miles by railroad and about two miles beyond the station we found the rebs in an open field to the tune of ten thousand. Upon our arrival there we found that two Regt's of Infantry the 11th and 14th regulars had just arrived for the same purpose and that gave us ample guard. After getting them into line and a file of soldiers on each side of them with the Marines and Sailors sliced in between, at 6 o'clock p.m., we marched enroute for the railroad station about seven miles distant where we expected to get cars and transport the whole party to City Point; but upon our arrival there a telegram informed us that transportation could not be furnished, as all the trains here being used in carrying the wounded and that the prisoners should be marched to City Point. Here was a delightful prospect for all, sixteen miles to walk, over which we thought we would be carried in the space of an hour, but which now must be footed in the space of eight hours. We formed the prisoners in a hollow square and prepared to make our preparations for a good square sleep on the ground, in the open air and without any overcoats or blankets to keep us warm - we having gone off in expectation of returning as above mentioned had taken nothing with us, not even anything to eat.

It was a long night and one of the most cheerless I ever spent. It was impossible to keep warm although we had large fires built, around which we sat impatiently waiting for daylight to come again. In the morning just as day broke we were ready to move and at six o'clock took up the

march for this place where we arrived a little after two p.m. without the loss of a man killed or wounded. Mind during all this time, we had nothing to eat expecting a few pieces of hard tack, which by some lucky accident fell into our hands and you can readily suppose that our appetites had become considerably sharpened before we reached the Point.

I was completely used up and was so tired that I could hardly walk and this evening I feel little indeed like writing but thought I had better write you than delay it. I can not say how many prisoners have been taken but I do not think it is less than fifteen thousand and very likely more than that, however you will have full particulars in the papers which we here are impatiently awaiting in order that we may know what is going on in our own immediate vicinity.

Tomorrow, morning the Admiral intends going up to Richmond in this vessel, if not, in a tug - and I shall go with him, as I am exceedingly anxious to see that famous city. Some of the officers of our staff were over in Petersburg today but as I was otherwise employed, I did not go.

Sallie Clemens is about a mile from here with her husband who is stationed on a small steamer laying up the Appomattox loaded with medical stores and he is in charge. I have been to see her twice and took dinner with her one time since. I was there on Sunday morning a short time - she certainly is very pleasant to me and acts towards me the same as when we were youngsters together. I find it pleasant to go there occasionally, notwithstanding what may have happened and have been said, although I must confess that after their conduct In Phila, I can not feel towards them as of old.

The postage stamps came to hand and I suppose you are now in the new house and have become comfortably located. Write me how you are getting along in it. I will write shortly after my return to this ship and asking for the appointment of George to the Naval school, but have not yet heard from him. Do not fail to see him and find out what he will do in the matter. I did not have a conversation with him when I was at home although I was at his office and coming away so suddenly I was prevented from urging the matter personally; as I said do not neglect to question him on the subject.

With much love to all at home.

Write soon.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

At last my wish has been gratified and as you see I write this from the late Capitol of the Southern Confederacy over which the National flag is now flying. It seems to us all here more like a dream than a reality when we think of our being here and that we now have absolute possession, not only of the City itself, but also of all the immense fortifications, which have been erected during the last four years for its defense. I wrote you last night informing you of the fact of the capture of the city, but no one can form any idea of the immense amount of property to which has fallen into our hands in consequence of their sudden departure. On the North bank of the James all the artillery, as far as we can learn, has been left undisturbed which proves conclusively that the enemy made a very hasty exit in this vicinity and had little expectation of such results.

This morning at eight o'clock we got under weigh at City Point and started up the river with the "River Queen", a steamer bringing carriage and saddle horses and two gun boats as convoys. We arrived in due time opposite a Battery and found the obstructions removed so that we could proceed in safety, upon arriving at Drury's Bluff we stopped, the obstructions at that point preventing our going any further, one gun boat having already gotten fast on them. There was room enough however for a tug to pass through and it was concluded to use it to transport us up to this city. The Admiral very kindly invited me to accompany him in his barge as also Capt. Adams of the staff, which was a great compliment, as the balance of the officers had a tug assigned them to follow after. Our tug took us in tow and when we got as far the bridge about two miles below the city it was closed and we could not get the tug through for some time and the Admiral concluded to pull up in the barge and let the tugs follow after.

In this way we were all of the party who arrived at the city as soon as expected. When we got opposite the city it was soon noted that the President was there and a crowd soon began to flock down to the wharf. We had brought a Marine guard but it was left behind on the tug so that when we landed we were without conveyance or escort of any kind, as no one knew we were coming.

As soon as we landed we took our boats crew of eight men and we took up our line of march with the President and Admiral Porter leading and Capt. Adams and myself following. We at once found that we had a hard road to travel as the crowd was getting more dense at every moment, almost impossible to get through as it was not an ordinary task to keep the people back or prevent them from enveloping us entirely - whilst there was one incessant roar of cheering: from the almost frantic population, and at every corner it was augmented and the streets on all sides were filled with people running to get a glimpse of Old Abe.

We soon arrived at Gen. Weitzel's Head Qrts. and I was indeed glad when we had gotten safely in the house. Outside, the crowd was swaying to and fro constantly increasing until there were thousands and it was one incessant cheer from old and young white and black - the latter being almost unable to restrain themselves and it was amusing to see their gyrations and performances gone through by them.

All the Army officers in the vicinity came to pay their respects and the house was soon filled with the shoulder strap gentry of all grades. After remaining there about an hour, we were informed that the steamer carrying the horses had arrived and that the carriages and saddle horses were ready at the door. The President, Admiral Porter, Gen. Weitzel, Kantz Sheply and some other Generals, whom I did not know, occupied one carriage, whilst your humble correspondent, with three other officers, occupied the other. A Regiment of Cavalry had arrived to act as escort, together with about fifty mounted officers and we started for a trip around the city.

Away we started, the crowd running along side and yelling their utmost, whilst the dust was intolerable and I was almost choked before we got to our journey's end. We rode through all the principal streets, but, to tell the truth, we could see little of the city, for the crowd was so dense, the dust so thick and the excitement too great to witness anything calmly, and we finally reached the dock where our boats were in waiting to take us off to the ship and I have no doubt but that all of our party were much pleased when we were safely on board.

Gen. Weitzed has his Head Quarters in Jeff Davis' Mansion, the one presented to him by the Rebel government, and indeed it is a splendid house, handsomely furnished with everything to add to the comfort of the arch traitor and here in the height of luxury reveled the leader of the Confederacy but now occupied by the Yankees. The furniture is all left, together with his housekeeper and some of the servants, but if he expects to be able to save anything by this, I think he is mistaken.

Davis left Richmond on Sunday night for some point further south where he expects to find it rather cooler than it would be for him here but where he has gone no one here knows. On Sunday morning he and Gen. Lee were in church and during the services Gen. Lee rec'd a dispatch from the battle field which he handed to Davis and immediately the congregation saw that something was wrong and the services were stopped and Jeff told them the truth that the city would have to be evacuated and that they could govern themselves accordingly. It must indeed have been a hard blow for all but there was no alternative and the work of destruction was immediately commenced.

They set fire to all the immense warehouses, which were filled with tobacco and the fire spreading rapidly burning block after block until a great part of the business portion of the city as well as a number of private residences were destroyed. The amount of property destroyed is immense and many a man's wealth has suddenly slipped away from him in consequence. Our troops getting into the city early on Monday morning saved much and prevented the fire from spreading any further. I send you by this mail two copies of the "Richmond Whig" which is now published under Union influence, the late editors having taken their departure. This is the first issue and I send them as a relic. Give one to the Journal. In it you can see the amount of property destroyed and damage done by the rebels before they left the city.

I have seen the famous Libby Prison, but under more favorable auspices than many others, but now the tide has changed and instead of Union men being the inmates, we have about seven hundred (700) rebels penned up there and guarded by Uncle Sam's troops. It is a great change and I tell you we can look with satisfaction at those fellows imprisoned there, where so many cruelties have been committed against the thousands of our poor boys who were unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. I do not know how long we will remain here but I do not think we will stay more than a day or two, which will give us plenty of time to see everything.

I was ashore tonight and took a walk around the city in the moonlight, but it seemed as though it was entirely deserted, there being no one in the street but the sentinels posted at the different points, and it did indeed seem strange that in so large a city that all should be still as death and no signs of life anywhere - but there are orders issued allowing no citizens or enlisted men to be out after eight o'clock and it is for this reason that everybody is confined to his house. I forgot to mention that amongst our captures there are forty locomotives, fifty passenger cars and two hundred-fifty freight cars, quite enough to keep the U.S. Military Railroads in this vicinity in rolling stock for some time yet. We will, in a day or two, have Rail R. communication between City Point and Petersburg and also between the latter place and this city and soon Uncle Sam's Cars will be rattling over the same roads which only a day or two since were held by the rebels.

Our victories here have been complete and I suppose the whole North has been electrified by the good news, which indicates a return to peace at no distant day. The President is still aboard here, busy writing in the office and expects to leave tomorrow sometime. At nine o'clock tomorrow morning Judge Campbell of Richmond is coming aboard to see the President. He was one of the Peace commissioners who lately went to Fortress Monroe with Hunter and Stevens, at which time he met the President. We do not know why he is coming aboard, but suppose it is only a friendly visit, as he has always been in favor of peace.

This has been a lovely day, but part of the time it was quite hot. The trees here are all beginning to look green and the fruit trees are in blossom whilst vegetables can be seen in all the gardens. Give one of the papers as soon as possible to the Journal that they may publish some extracts from it, if they wishing in next issue. As it is now nearly one o'clock I shall close. There is much more to write about but I have already written, perhaps, too much. Do not neglect to write me soon and send Journal. I wrote you a long letter last night, enclosing certificate of deposit, which I hope you will receive in due time.

With much love to Mother Tillie & all at home with kind regards to all my friends.

I am your affect. Son

Will

Flag Ship "Malvern"
Richmond, Va.
April 9th 1865

At last I will sever my connection with the Navy and again rusticate in the open air, for I leave at daylight tomorrow morning en route for the main army wherever it may be. I had concluded some time since to ask to be relieved as there was nothing more for me to do here; whilst at the same time I was somewhat anxious to get back again to my regular line of duty, but before I had taken any action in the matter I received orders to prepare immediately for service in the field. The orders came rather unexpectedly and suddenly allowing only a few hours today to make my preparations. There are six officers and thirty men (with transportation) in our party and we leave here at six o'clock a.m. tomorrow for City Point where we take the cars for Petersburg from which place we travel on our horses keeping the straight road (so says the order) until we reach Gen Ord's Hd Qrts wherever they may be.

I regret leaving here not a little for I have made many warm friends here, living as we have for the past six months as a little community by ourselves and whilst they all tell me they are sorry that I am compelled to leave, yet I know they cannot be more so than I am myself. Besides the Admiral has been so kind to me ever since I have been with him that I feel sorry to leave him, for I know I will travel far before I will find anyone so high in position, who will endeavor to make my stay with him as comfortable as he has done. Taking it all in all, I think that I will have the advantage of plenty of exercise from which we here are debarred but on the other hand I will have to exchange my snug little bunk and good mess, for the soft side of a stone, hard tack and pork, which fact is not very pleasant to contemplate.

We came here from City Point yesterday and last evening we all went to the Theatre and today I was busy getting my horses etc. ready for the tramp tomorrow. I met Alex Sillyman and his sister

in the city this p.m. and was surprised to meet Pottsville people here. Alex said he would see you when he arrived at home. I was sorry to hear of the death of Geo. Gowan, it is indeed too sad.

The paper came to hand and from it I learned of the Death of Mr. Losser, whilst I noticed that of Mr. Graeff in the Enquirer. I have rec'd but one letter from you. Direct your letters now to me Signal Officer U.S.A. Head Qrts Maj. Gen. Ord via City Point Va.

With much love to all at home and with the hope that all are well

I am Your Affec. Son

P.S. I enclose herewith five dollars, which is to pay Express charges on my trunk which will be sent you. The suit of clothes I want to have kept for me and such other things as I may think I will want. There is not a great deal in the trunk, but you may find something, which Mother can use. The trunk will be left here on the vessel at present and will be expressed by an officer when the ship arrives at Old Point or Norfolk. Have you Seen Mr. Strouse about George's Appointment? Do not let him rest until he gives you some decided answer.

Will

Richmond Va.

April 1865

I received your letter dated 8th a day or two since, it having first gone to the "Malvern" and was sent from there to me, which accounts for my not having received it sooner. I wrote you last from the "Malvern" on last Sunday a week ago just previous to my leaving that vessel, which letter I suppose you have rec'd long ere this. The following morning I left for City Point, from which place our party was to start to find Gen'l Ord's Hd. Qrts. Upon the arrival of an whole party at City Point we left for Petersburg on Monday evening at 6 o'clock in the midst of a heavy rain and as it had been raining all day you can imagine that the roads were in a most shocking condition and the depth of the mud made them almost impossible. Our teams, of which we had two, stuck in the mud in several places and often it was as much as we could do to get along at all; these detentions, together with the time consumed in hunting the right road, delayed us very much and it was long after midnight when we arrived in Petersburg, where we, the officers, were fortunate enough to get into a house and spread our blankets on the floor and sleep comfortably until daylight.

Very unexpectedly we received a telegram ordering us to remain there and not proceed any farther, which was indeed welcome news as otherwise we would have a march of over seventy miles to make in order to reach the forces to which we had been ordered to join. We remained in Petersburg a couple of days when we were ordered to this city where we now are encamped in a beautiful place just outside the city and are very comfortably located. We had a delightful ride from Petersburg to this place over the R & P turnpike and I had, a fine opportunity to go carefully over the whole ground on which I had been during the fighting last spring under Butler and I felt almost at home there as all the places looked so familiar to me. There are nine of us officers here in Camp, but I do not mess with them as one of them has his wife here and occupying a house close to the camp. I find it more pleasant to mess with him as we can have everything so much better prepared. We are in a delightful locality and overlook the city and country in all directions. The country looks beautiful indeed and I have no doubt but that vegetation here is much further advanced than it is with you.

On Sunday I took a ride through "Hollywood" Cemetery, which is the "Greenwood" of Richmond. It is not very large but it has beautiful carriage roads all through it and is filled with most delightful nooks and fine names and watercourses running through it. Here are buried many eminent southerners, statesmen etc. whilst the remains of many of their prominent Generals killed during the war, are deposited here. I saw Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's grave together with those of two of his children; his is marked only by a small head board on which is painted "Gen. Stuart wounded May 11th 1864, Died May 12th 1864" There are two large family vaults in which are filled with the bodies of General officers and the bones containing their remains stand in full view of all passerby. They have been embalmed and have only been placed there preparatory to being sent to their friends. The remains of James Monroe are also deposited here, having been removed from New York in 1858.

Beside the grain yards there are acres of graves of the soldiers killed around Richmond since the war. In the locality allotted for those killed in 1865 alone there are nearly three thousand. The graves are marked only by a small piece of board on which is written with pencil or perhaps with a knife the name of each, although in thousand of cases it would be impossible to recognize to whom they belong and thus many who would like to have the bodies of their friends removed, will be unable to find them. They are all rebels as they did not bury any of our men there.

The horrible assassination of President Lincoln has filled everyone with a spirit such as never has possessed them since the war and I only hope and pray that his death may be the signal for a commencement of retaliation upon the whole southern race and I hope that with the spirit of revenge to animate each and everyone of us we may be able to inflict such injuries upon the traitors that they may be brought to know, that if by all the kindness which we have already shown them and a leniency towards them we can not bring them back to their allegiance to our government, why then we will bring them back by force and I only hope that the Proclamation of Mr. Lincoln in regard to the disenfranchisement of certain parties will be most rigidly enforced.

I can hardly realize the fact that the President is dead as only a few days since I had the pleasure of entering Richmond with him and passing as he did safely through the City without any protection whatever and at a time when it was more than probable that there would be some one who might attempt violence to his person - it is indeed a pity that in his own home he should have met with the death he did. What an episode in our Country's history!!!!!!

This City is filled with Rebel soldiers and officers of all grades, who lately belonged to the Army of Gen. Lee and who are now on their way to their homes. They of course wear their full uniform and it has been the greatest wonder that there has as yet been no conflict between our officers and them as they seem impudent enough in many cases, whilst the Ladies delight in promenading the streets with their rebel brethren and at the same let us know their perfect abhorrence of anything Yankee. But they will soon get tired of that and be glad enough to again enjoy the protection of our government.

I am glad that all are pleased with the new home and I hope that you will be very comfortable there. You never have answered my questions in regard to George and his getting his

appointment. Have you done anything in the matter and have you seen Mr. Strouse? Let me know. I wrote to Mr. Strouse but got no answer from him.

Do not- neglect to write often and direct to

Lt. W.W.C. Signal Corps U.S.A. Hd. Qrts Maj. Gen Ord, Richmond Va.

With love to all I am your affec. Son

Will.

Richmond, Va.

April 27, 1865

Your letter of the 22nd reached me last evening and I was glad to hear again from you for, as you say, a long time had elapsed between your two last. We are, as I told you in a letter written to you a few days, encamped on the outskirts of the city in one of the most delightful spots, which can be found for miles around. We are located in what is called "Oak Grove" and whilst in every other place it is hot and unpleasant, we here are at all times in the enjoyment of plenty of shade and a most delightful breeze. Everyone who comes to see us exclaims "what a beautiful place". We have fine quarters and we all mess with a family in the neighborhood, so you see we are not at the present time suffering very much for our country, but on the contrary are resting from our late severe labors.

I do not go into the city a great deal, but ride horseback daily into the country for exercise and pleasure, as we have many fine roads in this vicinity. Everything seems to be at a stand still and there is little interest taken in regard to movements of our armies, as all seem to take it as a matter of course that the war is virtually closed. The only topic which has demanded our attention during the past two weeks, was the assassination of the President but even that has now a great measure subsided although the feelings created by that terrible deed can never be wholly eradicated and it must ever loom up before the eyes of the nation as the greatest of the many crimes committed during this revolution and which will ever be an indelible stain upon the whole south.

As I said before I am happy to know that I was with him during his visit to Richmond and had the pleasure of conversing with him without the least restraint on my part and without any reserve on his. The impressions, which he made upon me, were of so pleasant a character that I could not help but love him and I firmly believe that a better, more pure and more conscientious a man can not be found to fill his position. Although the south may exult over his death I think they have more cause for regret, for they have lost the best friend they had in the whole north. The greater part of his conversation in the boat on our way up the river, was occupied with expressions of kindness and forgiveness towards those who have for the past four years been trying to break him down and although he would at times enliven us with an anecdote or two yet still he would refer often to Him in whose hands he had placed his destiny and upon whom he relied for support. I believe Abraham Lincoln was a Christian and an honest man in every sense of the word, one in whom the love of country was paramount to all else, and one who at all times realized the weighty responsibilities which he had assumed, striving with utmost strength to do that (in which no one has succeeded) to please all, and his name will ever remain a monument up go which our nation, as long as it exists, will look with admiration. It is sad to contemplate his death and no one can avoid deploring the fact that he was not permitted to enjoy that peace, which is so near at hand, after all the troubles through which he had passed and which had to be

overcome in order that that end might be attained. But his death has occasioned no interruption in the movements of our government and we have another President in whom the hopes of the nation is centered and to whom all should look for a vigorous prosecution and enforcement of those principles which have been advocated by his late predecessors. Now that Andy Johnson is President it remains to be seen whether he will carry out the same views which he entertained four years since.

But enough of this and changing the subject to myself I would ask that you see Mr. Stronse (if you think he would be of any assistance) and get him to obtain for me a substantial recognition of services rendered by me. Before I left the "Malvern" the Admiral asked me if I had heard anything further than the first acknowledgements of his communication to the Sec. of the Navy and I told him that nothing more had been done, whereupon he immediately sat down and wrote another strong letter to Mr. Welles asking him to call the attention of the Sec. of War to my case and asking that I be brevetted to at least Captain. I have heard nothing as yet from this last letter and although I am in hopes that something will be done for me, yet the time is wearing rapidly away and I feel sometimes afraid that I will be neglected.

The officers here all seem to think that I will certainly obtain a brevet or two; for the acknowledgements which I have received are such as any officer in the service would be glad to have and they think it should be given me upon such recognitions. The Chief Signal officer of this Dep't has recommended and asked in his reports to the chief at Washington, that I be given a brevet. If you think Mr. Stronse would be of any service to me in this case, get him by all means, to assist me, if you think he would not be of any service, do not say anything to him about it.

I have asked you in every letter I have written you if you had done anything in regard to having George appointed to one of the Academies. Why do you not answer me? Get it for him if you can.

I am glad to hear you are becoming comfortably located and I have no doubt but that in due time all will be pleased with the change. I am also happy to hear that Tillie intends visiting Phila., and sincerely hope she may have a very pleasant time. If she will need any assistance from me, let me know and I will send her something although at present I cannot do anything, but will be able to do so in time. Tell her I want her to give my love to all my friends there and kind regards to Miss McNeely. With the hope that you may be more prompt in answering my letters than heretofore and with much love to all at home.

I am your affect. Son
Will

My trunk is still aboard the Malvern and I have written to have it sent you by express at once. You will get it in due time.

Signal Camp
Richmond, Va.
May 7, 1865

I was most agreeably surprised last night to receive your letter of the 4th and although I must confess I have little or nothing to write about, yet still I thought that even a few lines might prove acceptable.

My late letters home contained descriptions and accounts of all of interest, which has transpired here and there is little left for me to add in this. We are still located in the same camp, of which I wrote you, and it is, without doubt, the most lovely place in the vicinity of the city and daily when parties visit us, each and everyone exclaim "how beautiful". We are located just on the outskirts of the city in what is called by the citizens "Oak Grove" and whilst all the other encampments, by which we are surrounded, are exposed to the heat of the sun, we are at all times in the enjoyment of shade and a delightful breeze. There are ten officers and about eighty men in our party and we manage our affairs to suit ourselves without any restraint or subjection on the part of the high military officials to which the balance of the army is subservient. We are doing what all the army is doing at present and that is nothing and it remains with ourselves to make the time pass as pleasantly as possible.

We have plenty of horses and we ride daily, visiting the city and all points of interest in the country for miles around Richmond is the most beautiful city I have ever seen and with the exception of that portion which was destroyed by fire on the night of the evacuation, there is no part which bears sign or mark of war and destruction. There are many handsome and most comfortable looking residences with a profusion of shrubbery enshrouding each, whilst the ladies by their appearance prove most conclusively that either our blockade was very inefficient or that a goodly stock of dry goods had been carefully laid up before the war. This is certainly a city of handsome girls and although secret and filled with the bitterest feelings of hatred towards anything "Yankee", yet still I think we are privileged to admire their beauty as it comes under our observation.

Nearly every evening we walk through the most fashionable parts of the city where we have a fine chance of seeing the ladies who are seated at their doors or like ourselves, are walking up and down. It is amusing to see the feelings of satisfaction pictured on the faces of those ladies who are fortunate enough to have a rebel officer to cling to and also to see with what alacrity they can turn their backs to us as we approach but I have accounted for the latter fact in this way, that they must be so exceedingly homely that their backs are more pleasing than their faces, for the handsome ones appear to be willing that we should see them. This hatred towards us I think is slowly wearing away, at least it is not so, manifest now as it was upon our first arrival and I have no doubt but that in due course of time this feeling will almost be entirely eradicated and we Northerners be permitted to enjoy the association of the best families here.

This city is filled with rebel officers and soldiers lately belonging to Lee's army and more rebel uniforms can be seen on the streets at any time than ours. It is to me exceedingly aggravating to think that these very men who have been fighting us for the last four years, should now, after having been fairly beaten and subdued, be allowed to wear the emblems of their late rank and I

think that, at least, they should be compelled to change their uniform to that of a citizen and if they should offer as a plea that they had no other clothes, then let them remain in their houses. I have little to say to them for fear that I may be influenced by something they might say, to commit some rash act for I certainly feel towards them in anything but a kindly manner, for the assassination of Mr. Lincoln (the most brutal and cowardly act of infamy), has inspired me with the most bitter and revengeful feelings towards everyone of those who have upheld this rebellion.

It would be useless for me to expatiate upon his death for my pen would fail were I to try to add anything to the thousands of beautiful tributes, which have been written in his commemoration. Abraham Lincoln was a good man and it is a dreadful thing to contemplate that he should have met so horrible a death, just when Peace was dawning upon our country and how many thousands, who when grieving over it, have prayed and wished that he could have been permitted to live in order that he also might enjoy that glorious consummation to which we have all been looking so hopefully during the past four years - but it was otherwise ordained and Mr. Lincoln's remains now lie deposited in the tomb in Springfield which will in future, next to Mt. Vernon, be a "Mecca" to all Americans.

I feel proud that I was permitted to know him and without reserve on his part or on any hesitation on mine enjoyed many conversations with him on any Subject which happened to come up; and I am also proud to know that I was one of three (Admiral Porter, Capt. Adams & myself) who escorted the President through Richmond when he visited it, only twenty four hours after we had taken possession.

The South has lost one of her best friends and although many may secretly exult over his death, yet they will soon find they have much more cause for regret; for if Andy Johnson carries out the same views which he entertained a few years since the proof will stand plainly before them. But enough here I have written on without thinking, how far I had gotten and if it proves dull and uninteresting to you excuse it, for I can not help but give vent to at least some expression whenever the subject occurs to me.

I am exceedingly glad to hear that you are about visiting the city or rather (I suppose) that you are now there and you have my most hearty wishes that your trip may be a most pleasant one, but I have no fears that it will be otherwise for I know the friends who have invited you will do all to make your visit as happy a one as lies in their power.

Give my love to Kate, Gerty and all our cousins you may meet.

Give my kindest regards to Miss McNeely and say to her that I was exceedingly sorry that I did not get to see her when I was in the city, also tell her I would have called upon her on my return but I had no time as you can well explain. Tell her also that the comb which she gave me has been lost somewhere on the sacred soil of Virginia.

Remember me also to Mr. McNeely and Robert. With the hope that I may hear very soon from you that you will give me all the news I remain with much love.

Direct to Lt. W.W.C.

Signal Officer Hd. Qts. Dept. Richmond, Va.

U.S.A. of Va.

Signal Camp
Richmond, Va.
May 7, 1865

You have no doubt wondered many times since why I have not written before and really I should have done so but have been putting it off from day to day until quite a long time has elapsed since my writing you. I recv'd your letter of the 1st on the 3rd. I have written a long letter to Tillie at Phila. this morning and feel little like writing much now, in fact I have nothing of importance to write about. We are still encamped here and are having a most delightful time and are enjoying ourselves the best way we can. The weather has been and is delightful although it is very hot at times in the sun but we here encamped where we are suffering not at all from the heat as we have at all times shade and a good breeze of air - and it is a luxury after having been in the city to have a place of this kind to fall back upon.

The war is without doubt at an end and this fact is fully appreciated by our government which has already began a retrenchment of a great part of its expenses and the armies will in a short time have ceased to exist. The army of the Potomac, is now en-route for Washington, (having passed through this city yesterday,) where I suppose the greater part of it will be mustered out of the service and only a sufficient number will be retained to meet any difficulties which may possibly arise. That there will be a large force still retained in the service there can be no doubt, but the bulk of them will consist of colored troops who will garrison the different points necessary throughout the south. There are now many new colored regts. being organized which proves that a force of that kind will be held in the service. There are many conjectures thrown out as to what will be done with our corps, but nothing has yet been, said or done by which we can gain any information.

Our corps' is a very small one hardly one hundred (100) officers and half of them have already expressed their intentions to resign. There will be a certain number kept without doubt and duty assigned them of some kind or another, for our corps has been created by Congress and placed upon the same footing as the regular army and is governed by the same laws and at present are recognized as such by the authorities at Washington. We will however know soon what will be done, one way or the other, for I must confess that the most agreeable life a man can lead even though compelled to work for his living is civil life.

I am well and in first-rate health although I was laboring under a severe deafness a few days since yet now I feel all right again. I must say I cannot understand Stronse for I have been led to believe that he would do so much for you. If he acts contrary to what he professes it will be more than I expected of him. Do not let him rest, but find out whether he has filed that appointment and urge George's and have him appointed if possible. Why he did not answer my letter I cannot understand and I shall not forget it.

I am your Affect. Son
Will

Direct to Lt. W.W.C.

Signal Officer U.S.A. Hd. Qtrs. Dept. of Va, Richmond, Va.

I suppose you have recv'd my trunk ere this as I gave orders to have it sent at once.

Signal Camp
Richmond, Va.
May 14, 1865

This is a most lovely day and being Sunday quiet reigns supreme. The camp seems deserted, as all the officers except one other beside myself have gone into the city to church as well as most of the men and therefore I can sit down to write without fear of interruption as is usually the case. Although this is the case yet still I am afraid that I will be unable to write you a very interesting letter or give you much news as there is little transpiring of interest here.

I rec'd your letter of the 8th sent per Mr. Matz who gave it to me in our camp. On Thursday afternoon about five o'clock whilst at dinner, my boy, came and informed me that there were three gentlemen in camp who wished to see me. I thought the party was Messrs. Morris, Boyer and Heber Thompson whom I had met before in the city but I was much surprised to find that it was Mr. Matz, Cyrus Sheetz and O.D. Jenkins who had hunted me the first thing. I was glad to see them of course as I would anyone from Pottsville and did all I could to entertain them and the next day I took the ambulance down the Hotel and drove them allover the city, finally taking them out to see George Hill, who was encamped near it. They were much pleased with the trip and promised they would tell you all when they got home.

The same day they were out to see me I had sent horses down for Mr. Morris and party and they also rode out to our camp where they remained some time barely escaping a very heavy thunder shower. They have all gone home except Heber Thompson who is still in the city where he expects to go into some kind of business; most likely he will open a coal yard. You will get full particulars of my condition and situation from those gentlemen upon their arrival home.

Nearly all the armies of the U.S. have passed through Richmond en-route for Washington preparatory to a general breaking up and there are but few troops left in this vicinity to look after our interest as all think it unnecessary and that all war is at an end.

You ask me what will be done in reference to our corps and would say in reply that no one knows positively what will be done. There will no doubt be a number of the officers retained and perhaps all. I understand that an order has been issued by our Bureau at Washington informing all those officers who wish to resign to send in their resignations at once and they will be accepted, which has been done, no doubt, to find out how many will leave of their own accord and than a selection will be made of the remainder. There are many who have heretofore been loud in their protestations against the corps and in favor of resigning as soon as the war was over and we will now see if they are still of the same opinion and whether they will now go out, that an opportunity is offered them or try to remain in the service. If a selection is made from those having the best records I do not think they will muster me out or rather I do, not think they should do so, for mine I am satisfied stands as high as any officer in the corps and although they did not brevet me as was anticipated yet my record stands in my favor to strengthen my present position.

It is strange that some thing was not done for me but I suppose if I had had the proper influence to bring to bear upon the "powers that be", I should have been rewarded as my case deserved. I

intend writing to Admiral Porter and call his attention to it, asking his assistance again in the matter and I know that all he can do for me will be cheerfully undertaken. I think it would do no harm for Mr. Stronse to write to the Secretary of War calling his attention to the testimonials, which have already been given me, and asking that a better position be given me than that, which I now hold. Show him those, which you have and he can govern himself accordingly. Any delay in the matter will prove detrimental to my desires and the sooner it is done the better. If I can do so I intend remaining in the service until something better turns up, as I certainly do not want to re-enter civil life with no prospects ahead; whilst the salary I now receive is much more than I can obtain at home for some time. There is also a rumor current among our officers that a new cavalry regt will be formed and that we will officer it, to be called the 7th U. S. Cavalry but that is only a rumor and there is nothing left but to await the time when a definite decision will be arrived at.

We have been having the most delightful weather and at times almost too cool for comfort. Today it is indeed lovely, not in the sun, but cool in the shade, and as I intend remaining in camp all day I think that the heat will not trouble me much.

Do not neglect writing to me often and also let me know whether Mr. Stronse has done anything in the matter concerning myself.

With much love to Mother and all the little ones and with regards to Eliza.

I am your Affect. Son Will

I receive the Journal regularly. Direct your letters to:

Lt. W. W. C.

Signal Corps U.S.A. Head Qrts. Dep't Va., Richmond, Va.

Headquarters Department Va.
Office of the Chief Signal Officer
Richmond 28th May 1865

You have no doubt concluded that I think little of home from the fact of my not writing oftener, but that is not the case, but offer as an excuse for the seeming neglect, that I have nothing to write about. There is nothing at all transpiring of interest and we are "killing time" the best way we can. I rec'd your letter a few days since, but not having it with me at present I do not remember the date. I rec'd also by express the box which Mr. Matz sent me and have written him thanking him for them. I was surprised a few days since by a visit, to our camp from Messrs. Ric'd Morris, Ben Barnom, Ned Taylor and Thos. Anderneid who came on one of the most disagreeable days; it was raining and very cold. I have not seen them since nor do I know if they have left the city. The weather has been more like winter the past few days and we have had an extraordinary amount of rain - but today it is quite pleasant and the streets are filled with ladies returning from church. I am writing this in our office in the city having driven down from camp in the carriage with the intention of going to St. Paul's Church but found I was too late.

I received the Journal regularly.

Excuse this letter, as I really have no news to impart and let me hear oftener from home.

With much love to all at home

I am your Affect Son

Signal Camp
Richmond, Va.
June 4, 1865

I rec'd your letter a day or two since and would have answered it immediately but was unable to do so on account of my having other things to attend to which kept me busy all day. I have been on a _____ of investigation during the past week, which generally used up the greater part of the day and during the time, which was at my disposal; I had little inclination to write. I had given up all hopes of receiving a letter from you as so long a time had elapsed, since I had written but I could not help but believe that there were some extenuating circumstances and that your time was pretty well occupied in visiting your friends.

I am glad to hear that they have all been so kind to you and that you fully appreciate it and I earnestly hope that your whole visit may be a pleasant one. In regard to the conduct of those out at Green St., I have nothing to say for I am fully satisfied that your conduct towards them will be such as they deserve and in accordance with their actions towards you. I really can not understand how they can act in the manner they have after the kind consideration each and everyone have rec'd at the hands of our family and the treatment they have always rec'd at our house. Week after week and summer after summer have they been the most welcome guests at our house and now when at least some little kindness might be expected from them in return, they stand aloof and prove that they are devoid of even common politeness. I can assign no motive for their conduct except that it might be a sordid, selfish one, which prompts them to it, and if such be the case, the less you have to do with them the better.

I, individually have nothing to complain of them for their treatment of me has always been of the kindest nature and apparently seemed to have no little interest in me, but their conduct towards you has been far from satisfactory to me and I can not help but feel that upon me falls a part and which is necessary for me to bear. I suppose you know I met Sallie often at City Point before I came to Richmond. Our meetings were always of the most cordial character and her conduct towards me was most gratifying and it is certainly a mystery to me how they can act in the manner they have done towards you, but however the less said the better, depending upon your own strength of character to bear up against any obstacles which may arise.

We are now in the midst of summer, yes the hottest kind of summer. The heat is dreadful and we do not venture beyond the limits of our camp during the day except when required to do so. We have great reason to be thankful for the most excellent location of our camp where we are in the enjoyment of almost perpetual shade and we do indeed appreciate it, but even in here the heat finds its way and now whilst I am writing it is very warm indeed. I am sitting in my "shirt sleeves" but it is impossible to arrive at the least degree of comfort and we adopt the old motto "grin and bear it" although not very willingly. I have been unable to pierce the hearts of any of the Richmond Ladies yet as there hatred towards the Yankees has not yet become softened, but I have no doubt but ere many weeks more have elapsed they will have found that the association of Yankee officers is not so disagreeable as they at present imagine.

I have met several Northern Ladies who have been here on a visit and have enjoyed myself very much with them riding and driving - as we have plenty of horses and a couple of carriages

(borrowed of course) we are well provided with the means of entertaining any of our friends whom we may meet. We have been indeed having a good time since we have been here, and although I must admit we are all getting tired of this place, yet still we would prefer remaining here than to be ordered to some less pleasant place.

You ask me in regard to the status of our Corps and whether I shall remain in service. This is hard to answer as a great many conjectures have already been thrown out as to what disposition will be made of us officers. We certainly have been made, by an Act of Congress, a part of the Regular Army and all our business is conducted as such and we are recognized by all the departments as belonging thereto, but it is supposed that there will be a deduction made and those having the best records for services rendered in the field will be retained. If such be the case I do not see how they can deprive me of my position, if I choose to retain it, for my record stands certainly as high as any officer in the Corps whilst I have rec'd testimonials of such a character as have been bestowed in but a very few instances in the Whole Army and it has been a matter of wonder to my friends that I have not long since been promoted or brevetted a couple of grades, as so many others have been advanced and as was in many cases, without any particular reason or act of bravery on their part.

But enough I have already written much more than I had expected I would. You might say to Miss McN., that I certainly would not have considered it a very "bold" action on her part if she had sent her "love" but however that she has requested to be remembered to me, it is satisfactory. Do not neglect to offer my regards to her as before.

Give my love to all my cousins you may meet and also to Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Horton when you see them. Send me Mrs. P's address and I will write to her. I enclose herewith twenty dollars which you can use as you see fit and when you are in need of more let me know and I will send you what I can.

With the hope that you will answer this at once.

Believe me your Affect Bro.

Will

Direct to

Lt. W.W.C. Signal Officer

Hd. Qtrs. Dept. of Va. Richmond, Va.

I would like you to make me a few "butterflies" but would prefer having the "black" or of some dark colors.

Headquarters Department Va.
Office of the Chief Signal Officer Richmond, Va.
June 9th 1865

I received your letter a day or two since and was somewhat surprised to find that you had written me again, as so long time had elapsed since I had heard from home, however I was very glad to hear again from you and that all were well.

I rec'd a letter from Tillie about a week since in which she states she is having a good time and that her visit is being a pleasant one. I wrote her a few days since and enclosed her a small amount to purchase what she may want. at last I have rec'd my brevet appointment as Captain, from the President. I had given up, long since, all idea of having such a compliment bestowed upon me as it has been so long since the testimonial were before the department, but last night I rec'd the appointment to date from March 13, 1865 "for faithful and meritorious services". I am of course pleased with it, but there are officers here, who having been in the Corps ever since the war are rather envious of the honor conferred and whilst there is not one who does not heartily wish that he was the recipient of such acknowledgements, yet they hardly like the idea of my getting it for they think I have been in the Corps so short a time. But still they all congratulate me etc. notwithstanding the fact as above stated.

My next endeavor shall be to obtain orders according to my brevet rank and will see the Sec. Of War myself in order to obtain it, if it is necessary. You know that I will leave no stone unturned to accomplish any object I have in view.

We are all under orders for Washington and we leave here on Tuesday morning for that city. What is to be done with us we do not know although the general supposition is that we will be put upon some kind of duty other than that which we have been performing, some however think that a reduction will be made in the Corps and that only a portion will be retained in the service, but to tell the truth no one knows what can be expected. I am sorry and at the same time glad we are to leave this place, sorry because we are so comfortably located and so pleasantly situated which will not be the case at Georgetown, glad, because this is getting to be a most dull and monotonous life here and although Richmond is a most lovely place yet at present it is only a "one horse town" and it is impossible to get into the best society on account of the bitter feeling which still exists amongst that class of people. If an entree into that society could be obtained we no doubt could have a very pleasant time indeed, but as we are debarred from that, by force of circumstances, it is only a course of regret to be compelled to live in this community as we do.

The weather is scorching and unless on business I rarely leave the camp. This a.m. I thought I would almost perish when riding on my horse to the city and I would not have come down at all, did I not wish to make some reports in regard to the stations which I have had under my charge with the 24th. I suppose you also have had and are still having very hot weather, as this is the season for it.

Wally Wolff and Mat Cannine were here this week and I met them at the hotel. I suppose you will hear from Wally when he gets to Pottsville. I am in good health although I must confess this kind of weather about "does me up".

Do not direct you letters here any more but to Signal Camp, Georgetown, D.C.

With much love to all. Mother and all the boys and with the hope that I may receive a letter from you soon after my arrival in Washington.

I am your Affect. Son.

Remember me to Eliza & all my friends. Excuse this as I wrote it in about five minutes.

Direct you letters to Brevet Capt. W.W.C. etc.

Hdg. Signal Detachment
Washington, D.C.

Our party arrived here from Richmond yesterday morning and has become located in our old camp at Georgetown - some of the party however is in the city where they will remain for a few days. I concluded it better to fix up my quarters at once in camp, which I am doing gradually. We are living in barracks or rather a large building containing about fourteen room, plastered and well fitted up for offices, bedrooms etc. in the camp at Georgetown. It has rained off and on ever since our arrival and the streets of Washington are in the usual miserable condition.

I wrote you last from Richmond telling you that I had rec'd my appointment as Brevet Capt. which letter I suppose you have rec'd long ere this. I want Mother to send me her express at once the suit of citizens' clothes, which I purchased when I was home last - also all the white shirts, if I have any. When I was mustered out of the Infantry service I brought home a pair of Capts. shoulder straps, if you can find them please send them with the clothes. I enclose herewith five dollars to pay express charges. Have the package directed to me at Signal Camp, Georgetown, D.C. A few days since I sent her express to O.D. Jenkins, Pottsville, a revolver which he left in Richmond. If you should see him, ask him if he has recv'd it.

With much love to all at home & hoping to hear soon from you.

I am you affect. Son

Direct your letter Signal Camp Georgetown, D.C.

Georgetown, D.C.
June 19, 1865

I received your letter of the 9th in due time at this camp and should have answered it ere this, but to tell the truth, it has been so hot that I felt little like doing anything. I wrote you from Washington immediately after my arrival requesting you to send me the suit of Citizens clothes, shirts and a pair of Capt. shoulder straps enclosing five dollars to pay express charges, but I have as yet rec'd no answer to that letter although I expect to receive the articles tomorrow or next day.

We are here in camp with nothing to do and without any knowledge as to what will be the disposition made in regard to us. I was to see the Admiral yesterday and spent the afternoon with the family and taking tea with them. I had an elegant time and it seemed as though they were under the impression they could not do enough for me. It is certainly one of the best families I ever had the pleasure of meeting and their reception, even of the little children, was most gratifying to me as they had heard of me before and met me as though I was an old acquaintance.

The Admiral has certainly taken a great interest in me, as has already been shown, and now he has an object in view by which I will receive a fine appointment if he succeeds, which is very probable, as he spoke to General Grant yesterday in regard to me and the General told him that there would be no difficulty in the matter and that I could be appointed as the Admiral desired.

I shall not mention what the Admiral is anxious to have done, but will await further results and if satisfactory, will let you know at once. At any rate I do not think I will remain long here at Washington as it is more than probable that Col. Fisher, Chief Signal officer of the Army, will send me away somewhere as he asked me this morning as to how I would like to go to certain places. If I am here the beginning of next month I shall try and get a few days leave of absence in order that I may spend the 4th of July in Pottsville, but it will be rather difficult to obtain a leave then as so many want to go about that time.

I have never yet since I have been in the Corps rec'd a leave, except those granted me by the Admiral and I think I won't have as much difficulty in getting it as some of the others who have already been favored at Hd. Qtrs. I do not expect to get home on the fourth but if I can, I will do so.

The weather has been oppressively hot and almost unendurable - today however we had an elegant shower, which has cooled the atmosphere considerably, and you may depend upon it, we fully appreciate the change.

I hope you will excuse this hastily written scroll for indeed I am almost ashamed to send it but I thought I had better write you even though it were only a line. If you have not sent my things, please send them as soon as possible as I want them.

Give much love to Mother & all at home.

Kiss the little boys for me and tell them I think of them often.

I wrote to Tillie some time since but have rec'd no answer from her. Where is she?

Remember me to Eliza.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Signal Camp Georgetown, D.C.
June 26th 1865

Your letter dated the 11th only reached me yesterday which will account for your not having received a letter from me ere this, as I was daily in expectation of receiving one from you and it was from this cause deferred so long. It was, as you know, directed to Richmond and it reached that city about the time I left there for this place, but I cannot understand why it was detained so long in the former office. However it reached me at last conveying me the assurance that you are still in the midst of enjoyment and the recipient of many kind favors from your friends in Phila. who, I no doubt are doing all to make your time pass as pleasantly as possible whilst you are with them. I was pleased to hear that the Clemens' have received you with the proper feelings and that their seeming inattention to you during the first part of your visit was the result of the circumstance mentioned in your last letter. I am most exceedingly sorry that I was not aware, at the time, of their visit to Richmond for I would have been able to have added much, I think to their pleasure whilst there, acquainted as I am with all the most prominent points of interest in that locality, besides which I could have furnished plenty of horses, as well as an ambulance or

army carriage to drive them around. Whilst I was in Richmond I had a delightful time and was most pleasantly located indeed, and when I received orders to report in this city, I was much inclined to regret that the order had been issued for I had become somewhat attached to the place.

Our party arrived here on the 14th and we have been ever since, nothing to do and plenty of it. We are in fact awaiting the decision of the Sec. of War in regard to the disposition to be made of our Corps. There is considerable speculation as to what will be done and all kinds of conjectures are afloat, many thinking that the present number of officers and the present organization will be kept up and others that only a portion will be retained which latter is my belief.

Who will be retained and who will be kept in the service is a hard question to answer, but I suppose those having the best records will have the preference and if such is the case I think my chances are about as good as any. I wish to remain in the service and will do so if I can and I shall bring all the influence to bear upon the "powers that be" to accomplish my purpose. Admiral Porter lives in Georgetown, not far from our camp and I have visited him and the family very often since I have been here and their kindness towards me does not abate in the least, as they do all they can to please me and make me feel at home with them. The Admiral asked me a few days since how I would like to be ordered to a certain place on duty and upon telling him I would be delighted, he said he would have me so ordered and he saw Gen'l. Grant in reference to the matter who told him that it could be done if he desired it. So you see, if I remain in the service I can get a fine position through the influence of the Admiral.

Since I wrote you last I have rec'd the appointment of Brevet Captain from the President for "faithful and meritorious services", so you can see that the fears of some of the loyal people of Pottsville were rather uncalled for and should be, by this time, completely eradicated. The result of my services eliciting as it did in the first place the thanks of the different departments and finally my promotion as a reward, should be fitting rebukes to those people who would, in their intensity of feelings, try to deprive me of a position which they themselves would not dare to accept. I knew the time would come when I would be able to hurl back at them with two-fold force the indignities, which they endeavored to heap upon me and I look back upon the past with a sort of pride when I think that poor I should have been the object of so much attention at their hands. But enough as it is useless to harrow up old feelings but I could not help but revert to a subject, which was for a time a source of some mortification to me. But I console myself with the fact that I have performed my duty well and those in power have acknowledged that fact by my promotion.

I rec'd the necktie you sent me and am much obliged. The same mail brought me also a box containing three very handsome ones a present from a lady friend and they were all particularly acceptable at the present time as my stock in that line had become pretty low. The fact of my having rec'd these however should not prevent Miss MeN. from sending me one also as you intimate for I would be happy to receive one from her also.

I think I had better ask you for information concerning the widow for I certainly have no news from her. I am afraid she has "gone back" on me, but for what reason I cannot understand. I

suppose you are aware the gossipers of Pottsville freely circulated the report of an engagement between us, for which act of kindness. I ought to be under lasting obligations to them.

We have been having very hot weather almost unendurable, but today we have had considerable rain which has made it much more pleasant and I can assure you we all appreciate the change. I had partly expected to make a visit home on the fourth and stop a few days in Phila, but I am afraid I will not be able to do so, as I wish to remain here until I know what disposition will be made of me. If I am retained I will visit home as soon as I can and I hope it will be for a longer period than I was heretofore the case. I receive letters regularly from home and I suppose you are often in receipt of them also.

Give my love to all my friends, to Mrs. Patterson, Kate, Gerty and Miss MeN.

Do not neglect to write me soon. I am glad you received my letter containing the amount I sent you for I was afraid you did not get it.

With much love to you

I am your Affect. Brother

Will

Direct to Brevet Capt. W.W.C., Signal Camp, Georgetown, D.C.

Fort "Baker" Washington

July 2nd 1865

As you see I have again changed my location and I can assure you so far as being pleasantly or satisfactorily located I may as well say at once that such is not the case, for it is the most lonely place I have at any time been stationed and the past thirty six hours have seemed almost like as many days. Perhaps the fact of its seeming so lonesome is accounted for by my being, during the past year, in the association of so much company and being cut off from all I feel it so much the more.

This Fort is one of the many, which have been erected during the war for the defense of Washington and is located just across the "Eastern Branch" of the river and directly opposite the Navy Yard. It is one of the largest works in the vicinity and one which will be garrisoned for some time yet, for as you may have seen by the papers the greater part of the works are to be dismantled and the posts discontinued there being no further use for them. There has always been a Signal Station here in order that communication can be kept up with the city, as well as with the different posts on the Virginia side, but at present there is little or nothing to do, insufficient to keep up the station although as long as this is a post the station will be kept.

At the Signal Camp at Georgetown there are about fifteen officers who of course are unemployed and the Chief Sig. Off. of the Army is apprehensive of some changes that may be made in the Corps and that it will be reduced and as it is his intention to have me retained in the service if possible he has had me ordered here in order that I may be kept on duty so that in case the unemployed officers are discharged that I will not be included in that category. However if Adm. Porter makes his application for me and I am ordered as he requests I do not think there will be much difficulty for me to retain my position for some time yet.

I flatter myself that I stand in high favor with the Head of our Corps and I believe that he will consider me very favorably when the retentions, if any, are made. I am very comfortably located so far as a habitation is concerned, as I have a nice little house, built cottage style, containing two rooms one for office and the other for bedroom and I mess with the Colonel Commanding the post, but do not live quite as well as have been lately although I suppose it is good enough and I have no reason for complaint.

As I said in the beginning of this letter it is certainly a dull place, no excitement whatever and not a person can be seen around except the few attached to the Hd. Qrts and it is at all times as quiet as though there was not a soul around, except when the drum corps creates a racket enough to deafen me and that is noise enough for the time being. Just as I am writing, the Bass Drummer is beating the taps, which means "lights out" for all who are not fortunate enough to wear a strap and I suppose that quietness will again reign supreme until daylight tomorrow when the enthusiastic drum corps breaks in upon it just outside my window, a sort of an unpleasant serenade at an early hour of the morning.

From this place we have the most complete view of the city and the Scene is indeed a splendid one as it includes the whole of the City, Georgetown and the country for miles around. We are in the District of Columbia, but the Maryland line is but a short distance in the rear of us, although it appears to me that once having crossed the river we should be out of the District.

I rec'd your letter of the 29th yesterday at Georgetown and the Journal at this place today, so you see it does not take very long for your letters to reach me but that they arrive in proper time and I can not understand why mine are so long in reaching you, unless it be the fault of the Post Masters in this vicinity.

I rec'd also at the same time Mr. L's letter and if I do not answer it tonight I will in a day or so. I am sorry to hear that Mother met with the accident she did, but I hope that ere this she has entirely recovered. I see by the Journal that George has been distinguishing himself at cricket and am glad to find that he acquitted himself so nobly and scoring as many as he did in the game.

I wrote you a few days since enclosing ten dollars for the boys on the fourth. Did you receive it? I hardly know what I shall do on the 4th or where I shall go as I have been invited out but I think I will spend part of the day at Signal Camp, Georgetown as the officers there are going to get up some kind of festivities in honor of the occasion, and burn a few squibs in the evening. I suggested expending any quantity of our signal rockets, which are so much finer than those, which are generally, used particularly those called the Parachute, and also burn the Coston Lights now that the war is over and there is no further use for them - and it is altogether probable that some officer can get a great many off his papers as expended in the service.

I have no doubt but that there will be a gay time in Pottsville on that day judging from the preparations being made as indicated in the Journal and I would very much like to be home at that time - but it is otherwise decreed and I must willingly submit to my fate. I also see by the paper that Will Hazzard is at home. If you see him give him my regards and ask him whether he every received any copies of the photograph which we had taken in "Sleepy Hollow" near the

crow's nest tower on the James River. If he did receive any ask him if he got those for me, which I ordered to give them to you and I will refund him the necessary amount to pay for them.

It is getting late and I shall close as I have written much more than I supposed I would when I commenced. We had a delightful rain yesterday and most all night and today although the sun was hot yet still there is a strong cool breeze, this evening it is bright moonlight and quite pleasant out.

Give much love to Mother and all at home and with kind regards to Eliza.

I am your Affect. Son

Will

Write soon and direct to

Brevet Capt.

Care of Lt. Paul Brodie

Chief Sig. Off. Dept. of Washington

He will forward it to me.

Fort Baker, D.C.

July 18, 1865

I rec'd your letter of the 16th yesterday and had intended answering it last evening but as I was otherwise engaged it was deferred until tonight and even now I had almost forgotten my duty towards you, for I was just going to bed when the thought occurred to me that I owed you a letter which must be written at once. It is after eleven o'clock and I feel tired and worn out, having been in the city all day tramping around in every direction that I came back this evening thoroughly disgusted with the place and almost vowed I would not go there again unless business called me, for you know Washington, notwithstanding the constant excitement, is a dull place for one who has nothing to occupy his attention and when I do go there it is only as a kind of relief from the dull monotony of this place.

I think you are mistaken when you say I owe you two letters for I am under the impression that I wrote you since my arrival here and your letter of yesterday was the first I have rec'd. However it is not of much consequence, as I could not have given you much in the way of news, as it is awfully dull here where I am, although I am perfectly contented and like my present position very much. We are quite convenient to Washington only a few minutes ride to the _____ and I can go and come when I please.

There is a pretty good set of officers here and time passes about as quickly as anywhere else. Close by this Fort there is one of the oldest and best families in the District, which boasts of four daughters and I have been fortunate enough to come into their good graces and I spend many a pleasant hour with them. They have a fine residence and have treated me very kindly indeed, so kindly, that I manage to spend nearly every evening at their house. At present there is a young lady staying with them (Southerner of course) who is very handsome and so you can judge for yourself that with five young ladies I ought to be contented. Do not think however I have laid myself open for captivation but believe me I am still as impervious as ever and think I can resist all the temptations and allurements, which they may hold forth, but I do know that many a young man would be glad to have as fine an opportunity to select for himself a wife. They are the most agreeable and pleasant set of girls I ever met and try to do all to make me feel at home when I

visit them. I am glad to hear that you are still enjoying yourself. Give my kindest regards to the young lady who is assisting you in the arduous duties of housekeeping and say I offer them for the sake of a dear friend of mine Bob Long. Tillie, I hope you will excuse this hastily written letter but I thought I had better write you even if it was but a line. I have not heard from home for a long time and can not understand why none of them has written to me.

With love to all my cousins and friends believe me.

Your Affect Bro.

Will

Quartermaster's Office, Signal Detachment
Department of Washington Georgetown, D.C.
Aug 18th 1865

I arrived here yesterday morning and found that our Corps had gone, and the few officers still left here were about getting ready to start for their respective homes, so you may conclude that I will share the same fate as the others. The whole Corps in fact has been disbanded and there will be no one left but Col. Fisher who remains in Washington permanently as the head of an organization which does not exist, but may possibly undergo a resurrection in case another war should break out, but I am afraid that few of the old members could be tempted to serve Uncle Sam again no matter how much their services might be needed as so many of them feel as though they had not only been treated unkindly but unjustly and now they will never enter the service again.

I have been mustered out and am now a citizen and although my future prospects are not very brilliant, yet still I feel very well satisfied and am glad that I am again free to act and do, although I will be dependant upon my own exertions for a living.

I shall be compelled to remain here until my accounts are settled at the different departments, which will probably take from ten days to two weeks and until then I will be unable to get my final payments. Some of the officers have been trying to get their settlements for the last two weeks spending every day at one of the departments and have not yet succeeded. I hope I will not have much difficulty although I am afraid they will hunt up old scores against me whilst I was Capt. in the 129th when they told me my accts. were not altogether correct but I am in hopes that will be overlooked.

I am living here in Camp, have my old room and mess with the same family as I did when I was here before. My expenses are light and I congratulate myself on that fact. I had a pleasant time in Phila., saw "Tillie" several times and went with her to hear Bryant's Minstrels the evening I left. I told her to be more punctual in writing home. Pres. Carpenter left the Camp this a.m. and starts for Philad. tonight.

Direct to me at Signal Camp Georgetown, D.C.

Hoping to hear soon.

I am your Affec. Son

Will

I shall see Admiral Porter tomorrow or next day, when I shall solicit his assistance in my behalf.

Headquarters Department Washington
Office of the Chief Signal Officer
Aug. 21st 1865

I wrote you a few days since stating that I had been mustered out etc. and I write you today, not that I have anything of interest to impart, merely to let you know how I am getting along. I have started my papers in the different departments and I am afraid I will not be able to get them through before ten days or two weeks yet, as there are so many officers whose accts. are just now being settled.

If I only had my accts. as signal officer to settle, I could get through in a few days but my old accts as Capt. of Co. A. 129th are being hunted up and I am afraid they will give me a little trouble as some of the papers have been lost but I hope they will come out all right although it will take a little more time. I wish you would send me at once per mail any final accts. as Capt. 129th F.V. in reference to ordinance etc. I think they are in one of the Co. books and that we were looking at them when I was home last. It consists of a couple of sheets of paper put together and ruled out showing what disposition I made of those stores.

Ever since my return here I have been sick and am still quite unwell. I shall remain in my room for a couple of days yet when I hope to be able to attend to my business.

With the hope that I may soon hear from home.

I am your Affec. Son.

Direct to W.W.C.

Georgetown D.C.

Hart Island, N.Y.C.
June 7, 1866

I rec'd your letter of the 6th this evening as you requested haste to answer. I am glad to hear that you are succeeding in the sale of the property to your satisfaction and that the amounts realized are sufficient. If not absolutely necessary to sell all, do you not think it advisable to retain one place at least in order to have it in case you choose to enter the business spoken of? I think so, but however you do as you think best. I rec'd a letter, as well as the papers, from John and answered it last night and he told me he had left Minersville for good, and anticipated going in the lubricating business or at least commence it and endeavor to introduce it with a view to make it a profitable one. In regard to your visiting this place, I would say that I would be delighted to have you come, but indeed I must say that the trip would hardly repay you for there is nothing to be seen here whatever.

We are living on a barren, sandy island, with nothing on it except the barracks erected for the accommodation of the troops stationed here. At present there is not one organized body of troops only a few detachments and a number of recruits who are being drilled without arms. If we had a battalion or regiment of fully equipped and well drilled troops the trip might repay you for then you would obtain an idea as to what our proper duties and occupations are but as it is we are without commands and are awaiting the arrival of new recruits, which are coming in very slowly, in order to organize six companies of this Regt which are at present not in existence except on paper. I expect to go to New York on Saturday morning and remain in the city until Monday. I

will arrive there at ten a.m. and shall stop with Will Parvin but where he lives I do not know, however I shall call at the "Astor House" and "French's Hotel" on Saturday evening, Sunday and Monday morning to see if you have arrived in the city - should you choose to come on. Under the circumstances if you should not come it will be no trouble for me to call at the places above named. There is a steamer that leaves the battery every afternoon at 4 O'clock for this place - she is called the "Mary Benton" and is a good boat and you can obtain passage on her without any difficulty whatever, and you can have accommodation on the island by occupying my quarters and a good bed. If you come to the city and conclude not to visit the island, I can meet you at the former place as above stated. Telegraph me at the Astor House Saturday morning whether you will come on or not and I can govern myself accordingly. I am officer of the Guard tonight and feel little like writing, as I am not writing in my quarters so I hope you will excuse brevity. Hoping to hear soon from you soon.

Hart Island,
New York June 11, 1866

I wrote you this evening merely to acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday, which came to hand, together with "The Bulletin", this evening. It is indeed fortunate that Tim was saved and it must have been a miraculous escape. With you I wonder at his indiscretion, when he evinces generally so much caution and forethought in everything he undertakes. Tell him he need not be ashamed that he should have met with such accident but feel thankful that he was saved from drowning and I hope, which he no doubt will, that he will have been taught a lesson which will never be forgotten by him. Give him a kiss for me and say that I shall endeavor to get to see him before long.

This evening the General received orders to make application at once for the necessary transportation to carry us to Texas so you see the Gov't intends sending us away as soon as possible. I do not think we will be able to get ready no more before two weeks at least as the troops are not yet equipped, without arms and not even drilled, but there is no telling and it may be that as soon as the arms arrive we will be put enroute for Texas.

I shall visit you before I go if it is at all possible, but at present cannot say what are the probabilities for so doing. I shall have to close both for want of news and on account of the mosquitoes which are nearly eating me up. They are of the very largest kind and flit about my lamp in swarms and it keeps me busy with one hand to keep them off my person and my paper as I write. At night it is near to an impossibility to sleep and in the morning my face and hands bear unmistakable evidence of their industry during the night.

Give much love to Mother, Tim & all my friends & hoping to hear again from you.

I am your Affect . Son

Will

I noticed the death of Miss Harris. It is a sad thing, although I had expected she would not live long, as Tillie had told me whilst home that she had taken a bad cold which was feared would prove fatal.

I received a letter, as well as the papers from John this evening and noticing an advertisement in the "Standard" that Jurors summoned to attend court June 18th were notified not to attend as there will be no court during that week. I thought I would send you it, as I understood from you that you would have to be in Pottsville on that date, besides I thought perhaps you might not have finished your business by that time and would hurry home in consequence when you would prefer remaining in the city longer.

I arrived safely home last evening and found matters in status quo, but today affairs have taken a different aspect, from the fact that one hundred recruits were sent to our Reg's from general recruiting service and fifty per day will be sent until our reg't is full. We want about four hundred yet and after they have been fairly organized and equipped I suppose we'll be sent at once to Texas.

I think it is now more than probable we will get off some time during the next two months, but then as doubtful things are very uncertain it is hard to tell what may be expected, however I feel fully prepared for all orders and it matters little to me when we are ordered away; but at the same time I would much prefer remaining North during the summer and go South sometime in the fall. I suppose Mother and Tim are with you by this time and will enjoy themselves whilst in the city. John states in his letter that he will send my violin, which shows he rec'd my letter of which I spoke to you and in which I had enclosed the money. Hoping to hear soon from you and with much love to all.

I am your Affect. Son.

Will

Hart Island N.Y.
Harbour July 6, 1866

I arrived here safely this eve but almost tired to death for it was the hottest and hardest days' journey I ever took by rail, and I was congratulating myself all along the road that when I arrived here I would lie comfortably back and rest but was what my surprise upon finding an order had been issued placing me in command of one of the companies of the unassigned recruits which starts for Texas tomorrow at ten a.m. It was understood that these recruits should go at that time but as I had had nothing heretofore to do with them it was natural to suppose that I would not go with them, but go with the second detachment which will not leave for a week yet. I never received an order which I regretted so much as it destroys all the anticipations which a certain party had cherished and I am now compelled to go with those upon whom I had made no calculations.

The steamer the Herman Livingston is said to be one of the finest ocean steamers and is one of the regular line of passenger steamers turning between N. York and New Orleans. All our transportations, meals etc. are furnished to us free of expense. We will land at New Orleans and no doubt will spend a few days in that place when we will start for Galveston from there to San Antonio the Head Quarters of the Regiment. I am sorry that I had to pack up in such a hurry but once on the way it makes little difference when I go. I am hardly prepared to start at this time but shall make things suit as well as I can.

I want you to get my boots made as soon as you can and send them directed to me at New York and Mr. Cran will get them and bring them to me when he comes. Have them made large enough but not too large. Enclosed you will find ten dollars to pay expenses. Direct to W.W.C. 17th etc. Hart Island, New York Harbour.

I feel too tired to write more I must commence getting my things ready. Write me at least once a week without regard to letters from me and until otherwise informed direct to W.W.C. Head Quarters 17th U.S. Inf. San Antonio, Texas and they will be forwarded to me where ever I may be. When you receive this I suppose I will be knocking about at sea and may be suffering accordingly. Love to all. Good Bye .

Camp Yarde,
Texas June 26, 1868

My dear Mother,

I enclose herewith draft no. 799 of J.S. Lockwood banker dated San Antonio, Texas June 22, 1868 to the order of Chas. P. Hayden banker New York for one hundred (100) dollars, which I send to be equally divided between yourself and Tillie. Please do not neglect to acknowledge its receipt at once, in order that I may know that it has reached you.

There is little for me to write this a.m. and very dull would a long letter be, were I at this time to attempt to write one. One letter written from this post could contain all the information concerning this locality as we are leading a very quiet, staid and sober life. I have been here now nearly four months and being the only line officer on duty, I have been confined during all this time within the limits of the post having been absent only on one occasion, when I drove about ten miles into the country, to spend the afternoon fishing. So you see that I am rather unfortunately situated, stationed at a post on the frontier with a full company and without the assistance of a single soul, and am compelled to assume the duties of all the different positions and which at times become rather complicated. But, as I have so often written, this is the most delightful post in all Texas, not only on account of its surrounding scenery, and the absence of all dust and sand, I have most elegant quarters.

I occupy a building one hundred and thirty feet long with a wing half that long, and a fine covered verandah or porch running the entire length. My bedroom is very nicely furnished and as a party said the other day when visiting me that there was not as handsome a room in the state. Although I am comfortably located yet I have no company at all and all my association is limited to the surgeon of the post and the butler who by the way is a very finely educated old German gentleman, who is called into requisition as arbiter between the Doctor and myself when unable to settle a mooted point amongst ourselves.

I am daily expecting to hear something concerning an order assigning another officer to duty here, but as yet there not much prospect. However if one does come here by September I will make strenuous exertions to get a leave. I rec'd yesterday a letter from Father dated 5th which had been miscarried to a wrong post office, hence its delay in reaching me. In that letter he speaks of having ordered my boots and mentions John's assurance as exhibited in his visit to the President. I think he has a little more confidence in himself than I have, although I must say that

I do not consider myself in any way diffident, but feel as though I was on equality with the rest of mankind.

I receive the papers regularly and the last batch contained the program of the Sunday School Festival of the 7th, sent by Tim, kiss the boy for me. The papers are always welcome and the marked paragraphs read with the deepest interest.

The weather is now very warm but we suffer very little from the heat as we have constantly a fine breeze and as I am not compelled to be out much, I can sit in the shade at my leisure.

Please thank Mrs. Graeff for her kind remembrances of me and say that it was a most singular coincidence for only the night before the receipt of the letter containing her wish, I had a dream, during which I attended the late concert given in the Church in aid of the organ builder and had the pleasure of hearing Mr. G. & Miss Miller (I believe that is the name) singing just as was reported in the papers. Please remember me kindly to Mrs. G. as well as all enquiring friends.

Hoping that the draft may reach you all right and with much love to yourself, Tillie, Tim & all at home.

Adams & Wickes Contractors
San Antonio, Texas
August 13, 1868

Yours of 9th rec'd. In regard to the "Lubricator" referred to. We would like very much to give it a trial and should it answer for wagons and carts doubtless a very large quantity could be sold in this market. We cannot say the quantity that we could use as we don't know anything about the article. We run 175 wagons of our own, besides any number of contract ones and if the oil should prove a success we would like you to have a bbl or package sent us, to see what can be done with it.

We will give it a fair trial. Also inform us of the cost delivered at Indianola. We have no agent in New York, but think your Father or his agent would have no difficulty in shipping a package to us, care of our agent at Indianola S.M. Woodward. At this time we are using what is called "patent axle grease" and we use a large quantity. If the "lubricator" should prove a better material we would at once make the change.

How are you getting on at Yarde? You should be thankful that you are out there this warm weather here it is intensely warm. My little family is in the country at this time and I trust in good health - have not heard from them for several days.

Yours truly H.B. Adams

Camp Yarde, Texas
August 16, 1868

Some time since I wrote to the firm of Adams and Wickes Contractors for the transportation of Gov't supplies, at San Antonio stating that you were manufacturing a "lubrication" which excelled anything now in use etc. and asked that they give it a trial and I enclose herewith the answer of Mr. Adams to my communication. This firm has the contract of forwarding Gov't supplies allover this state and is one of the most extensive undertakings in the country. As Mr. Adams says they have one hundred and seventy five wagons of their own and I am confident they must have three times that number employed in addition, and as a consequence a large amount of lubricating material must be used.

Now if you think it expedient and desirable you might send them a barrel for trial and if it proves be all that you claim for it there can no doubt be found a large sale for it in this market where all transportation is accomplished by wagons, provided the expense may not be too great, for here in Texas the people don't as a general thing allow a dollar to pass out of their hands unless there is actual necessity therefore resembling very much the old Dutch farmers of Penna. in that particular.

In my letter to Mr. Adams I neglected to ask him what he was paying for that which he now uses, but I will write him today again and make the enquiries and as soon as I find out the price shall let you know, but in the meantime, you need only see what arrangements you can make to have it shipped from New York to Indianola, between which places there are constantly vessels of every description passing and I do not think the freight would be very high. If you conclude to send a barrel to that firm, first find out everything in connection with the cost of its transportation and then let me know at what price you can deliver it at Indianola and I will bear all the expenses of the experimental barrel provided, that the article which you are now making is all that it is represented to be; that it is decidedly better than other materials of the same description now on the market that you believe that there will be no probability of failure or dissatisfaction on the part of the purchasers, and that in case they should give us an order for fifty or a hundred barrels, it will be promptly filled.

I am well acquainted with the members of this firm, in fact they are warm personal friends of mine and are the same party, which offered me the salary of which I have already written you, and I know that if the article suits them I can sell them all they need to the utter exclusion of everything else, so as I said, if you know that your article is superior, I would be anxious to have it tried at my expense with the hope that we may be able to realize something out of it.

In forwarding goods from New York to Indianola, Texas it will be necessary, in order to ensure cheapness, to ship direct from one place to the other, for if it is unloaded and reshipped at New Orleans or Galveston the expense will be greatly increased, but I do not anticipate any difficulty in being able at any and at all times to have it shipped direct.

Write me at once in answer to this and give me your views in regard to it, and I will let you know whether you shall send a small quantity for trial. If the article is good, I have no doubt but that we can sell considerable, but I hardly see the necessity of sending it to far off Texas if it was

once properly introduced in the northern states where there are so many places which demand an article of that description. However I thought every little would help and if we could make occasional large sales here we had better do so. I shall await your answer to this before any further action.

I yesterday received my Commission of Major by brevet to rank as such from Mar. 2, 1867 for gallantry etc. during the war. It came to me without the least expectation on my part for I had not made a single effort in that direction and I do not know now to whom I am indebted for this consideration. However it was very acceptable but (if I say it myself) it was no more than I deserved, for my record at the War Dept is one of which I feel proud and testimonials are there on file, which are rarely bestowed on me occupying as subordinate position as I did. So in the future I ignore all such minor titles, as Captain and you will therefore address me by my proper title!!!!

I was disappointed yesterday at not receiving a letter from you although the papers, "Journal", "Standard" and "Press" reached me in the perusal of which I spent my usual happy hours for I read advertisements and all. I was surprised to see the notice of Curt Shoener's marriage. What is he doing now? Is he in a position where he is able to take care of a wife? I know this latter has been a great drawback with me for in this age of high prices a couple of thousand a year will hardly pay for "wife's clothes" - let alone buy the bread stuffs, however I shall not give up in despair, but hope on, hope ever.

The weather is extremely hot even here at Yarde, whilst accounts from San Antonio state that the heat is fearful there and I many times congratulate myself that I am up here in the mountains even if I am alone. This is Sunday and everything is still as death about the post, there is not a soul to be seen in any direction and in sheer despair concluded to inflict my letters upon a few of my friends not knowing how better to pass the time. I was also surprised to learn that Col. Conner had received the democratic nomination for Congress, for I had thought he had jumped the party long since and had united himself with the "loyal leaguers" and "carpetbaggers", but it seems I was mistaken for in these times much care should be exercised in the nomination of candidates and I don't suppose the Democrats acted hastily. What will be the result of the coming elections? Are the "truly loyal" still to remain victorious or are plain common sense and justice going to rule?

Do not neglect to answer this letter soon. I shall look for a regular letter from you in the next mail, for there is one due. Give much love to Mother, Tim & all at home. I hope that the sad drowning case of young "Simmons" may have the effect of keeping our little ones away from such danger and lead them to be very careful.

Love to all
Your Affect. Son
Will

Newport Barracks, Ky.
March 19, 1869

Dear Father,

I have been requested by the Adjutant General to furnish the dates of the desertion and apprehension of one John Moran, unassigned recruit 4th U.S. Calvary for whose arrest I paid on two different occasions thirty dollars, as Depot Q. Master, and I want you to refer to my retained papers to see if the dates required by the Adj. General are mentioned in the vouchers which I paid. The papers referred to are amongst those in the blue box and will be found one in the packages marked cash papers (or money account) for September and the other cash papers for October 1866 as I paid one voucher on Sept. 22, 1866 and the other October 10, 1866.

First find the packages required, open one amongst the papers composing it, you will find the voucher above mentioned and look carefully over it to see whether the dates of the desertion and apprehension of this man are mentioned thereon. This done close the package carefully as you found it, in order that nothing may be lost and then refer to the cash papers for October, with which you will do the same. Please make this examination at once and let me know as early as possible the result.

There is no news, weather very disagreeable, rainy but milder than it has been. As I said I have no news therefore excuse the brevity. I would not have written at all tonight but for the reason above given.

Give much love to all & write often.

Fort Garland, C.T.
May 15, 1870

I thought this evening I would not write you by this mail, but concluded finally to drop you a line to let you know that I am well and that I am much disappointed at not hearing from home as often as I wish. I have but one correspondent in the states besides yourself and when I do not hear from you for a couple of weeks there is a great void and I feel as though I was really alone, but I hope soon to see you when in the future where we can start on a new basis. I am much disappointed in regard to my leave. I forwarded an application for leave over three weeks ago and it should have been returned to me granted by this evening's mail, but owing to some informality it was returned me from Santa Fe last week for correction, hence I was compelled to make out another application and have thereby lost in all about four week's time. I had fully anticipated leaving here sometime during the coming week and reaching home the latter end of this month but as the matter now stands I will not be able to meet you all before about the middle of June.

I still entertain the idea of leaving the army provided I can clearly see my way through out of it, but as I said we can talk the matter over when I get home. We are slowly approaching summer although it is not yet warm. We continue our fires as usual and I sleep under about a half dozen blankets, for you must not forget that we are nine thousand feet above the sea. I have no news, everything dull and quiet. Give much love to Mother, Tillie, Tim & all. I hope next mail will bring me letters from you. Papers come regularly.

Fort Garland, C.T.
June 5th 1870

I put off writing to you much longer than I had intended, in fact I thought I would sooner answer it in person as I expected I would be at home before this. When I last wrote home I told them to expect me about the middle of this month but now something else has transpired to prevent my leaving here before the latter end of this month or the beginning of the next.

Last mail brought orders to send one commissioned officer to Fort Union N.M. to conduct a lot of recruits who were there awaiting transportation to this post and I was offered the opportunity to make the trip, but I declined as my trip home will be a long enough one and I did not care to prefix it with another of about four hundred miles and that over miserable roads so the only other available officer here was sent and I can not reasonably expect to leave here before he returns.

We have been having during the past week the most miserably cold weather, ice forming every night nearly a half-inch in thickness and the frost has killed nearly all the few vegetables we had. We are still wearing our thickest clothing and during the greater part of the time my overcoat is on my back. It seems that we are not going to have any summer here. I have no news, everything is dull and nothing going on. I hope you are pleased with your situation at Hughes' and have at last gotten into something. I rec'd no letters from home last mail and only two papers. So you may judge I was disappointed.

Give much love to Mother & tell her I hope soon to see her as well as all at home.

With love to Father, Tim, Frank and all

I am your Affect. Bro

Will

Fort Garland, C.T.
Sunday June 12, 1870

I received your letter of the 27th on Friday and really I can only acknowledge its receipt for I have no news whatever to communicate. I wrote to Timmy last mail which letter I suppose he will receive in proper time. My departure from this place has been delayed much longer than I anticipated, but I am glad now that it is so, for if I return again it will not be before the beginning of October when the weather will be most pleasant to travel.

In regard to the business I cannot say anything decisive but will have to wait until I see you when the matter can be talked over fully. I do not expect to leave here before the latter end of this month and hope to be home on or before the 4th July.

The weather still continues very cold and disagreeable, in fact it is such that I have as yet made no change in my clothing and rarely go out without throwing my overcoat over my shoulders. There is little prospect of our having any vegetables this year at all as everything, which did come up, was frozen. I have commenced a second planting but hardly think I will realize anything from it. I have been here now about eight months and during all that time we have had

but one rain and that not enough to moisten the surface of the ground. Everything here is dried up and unless we do soon get rain there will be danger of a famine in this section.

I received my usual lot of papers last mail over which I have been very intent all day.
Give much love to Mother, Tim, Frank and all.
Expecting to see you soon.
I am your Affect. Son
Will

Fort Garland, C.T.
Sunday evening June 19, 1870

I will write you but a note to say that I expect to leave here the latter end of the coming week say about the 25th and you may expect me home in eight or ten days there after.

I rec'd nothing last mail from anyone and was disappointed of course.

The weather has become somewhat warmer but it is still cool.
I expect to see you all soon, I feel as though I had nothing to write.
Give much love to Mother and all.

Phila.
July 8th 1870

I arrived here at 3 o'clock this morning tired, ragged and about half sick. Glad to get through my journey although it was not an unpleasant one. I shall go to Potts. in a day or two, perhaps Sunday, but will let you know. I may not leave here before the beginning of next week as I have something to attend to here. I shall be here until Sunday at any rate, so if you write me (Brigham House) I will get your letter tomorrow evening.
With much love to Mother and all
Will



WILLIAM CLEMENS

USS Onondaga

USS Onondaga on the James River, Virginia, in 1864-65



USS Onondaga on the James River, Virginia, 1864-65



USS Onondaga. Artwork by Oscar Parkes



French ironclad *Onondaga*, formerly USS *Onondaga*



Named after a lake and a county in New York State, the USS *Onondaga* was a double-turreted monitor that was launched 2 July 1864 by Continental Iron Works, Greenpoint, New York, under subcontract from George W. Quintard. She was commissioned at the New York Navy Yard on 24 March 1864. The *Onondaga* was 226 feet long, almost 50 feet wide, carried two 15-inch Dahlgren smoothbores and two 8-inch Parrott rifles, and had a crew of 150. The *Onondaga* left New York on 21 April 1864 and arrived at Hampton Roads, Virginia, two days later. She was attached to the James River Flotilla, which supported General Ulysses S. Grant's campaign against the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia.

On 24 November 1864, the *Onondaga*, along with the monitor USS *Mahopac*, attacked Confederate artillery positions on the James River at Howlett, Virginia, and attacked the same position again on 5 and 6 December. In January 1865, most of the ships in the James River Flotilla were reassigned to Admiral David Dixon Porter's fleet for the upcoming attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina. The *Onondaga* was the only monitor left to guard the Union forces on the James River against Flag Officer John K. Mitchell's Confederate James River Squadron.

As soon as the bulk of the Union warships left the James River Flotilla in January 1865, the Confederate Navy made its move. The Confederate ironclads *Virginia No. 2* and *Richmond*, the gunboat *Drewry* and the torpedo boat *Scorpion* all steamed down the river, heading towards the *Onondaga*. The *Onondaga* moved a little downriver so that there was more room for the monitor to maneuver and then she waited for the Confederate ships to come within range. Suddenly, all of the Confederate ships ran aground in a section of the river called "Trent's Reach" after trying to avoid some obstructions that were in the river itself. Seeing that the enemy warships were temporarily immobilized, the *Onondaga*, along with some Union artillery that was positioned on shore, began bombarding the Confederate ships. The gunboat *Drewry* blew up and the torpedo boat *Scorpion* had to be abandoned. But the two Southern ironclads managed to free themselves from the mud and retreated back up the river.

For the rest of the war the *Onondaga* supported the Union troops trying to take Richmond. After General Lee was forced to abandon the Confederate capital and Union

troops were finally able to capture the city, the *Onondaga* was relieved of its duties and sent back to New York for decommissioning on 8 June 1865. Then, in an unusual turn of events, the United States government, by an Act of Congress, sold the *Onondaga* back to her builder George W. Quintard on 7 March 1867. Quintard then resold the monitor to France for service in the French Navy. The French also called her the *Onondaga* and the only major modification made to the ship was replacing her American cannons with 9.4-inch rifled guns. The *Onondaga* remained in French service for the next 36 years and was finally scrapped in 1903, making her the longest lived of the larger American monitors built during the Civil War. After serving in two navies for almost 40 years, the *Onondaga* proved just how tough monitors could be.

Captions:

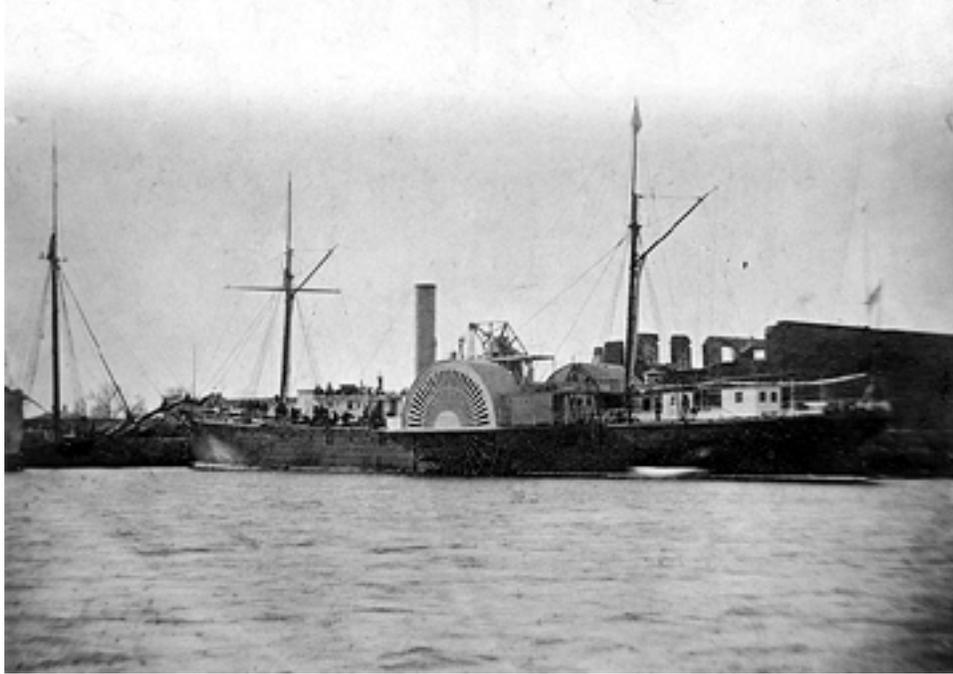
Figure 1 (Top): USS *Onondaga* on the James River, Virginia, in 1864-65. Note the pulling boat at her stern, with oars manned. Photographed by the Matthew Brady organization. *Photograph from the Collections of the U.S. National Archives.*

Figure 2 (Middle, Top): USS *Onondaga* on the James River, Virginia, 1864-1865. Note the rowboat in the foreground, manned by Union Soldiers, and the obstructions across the river in the right distance. *Photograph taken by Brady & Company. U.S. Naval Historical Center.*

Figure 3 (Middle, Bottom): “USS *Onondaga*,” watercolor by Oscar Parkes. Courtesy of Dr. Oscar Parkes, London, England, 1936. *U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph*

Figure 4 (Bottom): French coast-defense monitor *Onondaga*, at Brest, France, circa the later 1860s or the 1870s. She was originally the USS *Onondaga*, commissioned in 1864 and sold to France in 1867. Courtesy of William H. Davis. *U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph.*

USS MALVERN



USS *Malvern* (1863-1865). Briefly named *Ella and Annie* in 1863

USS *Malvern*, a 1477-ton (burden) iron side-wheel gunboat, was built in 1860 as the commercial steamship *William G. Hewes*. She later became a Confederate blockade runner, was renamed *Ella and Annie* and on 9 November 1863 was captured by USS *Niphon*, while attempting to enter the port of Wilmington, North Carolina.

Soon purchased by the U.S. Navy, she was briefly commissioned under the name *Ella and Annie* in December 1863 to search for the captured steamship *Chesapeake*. After finding and seizing that vessel in Nova Scotia waters, *Ella and Annie* returned to the Boston Navy Yard to complete her conversion to a warship. Commissioned in February 1864 as USS *Malvern*, she was employed for much of the remainder of the Civil War as flagship of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. As such, she was present during the capture of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, in January 1865 and received credit for the subsequent capture of the blockade running steamers *Charlotte* and *Stag*. During the next month *Malvern* took part in operations on the Cape Fear River, N.C., and was active in the James River area of Virginia as the Civil War neared its end. Following the fall of Richmond, Va., in early April 1865, she transported President Abraham Lincoln up the James to visit that city, the former capital of the Confederacy.

In October 1865, some six months after the war's conclusion, USS *Malvern* was sold at auction. She soon regained her original name, *William G. Hewes*, and in early 1866 began

what was to be nearly three more decades of commercial employment. On 20 February 1895 the old steamship was wrecked during a storm off the Cuban coast.



Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter, USN,
Commanding, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. (Center)

With members of his staff, on board his flagship USS *Malvern* in Hampton Roads,
Virginia, December 1864.

The officer standing at far left is Lieutenant Commander William B. Cushing, USN