Edward H. C. Taylor

Correspondence

1860-1864
Copies of Civil War letters, written by Edward Henry Courtney Taylor to his mother and sisters in Geneva, New York, 1861-1864. Property of his nephew C. F. Post 52554 Dixieway North South Bend, Indiana

Dear Mother,

I arrived here very safely on Tuesday evening after a tiresome ride of all of the night before. I got to Niagara Suspension bridge at two o'clock and went two miles on to the Falls where I stayed till six in the evening when I took the train for the Bridge—where I had to wait until half past two for the Great Western train—I got into Detroit at seven the next morning and was well tired out for I couldn't sleep in such uncomfortable seats as we had—In Detroit I waited nine long hours for the Olive Branch and could have slept standing if my legs would have held me up—

At last the boat came and we started up, or rather down the river for Trenton, and though the tide was in our favor it took us three hours to get there only fifteen miles! Trenton is a small country village—with four or five stores such as are common in all country villages, where you can buy cooking stoves and tooth-picks and what you may wish. From Trenton a queer ferry boat with parts of two paddle wheels propelled by a lean scraggy vicious little pony—It was the oddest looking craft I ever saw—A tough little Frenchman shouldered my trunk and carried it from the ferry to Mrs. Fox's house—about as far as our front gate—The house stands upon the river bank—facing it—just opposite from Trenton the road runs in front upon the bank—The view from almost any part of the house is splendid—and I never saw more beautiful sunsets than we have here—Mrs. Fox met me at the parlor door and welcomed me very pleasantly—she seems to be a perfect lady—She said that they had taken tea but that she would have some prepared for me—I asked to retire to wash and she ordered my trunk upstairs and sent her youngest boy to show me the room—He took me up to the second story into a very prettily furnished room—with a neat green and red carpet on the floor—a large closet with shelves and drawers and a handsome dressing table were in the room. I dressed and went down where I found a sister of Mrs. Fox, who had lived some time in Geneva—also her son who takes care of Mrs. Fox's farm—a very large one it is—Mrs. Fox poured tea for me and was very kind and pleasant—She is quite handsome and young and the boys are very good—Mrs. Hentig had a multitude of questions to ask about Geneva people she used to know etc. Do you remember Mrs. Hentig? They are related to McCombs and Roses in Geneva—That is Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Hentig are. The boys are very good and I think will learn well—they are under a governess but she was hardly competent to teach though she was highly educated—for instance she had Willie—who is hardly able to read words of two syllables studying Geography which tell about "this Terrestrial sphere"! Mrs. Fox has gone to Detroit to get suitable books—a list of which I have given her—She went yesterday and will return to night—There is no post office on this side to the Island—but on the other side of the Island there is an office but as it is more than a mile off we get our letters at Trenton—Mrs. Fox has told me that I can have the boat when I wish and I go over there twice a day to get the mail—a fruitless voyage at present—

It took just twelve dollars to get in to Detroit for I had to get breakfast there as I was so very faint and it took 40 cts more to get to Trenton and 15 cts across the river to Mrs. Fox's so that I had but 25 cts left—I bought six postage stamps and a pack of envelopes and have one cent left. I have written three letters and this will make the fourth so I can write two more and then will have to wait for a month before I can afford to write again, I suppose!!
I teach six hours a day -- and am at it without ceasing hearing and drilling from the time "school" begins until it closes -- The boys are a little "back" in their studies from the fact that they have had no good teacher -- They will do better now!! It is very tiresome work and I feel rather tired when I am through --

I must stop now -- I hope this can be read if it is worth it -- I write in haste as I expect to hear the Nine o'clock strike in a moment.

Remember me to all

Your son

Edward
Grosse Ile
Dec. 3, 1860

Dear Lottie:

Yours of sometime since was duly received. I would have answered sometime ago but have not been feeling so well that I liked to attempt writing after being in school all day. Though I have but four boys I am as busy as if I had thirty. I keep from nine until four and am busy all the time. You see I have two little boys -- Charlie and Crofton -- who cannot yet read well and I have to hear them six or seven times a day. George and Willie are not in the same studies and that makes double work. George is very lazy and requires much drilling and pushing. I have usually to keep him in until five and a few evenings since until tea time. He is good natured but lazy. Willie is slow but willing. George is very careless and thoughtless never remembering an errand or message while Willie is quite the opposite. George is twelve and Willie is ten. Crofton who is much like George in some respect but is not lazy. He is quick tempered but easily ruled by firmness. Charlie the Youngest is eight almost a bright little fellow likely to outstrip Crofton before long. He couldn't make a figure when I first came here but now he does large sums in addition with carrying. Crofton is quick in numbers and has in three months learned Addition, Subtraction and is now in Multiplication.

What is the state of affairs in Geneva? How does Anna's school come on? I haven't heard anything from her but I suppose she is busy. Has Willie made any arrangements with Morse? He ought to get more than he did I think. How is Hugh doing in Avon? Maria writes I suppose to you as often as usual. I got a letter from her yesterday and she was well.

How is the money market at home? After New Year's I can draw something I suppose. I suppose you have heard of the fall of stocks and rail road shares on account of the Secession movement. Well by that Mrs. Fox loses $7,000 or more.

How is Fanny coming on in Latin and other studies? Tell her to write.

Charlie Post wrote to me sometime since and I answered but he has not written since. Do you hear from him? I suppose of course not.

In haste

Your brother

Edward
Grosse Ile, Jan. 10th '61

Dear Lottie

Your letter came to hand the day before New Year's (the one enclosing the neck ties I mean) and the second came a few days after. I am much obliged for them (the neck ties and the letter) if you have any doubt which I mean.

My Christmas and New Year's present to you (as I told Anna) and to all will have to be Wish you Marrie Christmas and a happy New Year. I am glad you had so nice a time during Christmas -- it was dull to me. I am glad you were enjoying yourselves for I like to think you all happy and not feeling sad and low spirited as we some times were. I have been very homesick during this month. You know I had an offer to go free if I would vote a certain ticket. I had no objection to the ticket as one of my friends was on it, but Mrs. Fox was away. Yet she came in time for me to go and advised me to go and I packed up over night to start early in the morning hoping to connect with the evening train into Geneva. After packing up I suddenly felt as if I ought not to attempt it and the feeling was so strong that I unpacked and greatly surprised Mrs. Fox by coming down to breakfast when she supposed I had started before daylight for home. It happened all right in the end -- for I would have lost my expenses ($25.00) if I had come. But the coming so near going home and missing it made me feel "very queer" for some time. I am sorry to hear of your hands -- you ought to be very careful of them. I hope you do not have to use them too much. Don't take any pains to send me anything -- I know your good will to do so and that surely ought to be enough -- If you do send anything let it be of your own making and so of the others -- Don't let it cost anything but a little time. You will excuse my scraps of paper as I have nothing else on hand nor can get it till I go to Detroit. I would have called on Patterson but can't find out his address. Nobody that I know knows him. I did hear his school spoken very highly of, once.

Charles writes me that he doesn't hear very often from "home" and never from Maria. You must have him all to yourself. Is there much excitement over politics in Geneva? Of course you were all Anti-Republican in the last election. The Republicans are the first cause of the trouble. You asked me once what I went for -- I go for, or rather went for -- still go for anything not Republican --

Write soon -- Did that money come all safe? I hope it was current in Geneva.

Give my love to all

Yours truly

Edward
Trenton May 7, 1861

My dear Mother:

I have not written before as I was not settled in some plans I had laid. You probably knew that my situation at Mrs. Fox's was getting to be unbearable until at length I was obliged to give it up. The best thing that offered next was a berth of 1st Lieutenant in a Volunteer Company which influential friends helped me into. The pay is good -- $100 per month and rations. We will not probably go into service for more than a month from now, tho' the President has ordered the Regiment into quarters. The Company this morning went to Detroit but I being sick will stay till tomorrow. I have no time to go into particulars now but will write more in a day or two. Tell them to write and direct to Trenton until I write again. We are in the 4th Regiment. Our Company letter is E. I send a paper in which our Company is mentioned to Willie. Tell him to write soon.

Goodby.

Direct to E. H. Taylor
1st Lieut. Comp. E
4th Mich. Volunteers
Trenton
Mich.

I mentioned being sick. I am quite well this afternoon. I had overworked myself and brought on congestion. I was well cared for by my lady friends and well nursed. Mrs. Trux and Mrs. Slocum, both of whom I have mentioned before, took care of me. I am now staying at Slocum's. Slocum is worth a million and has furnished the company so far and will until the state makes an appropriation for the military force.
Detroit May 8th 1861

My dear Sister:

Your letter of the last week was duly received. I am sorry that my volunteering has caused any sorrow, but this is a time when anyone with the least spark of patriotism ought to come forward. I would had I not been so fortunate as to secure the place I hold have gone as a private for in my company are several gentlemen of education and wealth who go as privates tho' the most of the company is composed of hard working men. The people in this city -- Detroit -- are very kind in fitting out the men and several good ladies without my knowledge have been fitting me out in underclothes. Several gentlemen have taken upon themselves to present the Capt, and the two Lieutenants with swords and revolvers. And a number of my lady friends -- Mrs. Truax and Mrs. Slocum of Trenton among them have been at work getting me a uniform with some $60 or $100 -- Very kind, wasn't it? We will go to Adrian in a few days to join the Regiment. How long we will stay there before going into active service I don't know. Not long I hope.

I am sorry I can't see the family before I go but that is impossible. Give my love to all. Don't fear for my welfare. Being an officer I will be better able to take care of myself than in any other situation. Direct as before to Trenton for I can't tell how long we stay here.

In great haste, with love -- E. H. Taylor.
My dear Sister:

I don't know why it is but I can't get a letter from any of our family. I have written to you and to those at home several times but get no answer. After I wrote last time I received that cap you mentioned as having sent but which I thought lost. It was very nice but quite fancy.

You will be surprised to hear from me at this place. We came here on last Thursday and tomorrow we leave for Washington by way of Baltimore. We may have a fight in that famous city -- who knows? If we do I will write immediately do not be alarmed.

I have resigned in Co. I as Lieut. on account of disagreement with my Captain who treated me in a scrappy manner and in consequence, he, when the matter was properly laid before the Governor lost his position as Captain, but the vacancy I had created was filled and I was told to go with the regiment to Washington where I would be able to get a Lieutenantcy. I have strong friends at work for me such as the General in command of the Michigan forces and the senator from Michigan, Chandler. These men are interested in me through Mr. Slocum and Mr. Truax both of whom have spent a great deal for the Company and as they say mostly for my sake.

I am temporarily connected with the Monroe Co. A. Direct your letters exactly as follows—

Edward H. Taylor  
Washington, D. C.

Good bye and write soon. Don't be afraid of anything happening in Baltimore.

Harrisburg, June 29th, 1861

My dear Sister:

Why have'nt some of you written to me. I have written once to Anna and once to Willie but have not hear from any of you for more than a month.

You will be surprised to hear from me at this place. We left Adrian on Tuesday and reached this place on Thursday where we will lay over till Monday in order to get properly around. On Monday we leave for Washington by way of Baltimore. Some of the men are greatly disappointed because there is little prospect of a fight in passing thru Baltimore. Write and direct your letters to Wash. D. C. and they will be forwarded to the regiment. By the way I resigned in Co. I on account of the Captain and am now going with Co. A but not connected with it. I mess with them because I know most of the boys and they want me to stay with them. My object in going with them is that I have a promise of a Lieutenantcy when I get to Wash. I will tell the particulars in my next which will be from Wash. I have very good times in fact as well as though I still hold my office.

Your brother  
Edward

(Note: Two letters in one envelope -- to different sisters)
Dear Mother, Brothers and Sisters:

Tho' I don't owe anyone a letter this time yet having a little leisure time I will spend it in writing to you that you may know that I am still well. We are as a general thing very busy now in finishing our fort. We have it nearly done now, and two days more will see the guns all in place.

The enemy are throwing up works about four miles from here between Fairfax and Falls Church and between the latter place and this post. The chains of forts from Alexandria and Chain Bridge, of which this fort is one, are considered a sufficient guard in case of attack. It seems strange that with all the boasted power of this nation, a hostile army should lie within six miles of her capital.

The whole nation is paralyzed by this rebellion and the people have as yet hardly realized the greatness of the blow. The worst of all is there are too many traitors at home -- 1st those in the interest of the South, 2nd Abolitionists who are really seeking every chance to make the breach wider between North and South that a final separation must become necessary. Another thing -- we have a very weak administration. A President "negatively honest" -- a secretary of state who in all things seeks his own elevation -- whose views are such that compromise is beyond hope -- a secretary of war who seems only to be in office to clog business and to tie up with red tape every movement of the Army -- whose greatest efforts are made to put Pennsylvania lawyers and politicians into generals' uniforms -- an "old fog" for secretary of the navy -- his slowness a matter of joke. Rebel merchants and English ships running his blockade under his nose; rebel privates firing shotful volleys in his very face. Democrats, who constitute the majority of our Army, denounced at home as traitors, for wishing and demanding as the price of son's and relatives' blood a change in policy and the mode of conducting the war. Under this all, what can we do? Gen. McClellan can and will do much if they will leave him to his own policy if Cameron can content himself with mind his own Department, leaving all fighting to the discretion of one able to command -- our young and brave McClellan. I think McClellan will be the salvation of the nation in this crisis -- neither will he submit to have his hands tied by any politicians. His first demand on assuming the command of the "grand Army" was that he should have a free control of his department. The movement of General Butler upon North Carolina has demonstrated the good generalship of McClellan. North Carolina when attacked will feel the need of those troops now in sight of Washington and will recall them -- so will South Carolina, Georgia and other Rebel States. The Confederate Army will be broken up and the South will be whipped in detail and brought to see their innate weakness and inability to stand a war with the great odds pending. All this will happen if foreign powers will not interfere -- perhaps this victory of Butler's on the North Carolina coast will cause them more to respect our Federal loyal States and to think that this nation is really able to suppress a rebellion in its own borders.

What a desolation this war has effected! Miles and miles of country are laid waste. Acres of fine valuable woodland cut down and left to dry in order that they being dried may be burned in piles as they did in Michigan. All this is done that the guns of the forts may have a free range of country -- very few farmers have planted this year and those who did reaped no crop. Some splendid houses left by Secesh owners, sacked by our troops and then burned lend a rather lonely
and desolate aspect to the country. One sees no fences for the soldiers have
taken down all the farmers best Virginia rails for fuel. If Virginia were long
to be the battlefield poverty will be the lot of her population and bankruptcy
will be the lot of her financiers. For thirty miles on the road to Fairfax on
three or four different roads our army encamped a few days before the battle of
Bull's Run -- the whole county became almost a desert as if by magic -- crops
destroyed, fences down -- groves, almost perfect in beauty, cut down to give room
for Batteries, houses and barns destroyed for the same purpose.

The people had fled before us, thereby showing their Secesh fellings -- the few
that remained showed a crumbling sauciness which was very wrath inspiring. There
may be a large number of Union men in this part of Virginia. I have only seen a
small half dozen.

I suppose you have heard a thousand different times that Washington was taken or
that a great battle was fighting on the opposite side of the river. We read such
news in the few papers which we see, but we don't believe it as we can see Wash-
ington and it doesn't look taken and as we know that a fight couldn't well take
place on this side of the River without our either hearing or seeing it. A battle
may take place inside of ten days -- we expect it in that time and are confident
of victory.

You will find little of interest, I fear, in this letter. I only wrote to get an
answer.

Please someone write soon. Love to Carrie and the "baby".

Excuse haste and skip all you can't read.

Yours affectionately,

Edward

Direct as before to Washington

P.S. A man just brought in from Picket Guard with his leg shot through by a
"Secesh" Negro! He is doing well now. He was shot last night. I believe it
was a sham negro -- a blacked up "Secesh" prowler.
Camp Union beyond the Potomac August 16, 1861

Dear Maria:

Your long expected letter came last evening and, as I hadn't heard from home in an age, it was doubly welcome. You will see from my date that we have moved our camp at Meridian Hill. We are now once more on the "Sacred Soil of Virginia", opposite to Georgetown and a mile from Falls Church. I went out the other day to get a look at the Church but didn't dare to come too close to the Rebel Pickets and had to turn back.

Our camp is very pleasantly situated and is -- most important of all -- healthy. The water is good though a little inconvenient to obtain, as the spring is outside the line of our guards and we have to get a pass to go by. This is a queer country here, but I like it very much indeed. It seems to be all Hill and Valley and the valleys are full of springs, most of them cool and all clear. The houses are built with reference to some nice spring, while the roads have gone wild and seem to try their best to keep away from the houses and to go over the highest hills. Sometimes they take a turn through the woods as if to be more sure of getting away from civilization, and there one can fancy that he is in what in Michigan is called a wood road, for it is fenced on neither side. The people have the regular negro accent and quite a number -- and more than that -- of the old ladies of the F. F. V.'s are accustomed to smoke a dirty, black short-stemmed, clay pipe!!! Why the other day I had quite a social smoke with an old lady who lives not far from here. I felt very like offering her my own briar-root pipe but concluded she smoked clay pipes in preference.

Most of the houses are so old that they still stand from mere force of habit -- being surrounded by trees the wind can't get at them to blow them down. Still they look picturesque perched perhaps on the hillside, half hid by trees, or hid in the valley with only the roof and chimney visible.

We don't expect to have any fighting for some time, but will, likely, soon change our camp to Fort Corcoras, on the River.

In regard to the chance of getting an appointment -- I can say nothing. Col. Woodbury promised me when I resigned my place as lieut. in Co. I that he would give me the first vacancy. Two have occurred, but are already temporarily filled. I am now better drilled and more able to command a Company than some of our Captains, but I can't tell what will happen until it does happen.

I will be obliged to stop now. In my next I will try and give you a description of camp life -- which isn't like the newspaper description at all.

Goodbye now. Write soon, as it goes hard to get no letters when most of the tent do. I have only had six letters since leaving Mich.

Goodbye -- Ned --
Dear Lottie:

I merely write to stir you up to write to me for you owe me a letter for a long time, and to let you know that I am all well yet.

War news is dull and I have nothing new to tell. You who live far away from the scene of action know more of the affairs going on than we do here. We are absolutely ignorant for we never see the papers unless someone may send one to someone when it goes the rounds and is read with all eagerness. Try and send me a Gazette if you can. I should like to see it.

There is no telling how long before we have to make an advance, but don't be alarmed if you sometimes don't hear from me for a considerable time, for we may be on the march or paper may be lacking (we have no place to keep paper safely and so have to buy in small quantities and the pedlars and sutlers are sometimes nowhere to be found.) Or we may write and the Regimental Postmaster may be unable to take our mail to Washington. So you see there is no need of getting alarmed if you don't hear from me.

I have no time to write more and you don't deserve any more tho' I suppose you have enough to do without writing letters.

Charlie says he hears often from you and is improving in writing "love letters" after the pattern Marie gave.

Goodbye

Edward
Dear Marie:

Yours of Aug. 22nd came last evening. I was very glad to hear from you tho' I did not expect to so soon. Yet it seems to have taken your letter a long time to reach me -- four days from Bethlehem to Washington is too long. Within five days I have written fifteen letters -- (this is the sixteenth). You see I do not always have the opportunity to write and so when I have the chance must do my writing up in a batch as they bake bread. I have no doubt you all worry very much over my safety, but there is little need of that. I am in no more danger in the battlefield than I would be at home. The same power that shields one from danger by his fire-side will protect in the battlefield.

Nor must you be troubled if long periods elapse before you hear from me for sometimes we may be on the march and have no means of writing or of sending letters. Or we may not be able to get paper. We have no place to keep any quantity of stationery in any safety and so have to buy of the sutler or of pedlars who may visit the Camp. Sometimes they are away for weeks and of course we are "out". This happened at Fairfax C.H. when some to the boys wrote home on brown wrapping paper and paid five cents for six square inches of it, to those who were so lucky as to possess the article! letters are often lost. I wrote home from Fairfax C.H. using the leaves of myNote book -- that letter never reached home for if it had you would have heard from me by the Tuesday after the battle -- whereas you did not until a week had passed. The letter was only to tell that I was safe, but the folk never got it, or they would have mentioned it. Numbers of letters are constantly lost and there is continued complaint of carelessness on the part of Postmasters --

I had quite a time to get this paper this morning -- I went to the sutler and asked for five cents worth of paper. He told me I would have to take a dollar's worth of tickets. You see they have tickets worth five, ten and twenty-five cents each, like the milkman. They will not let these tickets go in less quantities than one dollar's worth payable on the day on which the troopers are paid off. Well, I didn't want a dollar's worth of the tickets for if one has them the temptation to spend them in buying tea, sugar, lemons, cakes and such other things is very strong. But say all I could I had to take a dollar to get five cents worth of paper. It is a shame the way the sutler (the authorized pedlar to the Reg) charges. Gingerbread for which one cent in Geneva would have been almost too much, he sells at five. Butter which could be bought, so the papers tell, in Michigan for seven he sells for fifty cents a pound. Lemons at ten or twelve cents apiece. He gets his price for he has no opposition -- it is not allowed to sell anything inside the camp grounds by anyone but the sutler. The boys must have some of these things for Government rations are what they have been used to. There has been a deal of talk in some of the papers of the abuse of soldiers. I have seen none at all. Some who are insolent get deserved punishment but very seldom unjustly. An officer dare not abuse his men for he stands the chance in case he does of losing his commission. The Lt. Col. of DeKalb Reg. is under arrest for striking a sick man in his reg. You see there is the right to appeal open to the privates. He can appeal from one Officer to another until it comes before McClellan. He is sure to get justice if he has been wronged or will suffer the consequences if he merely complains to make trouble. Stories of abuse are all
lies, at least in part. The great trouble is the one opposite — laxity of
discipline and the too great familiarity between officers and men. It makes
the majority of men insolent.

You are mistaken if you think Washington safe. Our army is not even half what it
is believed to be. Our batteries are not finished nor all the guns mounted.
The Rebels are certainly and surely moving upon us. Gen. Beauregard is almost
compelled by the politicians of the South to make a move he perhaps would not
advise. Look at Bull’s Run and the work our politicians made in compelling Scott
to the attack. The Southern Army also inflated by victory, and unpaid, demand
another victory which will give the C.S.A. government power to pay up from the
spoils of Washington. Gen. Beauregard must move or lose his Army and that within
two weeks. Such is the general view of the question here, but the newspapers are
not allowed to publish such news but the contrary. They could hold Washington if
necessary and will in their present position. Why! the U S A has never been more
than thirty miles into Va. since the war began! I must close now so goodbye—

Edward

Direct as before
Dear Marie:

Your letter was received last night and having a little spare time I will answer now. Last night I got three letters -- one from you -- one from Charley and one from Hugh and Carrie. You may be sure I was rejoiced at my immense good luck. They are all well at home, I judge from the letters. Hugh talks of getting a place in Racine College. I hope he will tho' the salary is small -- yet there are hard times and money is scarce. There is very little doing in the country just now -- in Michigan wheat is selling for forty cents a bushel and no market at that. I have never known wheat to bring less than 75 cents before. This country is in a bad fix just now and how it will recover I can't see. If our Administration had more stamina matters would stand better, but with a president "negatively honest", a Secretary of War palpably unfit for office he holds, a Secretary of Navy who is of the "old fogy" stamp -- his slowness a matter of joke -- why this blockade is run by Secesh and English ships with perfect impunity and saucy privateers fire spiteful volleys under his very nose. Why "Charleston is blockaded" yet little steamers run in and out with no fear of results for they know that our large vessels can't come as near shore as they can. Yet our efficient Secretary of Naval Affairs sends his small craft to Pensacola and Fort Pickens, the former so strictly guarded by the latter that a skiff couldn't pass out of the harbor. Again our Republican friends mistake the material of our Grand Army if they think they can use them as tools of Abolitionism. To this I lay the want of enthusiasm which really does pervade our Army. The War Department is also to blame for the want of spirit in our Army -- when it gives us leaders in whom we have no trust -- the McDowell's, the Miles and others of the class. Governors of States deserve great blame in giving command of troops and regiments to lawyers and broken down politicians -- whose experience of war is limited to newspaper's war news items. There were many such at Bull's Run and I had the honor of arresting the flight of a Colonel of Pennsylvania troops who left his Reg. and fled from the field of Battle. Late in the afternoon when I had returned to Fairfax thinking all was going well with our troops on the advance I was suddenly startled by the order to "fall in." We took our places in rank and marched out a mile towards Bull's Run and halted for the purpose of stopping the flight of our men. Among the first we stopped was this Col. whom I stopped with my bayonet on his breast in spite of his drawn pistol which he vainly tried in his excitement to fire, but as he forgot to cock his pistol I could afford to laugh at him. I told you how we kept the fugitives back until the crowd became so dense that we were forced to give way to their pressure.

General McClellan is likely to be the salvation of this nation. The movement of Gen. Butler upon the N. Carolina coast is strong evidence of his good sense. By such means he will distract the attention of the enemy before Washington -- cause the governors of those states whose shores are menace to recall their contingents and so divide and reduce the Confederate Army. Then we can whip them in detail and the war is over. But McClellan never could do this had he not in the start cut loose from all interference of Sec. Cameron.

I didn't think that there were any so foolish as to call our dreadful defeat and shockingly conducted retreat as Bull's Run into a victory -- Indeed the Rebels were retreating but they have fresh troops to replace those leaving the field in
disorder. Republican politicians brought on the fight too soon and now would like to cover their fault by brag.

I didn't use your extra sheet of paper as I had a larger one. I will use that for some other letter.

There is no move in camp just now -- we are situated just as before.

As tattoo is beating I must close.

Write soon -- Good night

Edward
the tone and spirit of your letter. As you have enlisted as a soldier you will
do a soldier's duty -- I think you have seen your darkest day. Hope for the
future and in the trying hour of battle fight manfully (should it come) and you
will come out victorious and, believe me, you have a right to hope for a brighter
future and it will come in time and perhaps not very far hence. It may be possi-
ble I may bring about a change in your position very soon, but hope to be assured
that I will do all it is possible for me to do to get you a command as officer in
our Army. You will excuse this hurried letter. I have a severe headache today
and am not in any shape to write but it is better than no letter and I know you
will receive it as such. I see from the evening paper that the Rebels made an
advance on our Pickets all along the line of the Potomac and particularly at Ball's
Cross Roads and that when our soldiers stepped out to meet them they prefer to fall
back. They are trying to call you out. They have no idea of attacking you in your
entrenchments. They will call you out in the field if possible and get you exposed
to some of their concealed batteries. But let them figure. The future will grow
darker and darker for them -- they are to have no more victories or drive battles.

Yours in haste,

Geo. B. Truax
Trenton Sept. 15th 1861

Mr. Edward H. Taylor

Dear Sir:

Your first letter and also the last dated Sept. 8th was received; one reason why I did not reply sooner was I have from the first been trying to help you to a better position than you now have; and another reason I have from the Fall of Fort Sumter been actively at work for my country occupied almost a part of the time in that way. We have recruited another company in Trenton for Col. Brodhead Regmt. Cavalry. The Regiment is full and the companies are now all in Camp at Horntransick above Detroit in the River. They have twelve companies of over one hundred men each - their horses are all to be bought in this state and also their full equipment is to be forwarded here and all to be delivered on or before the fifteenth of next month. Mr. Hudson is chaplain. Dr. Nash is assistant surgeon. Ira David (could not read here) in the Regiment, Peter Stagg 2d Lieutenant, William Brevoort 1st Lieutenant, Peter Stagg 2d Lieutenant, George Alford and William Irwin. From Trenton, Buggers, Grenlaw, Campenau, Hale and others from Trenton private --

I was told this morning that the Cavalry Regiment was ordered immediately to Washington as they now are without any horses, arms or clothing. I cannot think it is so, unless it is to use them as Infantry for the present.

And now in regard to yourself again, I saw Mr. Chandler before he went on to Washington. He is now in Washington. He told me he would attend to it and try and get you promoted. Now while there I saw Chandler and Brigadier General Williams together; Williams said to Chandler he could do it and he had better attend to it now while in Washington. Williams said there were vacancies occurring at the time in the 4th Regt. Gen. Williams is to be there soon himself and before he goes I shall try and see Governor Blair and get him awakened to your cause and I think will give you a few steps up the ladder at all events. I shall continue to urge them until they do something as they have promised to do so --

Mrs. Fox has a teacher for her boys now by the name of Ogden. I do not know how she is pleased with him. I do not like him very much. He is very presuming -- Rentig comes in the store occasionally. Has kept pretty close to the Farm this summer. Alice and Elliott Slocum have gone East to attend school. Alice goes to Miss Willows School at Troy and Elliott to Union College. Mr. Slocum and Family, as well as our own, are always pleased to hear from you. I hope you will try and write often to me and make your letters as lengthy as possible and give particulars of anything you can learn about the war in your vicinity; if you should have any skirmishing or battles, please give me full details if you can possibly get the time. I think many of them would interest the Public if they were printed in our Detroit papers. It is good to criticize some of the action and proceedings of some of the officers if the thing is not made too personal.

Remember me to Capt. Luce and say to him I would like to hear that he had received the appointment of Lieut. Col. in his Regt. as that Post is now vacant. Your Major I do not know but am told he is not the man for the office of Lieut. Col. -- and also say to Capt. Luce as a request from me to give you all the aid he can for your promotion, consistent with the position of each of you. I must say I like
Dear Mother and All:

I have had no letter from home for a long time, but tho' everyone is owing me a letter I will write again that you may know that I am still in the land of the living.

There is nothing of importance happening here now tho' we are in a state of expectancy. Yet we take things more coolly than the "outsiders" who are, especially the Washington people, in a wonderful twitter. It puts me in mind of the rope walking that took place in Geneva a year or more ago. The rope dancer was fussing and fixing things, and seemed in no haste by the way he tied and untied the same rope over again, now loosening and now tightening this or that guy rope. The crowd gaped and looked on in earnest expectation. Soon they began to "wonder why he didn't begin", "Pahaw, why doesn't he make haste?" etc. When the man had fixed things to suit himself, then he walked his swinging path with success. Yet one guy which he had not tightened one little more made the peril of his journey ten times greater. Just so with McClellan. When he has fixed things to suit himself he will not be long in his journey, difficult tho' it may seem to be, from Washington to Richmond, let the crowd below, who would rather peril other necks than their own, keep quiet if they want to see the show. "Onward to Richmond" will be the order, when all things are made fast and when the undertaking can be carried out with perfect success. Two months ago the crowd grew so impatient and cried so loud "Why doesn't he walk" that poor McDowell lost his balance and fell into the depths of Bull Run. McClellan is as brave tho' a more prudent and careful rope walker than he.

Yes, and what a strange crowd stood on the hills around Bull Run! When McDowell fell they all cried out "What a fool to fall! Why didn't he guy his cable? He would do better to swing on a rope's end than walk on one!" Things have changed now, I think.

Nothing of interest has happened lately in Camp or in this neighborhood that I know of. I am much obliged to somebody for two papers this week -- The Gazette and Intelligencer. I was glad to see both for I see few papers and no books.

I must close now for supper is ready. It consists of beef steak!! a rarity, by the way, and tea. We have first rate bread compared to what the papers make out -- "fresh and soft" as the cook says.

Love to all and regards to Miss Mary and Miss Martha.

Affectionately,

Edward
Sunday, September 22nd, 1861

My dear Mother:

I write merely to send you a treasury note or, if I can get it changed, a draft for ten dollars -- all I have at present. A soldier's pay is very small at best. If I had more I would gladly send it. Enclosed is also a letter from George B. Truax, Esq, which explain itself and will show that in enlisting I did not do so in blind enthusiasm but while with a wish to do what little I could for the Union, I had what seemed my own interest in view. When I enlisted as private into the Army, I did so with the promise of a commission from Gov. Blair, Gen. Williams and of Senator Chandler. Mr. Truax is both wealthy and influential in Michigan. Whether he can do for me remains to be seen. As much for the hope of being able to do something like my part in the support of the family, as for any other reason, I hope he will succeed. I owe to him all the interest which the Gov. of Michigan and Brig. Gen. Williams and Chandler may show in my favor.

When I left Mrs. Fox's it was with a certainty of $100 a month coupled, of course, with the risks of a soldier's life, whether he holds a commission or not. By the villainy of one man I was forced to resign or suffer disgrace. I was in his power -- away from friends -- (we were in Adrian at that time) no one to advise with but the Col. I chose to resign as the only alternative feeling sure you and all who had a right to criticize my actions would think me right. Granger proved himself subsequently a rascal and was thrown out of the Reg. The Col. promised me a place as soon as one was vacant, if I could afford to wait for that time, at the same time telling me the time would be short. Those whom I could consult, Slocum and Truax as also Brig. Gen. Williams, advised to go with the Fourth. I did so and am yet a private with but a few dollars to send home -- when so much ought to come from me in the family support.

My position at Mrs. Fox's was by no means pleasant during the latter part of my stay there and I feel sure could she have found a reasonable pretext for dismissing me, she would have done so. When something better offered in the shape of a lieutenancy I was glad to leave her. That she suddenly turned against me after treating me with all possible attention will be nothing against me when you see from Col. Truax's letter that the personal friends of Mrs. F. are my friends, the Slocums particularly. Mr. G. B. Slocum did a great deal for me -- presented me with a uniform with thirty dollars or more -- was intending to buy a sword, etc. when I resigned. He is a very peculiar man, but strange to say thinks Mrs. Fox a very fine woman and me a very fine young man. That as rich as Croesus, he is as odd as an old Dutch farmer -- wears one leg of his pants up, the other down. A sharper or shrewder man never lived. His wife I will never forget for her kindness to me when, after the fatigue of recruiting that Co. in Trenton and just before leaving for Detroit, I was taken sick with a sort of ague in the head, produced by exposure to the weather. She took me to her house and she and her brother's wife, Mrs. Truax, nursed me. Most of the time I was as crazy as a loon with a burning fever. Dr. Nash feared brain fever but I came through in a week. After Mrs. Slocum and Mrs. Truax were so kind to me Mrs. Fox began to put on strangely distant airs towards them. What the Dickens ailed her I can't find out. When you come to know her, she was really a very shallow woman almost silly in some things. Wouldn't play cards on Fridays but on any other evening of the week she was never more pleased than when playing a game of Buchre!!
If Col. Truax can do anything for me I am sure he will. I hardly know whether to hope from his letter or not. What do you think? If I could leave Camp and go to Washington I might do something with Chandler whom I know and who has promised to do what he can, but after all who can believe a Senator?

All is quiet on Camp and we see nothing of the enemy except while on picket. On Friday day and night and Saturday morning I was on picket and we were fired on several times but the Secesh are miserable shots and fire too high -- all the balls whistled far above our heads. A party of our men went out twice and first time surprised a lurking party of the Rebels who were trying to get up near enough to fire upon our pickets. The next time we stumbled upon a picket party of the enemy and when we summoned them to surrender the rascals fired upon us and cut and ran, leaving blankets, guns, haversacks and knapsacks behind. As they ran we fired, taking a little better aim than they for one of them was seen clapping his hand on his rear but didn't run any the slower on that account. I fired at one and didn't aim quite sure, but hit his cartridge box, which exploded (we were quite near at the time). Waht a scattering of personal property that fellow did make! Buckler Straps and coat came off while he streaked for dear life. Firing at pickets is certainly barbarous but as they will do it and the woods are full of lurking devils, it is necessary to make a raid into their territory and drive them back. If they want to carry on a guerilla warfare we are ready and with better hopes of success, for tho' we never have gone out to lurk around and shoot pickets, we have killed three to one of those who follow that practice.

An acting second lieutenant and a private have deserted from this reg. and have just been heard from. If caught they will be shot. I'd rather be shot on picket.

I have heard from Marie quite often since she went back to Bethlehem.

Tell Anne I got her letter and the paper. I was glad to get them. Tell her she need not send any more writing paper as I have got a lot on hand cheap and also a portfolio worth fifty cents, which will answer well to keep my paper in and which I can safely carry during a march.

Tell Fannie to write again. I will answer her last as soon as I can get the time.

Goodbye.

Affectionately,

Edward
Camp on Hall's Hill  
Monday October 7th, '61

Dear Lottie:

Your letter was received sometime since and would have been answered before but I have been sick with measles. As you know, I of course have enjoyed myself very much during my sickness. I was really lucky in having the lightest attack in the hospital. I am now quite well except a cold or rather a cough. I am sorry and glad to hear the news of Hugh and Carrie. I can't write more now. Write soon as you can -- In haste

Your Bro., Edward
Thursday, October 17th, '61

Dear Will:

You won't write me so I must even write you. I hear very good accounts of your college life -- go on, you will never be sorry for hard study. Try to find a spare moment to write to me and tell some of your college experience. Be careful to take exercise. If you can get a pair of dumb bells do so and use them as soon as you get up, for five minutes after dressing and washing, also just before dinner and supper. Frank Angell used to have a pair; perhaps you could get his. We are still in status quo except a move of five miles towards Secessia. What comes next is hard to tell. I see our Black Republican administration is backing down in exchanging prisoners. Then the C.S.A. are a "belligerent power" at last in the eyes of Lincoln. I fear a still worse back down.

Next week McClellan takes the field -- then for fun. I will try and keep you all posted tho' it will be hard to get my letters home, I fear.

You have no idea what a green Reg. the 50th is. On going over there a short time ago (they are a few miles in our rear) I found a picket post of theirs. Who ever heard of picket in the midst of an advancing army whose rear and flanks were covered for seven miles up and down the river! They really thought they were in the centre of Secessia while in the very midst of our army and our pickets three miles in advance.

Write soon as possible.

Your affectionate Bro.

Edward
Nov. 26th '61

Dear Lottie:

Your letter was received some time ago and the parcel came a few days ago. Its contents were in a good state of preservation. The apples all sound and unjured by their trip. They "spoiled" some when they were opened, however. Your cakes were excellent and have given me quite a distaste for bacon, beans, hard bread and "Jimmie's" cooking. Give a multitude of thanks to the Misses Tillinghast for that blanket. It comes in good play these frosty nights. The needlebook also was acceptable. On its receipt I immediately began restoring buttons on my clothing, in which Mother's bag of sundries came into good use.

To Fannie I owe many thanks for the portfolio and I will try to make use of it in a special correspondence with her. Will must take my thanks for his present. By the way, I owe him a letter and will write as soon as I can. It is so cold now, one can't write when he wants to. To Anna I owe the books, I suppose, tho' some are marked "Mr. Morse". One is from Lottie - "Great Expectations"; one that I had wanted to read very much. The books are really a treat and I was glad of the Church Journals also that Miss Tillinghast sent. When the weather is as cold as today, no drill and the boys crowd about smoking, flickering fires. I can cover myself up in my tent with my blankets and coats and read.

On the receipt of the parcel I had a party to which I invited a few special friends. We had a fine time.

I am much obliged to you all and thank you all I can. Did you pay the expressage on it? I paid none here and was only charged for bringing it from the city here.

Nothing new has happened here since I wrote last. I will write again soon. Let me hear from you as often as you can. I would write more but my hands are so cold I have to stop every few minutes to warm them in the candle.

Goodnight,

Ned

P.S. I have re-opened this to answer Anna's question about George Yates -- He is a private in my Company -- very fine boy in many respects. At present he is detached with eight or ten others with Prof. Wise battalion as guard. His address is same as mine -- He sent his love to his friends in Geneva. I have not seen him for about a week.
Fairfax C. H. Feb. 11th '62

Dear Mother:

You will see by my date where we now are -- in short, the "Grand Army" has advanced. We left our camp on Minor's Hill yesterday evening the thro' mud and mire reached Fairfax last night. This morning we passed thro' Fairfax and now are camped south of that place and near by. Rumors are rife of the evacuation of Manassas. How true I can hardly say. Centreville certainly is in our possession -- perhaps Manassas and no fight. Our future course in case Manassas be evacuated I can not tell. Perhaps go to Burnside's aid upon whom they may move from here. If so he would be in serious danger.

We may move on as we have begun. The morrow will relieve all doubt.

I write tonight that in case you hear of any movement you may not be alarmed for my safety. I do not know how I can send this but I might have a chance and wished to be prepared. If you should fail to hear from me for some time do not be alarmed as the mail is likely to be stopped between the Camps and Washington for a week or ten days.

I write this by Campfire and moonlight -- Love to all. Don't be troubled for me.

Your affectionate son

Edward
Miss Lottie D. Taylor

Geneva
Ontario County
New York

Minor's Hill, Va., March 6th, '62

My Dear Sister Lottie:

Yours was received last Saturday evening. I was glad to hear you were better of your measles. You had them much as I did, tho' worse, I suppose. I hope Anna will have no serious sickness. I thought she had the measles before. Has Fannie quite recovered from her attack? And Willie, is he to have his turn or not?

I would have written before but have been very busy in making out Muster Rolls and Company Pay Rolls. It has kept me very busy for some time, but as it saved me from Guard duty and Police work, I was not unwilling. Guard duty is no fun these days as we are having windy wet nights and it is very muddy.

We expect soon to move as the roads are now so far dried up that artillery can move, tho' with difficulty. Orders have been issued to have everything ready. Two days rations were issued extra to be cooked by the Company Cook at short notice for a march. Sixty rounds of cartridge were issued yesterday, cartridge boxes to be filled and the remaining twenty rounds to be packed in the knapsack. They seem determined we shall not lose the fight for want of powder and lead. Yes, we must move soon -- the sooner the better for I want it ended. The Right and Left Wings under General Banks and Hintzelman respectively have moved -- the Left under Hintzelman and McDowell left yesterday. Gen. Smith and Gen. Porter commanding the center must soon close up. Gen Porter commands our Division. This Division contains three Brigades under General Morell (our Brig. Gen.) Martindale and Butterfield. General Morell's Brigade is composed of the New York Volunteers from Owego, Syracuse, Utica, etc. -- the Michigan Fourth from Monroe, Marshall, Hillsdale, Adrian and Wayne Co. and South East Michigan generally. The Ninth (Irish) Massachusetts Vol's, is the third Reg. in the Brigade. The Ninth is from Boston. The fourth Reg. in the Brigade is the Sixty Second Pennsylvania Vol's. There are two Batteries in the Brigade, one the West Point Regular Artillery under Capt.______, and the other the Rhode Island Battery under Capt.______. A Cavalry squadron from Pennsylvania completes the force. I mention these things that you may be able from the papers to find our position in a fight and may not uselessly worry over every report of a fight but may know at once whether we were in or not. Gen. Banks will probably advance on Liestor, N.W. of this while Hintzelman will perhaps take position towards Aquia Creek and south of Fairfax. We, as soon as they have taken positions, must move up and with our left on McDowell's right advance upon the center while Hintzelman and Banks move on the left and right of Manassas. That is the way things look now.

I have no time to write a long letter now. In case of any movement forward I will write as soon as may be, but don't worry if I fail to write for mails will be uncertain. Write when you can -- love to all and to Mother in particular.

Affectionately,

Edward

I am quite well; indeed I never was so rugged as now. Charlie wrote me last week. I will answer him as soon as I possibly can do so.
My dear Mother:

It is some time since I have heard from home and from the irregularity of our mail the chances are that I may wait much longer before I again receive word from home. Indeed I fear this will be long in reaching you tho' there is much more chance to us of sending than of receiving mail. It might mend matters slightly if letters were directed, now that we have changed our locality, as follows -- "Company A -- 4th Michigan Infantry Gen. Porter's Division, Washington, D.C." Though no longer near Washington our letters will sooner or later be forwarded to our Regt. and it would create less confusion if directed as above since post office clerks knowing the position of Brigades and Divisions might with great reason be ignorant of the whereabouts of the many Regts. of the army.

You will see by my dating that we have at length made a move which looks like work. "On to Richmond" is now the order, and those who have been urging action upon old McClellan will soon be satisfied as they were surprised at the seeming sudden change in the programme. Manassas, taken without a life lost, is no longer the battlefield. McClellan knew its value to us to be nothing, in a military point of view, and so permitted it to remain in Rebel hands until they suddenly got an inkling of his movements and found Manassas to be of no value to them and necessity compelled its evacuation. Then the wisdom of McClellan's long delay becomes apparent in that without sacrifice of life or treasure he now is nearer Richmond by another path and the disputed gate, Manassas, in our power.

On the 11th of March our Army advanced upon the boasted stronghold and found no enemy. Immediately a large body of the Army of the Potomac was embarked upon transports previously provided for that purpose. These were immediately shoved off to Fortress Monroe and were soon followed by the centre of the Army under Heintzelman. Porter's Division embarked March 21st and reached Fortress Monroe on the Sunday following. Since our arrival Division after Division has followed and except the Army under Banks and a portion of McDowell's command holding Manassas, Vienna, Fairfax C. H., etc. Very soon we will "on to Richmond", turning their position by moving from east and south instead of as expected from the north-east. The Movement is an unexpected one to the Rebels and takes the croakers all aback. Success can hardly fail to attend our advance and soon victory will end the war.

At present we are camped about four miles from Fortress Monroe and two miles beyond the village of Hampton, which you will remember was burned last summer by the Rebel Gen. Magruder. It was a beautiful place and noted as a pleasant residence. Now blackened ruins and trembling chimney stacks are the witnesses of a black deed. Its inhabitants have sought shelter elsewhere and desolation reigns solitary.

This country is vastly superior in fertility and natural beauty to that we have left in Fairfax Co. and near Washington. The soil is warmer and richer and lighter and evidence of prosperity is seen on every hand. There are, however, to be seen here and there desolate farms, whose owners have either been turned adrift and houses burned for love of Union when the Rebel flag waved here or perhaps whose owner has left all and embarked in the desperate cause of disunion fleeing upon the approach of the Union forces. The whole country is truly beautiful with these mournful reminders of war and bloodshed to the contrary notwithstanding.
April 2nd 1862

On Thursday last we went on a reconnaissance in force towards Big Bethel some ten miles north west of here. The enemy on our approach ran away, having about a half hour start of us. It was a tough march for us as we were obliged to go by a circuitous route to camp the same day, reaching here sometime in the evening. You may be sure we were well tired on the march out as well as the return. We went in "quick time."

Friday and Saturday were awful days for us. It rained incessantly from the north east with much wind. We have no tents, our only shelter being oil cloths stretched on poles for a roof or, instead of that, pine boughs. Our oil cloths are small and even though we do our very best with the oil cloths and boughs, we can make but indifferent shelter when the storm beats. I know that I never passed worse nights than Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The latter night I was on picket and had no shelter at all. Friday night I was wet through and didn't sleep a wink for the cold. All of Saturday I was on duty and was too wet and cold to sleep at night. Sunday morning I slept a little and that in spite of a stream of water trying to run into my mouth. In the afternoon I was detailed for picket and stood post until next morning at ten when just as we were relieved it cleared up. I was so exhausted that though I kept good watch I felt as tho' in a dream. The third guard from me was shot on his post by a lurking Rebel and except the momentary start at the flash and report of the gun, I was too weary to be moved by the circumstance. The poor fellow belonged to a Massachusetts Regiment, I believe.

I got a letter from Hugh while at Fairfax C.H. and would send it only it got so wet as to fall in pieces. He was well as was Carrie and Baby also. I am glad he is so well pleased. Marie wrote me a short time before Minor's Hill. She also was well. I wish I could hear oftener from home. A letter is of great value to us here.

I still think the war will come to a speedy close. It can't last long, and I long for the time when war will be over and the soldier once more at home. It is a long time since I was there and every day seems to make the time doubly long. Write soon some one.

Love to all.

Your affectionate son

Edward
April 2nd 1862

P.S. Orders have come to march tomorrow -- destination not known. I am glad for every step towards the enemy is one towards home to me. Thus on! March on! McClellan is with us and we all trust him, for he deserves confidence so far.

By the way some have received letters directed Fortress Monroe instead of Washington. Please let someone write me addressing Co. A 4th Mich. Reg. -- Gen. Porter's Division, Fortress Monroe, Va, and at the same time someone else write to the address I gave in the first part of my letter to see which will come soonest. Please excuse the looks of this as I write in the midst of inconveniences too numerous to mention. Respects to the Misses Tillinghast and to Mrs. Angel. Much love to all.

Edward
My dear Sister Lottie:

Your letter of April 6th came yesterday -- I can't say it was welcome for it brought too much bad news. I was quite anxious to hear from home for I had received nothing later than March 7th and heard you were sick. I hope Anna is better now. I felt sure she was sick for else I might have had a letter from her. Fannie too seems is unwell, I hope not seriously. You indeed must have your hands full, but I hope you are not obliged to overwork yourself. I fear you do and that after being so sick. Oh! I would give anything to be at home or where I could be of some use to you. I feel as tho' I did wrong in coming here tho' the intention was good and there was fair prospect. The step taken, there is no drawing back.

You said nothing of Mother's health so I shall suppose her as well as a multitude of cares will allow. I do hope she does not think me intentionally ungrateful in having done so little for the family support. I would not have enlisted nor felt it right to do so had I not been promised much in the way of promotion -- and the pay of a commissioned officer is large. Fortune seems to have been against me so far tho' there are yet chances. I am now anxious for a termination of the war. What do you think? Can it last long?

You will see by my date that we are before Yorktown where in 1785 Lord Cornwallis surrendered to Washington. We got to Fortress Monroe on Mar. 17th and marched to Hampton Village which the rebels had burned last summer under McGruder. April 3rd we left Hampton for Yorktown where the enemy laid entrenched and reached here April 5th. Since then we have laid under fire of the enemy's guns and are hourly amusing ourselves by dodging shell and shot. Yorktown is not easily to be taken and hard work must come before it falls. The enemy has fortified the whole isthmus between James and York Rivers and will be dislodged from one stronghold but to fall back upon another. We are confident of success here and that soon. If Yorktown is captured Richmond goes by the board and may even fall previously.

News has just reached us of the battle in Miss. at Corinth. Luck is the news I like to hear. What a pity Beauregard did not also fall into our hands! The day of reckoning with these rascal rebels is near at hand and I only fear that such as are the leaders and head of this wicked and horrid conspiracy may escape the doom -- death -- of traitors. Their deluded and ignorant followers ought to be allowed to return home in safety but let the others stretch hemp. They know better while the rank and file are ignorant of the greatness of their crime.

The people -- I mean the lower class -- are, as far as I have seen, ignorant beyond measure. Even now some will tell you that "They have read how the Yankees were trying to drive 'em off their farms and to give them to the Northern soldiers, etc. " That Hamblin was a mulatto slave -- escaped!" All believe that the Confederacy have had no reverse in the west and think we are trying to befoul them when we tell them of Forts Henry and Donnelson. The women will often stand in the doors and as we pass revile the "cowardly whelps of Yankees!" the "Mercenary Hessians!" One woman claiming to be a lady and possessing some marks of refinement actually wanted to "spit upon the U.S. flag!" We offered them no insult and their property was protected, yet such was the return. Gen. McGruder of the Rebel
Army burned every house of Union men between Hampton and Yorktown besides burning
Hampton together with the old Church which the British spared when they twice
burned the Village -- once in the Revolution and once in 1812-15. You have no
idea of the suffering of those who have dared profess Union sentiments in Va. --
death and torture were common and the jails everywhere are crowded with "Tories" --
save the mark! After what I have seen I shall never deny that death ought to be
the reward of such vile traitors as Jeff Davis, Breckenridge, Beauregard, Johnston,
etc., never forgetting McRuder -- Hang them and as high as Mamen and let them
hang till the wind of Heaven have bleached out the stain of the many crimes -- the
murders and ruin they have made and committed! I hate to see any mawkish pity on
such a subject. The thousands slain in the cause of the Union at Corinth and Bull
Run, at Lexington and Ball's Bluff, at Bull Run, at Lewis's Bluff, at By Bethie (?),
his battlefield I lately passed over, cry out against the authors of the Confederate Conspiracy.

April 15. I have just had a letter from Fannie. I will answer it as soon as I can.
The firing of the enemy has been turned upon our gunboats at the mouth of the York
River and we are enjoying a little rest from the constant explosion of their shell
in our neighborhood. One of the men had his knapsack taken the other day by a
shell but, strange to say, was not even stunned by the shock. He belonged to our
Brigade (64th Penn Reg.) and the same shell passed over our Reg. tearing off a
tree-top which killed two of our men. Strong as has been the fire, we have lost
but few men in the whole force before York. The enemy's shell mostly fail to
explode so unless they hit do no damage. I wouldn't give much for what would
be left of our Reg. had their shell been as good as those fired by Capt. Griffin's
West Point Battery of this Brigade. Every shell he threw exploded within their
works and the first day he succeeded in silencing a battery of three pieces.
Night before last he crept up with his battery alone upon a Rebel force engaged
upon their breastworks, and before he was perceived opened fire with grape and
canister. What a scampering there was! It was about as daring a thing as has
been done for he was in the midst of their forces before he opened and had he not
taken them by surprise must have been overpowered.

Day before yesterday while I was on Picket guard I crawled up close to a large
fort on the North of their line and hid behind a clump of pine trees. Pretty
soon a body of skirmishers skulked out of the fort and seemed to be trying to
creep upon our picket line unobserved. When they got within good range they
opened fire and one rebel waved a black flag over his head! Our boys returned
the fire, and as the Confederates turned and ran I took as good aim as possible
for the flag bearer and my ball passed his head but landed in his arm. The same
arm that waved the flag. He dropped the flag and ran on a few steps -- then fell
and was carried in by his comrades. I wanted to go and get the flag but didn't
dare the risk as I was too near the fort to come out openly. So it was I had
hardly left my concealment and skulked back to the picket when I saw them direct
a gun there and the shell exploded in the midst of the clump of pines.

The same day a fellow came across the field as cool as possible and we took him
for one of our sharpshooters. He came within a few rods -- threw his blanket
across the fence, rested his elbow on the top rail and leisurely brought his piece
to a level and took deliberate aim at us! Then we discovered who it was and one
of our boys firing just before he did spoiled his aim and made him beat a rapid
retreat. At the same time if they catch one of our men they abuse and maltreat
him and often will murder him. That is what I call cowardice.

If the enemy resist us here long it will result in a fierce battle for they have a force of some ninety or a hundred thousand concentrated there to dispute a passage to Richmond.

I must close as the mail leaves camp soon. Fannie's letter was directed by way of Fortress Monroe and came through in four days -- I see by order of the Postmaster General that letters must be directed to Washington and will be forwarded thence. Since I wrote Porter's Division has been transferred from McDowell's to Heintzelman's Corps.

I will answer Fannie's letter as soon as I can. I have not hear from Marie for a month or more. When you get time, don't fail to write. Love to all and remember me to Mrs. Angell and Richard -- also to Miss Mary and Miss Martha.

Affectionately your Bro.

Edward

If you can, send a paper with an account of the Corinth battle. I received the paper sent from home (the Intelligence Messenger).
Dear Mother, Bro. & Sisters all:

I have just received (next few words not legible) enclosing this paper and envelope, etc. She was correct in her surmise as to my chance of writing -- since the evacuation of York Town I have had but little rest or chance of writing.

When McClellan by consummate generalship had compelled the evacuation of Y--and retreat was hotly pursued by our forces -- Porter's Division was recalled from the race and as quickly as possible embarked at York to ascend the York River for West Point. We landed on the other side of the Pamunkey River and marched westward for Richmond. The day before landing Franklin's Division (in which is Richard Norish) had a fight at W. Point. In that fight the Rebels showed a fiendish spirit -- Many of our wounded were found with throats cut and otherwise mutilated -- This I know to be fact, for I saw men with throats cut and ears lopped off who had gun shot wounds sufficient to have caused death without such barbarous usage. Such deeds have never been done by our men nor are they done by civilized nations -- who says to the contrary is very ignorant, or very foolish. Guerilla warfare is barbarism -- Mining is admirable if by mining an attack can be repulsed -- but to mine and evacuate place and to plant "torpedoes" for the purpose of destroying an insignificant number of men -- whose death will make no real difference to either party is justly condemnable and disgraceful -- For the same reason is the shooting of pickets on post condemned in civilized warfare. No adequate result is gained by the party so doing. We seem to be fighting those devoid of civilization or even of common decency and mercy. From W. Point we marched to Cumberland on the Pamkey -- Thence to White House or the Custis House where Washington courted the "widow Custis". St. Peter's Ch. where he was married lay on our route from thence to Tuntstalls on the W. Point and Richmond R.R. Tuntstalls (I wish I had time to describe the beauty of the place) to Mechanicsville was the next stage -- This latter place is six miles N.E. of Richmond and close to the Chickahominy River (or creek) -- At this place we had a fight while on a reconnaissance. We forded and swam the creek six rods wide and a swift current with sudden & deep holes -- in the face of the enemy. Our Rgt. alone was engaged without support while four Rebel Regts opposed us. We drove them from their position and took twenty-three unwounded prisoners and twelve wounded leaving one hundred and twenty dead on the field. Our loss was two killed and six wounded. Last Sunday we buried our dead -- The most solemn service a impression. McClellan personally thanked the Regt and especially thirty men of my Co (The first Platoon to which I belong) shaking hands with Capt Rose. He called it "one of the most brilliant exploits of the War."

Thence we marched to this place for the purpose of getting possession of the R.R. from Richmond to Hanassas. We succeeded in our object tho' we had to fight for it and that after a trying and severe march of twenty miles. Our loss were seven in killed and wounded -- The Rebel loss was more severe while they lost multitudes of prisoners -- The particulars I can't yet give as the fight was but yesterday and we have hardly got our senses yet. The road is now open for McDowell's army to close in upon Richmond from the north.

This place Hanover C.H. is fifteen miles north of Richmond -- You see we have made a circuit around Richmond and consequently have done a deal of marching. Let people at home keep quiet and wait -- all will be right as long as McClellan is left to pursue his own plans without hinderance -- If they had only left him alone
when we landed at Fortress Monroe.

We took many prisoners and I am proud to say our men treated them as men even the enemies and unfortunate. We are confident of success with McClellan at our head let his enemies and abolitionists say what they please.

Write soon -- In great haste

Edward
Near Newbridge, Va.,
June 9th, 1862

Dear friends at Home:

You must be somewhat surprised at not having heard from me in six weeks -- this I learn from Anna's letter of June 2nd just received. I have written at least five times since leaving Yorktown, but it seems my letters have not gone thro'. In the meantime I have received two letters from home --

After McClellan's splendid bloodless victory at Yorktown this Division was sent via York River to West Point to commence the movement which has, by out generalizing Johnstone, placed our Army in its present favorable position before Richmond. From Richmond by severe and fatiguing marching, over the worst Virginia Roads (that is saying a great deal) we gained Cumberland and White House on the Pamunkey River (a branch of York R.) We had on this route constant skirmishing with the enemy. White House, you know, is where Washington courted the "Pretty Widow Custiss". It is now in possession of the Lee who married into the same family. From Cumberland we went by toilsome circuitous routes to our present position.

Gen. Fitz John Porters Division has been increased by the addition of a Brigade of Regulars and Tyler's Brigade of Heavy Artillery -- this gives it the dignity of a Corps d'Armee -- while Gen. Horell takes charge of the Division and Col. McQuade of the 14th N.Y. Vols. commands the Brigade. Our corps is the "Grand Reserve of the Army of the Potomac". Tho' on reserve we are by no means kept idle or out of danger -- on the contrary we have to do all the ordinary work of a reserve and much of such service as it would be impolite to take troops from the front to do -- such was our movement on Hanover CH. Our Division alone was engaged there and conquered after a severe fight and terrible fatiguing march. The result of the Battle of Hanover C.H. proved the Reserve Corps to be good stuff. Tho' Hanover is but eighteen miles in direct line we marched upwards of twenty-five to reach it. From the order in which we marched our Brigade was the last to get into the fight and therefore saw less of it than our other Brigades.

Our Reg. had a fight on its own hook before this Hanover affair. We crossed the Chickahominia above New Bridge and wiped out a Rebel force of three Regts. among them the famous Louisiana 5th (Tigers). It was a brilliant affair and was highly praised by "Little Mac". Perhaps you read an account in the NY Herald and Times, in both of which it was mentioned with much accuracy and praise but no exaggeration. McClellan personally in presence of the Reg. thanked Col. Woodbury and the Capt. of Co. A and Co. A (our Company did the principal work). Our Capt's. name is Ross. We blushed redder than the rose at such unexpected praise from a General whom we all trust, love, and almost idolize.

We has but little chance of dodging for we were so close that the balls reached us sooner than the report. Besides there were so many of them we hadn't time. At Yorktown it was easy enough to dodge shell fired at long range tho' we stood in danger of the pieces when it exploded. At Hanover when they opened on us with musketry we were ordered to lie down as soon as the first gun was fired and when the rascals had emptied their guns, "up and at them" was the word, and secess still hardly waited for us -- they do hate the bayonette beyond measure.

I am more and more convinced that the war must soon end. The news from Halleck is encouraging beyond all I had hoped. Beauregard's famous army is scattered and himself the Will o' Wisp.
My dear Sister Lottie:

I believe I am owing you a letter and will try and repay the I have but time to write but a few lines. We are still in "status quo" -- constant skirmishing with the enemy but nothing decisive. We are encamped on the farm of Dr. Gaines, a Secession sympathizer of some importance. He owns some thirteen hundred acres of land and a large number of slaves, many of whom were sent away with the Rebel Army for safety before our arrival. He is a regular "old Secesh" and declares he will dig up the bodies of the Union Soldiers buried on his property! He gets his pay, however, by being kept under guard and confined to his own house.

There is no telling how soon the war is to end in the capture of Richmond -- for end it virtually will in that event. It may indeed be prolonged by skirmishes and guerilla warfare for some months beyond that period, but guerillas cannot long sustain a conflict without a standing army for a "stand by" or support. They could not derive sufficient subsistence from enemies and must gain their main supply from friends. Farmers for the sake of families and farms will not dare to aid and the result will be they will prey upon friends as well as foe. Other means too can be resorted to by our Generals to make it much to the interests of states and districts to aid in suppressing these lawless bands. At all events it needs but a little wisdom on our part to make the guerillas, when the support of a large Rebel Army in the field is withdrawn, find no means of support but in robbing their own friends, and thus will become enemies to Secesh as well as Union people.

The weather is intolerably hot -- many are sick -- I, thank Heaven, am still as well as can be -- I try to take what care I can in regard to what I eat -- rather going hungry than eating fat pork and bacon in such warm weather. I get some hoe cake from Gaines' negroes occasionally but don't like it over much -- I wouldn't eat it but for the change from "hard-bread". It is not such "hoe cake" as I used to get in Fairfax Co. -- that was much like "Johnny cake" made of water -- while this is merely meal mixed with water and baked in the ashes with no salt and no shortening. By splitting the cakes and sprinkling a little salt on and frying in a little fat it makes a very palatable dish, tasting like fried mush -- I always used to like that you know.

I hear nothing from the many letters I have written to Marie -- Do you hear from her? I hope she is well.

The last time I saw Geo. Yates I mentioned that his Mother had inquired thro' my letters from home after him. He thanked me and spoke of writing. I see him nearly every day -- he is now Quarter Master Sergeant of the Regiment.

I see by the papers that Lyman Fradin French is appointed a 2nd Lieutenant of Marines. By what influence did he get the position? Was he ever in the Volunteer service? Has he had any experience of Military affairs? Could you at home bring any influence in my favor for a similar appointment? Marines are drilled like Infantry and are only soldiers on shipboard. After a year's service in the field I ought to have some knowledge of a soldier's duty -- I can give the recommendation of my Colonel and Company officers as to fitness and capacity. Is there no one who would be willing to do such a favor to me? It needs but a man of some influence to take in hand and it could be readily done. In one of the letters received from
June 18th, '62

home one of you spoke of trying something of that nature for me -- I wish you would. A year of faithful service in the field ought to give me some shadow of chance, if there is any justice in such matters. I write in great haste and that must be my excuse to the appearance of this. Love to all the family and remember me to all friends -- to the Misses Tillinghast, to Miss Kingsland -- to Mrs. Angell and to Miss Lowthorp -- also to Dr. Wiley and Charley Wiley. I wrote a day or so since to C.F.P. He seems to be working like a beaver to get his farm and home done -- I hope it will be a happy one. He still seems sorry that he didn't go to war -- tho' I think he took the wisest course.

Your affectionate Brother

Edward

In speaking of an appointment I spoke of Marines alone. If I could get an appointment in the Regular Army as 2nd Lieutenant I should be indifferent whether it were Infantry or Marine.
Before Richmond  
Saturday June 21st 1862

My dear Sister Anna:

Yours of June 16th is just received.-- I wrote to Lottie a day or more ago and since then nothing new has transpired. Secesh are a little more active yesterday and today. They are throwing shell into our camp. Yesterday a number fell into the camp of the 1st Michigan killing one man. We have got so used to shell now after our experience of them at Yorktown, Hanover and several other places that we pay but little attention to them. By the way, you remember I wrote a hasty account of a fight this Regiment had with the "Rebs" across the Chickahominy. Enclosed I sent a scrap referring to the affair taken from one of the N. Y. Herald. It speaks of one man being killed -- another died of wounds the next day. The statement as to Piper's brother is true for I had it directly from Geo. Spaulding who is his Capt. I also heard the prisoner tell Woodbury how he could have shot him. I send also three lithographs of Gen. McClellan, Gen. Morell (acting Division General) and of Col. Woodbury. They are tolerable likenesses, especially of Morell -- McClellan wears his whiskers cut differently and that has much changed his appearance -- no picture, however, can give that splendid sharp, piercing eye of his.

If Abolitionists only knew how much they damaged themselves in the eyes of the Army by censoring McClellan they would pause before they waked up a storm of resentment, which, on the return of the soldiers to home and civil rights, would sweep them from political position and importance, and would stamp them as traitors of the vilest dye.

I see that Hale has been trying to bring in a bill in the Senate making it legal to enlist negroes as soldiers, putting them on the same footing as white volunteers. Now I speak not only for myself but for nineteen out of twenty in this Co. or Reg. or Army when I say that if that became law we would sooner lay down arms than fight. If such a law passed Hale would hardly dare come near the Army. When we cease to fight for the Union and begin to fight for Negro equality I am ready to lay down arms and will.

I think in the event of the fall of Richmond the war is over provided the north is willing to overlook much of the past year -- "Forgive and Forget" ought to be their motto with the masses of the southern people, and let confiscation only touch their chief leaders. I received a paper from Marie, but no letter. From Hough I have not heard for four months.

In my letter to Lottie I asked if any effort could be made by you at home to procure for me a commission either in the Marines or in the U. S. Army -- I spoke particularly of the Marines as I thought a position easier secured there than in the Infantry. Our Navy is to be largely increased and after the war will (unlike the Army) suffer but little reduction. Naval officers as well as Army officers are mostly chosen from the schools at West Point and the Naval School while the officers of Marines are more often taken from civil life; therefore, I think one stands a better chance of gaining a position. Perhaps Dr. Jackson or Dr. Metcalf could lend a little influence in that direction. Could Dr. Wiley? Will you try what can be done, for much may depend on it. A Marine is not expected to be a sailor, you know -- he is merely a soldier on shipboard. As a soldier I have the education and drill necessary. Indeed as a Naval officer I would not do at all for I know noth-
eing of Navigation but as an officer of the Marine Corps of the Army I should do as well as the next, if I do say so myself. Please make an effort for me. What influence has Lieut. Swift?

Hoping soon to hear from you, I remain

Your affectionate Brother "Ned"

Appointments in the U. S. service are made by the President or Secretary of War. It needs but a few or even one influential man to represent the fitness of the applicant to the Secretary and the appointment will be made. The fact of one year's service in the field and actual experience of battle might perhaps go some way with the Secretary or President.
Below City Point near Wilson's Bar 4th July '62
Camp Army of Potomac

Dear Mother:

Tho' the mercy of a kind God I have been spared thro' divers dangers and sufferings -- I can't now explain the meaning of various movements made by our Army within the past week except on the ground that as McDowell failed to make a junction with us at Hanover, C.H., we were unable to keep up our long line of communication with the White House and were forced to change front and rest our rear upon the James River. This movement began on the 26th Ult. in a heavy battle at Mechanicsville on the Chickahominy. We were in this battle but our loss was comparatively small (perhaps 40). From Mechanicsville we on the right were ordered to fall back on to a strong position at Gaines Hill (or Mills). Our loss at this battle was about 100. Our next position was a strong one near the James River. Here we lost severely -- our Colonel is killed, also two Captains, four or five Lieutenants are wounded and perhaps prisoners. 350 is our probable loss in the Reg. But we held our own and we have the satisfaction of knowing that as Gen. Fitz John Porter said, "The fourth saved the Army on the 1st of July." The Army fought well and not a day has passed for the past week but a portion has been hotly engaged -- one Division covering the rear as the others fell back. In every engagement we were victorious but unable to pursue the advantage or to hold the position longer than sufficient for a cover to the retreat. Our new position acquired and some sorely needed reinforcements having come, the Army is now advancing while the Enemy is being taken in the rear as was the programme.

I have no time for particulars. I merely write to say that I, thank God, am safe and unharmed. There is some talk of our Reg. having some rest and time for recruiting -- I hope it may be so. We still trust McClellan. I write in haste. Lottie's letter received. Will soon answer. Love to all.

Pray for and with your soldier son that he may be saved from a death of the soul if not of the body.

Affectionately

E. H. Taylor
Harrison's Bar Landing, Va.
July 14th, 1862

My dear Sister:

Your letters of July 8th and 11th were both received last night — I still desire to obtain the position I wrote of. I would greatly prefer it to the Volunteer service even if I stood a chance in the latter -- Doubtful -- "Kissing goes by favor". Many of our officers are wounded and retain their rank, leaving but four actual vacancies in the list of Commissions. These will be filled by those who can make the most favor with Gov. Blair. There is much talk of his having appointed certain gentlemen into Commissions in the Reg. who have so far no knowledge of drill or war. I fear it is so, for the evidence is strong. To us who have seen service, such a proceeding would be unendurable almost. Indeed by all means help me in this matter. I see no light ahead here and no prospect of bettering myself.

I sent Capt. Randolph's paper. I was sorry he was so poor a scholar and pensman -- such things have an influence. You know we lost our Colonel who was killed on the field July 1st. There never was a braver or better officer. As a man I can say less. Without him the Regiment will sink to insignificance -- our Lt. Col. can never fill his place -- I hear he has resigned -- the terrible effects of our movement together with a slight wound having made him too unwell to remain. He is now home. Our Major went crazy from coup de soleil some six weeks since -- hence Capt. Randolph is in Command as Col. Co. A lost its Capt. at the same time Col. Woodbury was killed, Captain Rose was a brave man and a good officer. Our Reg. went into the field on June 26th 650 in number. On the night of July 1st we musterred but 230 -- the remainder killed, wounded, and missing. None of the missing have yet turned up, therefore we are forced to count them as killed or prisoners or wounded and in the hands of Confederate forces. Before going into action at Gaines' Mills our army piled knapsacks by Regts. in the rear. When there seemed great prospect of our being overwhelmed an order was given to burn them, so that when we did fall back, lo! our knapsacks were no more, and a soldier's knapsack contains his all.

Thus it came that during those ever memorable six days of heavy fighting and forced marching we were without shelter and without blankets or change of shirts -- in short, we had nothing but our clothes upon our backs -- not even a great coat but a simple blouse or fatigue sack. Part of the time the weather was awful; severe rain fell for three days; the ground was low and swampy -- the nights cold and chilly -- with fighting for three days and three days and parts of six nights spent in fatiguing marching -- half of the little remnant of our Regiment is prostrate with sickness. I am still suffering from the effects of over-exertion and very weak -- do no duty and am under medical treatment, but thank God! am out of hospital nor expect to go there. Rest and quiet is all I need and am likely to get these, I think. If I were only at home I should soon be better and would soon forget to feel unwell. We are not yet provided with tents but have received blankets and are quartered in a shady wood.

In regard to our recent movement my opinion is unchanged. The worst form of treason -- the blackest guilt, lies at the doors of those who refused McClellan's call for reinforcements. If they could not cooperate with him from the north of Richmond by way of Hanover C.R. why did they not send men by way of White House? The ruin of McClellan was a resolved fact to the Abolition faction -- such is my settled conviction. Look at the debates on the use of White House as hospital -- a poorly ventilated ill contrived house not fit to hold thirty patients. Thus to wrangle over it to the injury of our General when the fate of an army was depending! Does history show such guilt heretofore? All this time our sick were under
the shelter of large hospital tents -- cool and convenient -- better in this clime than any house and then we had plenty of large tents. They only wished to injure McClellan by making it seem he was negligent of his sick and wounded. When his movements are not interfered with by Abolition Confreres the sick arrangements have been almost perfect for so large an army. Now it is different for in moving we lost much in the means of taking care of sick and wounded and the number of sick and wounded is quadrupled. But whose fault is it we moved? Truth answers-- "Traitors under the name of Abolitionists." Such are my candid opinions. What I state as fact is fact, for I state that I saw and know and not the word of others only. The whole army knows these things and deep is the curse heaped on the heads of those who had nigh ruined us by designed neglect. We trust McClellan still (that galls and piques the Summers, Chandlers and Hales of our petty congress) and we believe Lincoln trusts him too. Yet we puzzle that he keeps such a vile humbug in power as Edwin M. Stanton -- yes, our hope is still in Lincoln and McClellan, under God. We believe them true and to be working together -- time will show -- but why is Stanton kept in power? And now when the President is calling for men what does Congress do? Why wrangle if it shall include in the Militia Bill the negroes and free his child, wife, and family for military service. In case this were to pass there will be two results -- one remote, the other more immediate. The latter -- What white man would sign an enlistment roll after a negro? Call it prejudice or what not, such is the fact -- I answer one man would sign where ten would have signed. Again I know of no plan where a Regiment of full blacks has been in service except in San Domingo. They are the poorest soldiers. Wherever they have been tried they have proved worse than useless. It is a mistake to say they were employed with success in the Revolution in 1812 or in the Mexican War. In the latter they proved a great failure and laughing stock. But for the sake of argument admit that they do make tolerable soldiers and come to the more remote result of such proceeding on our part. All the connection of the black soldier being freed by his service in any capacity in our army, the longer the war is continued the greater number of freed men there will be and in the end all blacks in the invaded states will be affected, for abolitionists will procure the employment of every black possible and this frees his family. Chandler and Wade admit this to be intended a death blow to the "sum of villainies" Slavery. Now what are we fighting for? The freedom of the Negro or the integrity of the Union? The latter is all I enlisted for. That is all Lincoln claims to have in view and even in his proclamation offering to aid those states desiring to free themselves of slavery he holds forth the opinion that as a state institution it is none of our business only as far as our own state is concerned. Such has always been my opinion -- I see no reason to change it. Such was father's opinion. I honor it. The avowed object of the war was to restore the Union as it was with the Constitution as it is. Now the moment the War is put on an abolition footing all is changed. We are warring for a "New Union and a 'Purged' Constitution." In the first case we of the Union party are opposing traitors who are striving to destroy a just government and to pull down a glorious Union. In the latter we are waging an unjust, unholy war against a people united and brave striving to maintain their freedom. In such a war we could not conquer -- perhaps Dr. Metcalf may have seen the future when he spoke -- Quien sabe? No! The moment the war becomes an abolition war I cease to be a soldier bearing arms against the South. The future is in the hands of God alone. Will he permit these vile traitors of our own section to rule for our further punishment? I hope and pray not. If it be not the intention to make abolition the issue why is every effort made by these men renders reconstruction impossible? In the name of wonder do they think the Union will be restored by
July 14th, 1862

blood alone or does not common sense tell them that forgiveness must be exercised? I was a splendid article on that in the Gospel Messenger in the form of a letter from an Army Chaplain in our service. All the hard fighting in the world with its loss of blood and treasures cannot reform the Union if general confiscation, abolitionism, and rapine by law. The one counteracts the other -- and as we fight and suffer to conquer, Congress in our rear undoes all we do and we look back to see all undone and the end of all our efforts negatory and the drops of blood in the balance outweighing more and more the chance of reconstruction. Where will the end be? I see a dark future. I think I see foreign intervention looming up. Let it come. I can fight a foreign enemy. If this war is one for the Union I am content. When I see it made an abolition crusade, if still in the invading army I will leave either by fair or foul means. For this reason also I would go into Marine service in preference to the vols. There would be more honorable chance of leaving the service.
My dear Sister Lottie:

Your welcome letter of the 4th came last evening. Have no fear but your letters are as welcome as any I could receive and as interesting for generally they contain most news of little matters such as the others forget to write. The only fault I find is you write so seldom. The small matters around home are what I like to hear about and the others seem to forget to write of them or think them unworthy of their pens or think I must know them by intuition -- so I would have you write often if possible. Anna delights in politics, Will writes but seldom and Marie is not long at home, and so have only your and Fannie's letters to keep me posted in the minutiae of home matters. Indeed half the time I don't know there is such a place as Geneva. I hear so little of what is going on there. And in your last letter even you were guilty of a very provoking thing along with Will and Anna. In one place you say: "I believe Willie and Anna have told you all the news of Company raising here, etc." Anna supposes that Willie and Lottie have told all that is to be said, etc. Looking in Willie's letter I find nothing about the Co's, whatever! How I was anxious to hear about that very subject. I judge, however, from all the letters that as yet you have made no effort in the direction I indicated in my last. I am sorry, for tho' as Will says the officers are already recruiting for the Co's, they are inexperienced and Col. Shirrell might be willing to make a vacancy for one having claims to a little military experience gained in fourteen months service and in seven battles. His personal influence could procure the appointment of such officers as pleased him, and I wished to know if that influence could be worked upon in my favor. I fear it is too late now, and the opportunity, if there was one, is lost. In my last I wished to urge this effort upon you that in case the effort of Dr. Jackson failed there would be something else to fall back upon. I must have failed intelligibly to explain my meaning.

You all seem to have the idea that I can get home on furlough or leave of absence. Impossible -- no furloughs are granted to privates at all unless they be sick and a change of climate be necessary to a restoration to health, and then the difficulty is great. I can not get home on a discharge, nor can I get a discharge except thro' a commission. The obtaining a commission would procure a discharge from this Regiment -- in no other way can I get home -- and my chances of this are but very small. I fear. Is there no one but Dr. Jackson who could help me in regard to the Marines? I fear to leave it all in one man's hands. Combined influence goes a great ways farther than any one man's.

No, I am sorry to say there is no chance of my getting home except the small one of success thro' your efforts at home. I am sorry Mother was disappointed in not welcoming me home and am sorry that spoiled her intended visit. I wonder how she got the idea of my coming home. I never hinted at such a thing. I hope at least I may get home in time to be present at your marriage. I should like it much, but fear not.

You will have a comfortable snug house judging from the plan -- Charlie told me in his last letter that it was almost finished. At any rate when I do get out of this service I will come and see you there and patronize my little nephew Charlie and tell him of the wars.

I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Angell being sick. I hope she may be better now.
August 8th, 1862

Remember me to her and to Mrs. Kingsland and family. Dr. Potter didn't resign until he was forced to. I happen to have been alongside the 50th several times and know a thing or two. He got drunk too often and the Hospital Steward (Bain Folwell) was obliged to conceal the brandy of the Hospital from him. Gilbert was little thought of in the Regt. Did you know that Will Folwell was a Lieutenant in the 50th? I have seen him several times -- first at the siege of York where I unexpectedly met him. Since then he has looked me up once or twice and I him.

It is strange so many can be at home when the orders are so strict against it, unless they are there by false pretense and liable to punishment if they are not soon back to their Regiments.

I see they intend to draft on the 15th. Will will be exempted, being a student, but he ought to file his claim to exemption as soon as possible.

I now have to close for really I have nothing of which to write.

Remember me to Miss Mary and Miss Martha and to all my friends.

Write soon as possible and have the others do the same.

Your affectionate brother

Edward
Near Sharpsburg, Md., Sept. 20th, '62

My dear Sister Lottie:

I take advantage of a few days quiet in camp to "drop a line" (angling for an answer, you see) — I have not heard from home for a long time except thro' a letter Capt. French received making inquiry after me. I have written at Minor's Hill, also at Falls Church, which letters I presume you have received by this. Since my last I have again been amid the dire terror and destruction of battle. Fortunately I am still uninjured — our Corps being held on reserve at the battle of South Mountain and Antietam took but little active part in them. Last Friday, however, the 4th had a battle all to itself in which, as in a similar affair on the Chickahominy last May "the Reg. Covered itself with glory." We crossed the Potomac at this point with a severe fire of grape and canister and in spite of the destructive fire of the enemy's sharpshooters who lined the opposite banks. The river here is full sixty rods wide and in places up to our chins (for we were ignorant of the regular ford), the current rapid — tho' our guns and ammunition were wet and useless, yet on the boys went struggling thro' the water over the uneven bottom and charging up the opposite steep drove the enemy and captured a fine battery of brass twelve pounders. Night prevented pursuit and after making our captures secure we recrossed the river and returned to our Division amid the cheers of the army of these parts. If I were at home or even if I had time now I would tell of a rather thrilling adventure that befell me on this occasion. When I do get home look out for "yarns" — I have a deal of the material ready to spin at that hoped for time.

Next morning we again crossed the river finding no enemy to oppose us and after completing the work of the night before and capturing a few lurking prisoners we returned to our present camp. General Martindale's Brigade took our place across the river. We were hardly settled in camp before we were roused by a heavy firing in the direction of the River. Falling in, we were marched in that direction when we began to meet large numbers of the 118th Pa. Vols. without guns, hats, or knapsacks — in fact, completely panic stricken. It appeared that after Martindale had crossed the enemy appeared in some small force and the 118th after giving and receiving a fire broke and ran. Of course they were pursued and falling back on the remaining force confusion ensued. Taking advantage of this the enemy drove the whole of our force (2000) across the river capturing near 200 of the 118th (a new Pa. Regt.) They were again obliged to call upon this (Griffin's) Brigade to stem the tide and now we repose the opposite bank of the river and "all is quiet along the Potomac."

Gen. Pope was pleased to call Porter's Corps "demoralized"; in fact, he said so of the whole of the Peninsular Army. How true and just he was these late battles in Maryland will show. Under him any army of the size of ours would seem demoralized, for to keep up the tone of an army requires more genius and head than he possessed. At the head of a small force he would do, but not at the head of this army nor with such an army as either Jackson or Lee. He was outwitted and befooled and was unable to mass or deploy the force at his command. Although he vainly tried to put the blame of his disaster upon Porter and even upon Griffin, had it not been for both the latter, their men worn out by fatigue of march and want of food, sleep, shelter and even clothing, and with Regts. scarcely numbering two hundred men each, Pope's army would never have extricated itself from its many perils.

With this apology of a letter I must close for being on guard I lack time.
By the way, I saw Jimmie Morton at Minor's Hill. He is in the 4th N Y Heavy Artillery (Col. Doubleday's) stationed at Chain Bridge -- he is now clerk to the adjutant. I was very glad to see him indeed. He was well and in good spirits. Much grown since I last saw him.

And among the pleasant surprises one sometimes meets with was the meeting with Arend Van Der Veen a few days since. He is Hospital Steward in the 8th Mich. We had a good time talking of old times. Write soon. Direct to Morell's Brigade, Porter's Corps.

Affectionately,

Edward
Head Quarters 2nd Brigade (Griffins)
Morell’s Division, Camp near Sharpsburg, Md.
October 11th, 1862

My dear Sister Marie:

It is now quite a time since I have either heard from you or have written to you. The first is not my fault and the latter I take the first opportunity to remedy. Until yesterday I was unable to write, not having the conveniences, and yesterday was a busy day to me, so today is really the first in which I could write, and today can only spare me a few moments -- the remainder devoted to my country (!!!)

Yesterday I was detailed as Clerk or Secretary or Scribe to these Head Quarters -- whether temporarily or permanently I don’t at present know. If permanently it will be a good thing as much as I shall fare as well as need be and will earn a little extra pay, no small consideration in these times. My duties here are tolerably easy at times tho’ sometimes I shall have my hands full -- at least as long as I stay here I shall have the chance of writing more frequently than heretofore.

That portion of the Army lying in these parts is doing nothing indicative of a forward move. We are resting on our oars -- how long this will continue I have no idea. Did you read in the paper an account of the “brilliant charge” of the 4th Mich. across the Potomac? It was a rough job for the water was deep, ran swift and the “Rebs” were thick on the other side. Still the boys never behaved better or seemed more heedless of danger. To me it seemed the most desperate place I was ever in and I never expected to come out alive.

Indeed I am particularly fortunate, having been in nine battles so far and having received not even a scratch. At Malvern Hill I was struck by a spent ball but it only numbed my arm for a minute or so. I got a letter from home day before yesterday -- all were well. They said they had not heard from you in some time. I suppose you know that Charlie Post has enlisted in the 25th Michigan Volts? I heard it first from Arend Van Der Veen whom I unexpectedly met with a week since. I was sorry to hear of Charlie having enlisted -- Poor Lottie! “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.”

Arend is Hospital Steward in the 8th Mich. Infty -- Otto Doesburg is in the same Regt. but was sick (?) in Washington when I went over to the Regt. Arend says Otto has played sick or found some other excuse to keep out of danger during every battle in which the 8th has taken part. Generally the way with those who make such a boast of valor.

A batch of orders has just come in and I must turn my attention to the condition of the Army.

In haste but with much love

I remain Yours Affectionately

Edward

Write soon and I will promise a faithful answer --
My dear Lottie:

I received yours a few days since with pleasure and shall the next time I write try and do better than I can this time. I shall for some time at least I expect, have better facilities for writing than heretofore - having been selected as Clerk in Gen Griffin's H'd Qu'r's. How long I shall remain here I do not know - I hope permanently as I should fare much better and the duties are far from severe. A good tent to myself in which to write and no great exposure. To handle a pen is certainly easier than to handle a musket. I have done my share of the former and I hope now I will be able to put aside the "sword" and take the "mightier" weapon-- However, if the "sword" had a Commission attached I should hardly be willing to relinquish it -- If I stay here I shall relinquish the musket with pleasure and with a feeling of having done my duty with it well and in a soldierly manner, having served with it in eight battles of greater or less magnitude and in skirmishes innumerable.

I was in hopes Charlie Post's regiment would come this way, but I see by your letter that it has been ordered to Kentucky -- Arend Van Der Veen felt sure he would come together with the 24th Mich, which is encamped near us.

So you don't think much of A. Lincoln's Proclamation -- Nor do I at present, Tho I submit I may have reason to think better of it if I could see "why" he proclaims what he can't enforce. There may have been some deep strategy in it even if I or you and the rest of the world can't see it. I begin to think our worthy Pres. is very much like that very-useful-in-its-place-fowl that ornaments the pinnacle of most church spires -- a weathercock. He tells the Chicago Negro loving Committee that to proclaim emancipation would be to issue a "bull against the Comet." The next thing he does is to do the very thing he thought so absurd -- Where is the bull and the Comet now?

I shall have to close now for I have a deal of writing to do to be sent to the Reg't --

Affectionately, with love to all

Edward

Write as soon as possible. Why don't Will write, also Fannie?
My dear Sister:

The Army of the Potomac has just returned from its own funeral, and I write with the booming of their death knell still sounding in my ears.

This morning it was announced that McC. was relieved of his command and the Reg. was ordered forward and every arrangement made to receive him for the last time. The blow came unexpectedly and struck consternation among us all. Many a poor soldier of the old Army cried at the announcement and when he rode along the line looking even more splendid than ever, tho' sad, very sad.

Well might he look sad to leave behind him these true, tried friends, the Army of the Potomac — men who had suffered, endured every fatigue and hardship, with him and whom he had watched over and even organized. In the bitterness of grief the Army shed tears and vowed deep vengeance upon those who would destroy McClellan and us thro' him. Hope, Faith, Courage are gone with him, for we all clearly see that patriotism no longer rules but fanaticism. The soldier is sacrificed to the politician. Woe! Woe! Woe! What is to be the end?

Is it Fremont and a dictatorship they aim at? Let them beware. McClellan's Army is still in existence and can bear but little more of such usage. A terrible day of reckoning will come — I saw that today when strong men laid down and wept in anger and grief. None but the new, green troops now are cheerful — they, new from home, are full of the miserable prejudice which has contaminated every one North — the prejudice against McClellan. In their folly they think him slow and inactive — they who never saw the enemy and never a fight.

People North might think it very easy to make a winter campaign with an army half clothed and half fed, but let them try it — before they blow. A November campaign means death and suffering from exposure, when under the most favorable circumstances. And the people forced us to move when one half the men are shoeless and many without blankets and some without coats thicker than an ordinary dress coat and many (Porter's Corps or rather now Hollers) with mere blouses as thick as a heavy woolen shirt.

One could wish the Army turned loose upon the North for there are our worst enemies.

As ever with love to all.

E. H. Taylor
Head Qrs. 1st Division, 5th Army Corps,
Camp near Hartwood, Va. Nov. 20, '62

My dear Mother:

I am owing someone at home a letter but whom I can't say, so I will repay by writing one to you.

I am still quite well thro' all the hardships and exposures of this very severe campaign. I am, indeed, somewhat better situated than I was during the other campaigns in which I have taken part, and much better off than a vast many of the Army now. You probably saw in the papers an account of the removal of Gen. Fitz-John Porter from the command of the 5th Army Corps. Gen. Porter was a brave officer and, I believe, a good soldier. His removal, coming so soon after McClellan's, made but little noise.

Porter's removal made a vacancy in the command of the Corps, which Gen. Hooker was appointed to fill. Gen. Morell had before this been assigned to a command on the upper Potomac leaving a vacancy in the command of the Division, which was filled by the appointment of Gen. Butterfield. A few days since the Army of the Potomac was divided into three "Grand Divisions" composed of two or more Corps each: Gen. Sumner was given the Right, Gen. Franklin the Left, and Gen. Hooker was given the Centre composed of the 3rd and 5th Corps. Gen. Hooker's appointment to the "Grand Centre Division" made a vacancy in the Corps command. Gen. Butterfield being then the senior Division Commander was given the Corps and the command of the 1st Division came upon Gen. Griffin who was senior Brigadier.

When Gen. Griffin got his appointment I had been a month in his Brigade office, and having given good satisfaction, his Adjutant, Lieut. Ross offered me the place of Clerk at Division Hqrs. Qr., and this to the exclusion of a number of more experienced clerks. My duties are very light, tho' somewhat responsible.

There are four of us clerks and we "mess" together having a cook detailed for our special use. To be sure we have nothing but soldier's rations to cook, but it is something not to have to do one's own cooking.

We have been on the march for several days past and now are some seven miles from the City of Fredericksburg. This is old ground to me for I was here last summer. When last I wrote I was in the vicinity of Warrenton.

I hardly know what to say of our present movement. We seem to be advancing but at the same time we are dropping communication in the rear and opening new lines.

As usual I am writing in haste. Someone spoke of numbering letters. I will begin with this as "No. 1."

Love to all

Affectionately

Edward
My dear sister Lottie:

I have just received a package of papers enclosing some spices for which I am much obliged. You have no idea of the difference between the pepper we buy here and that. Can you send me some saleratus in the same way? You know we have a mess here of some six or seven and a cook who tells me that he can make some "pan cakes" with saleratus. He has some flour in his possession and is quite a genius so I think he will succeed. I have made biscuits, but how are they made at home?

If I have not too much to do I have leave this afternoon to go over to where the 8th Mich. are; Arend V. D. Veen and Otto (Douting?) are there, I suppose. Have you heard from Charlie? I wish his Regt. were here.

Write soon directing as the enclosed paper.

Affectionately

Ned --
Head Quarters 1st Div.  
5th Army Corps.  
Camp near Falmouth, Va. Nov. 27 [1862]

My dear Sister:

Today is "Thanksgiving Day" thru the Northern States, I suppose. It is three years now since I spent Thanksgiving at home, and I wonder how long it will be before I shall pass another by the Home fireside. The war seems as far from a close as ever and no one knows when or what the end will be. I have lost all faith of successful termination of the struggle. How can we succeed when more trickster politicians control the movements of our generals and dictate when and how they must move? McClellan is removed because he failed to move where Hallick desires. The Army then being without tents, short of blankets and everything necessary. I know these things are wanting and that the Quartermaster Dept. could get no adequate supplies from the authorities in Washington. Again, why did they wait to remove him till he had again brought the Army into Virginia. His offence was of a much older date than his removal. Didn't Lincoln fear if he were removed the New York elections would prove disastrous to Wadsworth? And have we the assurance that Burnside will be supported by the Administration and that his appointment is not a cover to something further? Is he not a mere temporary appointment and is not Fremont in the mind of the Republican Party? I fear so. I have no faith now.

What for dinner did you have today? We had beef soup, pen cakes, fried crackers, fresh beef, soft bread and coffee. What do you think of that? High living for a soldier I tell you. I am quite well now and but for being a little homesick now doing quite well.

Write soon. Love to all. Remember me to Misses Tillinghast and to Mrs. Angell and to the Kingslands.

Affectionately,

Ned.
Soldier's Letter

Miss Hottie D. Taylor

Geneva
Ontario County
New York

Head Quarters 1st. Division
6th Army Corps
Camp near Falmouth, Va. Nov. 29 (1862)

My dear Sister Hottie:

In our office work we make a great many half sheets of paper which we fold as this is and make note paper of. As we have many notes and official letters to write, they come very useful. I was folding up my half sheets tonight and they looked so tempting I was forced to begin a letter to someone. In selecting someone to write to, I thought of you. You are indebted to me, I think, for one letter, but I suppose you find but little time for writing.

I have nothing to write of tonight -- there is no news on any subject -- everything is dull -- nothing that looks like movement at all -- it looks strangely like as tho' we had failed in our Campaign so far. Who's to blame? We are here stopped for supplies. Why don't the people make a fuss now? Was there any more policy in fitting out the army here, with the enemy in our rear and threatening Washington, than to refit in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry? "I can't see it", can you? Yet for wishing to do the latter was McClellan sacrificed or rather was he sacrificed to the people north and to the Abolition party.

O, we soldiers in the army can see a thing or two if we are only to obey our superiors. Burnside isn't to blame -- he means all right, I think. He was put in command of an army, which had been forced to move unprepared, and he moved as far as he could, but at length found he could not go ahead without shoes, socks and shirts and tents and overcoats and pants and coats -- and above all not without rations. Within the week the troops have been two days without rations. There is plenty in Washington, but "red tape" was in the way, and no depot had been arranged at Aquia Creek. You see the Department in Washington can only be approached in a certain way and that way is a roundabout one.

I wonder if this war is to continue thro' another year. A year ago I had strong hopes of being home by this time. What will the year coming bring forth?

Write soon. Give my love to all and believe me

Your affectionate bro.

Ned --
Dear Brother:

Yours was received some time since and would have been answered before, but that I have been very busy and because I expected certainly to be able to be in Geneva before this on my way to Michigan and intended to go by way of Troy. I have been, however, disappointed in this, at least for the present. We are having miserable weather now, cold frosty nights, and cold damp windy days. Mud, also abominable. You can imagine the pleasure of camp life under such circumstances. Our tents hardly serve to shed the beating rain and are easily penetrated by the cold winds.

What they intend to do with this army is a mystery to me. Even now artillery can be moved with difficulty and during the winter the difficulty will be increased for the frosts will not be certain and severe enough to make these worst of all roads passable. There is some talk of this Reg. going on another expedition and some talk of going to Missouri. But there is nothing reliable.

You will excuse the looks of this as I write in haste and it is too cold to hold a pen. Love to Carrie and the baby. By the way, I got your photographs. I thank you for them. When I can I will send you mine. The baby looks all that she has been described. I should like much to see my little niece.

Your affectionate Bro.,

Edward
Head Quarters opposite City of
Fredericksburg, Va.
Dec. 13, 1862

My dear Mother:

I have but a word to write. A battle is going on and our Div. is just going in. Our troops are in Fredericksburg and are fighting in the streets. This is the third day of the battle. How the scales will turn can hardly be told yet. We have lost heavily and have a hard position to gain. We hope for the best. I never felt less like a fight than now. I expect the Div. will take it tomorrow.

Love to all,

Edward
Head Quarters 1st Division  
5th Army Corps  
Camp near Falmouth, Va, Jan. 7, '63

My dear brother Will:

I had headed this letter intending to address it to a female of the genus young lady, but the receipt of yours of Dec. 29th dissipated the idea, and I write to you first the guilty thereby of being ungallant.

The tobacco was received and many thanks for it -- "Kiliknich" is not plentiful in the army of the Potomac. I am only a moderate smoker but I require good tobacco when I do smoke,

My Christmas dinner was a sumptuous one for a soldier -- roast beef done to a turn -- baked beans (a dish in which "our cook" excels), potatoes, jam, biscuit (and light ones too), butter and a dessert of pie. What do you think of that "bill of fare?" Good for a soldier. You see the Division Quarter Master and the other Staff Officers looking on us with favor assisted us in procuring the material for a Christmas dinner -- Weedon (the Qr. Mr.) gave us as his Christmas gift #5.00 to be laid out in a dinner. We didn't find much chance of spending it, there being no market. So it has served us in buying some luxuries for the mess. On New Year's Day we had turkey (!!) and potato and biscuit and pie. So you see I wasn't so badly off as one might think. You may think potato and biscuit are nothing great, but with us they are great things. Indeed I have no cause to complain of my present living -- if all soldiers lived as well nobody ought to complain. Whenever we can get yeast powder or saleratus and soda, we have bread and biscuit in place of "hard tack". We have a good cook, an old steam boat cook.

When we get paid I shall want you to send me some things -- as dried fruit, corn starch, farina, saleratus and soda, and handkerchiefs, etc. I will write and send the money when I get paid.

So you are deep in College politics! It would seem as if the old plan of conciliating secret societies was still pursued on the part of Pres. Jackson. He did the same thing by Boswell (Charley) in my Class. Societies are the ruin of a college. The Literary Societies lose all their use and interest owing to the division A.B.C., E.O. and O.D.X. produce. Have you joined any society?

I agree with you about the wars -- we are very nearly "played out" as a nation -- What will the next congress do? -- Can they save us?

Gen. Griffin is absent in Washington so we clerks are taking it easy -- Gen. Potter is expected to come out all right. At least it is proved he executed orders to his best ability and when in doubt consulted his subordinates Comig. Div. for their best advice -- I know we marched harder than I wish to again to come to the assistance of that "experiment" Pope.

I expect Griffin, who is tried on almost the same charges, will come out all sound. Write soon -- love to Mother and the girls --

Your affect. bro.

Edward
Head Quarters 1st Division
5th Army Corps
Camp near Falmouth, Va. Jan. 13th, '63

My dear Mother:

I don't write tonight because I have anything in the way of news to tell, but be-
cause, not having had a letter from home for so long a time, I wish to get you to
"stir 'em up" for me and make them write.

I think Fannie and Will might do better. Of the others I can't generally complain.
Lottie and Annie write as often as they can, I suppose -- I am sure they both have
enough to do to keep them busy.

I haven't heard from Marie for a long time -- what is the reason? Nor have I heard
from Hugh in an age.

We are still stationary and I think will be for some time to come. At least there
are no indications of a forward movement, at present. We don't seem to progress
any the more after getting McClellan out, and after the announcement of the policy
of "Honest(?) Abe." We don't get very cheering news from Vicksburg either -- nor
from Galveston. And Rosecrans don't seem to have gained much by his late battle --
What sense is there in dividing the army in that way? Why not concentrate either for
the attack of Richmond or some settled point? Had Banks and Burnside cooperated,
or had Banks and Sherman acted together something might have been effected. We
need a revival or revolution among our public servants (the President and his
Secretaries).

What kind of time did you all have Christmas? Will told me you had three turkeys
sent -- who in wonder sent them? I had a very pleasant Christmas and New Year's
-- that is, pleasant for the Army --

I wrote to Charlie Post some time ago but have as yet received no answer. I wonder
if his regiment was in the late battles.

So Will didn't get a chance of exhibiting his eloquence before the assembled multi-
tudes on the list of prize competitors -- small loss for him. There never used to
be, in the past six years, any fairness in the way the appointments were given out,
or in the awarding of the prizes. Nor is good reciting of a set piece a test of
talent as a speaker or a test of scholarship. He needn't feel badly over his
failure.

I have no more time to write at present. Love to all and to yourself. Remember
me to the Misses Tillinghast and to all who ask after me.

Affectionately

Edward

I am going to "frank" this letter as an experiment and I want to know is postage
required at the end of its journey. Please let me know when anyone writes.
Head Quarters 1st Division
January 15th 1863

My dear Sister Lottie:

Just a few moments to spare tonight and those I will devote to writing a few lines home. It is some time since I have heard from home or from Marie. What is the reason? I hope no one is sick.

I wrote to Mother night before last but as I franked the letter I don't know whether she will get it or not. Let me know and also if it requires payment at the post office in Geneva.

We have indications of an intended movement, but time and direction not to be surmised. I doubt if we move at all for some time to come. Things here move on in the same slow way -- nothing new and very dull. A large number of officers are absent on leave (some without leave). But few enlisted men get away four our portion of the army, at least.

I have returned to the applicants at least forty furloughs disapproved within the week.

Porter you see got thro' his trial all right. Pope failed in his attempt to lay the blame of his retreat and disaster upon the Army of the Potomac and by implication upon McClellan. Porter's trial proved that McClellan and his Generals did all in their power to extricate him from the foolish snare he had got into.

I shall never cease to blame the administration,1st for dividing the Army at the commencement of the Peninsular campaign -- that fatal mistake compelled McClellan to "dig"the rebels out of Yorktown instead of turning the position by a force up the York and Pamunkey Rivers; 2d, for the failure, after the battle of Williamsburg and West Point, to permit the cooperation of McDowell by way of Hanover. This gave the "Secesh" time to fall back on Richmond and entrench their position on the Chickahominy; 3d, for the continued failure to cooperate after we had opened the road by the battle of Hanover C.H. This failure resulted in rendering that battle a useless waste of life. The road was clear and no enemy in the way -- Why did the Government fail to keep its promise and not let McDowell march to take position on our right? Their pickets could hear our firing during the battle and the men chefed to aid us in the fight -- orders forbade.

A short time after the rebels, suspecting how our right was open to attack, sent Stuart with his cavalry to ride around our Army! He did so, by way of Hanover C.H. and as he passed over the battlefield no doubt thought how like a victory that battle had been to them, since we had gained nothing and had lost many lives -- to be sure we gained the day but what else? So Stuart rode around our army, saw our weak points and how easily our right could be assailed. Nothing now remained but to prepare for a change of base, and every preparation for retreat was made. Soon Jackson appeared on the right at Mechanicsville -- and seven days retreat and battle began. The next and 4th failure of the government was the foolish withdrawing of the Army from the Peninsula -- this enabled "Secesh" to throw their whole force upon Pope -- and to invade Maryland. The 5th fault was the superseding of McClellan by Burnside which resulted in the miscalculations culminating in the battle of last month. So we go. Now I don't claim any great wisdom, but I ask if I did not predict failure before each of the above named periods? -- in fact, it was palpable to
all that they were military blunders -- and I think the blunders were intended. Yes, I believe it was the deliberate intention of those in power to prolong the war -- until they had forced an abolition policy -- Do you think our lives of any value to those who would make this a war for the freedom of the negro alone? Not at all -- they tell us, because we are not willing to see the negro in our ranks and do not wish to make that a test question, that we lack patriotism! We who have stood the brunt of so many battles! I speak for the whole army -- particularly the old army.

Gov. Andrews of Mass, promised so many volunteers if the negro were the object, and an abolition policy proclaimed, hardly kept his promise, and the few men who did come, tempted no doubt by the large bounty offered, prating of the "poor oppressed negro", could hardly be brought into line under fire and ran the first opportunity. The old troops who without bounty and no hope of any had enlisted twenty month ago had to do their work for them. Still because the Negro is not our God we are no patriots, almost as "bad as the traitors of the south." Vive le nigfer!! Vive Honest (?) old Abe!

I begin thinking the "little joker" (old Abe) almost "played out." What do you think -- so we go. The negro first, our country next.

Affectionately,

E --
Head Quarters 1st Division
Fifth Corps d'armes
Camp near Falmouth, Va. Jan. 26, 1863

Dear "Bill":

"I am demoralized!" No use of talking -- "totally demoralized" is the word. Porter cashed the check and that after the evidence adduced! Was he prejudged? Or could you expect justice in a court over which Hunter presided? And if they only struck at Porter -- but they aim at McClellan -- O! The treachery of fanaticism, the base perversion of justice in those who rule -- our Patrice -- Freedom, Justice, and Liberty are dethroned and a snake-haried fury reigns in place; her name is Abolition.

And the Army of the Potomac "moved." We had expected orders for three days, in fact were under orders for that time. Burnside issued an address -- told us it was to be a "fatal blow to the Rebellion", "was to bring peace to our distracted land". In fact, a "big thing" was to be done. And Burnside did a "big thing" -- lost four days good weather and just as it began to rain moved to the right with this and the Grand Division of Gen. Franklin -- Moved two miles first day and three the second and stuck in the mud! Took two days to get in moving order again -- in the meantime the "Rebs" got ready and were able to oppose our crossing with effect. The great wonder is that Burnside had sense enough to return to the old camp we occupied before the move began. I imagine he heard some plain talk as he passed along the lines and took the hint.

Two days were occupied in gaining our old ground and they were days of toil. The road had to be corduroyed seven miles before we could move artillery or wagons of any kind. Horses and Mules died by the score all along the road. We think Burnside "played out". We know he is no general for such a command. Will the Government take warning in time or will they continue as they have begun? Must the Army mutiny before they understand that they are not in "excellent spirits" and "thinking to be led against the enemy" under such men as Burnside? Poor weak-minded fool he! He tried to storm Fredericksburg the first time by Infantry and only supported by two batteries (12 pieces) of short range guns in position to effect any good! Our men had to fight beyond the cover of our guns raked by an unchecked fire of the enemy's artillery! and all the time we had guns of long range not even mounted but rusting in the mud!!! I am "demoralized" and who is not? "The army in good spirits!" Yes, our men like to be led to slaughter, or perhaps they have got used to it. McDowell gave them the first lesson in it and he was ably seconded by Hunter in S.C. when the 79th (Highlanders) and the 8th Mich. were used almost entirely up. -- (Lost over one half their number). Pope also tried the same lesson -- the same funny thing was tried at Vicksburg. In fact we have got used to it and rather like to go into a fight with the expectation of being led into some pleasant surprise in the way of a "trap." "The Army is but little affected by the removal of McClellan -- Soldiers burdened with knapsack have but little time to discuss such topics and are accustomed to implicit obedience. They care but little who is in command." So says the Tribune. He ought to have added, "The soldier is -- or ought to be -- or will be if my policy is carried out to the letter -- a dog." I don't say the Tribune lies -- no -- but I wish the writer along with Lincoln, Halleck and Stanton and some others had to take Fredericksburg under Burnside -- I admit we don't much mind who leads us to butchery provided we must be butchered, but we do seriously object to being butchered. Does the Tribune forget who composed the Army? Or do we lose the right and habit of thinking (and acting, I might add by way of hint and warning) when we enlist in our country's defense? Is it the natural result of his policy to degrade the men who compose the bulk of our armies below the level.
of thinking men?

The game is almost "played." What will the end be?

Would to Heaven the South would hoist the old flag -- proclaim themselves for the Union as it was -- The Army of the Union would shake off the rule of fanaticism and join them and the North and West would sustain them and a New Union Arise or the Old Union rather be united -- And let New England go!

You see, I am "demoralized."

I feel like a man in a ship with a crazy pilot and rocks ahead -- gaily we sail on, catching every breath of wind -- going swiftly, going surely to the Devil -- And how the sharks are about the ship to gobble us up!

"The Gods help those who help themselves." And why don't we help ourselves?

Lincoln may think this is Fredericksburg -- all that was a joke. Let him think that. The old proverb reads, "Whom the Gods would destroy they first made mad (i.e. foolish)" and he is and acts very foolish.

What if the People and the Army take the matter in hand. We are ready. Are the people yet waked up -- do they see the rocks upon which we are surely going to ruin?

You see I'm "demoralized".

Write soon.

Affectionately

E --
My dear Mother:

By the same mail with this I send you a slight present, which I feel sure you will value, in addition to its worth as a gift, the more that it represents scenes in which I have taken part. In it you will see represented the old camp at Minor's Hill, Va. with the Regiment in line for Dress Parade. You can see the arches over the entrance of each Co. Street -- on the left of the line of arches you will see that of my Company. Have you ever seen a dress parade? The music is now "beating down" -- the men at "parade rest", still each one in his place, not a muscle stirring.

One of the side pictures represents my Co. crossing the Chickahominy to attack the 8th Louisiana. After we had dispersed that Regt. we were attacked by a whole brigade of Rebs. (Semmi's I think). But they also were repulsed, severely, by the remainder of the 4th Mich. which came to the rescue. The victory belonged alone to the Regt. No other troops were engaged, or called for, and the victory was complete. On the opposite side you see McClellan riding out to meet us returning from this fight. How pleased he was! And only sad when he saw the dead and wounded go by. We lost two killed and six wounded while the Rebs, lost over a hundred and fifty besides prisoners!

The battle of Malvern Hill is very well given -- you see the house with the cannon near? My Co. was just by the cannon and we were obliged to lie down on our faces sometimes for them to fire over us. We lost heavily there -- more than half of the Regt. are now lying on the field of Malvern. Col. Woodbury (D.A.) was killed there. You see his picture on the upper left corner? He was a brave soldier -- he was not more than ten feet from me when he fell -- and five minutes after Capt. Ross was killed on the same spot. Out of twenty-four men (twelve files) on the right of Co. "A" Jack Carter and myself (Jack "covered" me, i.e., was my rear rank man) were the only ones not touched by shot or shell. I was struck by a "spent ball" which only made a black and blue spot.

Col. Childs, our next Col., is given on the right upper corner. He has resigned and gone home. He was not liked as was Woodbury. We have no Colonel now.

Yorktown siege is well given.

Behind that chimney the Reb, sharpshooters used to try and pick us off as we were picking up the dirt. How the shot and shell used to whistle over us there! All day long and day after day they keep it up but couldn't stop us working.

On the lower left hand corner you will see "Fort Woodbury" opposite Georgetown S.C. (One of the Defences of Washington). The 4th built this fort previous to going to Minor's Hill. If we had the fording -- of the Potomac at Sheperdstown and the battle of Fredericksburg in some way mentioned -- the thing would be complete.

In haste -- affectionately

Edward
Miss Lottie D. Taylor  
Geneva  
Ontario County  
New York  

Head Quarters 1st Division  
5th Army Corps  
April 1st, 1863  

My dear sister Lottie:  

I just this moment received your last letter. I was very glad to hear from you and from home. You say you have not heard from me in a month. I have written at least twice in that time.  

I am sorry to hear that mother has been sick. I hope she will be quite well when this is received. Anna also I understand has not been enjoying very good health. I hope she is better now.  

Marie sent me the letter from Hugh containing the description of his new home. It seems rather small for so many. Are all of Mrs. Stowe's family with him? I can't see where he manages to "Stowe" them all in his limited space. Well, I suppose he enjoys it better now.  

I hear from Marie occasionally. At last writing she was well.  

I am glad to hear of Will's success in College. I hope he will keep it up and come out as near the lead as possible.  

The weather is getting to be quite settled and, I suppose, before long the army will be on the move, perhaps by the time you get this. I look with considerable hope to the coming campaign. The Army is in good spirits -- never better, and the discipline is much improved since Burnside left us. I can't say I like Hooker, but he is a man of much strength and firmness.  

You ask if the two years men are likely to remain -- not very -- they will undoubtedly go home at the expiration of their time. Many may re-enlist after they have been home some time and begin to get restless. But the two years regiments are not composed of two years men alone -- of the 35 two years regiments at least one third (perhaps 3000) are three years men. Thus after the two years men have gone home, the organization of these regiments will be preserved and these "skeletons" can be filled by recruits and "drafts". We have six two years regiments in this Division -- their united strength, "present for duty", will not exceed 1500 of whom 500 are three years men. The whole strength of these regiments "present and absent" is about 2400. The nine months men will make a little hole in the army -- one Division (Humphrey's) of this Corps (the 5th Meade's) is almost entirely composed of nine months men. I hope the draft will be put through with a firm hand. It should have been resorted to a year since.  

As for negro troops -- I must say I begin to think differently. Not that I love the negro more but I do believe that they are more fit to be used than I once thought. I would have little objection to seeing them put into regiments with white officers and kept by themselves -- not put in among white troops, nor even allowed to have colored commissioned officers. A regiment composed of good and
picked negroes, with firm officers, who didn't love a negro too much to shoot one if he played coward, would make I believe a rather desperate obstacle for Rebel Chivalry to contend against. You may wonder what has changed my opinions in that matter. I have seen distinctly negroes doing picket duty across the river here. If the "Rebs" use them why not we? Again a desperate negro is a terrible thing. Now though "Johnny Reb" uses the negro (the thing is settled beyond dispute for negroes have been captured among their ranks and the fact of negro soldiers is mentioned in the Richmond papers,), yet he vows vengeance on any Yankee negro or Yankee commanding negroes on our side. Hang them he will! So both officer and "neg" would have nothing to do but win or -- get hung -- and would naturally prefer the former. Why shouldn't a negro be used as a soldier by us as well as Indians by the "Rebs"? Why would not they make as good soldiers for us as for the English or French? And what better is a "Sepoy" than a negro? It is also proposed to use them where white men die off unless acclimated. In short I see no objection to using the negro as a soldier if he be properly handled.

By the way, I have been offered a commission in one of Gen. Danl. Ulman's new Regiments -- rank and file black -- officers white -- so far I have neither declined nor accepted. What shall I do?

An order has just come down directing this Division to wear as a distinctive badge a red woolen maltese cross [+] on the front of the cap. Hooker is bound to put his mark on his sheep before he takes them to slaughter.

Write soon -- love to all.

Affectionately,

Edward
HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Camp near Falmouth, Va. April 30th, 1863

General Orders
No. 47

It is with heartfelt satisfaction the Commanding General announces to the Army that the operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly, or come out from behind his defences and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him.

The operations of the 5th, 11th and 12th Corps have been a succession of splendid achievements.

By command of Major General Hooker:

S. Williams,
Assistant Adjutant General

Official:

Captain, A D C
Miss Lottie D. Taylor
Geneva
Ontario County
New York

Head Quarters 1st Div. 5th Corps
May 7, 1863

My dear Sister Lottie:

Now that we are again quiet I write to let you know that I am "all right." The great movement has ended and contrary to my hopes no great success has followed. Splendid fighting has been done and at one time the city was in our possession, but some blundering was committed and the result is that we are now in our old camp. In fact, we had to retreat. They say the "Rebs" also retreated, so much more shame to us.

The fifth Corps did well and our Division best of all. The Eleventh (Sigel's) Corps acted shamefully, running without firing a shot, on the first appearance of the enemy. Mostly Dutchmen (rather Germans) they have always played the cowards. Hooker has failed entirely in this move — has been outwitted, in fact, and the enemy have either escaped or are in as good position as before the attack. I am very sorry for we needed such a brilliant victory to give spirit to the men. There was heavy fighting done by the 6th Corps under Sedgwick just above Fredericksburg, but he had to withdraw, having advanced too far. I saw a charge made by a Maine Regt. (the 6th if think). It was a splendid thing. Up a steep hill in face of a tremendous fire. What a pity that the bravery of such men should be thrown away — that so many lives be lost — that no great discouragement to bravery be forced upon men really brave by such constant blundering.

Is Hooker only "getting his hand" in? Are men to be sacrificed for his practicing? Is he capable of the position? I can't answer the questions, but I know that fearful blunders were made and many lives thrown away — for what? People at home will never know the extent of these blunders nor the extent of this failure, for means are taken to prevent such a result. You are perhaps told it is a victory! I can't say who is to blame only I know there is blame.

I enclose Gen. Hooker's order previous to the final attack. How different the result from his anticipations! Instead of the Enemy retreating we retreated! Our men didn't wish to fall back and were unwilling to obey the order. What a howl would have been raised north had McClellan delayed his moving until the last of April and then retreated from a retreating enemy! A year ago they howled when they could not make Gen. McClellan move before the 10th of March. I don't wish to condemn Hooker until we know all the facts, all I know now is that we failed in our ends -- and were compelled to retreat and that from an enemy who we had every reason to think was also falling back. If I judged at all I should say that the error was in dividing our forces as was done and thereby putting it in the power of the enemy to crash one portion before aid could be given. If that be the error Hooker is to blame. Time will settle the question, and Hooker will be sure to get justice, as Wade, Chandler & Co. will not likely sit in judgment on him, he being "all sound on the wool", that is, "anti-McClellan." Though wherein McClellan interfered, politically, with the views of the abolition party I never could see. I rather think that they with the desire of forcing certain issues wished to keep
the war agoing and merely made McC, the scape goat for delays created by them and
for failures at the bottom of which they were.

I am, as usual, writing in great haste. Can you read it?

Love to all. Write soon.

Affectionately

Edw. H. Courtney Taylor
Miss Lottie D. Taylor
Geneva
Ontario County
New York

Head Quarters 1st Div. 5th Corps
May 12th, 1863

My Dear Sister Lottie:

Tho' you are owing me a letter, yet having nothing particular to do just now, I will write again. We are now quietly settled in our old quarters and getting over the fatigue of the late movements. I see by the few papers allowed to reach us that the administration are using every effort to make a victory out of that affair. I admit we did whip them in actual battle, but as a whole we did not gain our end. Good fighting was done. Our men are brave but no advantage was made of our actual gain and our valor was wasted by poor generalship. A victory is no victory at all unless you can show some great advantage to compensate for so many lives lost and so many wounds received. Otherwise the dead and the friends of the dead can judge the General whether he be guilty of murder or no. To be sure a general may have expected success from certain movements, but if all movements were made according to his wish and he still fail, and can only boast to have taken so many prisoners and to have taken so many cannon and not to really have weakened the enemy, nor having bettered our own position, but to have lost many killed, wounded and prisoners, then I say he is justly to be held responsible for failure -- for lack of judgment -- for the lives of the men lost by failure. If we give a general full scope and free action we have a right to expect correct judgment and success from him. Our Peninsular campaign was a failure owing to the failure of McDowell to cooperate (the latter owing to his orders from Washington.) But the battles of the seven days were successful as they accomplished the end in view i.e. the saving of the army. Our heavy loss in men was fully balanced by the saving of the main body of the army and its material. Our campaign under Pope was a failure for he, lacking proper judgment and command, allowed what should have been an orderly retreat, at worst -- to become a disorganized rout, and therefore the enemy took advantage and our loss was heavy and far too heavy. A proper amount of judgment had saved many men and much material and perhaps have given us the chance when the enemy were too much excited in the order of pursuit, to have severely punished them and perhaps to have changed our retreat into advance. Our Maryland campaign was a success, having in view the driving of the enemy from loyal territory. The enemy were severely punished at South Mountain and Antietam and good judgment or poor judgment as a committee call it alone prevented the Commanding General from pursuing the next day and getting badly whipped in turn, for we had but two Divisions that morning -- Morell's (our Division) and Sykes (the Regulars) with which to open pursuit and neither Division numbered five thousand present. (There were more on the rolls but many had struggled on the rapid marches from Washington). Besides, these same men were enfeebled by their stay on the Peninsula during the hot summer and the following terribly long marches, averaging twenty miles a day to the relief of Pope, and the following marches and battles of his retreat and the still later march through Maryland -- rapid and toilsome, though the Committee speak of eight miles a day as the average. A lie and a well-known lie. Burnside, tho' a good soldier in certain limits and with a not too large command, failed. We were very hopeful of success when he took command as well as when Hopek did, not that we considered them as better than McClellan but in each case thought the administration would give them more countenance and support. We don't so love McClellan that we
would be unwilling to fight under any **good** General whom the government would favor and support. But until they find a better than McClellan let us have him and let them support him honestly. They have never done so yet. If they have a good and trustworthy and judicious General whom they can honestly and honorably support let them put him on the carpet and the army will fight as well as ever they did. But no more experiments, no more "breaking in" of Generals, no more of compelling movements against the better judgment of the Gen. Commander and the man who is held responsible. Burnside failed, but I only blame him for being forced to undertake what he confessed himself unable to do. He was a good Division of Corps general but was not able then to command the Army of the Potomac. And Hooker has failed now. Say what people may and say what he may, He confesses his failure in the accompanying order: "If it has not accomplished all that was expected, etc." He places the reason "unforeseen obstacles." The only obstacles I know of were that the enemy outflanked us by superior maneuvering and of course it was full time to recross the river. What business had he in letting them out maneuver him! I can't trust Hooker. Most of the winter I have lived within ten rods of his quarters and know him to be a whiskey "bloat" -- one of the most profane men I ever knew and a terrible bragadocio. Still when he took command and particularly just as this move began I was willing to give him all support in word and deed, for I thought there must be something beneath the exterior -- something of a great General, to win such praise from the papers and public and such powerful support from the administration.

"Genl. Orders No. 49" in part tells the truth but would leave the impression that a substantial gain had been obtained. Not so. Everything here is now in "status quo" and the real bravery was wasted for naught. The design of this order is to make the world believe Hooker a great General as the gain of a substantial victory. Now no papers are permitted to be sold within the lines unless they contain laudations of Hooker and the Administration. All others are prohibited. Is he afraid the soldiers will see their own opinion in print?

I enclose the pattern of a "badge" -- I would like you to make me one after it. The Army are ordered to wear a certain badge upon their caps or hats and it is an offence to be found without the proper badge conspicuously worn. The first corps wear a badge of circular form (●). The second corps wear a fire-foil (ァ). The Third Corps wear a lozenge (◇). The Fourth Corps is not in this army. The fifth (our) Corps (Gen. Meade's) wear a maltese cross (☆). The sixth corps wear a Roman cross (†). The seventh and eighth and Ninth and tenth corps are not in this army. The 11th Corps wear a crescent (✈). The 12th wear a star (★). Now there are three Divisions in each Corps so that by each Div, having a color you have a mark by which you can tell where a soldier belongs and which Division has the most stragglers during a fight. So the 1st Div. of each Corps wear a red badge -- the 2nd Div. wear a white badge and the 3d Div. have a blue one. Thus a man of the 3d Div., 12th Corps would wear a blue cloth (woolen) star. A man of the 2nd Div. 5th Corps wears a white (woolen) cross. And I belonging to the 1st Div. 5th Corps wear a red maltese cross (the prettiest badge of all). These badges are supplied to the army made of woolen cloth but I want an extra one and slightly different in finish. The cross is to be covered with red (silk) velvet, with a border of white silk very narrow, or a border of gold or silver braid very narrow. The cross to be made of some stiff material and covered with the silk velvet. The stiffening can be of cloth or leather so as to raise the cross above the "base" and make it "set out". The "base" will also be made of some stiff and thick material and covered with blue cloth, either dark or light blue will do. If braid be placed around the cross dark blue would be most suitable for the covering of the "base". I
should prefer dark blue in any case. The cross is to be sewed to the "base". The stiffening used should be such that will not spoil in getting wet. I enclose a specimen of the badges issued to the troops made of red cloth. The badges are a very good notion and serve a good purpose in preventing straggling, etc.

There is positively no news stirring. Do you hear from Charlie Post? He has not answered my last. I shall write to him when I get time, soon, I hope. So he was arrested for a straggler. I am saved that danger now though once I was arrested as a rebel -- that was just before the 1st Bull Run battle. I was arrested by a Dutch Regt. -- the 27th Pa. Col. Einstein of Bluksr's Div. and released by Gen. Miles who was killed at Harper's Ferry. I believe I wrote home at the time. I didn't have a very bad time -- was under guard two days and after that spent four days with my captors in an Irish Company of the Dutch (27th) Pa. Regt. -- saw and was in, for a little while, the battle of July 16th, 1861 (First Bull Run.) Now I can make my own -------- which would be good to take me to Washington or home if I had leave to go. Did I tell you I was in Washington last month? I went up on duty with a party of soldiers to store surplus baggage. I was very busy while there but enjoyed the change from camp to city very much.

I haven't heard from Marie in a very long time -- Do you hear from her? I fear she is unwell.

I have written a very long letter but I fear a very uninteresting one. Write soon and make the others write also. Tell me all the village news. Love to all.

Your affectionate brother

Edw. H. C. Taylor

The news is that the Cavalry did a very "big thing" or as Lincoln says "a large and extensive thing." Good for them, I say. But why didn't Hooker take advantage of it? What use in sending cavalry out on such expeditions unless as part of a great movement. The whole cause of Hooker's failure was his division of the army into so many distinct bodies operating from different directions and seemingly with no general plan and no cooperation. One Corps here, another there with no connection and one ignorant of the movements of all but his own troops -- the Cavalry at another point doing its best -- all fought well but from the lack of general plan and cooperation and of a proper concentration of attack all was spoiled. I enclose a few paper Maltese crosses as patterns of the shape and size I would like mine to be made. (If indeed you will make me one.)

Goodby

Edward

You may think I am bitter on Hooker but I have just been making out lists of "killed, wounded and missing" and I can't help thinking the many deaths were for nothing. If Hooker does better in the future (doubtful) I will forgive him this.
Recommendations for Brevets and Medals, Purveyors, Inspector General’s Department, Captured arms, Company savings, Prisoners sentenced to hard labor, Flag, Lights, Badges.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Camp near Falmouth, Va. May 12, 1863

General Orders No. 53

1. Commanding officers will forward, with their reports of the recent battles, separate lists, containing the names of officers, non-commissioned officers and privates, of their respective commands, deserving of brevets or medals, or honorable mention in orders, for distinguished and gallant services in the face of the enemy. It is not expected that these lists will mention those who simply do their duty, but those only whose gallantry or merit were conspicuous and worthy of especial notice. The lists should set forth the number and nature of wounds received, if any, and the previous battles in which the officer or soldier has been mentioned, engaged or wounded, &c.

2. The non-observance, in many cases, of the regulations prescribed in General Orders nos. 10 and 30, for the government of Purveyors, requires the attention of all commanding officers, and of the officers of the Provost Marshall General’s and Inspector General’s Departments.

Hereafter, whenever it shall be found that improper uses have been made of the facilities granted to Purveyors, the offending party will be sent immediately beyond the lines of the Army not to return, his name published in orders, and the command permitting the unauthorized traffic, will be denied transportation or passes for private stores.

3. The officers of the Inspector General’s Department are, by virtue of their official position, required to see that all orders are strictly enforced.

4. Division Ordnance officers will be held responsible that all arms and equipments of sick and wounded men, and all captured arms or equipments are brought off the field in time of action. Corps and other commanders will hold them to a strict accountability therefor.

5. Paragraph 2, of General Order, No. 30 of April 2, 1863, from these Headquarters, is amended so as to read as follows:

Accounts for company savings, accompanied by a letter of advice, stating the Regiment, Brigade, Division, Corps and Army, to which the write belongs, would be forwarded to the Commissary General of Subsistence, United States Army, at Washington, D. C.

When such accounts are made out as required by the Regulations, and the Commissaries signing the certificates to them, have taken up the stores on their returns, payment will be made.
General Orders
No. 53
May 12, 1863

The envelopes containing the accounts, besides having the usual direction, must be endorsed, "Company Savings."

6. Prisoners sentenced by General Courts Martial in this Army, to hard labor upon public works, will be sent to the Provost Marshal General, with copies of the order promulgating the sentence and of the descriptive list of the soldier, in each case.

The Provost Marshal General will dispose of these prisoners in such manner as may, from time to time, be indicated to him from these Head Quarters.

7. The flag for the Head Quarters of the cavalry corps, will be of the same size and shape as heretofore prescribed for Head Quarters infantry corps, yellow, with cross sabres white.

The flag for the Head Quarters of the Artillery reserve will be of the same size and shape as heretofore prescribed for Head Quarters infantry corps, red, with cross cannon white.

The flags for the divisions of the different corps of this army will be as follows:

For the 1st division of each corps, a white rectangular flag, with the symbol of the corps in red.

For the 2d division of each corps, a blue rectangular flag, with the symbol of the corps in white.

For the 3d division of each corps, a white rectangular flag, with the symbol of the corps in blue.

For the light division of the 6th corps, a white rectangular flag, with the symbol of the corps in green.

The brigades of the 1st division of each corps, a white triangular flag, with the symbol of the corps in red in the center.

The 1st brigade no other stripe or mark.

The 2d brigade a blue stripe six inches wide next the lance.

The 3d brigade a blue border 4½ inches wide all round the flag.

The brigades of the 2d division of each corps blue triangular flag, symbol of the corps in white in the center.

1st brigade, no other stripe or mark.

2d brigade, red stripe six inches wide, next the lance.

3d brigade, red border 4½ inches wide around the flag.

The brigades of 3d division of each corps, white triangular flag, symbol of the corps in blue in center.
1st brigade no other stripe or mark.

2nd brigade red stripe six inches wide next the lance.

3d brigade red border 4½ inches wide all round the flag.

The chief quartermaster will furnish the flags upon requisitions approved by the corps commander.

8. General Head Quarters at night will be indicated by two red lights, one below the other.

Head Quarters of Corps by white and red lights side by side, close together.

Lights will not be thus displayed at any other place in camp.

9. The badges worn by the troops, when lost or torn off, must be immediately replaced.

The officers of the Staff on duty at these Head Quarters will wear a badge according to pattern in the Assistant Adjutant General’s office.

The only troops without badges are the Cavalry, the 8th Infantry and 23d New York Volunteers on duty at Head-Quarters, and the Provisional Brigade at Aquia and on the Railroad.

Provost Marshals will arrest stragglers all other troops found without badges and return them to their commands under guard.

By command of Major General Hooker:

S. Williams,
Assistant Adjutant General

Official:
Head Quarters, 1st Div. 5th Corps  
May 13th, 1863

My dear Mother:

I send, as promised, my photograph, or rather three of them. I had them taken when I was up in Washington a couple or more weeks ago. One of them I have marked for you. I think it is the best of the lot. The other one marked with my name is for the family generally, and the one not marked you may destroy if you see fit. It is a poor one, the eyes being bleared. Tho' the pictures don't look as "rough" as I do, yet I must plead as excuse for looking as bad as I do that two years campaigning don't improve one's beauty.

I don't look very military in the pictures as the colors don't show and I have on a sack coat. I have on light blue pants and vest, the latter as well as the coat adorned with brass buttons. My coat is a light flannel sack coat, dark blue in color -- such a coat as is, in the army called an "officer's blouse" or an "undress coat." That is not my proper uniform, but such as I have worn since I came to Head Quarters. I don't like the regular uniform for soldiers, it is poorly shaped and in poor taste. I have on also a paper (the kind most known in the army, where wash women are unknown) and a woolen shirt, slate colored and dark stripe. I wear woolen shirts entirely now, and when I leave the army I think I shall continue to wear them as more comfortable than any other and full as cheap.

I should much like your picture with Lottie's, Willie's and Fannie's -- (I have Annie's, Hugh's and Marie's already) to complete my "gallery". Can you not have them taken for me? I have so many to divide my picture among that a dozen goes but a small way. I can have another lot taken from the same plate any time within the year if I wish, for they have the plates that long if desired to.

There is positively no news here. All reports of the Army having again crossed the river are false; we are still in our old camp and not even a division has moved. Nor have the enemy left the city of Fredericksburg as reported in the papers. Our coming movements are a mystery. But I should be glad if only Hooker proved himself capable of out-generaling and out-maneuvering as well as in whipping them in equal ground. The latter we can do but the General must do the former.

Love to all,

Your affectionate son

Edw. H. C. Taylor
Miss Lottie D. Taylor
Geneva
Ontario County
New York

Head Quarters 1st Div. 5th Corps
May 21st, 1963

My dear sister Lottie:

I write this to enclose in Fannie's and can only write a few lines.

Fannie tells me you want one of those lithographs of the 4th Mich. I think my Regt. is on picket as the detail was made from that Brigade. But I'll go over this evening and if I can see Lt. Gruner (who drew the pictures) I will find out if he has any with him, and if so will send you one. I fear that he has sent all the pictures he had to Washington. I will do what I can about it tho' I may not succeed as soon as I hope. I am glad to hear that you have heard from Marie, for it was so long since I had heard I feared something was wrong. I have written to her three times since she wrote.

As for that badge the cross is to be sewed on around the edges. I am much obliged to you for undertaking it. You will see by the accompanying order that every one is obliged to wear his badge. The order also shows how we tell troops and where they belong on the field or on the march -- by the Head Quarter flag which in the march is carried at the head of the Corps, Division or Brigade, and in action is just in rear of the line of troops. Our Head Quarter flag is a white square flag with a large red maltese cross in the centre. Speaking of flags -- you should have seen the old flag of the 4th Mich. It has been sent home for safe keeping, as it was so torn and cut from shot and shell that it could not be carried. We have a new one now, but I think more of the old soiled flag we fought under on the Peninsula and in every battle till the last.

There is nothing new at present and no appearance of moving in any quarter. Indications are that we will not move for some weeks to come.

As I have nothing to say, I won't make myself dull by saying it --

With love to Mother and all
Goodby --
Affectionately your brother
Edw. H. C. Taylor
Miss Lottie D. Taylor
Geneva
Ontario County
New York
Head Quars, 1st Division, 5th Corps
Camp near Falmouth, Va. May 23d, 1863

My dear Sister Lottie:

I received your letter of May 15th and 20th containing the badge just now, and was very much pleased with it indeed. I had never seen one made in the manner I proposed and this is as near my idea as well could be. The shape is perfect and the manner of making and its general appearance is all I expected. I didn't think it would look as well as it does instead of expecting it to look better. Everyone is asking me "Where did you get your badge?" "Have you one to spare?" etc. I feel quite flattered by the notice it attracts. I owe you many thanks for it.

So you don't think much of "Hooker's strategy" -- I think it is a palpable blunder. The cavalry might have attacked and might have captured the place -- but they didn't happen to know the consternation prevailing in the city. But what if they had taken the place -- their own capture would have been a matter of course.

They might have done more and even held Richmond had Hooker's main army pressed the enemy at this point.

The great cause of Sedgwick's failure was the want of vigorous cooperation. And had Cavalry been used on the right the 11th Corps need not have been surprised.

The "Strategy" was a failure -- the using of the stream was not the cause of failure or the cause of retreat. The order to retreat was issued fourteen hours before the storm began. The storm saved us from attack and made our movements secret. The bridges were not carried away by the storm.

You wanted to know how much I get a month -- $13.00 -- "Extra pay" to soldiers is stopped by the conscription act. I used to get from 25 to 40 cents per day extra pay -- but that is stopped -- I got that for one month.

I am glad my photograph gave satisfaction -- I enclose some more copies. Some of them are not very good pictures. But you can pick out for yourself the best.

What is Charlie's address -- send it to me and I will write him, tho' he is owing me a letter.

I received a letter today from Marie. She had been sick but was better. She sent me her photograph -- a very good picture and better than the old one.

When can you send me yours and Mother's and Willie's? Fannie has promised hers -- Love to all and remember me to all friends.

Affectionately

Edw. H. C. Taylor
My dear Sister Lottie:

I sent you on the 10th two of the lithographs of this Regt. Take the best one and if you will keep the other for me. I have no time to write much and indeed only write now because I forgot to mention the sending of the pictures in my letter to Annie of yesterday.

I told Annie that I had returned to the Regt. and was Sergeant Major thereof. I find it is not a very hard place and the prospect ahead is very fair. I tent with the Adjutant (Lt. Lombard) who is a very clever fellow. I mess with about sixteen officers and turn my rations in for payment. It will not be so easy as my clerkship but the chances are good for the future.

Times are a little lively just now.

There was a brilliant cavalry fight near here in which our boys clearly showed their superiority as cavalry to the cavalry of the enemy.

There is nothing new or strange in or about camp.

Love to all -- Affectionately --

Your brother

Edw. H. C. Taylor
Battle Field near
Gettysburg, Pa. July 4th, 1863

Dear Mother:

I take this first chance to let you know that I am safe from the battle of day before yesterday and yesterday -- the slaughter was awful but so far all is in our favor -- I was taken by a party of "Rebs", and sent to their rear but managed to escape when they were repulsed by playing wounded and hiding behind a large rock -- I will tell my adventures another time. We took 300 men into the fight and brought out 88. I had a narrow escape. There is a lull in the storm. What comes next is hard to tell. I escaped from my captors before they had time to parole me and so am good for the next fight.

No more at present. When I can, I will write again.

Your affectionate son,

Edw. H. C. Taylor

Direct to
1st Division, 5th Corps
Camp 4th Mich. Infantry
Near Emmettsburg, Pa.
July 6th, 1863.

My dear Sister:

I write a few lines to let you know that I have come through the late battle "all right." I will give all particulars when I can write at leisure. Till then good by — Write soon.

Affectionately

Your brother

Edw. H. C. Taylor

Address

1st Division, 5th Corps
Army of Potomac
My dear Sister:

I was much pleased to get a letter from you tonight and will answer it as once. It is quite a long time since I have had a letter from home tho' Marie wrote a short time since.

Everything here is very dull. Madame Rumor is very busy with our future prospects. One day we are to return to Michigan to get filled up -- (Only the most sanguine believe that). The next we are bound for Alexandria to take part in a new expedition. Meanwhile we go through the lazy routine of camp life in Virginia in "dog day", a little drill -- a little parade -- much sleep, and much "don't know-what-to-do-with-oneself." Tho' we are inactive there is no chance for furloughs -- Our Corps (except Humphrey's nine months Pennsylvania Division -- now discharged) never were much favored that way at any time.

I hardly know what they intend to do with the Army of the Potomac -- they have certainly taken away a large number of our men and we can't number now over thirty thousand for duty. Where they have sent these men I don't know -- some are in Washington and some I hear are in New York Harbor on transports. Now true the latter is I don't know. The position this corps holds -- on the upper Rappahannock -- I do not think very secure, and is merely a cover for some other movement. I don't look for a forward movement by this direction and with our present force. I was in hopes if any expedition were organized with troops from this army, we would go; for I am so tired of this Virginia campaigning.

I hope Charlie will be able to get as far as Geneva though twenty days will be but a short time for so long a journey. I am so sorry he ever enlisted, tho' as he has, I am sure he will do all his duty. What are his chances for promotion? He is not the kind to "curry favor" to secure place. I am glad Willie wasn't drafted. One is enough in the army as long as the rest can keep out. I will be perfectly willing to do the family fighting.

I received your paper. Much obliged. A Geneva paper is a rare thing to me. Geneva is, I fear, much changed since three years ago. I hardly thought so long a time would pass before I should return and even now I see no prospect of getting home before about the 1st of next July. Which will be another year of many changes, perhaps.

You ask if the account of the battle of Gettysburg is correct. Nearly -- The 5th Corps had marched to reach the field for two days and nights and reaching the field in time to save the left of the army, after an awful and at times hand-to-hand struggle (an uncommon thing in real war to cross bayonets with the enemy) left over one-third their number dead on the field. Few troops ever fought harder and better than the old Fifth Corps -- Mende had but lately left the command of this corps and when he sent Gen. Sykes in with us we told him it was a place where he could only trust "his boys."

I honestly believe the Battle of Gettysburg was the severest one ever fought and a fatal one to the South. Give us but success at Charleston -- at Mobile -- and we can afford to lie still here.
The Southern Confederacy is now on its last pins. They are exhausted, while we are hardly yet pressed for men or money. They are in the midst of their fourth conscription while we have just begun to claim the service every citizen owes to his country. Did you see as I can the hollowness of that called the Confederate Government you would be surprised that it held so long. That it still exists and is a power is only due to the low and degraded state in which the poorer people of the South are kept by their superiors. I sometimes wonder if I am not in a foreign country. The people are so different -- so debased and ignorant -- I mean the poor people. If I were a Virginian, I should be a very strong abolitionist -- from no love to the negro but from a real wish to get rid of a terrible curse to so fine a state.

It has got to be quite late and I must turn in.

Remember me to all friends, particularly to the Kingslands (pardon the blot), the Misses Tillinghast, Mrs. Angell and Dr. Bissell. By the way -- I wrote to Dr. Jackson and to Dr. Bissell, sending the former certificates from the Assistant Adjutant General of this Division and from the Colonel, about trying again for the Marine Corps. I do not know if anything will come of it, but I can do nothing unless through friends, and such a situation would be the summit of my wishes. I know I am fitted for a Lieutenancy in the Marines and the appointment would be a life one. I have lost more than two years by being in the army if I do not adopt a military life as a profession. The Marine Corps is preferable for many reasons and obtainable if I can bring enough influence to bear. If you can in any way help the thing along, pray do. One thing you would perhaps find in favor of the Marine Service. It is, as is all sea service, safer than land service. The number we lose killed in one battle would man a large navy.

I do not think you can do much but do what you can please -- I do not build much upon obtaining my wish but deem it right to try.

Love to all -- yourself, Mother, Anna, Willie and Fannie. Let all and everyone write when you can and let mother write through one of you. When am I to get Fannie's and Willie's and yours and Mother's pictures?

Affectionately,

Edward

I am sorry my letter (the last) was so poor an affair since it was so honored.
Miss Lottie D. Taylor  
Geneva  
New York
Head Quarters - 4th Mich. Inf. 
Camp at Beverly Ford, Va. 
Sept. 13th, 1863.

My dear Sister:

Yours enclosing the within deeds came by tonight's mail. Going to Washington is out of the question, but I am told that I can, in the absence of the proper civil authority have them acknowledged before a Judge Advocate and in absence of the latter before the Adjutant of the Regt. I did not know this before, but I went over and saw Colonel Connor of the 44th N. Y. Vols. who told me that Capt. Allen of the 44th who is Judge Advocate of a Court Martial now in session could do the business for me. I will see him tomorrow so as to have the papers ready for tomorrow night's mail (the next mail for Washington.)

I am very sorry to hear that you are again hard pressed. I am the more sorry that I can do nothing to help. I have been getting for the past two months the pay of Sgt. Maj. 21 dollars, but before I only got a private's pay.

When I enlisted I was a little in debt from money spent in raising that Company. Had I not trusted certain persons, who proved false, I should not have been at all troubled for I should have been amply able to pay these little debts without difficulty from my pay as lieu.t. These debts I have paid since.

Again I have lost clothing -- sent away for storage by order and which was never returned and clothing destroyed by order at Gaines' Mills (They feared that being loaded, the men could not do the marching expected of them). Now this clothing sent away or destroyed was clothing which we had to replace, as when sent away or destroyed it left us with only the clothes on our backs and no change. When we get into camp for any length of time we are expected to have a certain amount of clothing on hand. If we have it not, we must draw it and it is charged to us. We had orders at Minier's Hill to send away all our winter clothing and blankets for storage till the next winter but when winter came the stored goods did not come and to keep soul and body together we had to draw new overcoats, blankets and underclothing and uniform coats all of which are charged against us to be paid for from our monthly pay. At Harrison's Landing we sent away by order all but the clothes on our backs. These goods never were returned nor can we get any pay for them. But as soon as we got to Washington we had to draw new clothing throughout as we were covered with vermin, having had no change for so long. Leaving Sharpsburg the same was repeated. Again this spring at leaving Falmouth, In this way we have sent off clothing six times and each time were obliged to draw the same amount over again. Twice before going into battle we have had orders to take off our knapsacks and leave them. They were in one case burned when retreat seemed immediately upon us, in the other case about half the Regt. recovered theirs. I lost mine, it having been stolen by some skulkers. I also had a knapsack stolen containing all my clothing and other articles with blankets, etc. while I was sick with measles at Minier's Hill in the fall of 1861. When we entered the service we had to draw a grey uniform which was charged to us at 20 dols. This uniform was discarded as too much like the Secesh, very soon after the 1st Bull Run battle, and we had to draw a full U.S. uniform which came to about 30 dollars. The allowance of clothing from June 20th, 1861 to June 25th, 1863
Sept. 13th, 1863

is 78 dollars, but from the causes above given I had to exceed my allowance by nearly 130 dollars, and this for articles I was obliged to have and to show at every inspection. Had our officers done their duty or known their business we would have got the value of all clothing sent away by order or destroyed or left in action by order. Other regiments got pay for such things, but we are blessed with some very poor officers, as far as looking for the comfort of the men is concerned.

There is no chance for an enlisted man to be extravagant in clothing unless he be careless in taking care of them. I was as careful as possible. There is little chance of spending money in fine clothes as all dress alike except the commissioned officers.

I might have sent something home only I was ashamed to send so very little. After deducting my clothing account and such like, I only drew between seven and eight dollars a month. One has also to pay so much if he gets a little butter or a dozen eggs or pound of cheese from the sutler. Butter is 60 cents per pound -- tea $1.75. Cheese 1 dollar -- condensed milk 1 dollar a can of pint size -- sugar and all other eatables in proportion. Now one cannot live on pork and hard crackers alone -- I grow billious on such fare and must have change or starve. I am not dainty as to what I eat -- I can eat anything, but I have to suffer the consequences if I do not take proper care. I have and have for over fifteen months the chronic diarrhea and anything so indigestible as pork and hard bread eaten several times in succession increases it, and I suffer intensely with the pain. Hard fare and exposure are the cause and the same evils increase its violence.

Hereafter I shall be able to do something in the way of sending money home. How soon we will get pay I do not know. Two months are now due us, and of that two months 30 dollars will be deducted for clothing, etc. Then I shall be square and hereafter shall not be in a situation where I shall have to send away or destroy my clothing as my things are carried in the waggons.

I hope that this press for money at home will not last long but that better times are coming.

I think you will find the Deeds are rightly signed by me; at least I don't know how to do it differently.

Hoping this will find all well and happy and with love,

I remain your affectionate

Brother Ned.

P.S. Not being able to find the Judge Advocate I have to acknowledge the deeds before the Adjutant. He is just as well.
Head Quarters 4th Mich. Infty.
Near Culpepper C.H. Va. Sep. 29, 1863

My dear Lottie:

Yours of Sept. 20th was received last evening. I am glad the deeds were found all right. I don't understand why it was necessary to redeed that lot to VanHauotte. Does he give another deed in place? By the way will it be of any use if I sign papers giving up any claim to that Michigan land to mother as well as to the Hermitage? It might be that you might want to sell and I being absent would have difficulty in arranging it. If any good present or prospective would be gained by signing over to mother, let me know and also the "modres operandi". It don't amount to a great deal but what little there is belongs more rightly to you females than to us boys.

Your tea was most acceptable. Old Jimmie declares it is the best he has tasted since leaving Ringland. Old Jimmie is an old Englishman. He cooks for me in addition to cooking for Camp A and in return I am able to have certain privileges granted him. He is a genius in a way though not blessed with scruples in regard to dirt. I have got used to that however.

What cavalry Regiment is it that is camped near Geneva? I wish I had entered the Cavalry service instead of the Infantry. It is much easier and has more life. Do you think there is any chance of success in the Marine Corps? If not what are the chances of a commission in one of the New York regiments at the end of nine months (when I shall be discharged)? If I cannot get into the Marines I shall try for a position in the Volunteers when I get out of this. We lost so many at Gettysburg, that now we have to many officers for the number of men. Some of our officers will have to be mustered out and the chances of promotion are small. In what part of Michigan does Mr. Bours intend to settle? I hope Charlie may succeed in getting his furlough by the time I get home.

The Assembly is sounding and I must close at once.

Love and regards to all

E.
Near Fairfax C. H., Va.,
October 16th, 1863

Dear Mother:

We are on the march and as you see have left Culpepper C. H. and have got as far as Fairfax C. H. The move began by a move from our camp at the former place towards the Rapid Ann on Saturday. We returned the same night, the Rebs having followed up too closely. On Sunday the cavalry gave them a "brush". The same day we moved back to Beverly Ford on the Rappahannock and crossed to old camp of August last. Next day we recrossed and drove the enemy who had followed as far as Brandy Station (five miles). Next day we again crossed the River and marched to near Callette Station on the Orange and Alexandria R. R.

Next day to Manassas Junction. Next to Bull Run. Had a fight here and repulsed enemy capturing eleven (11) pieces of Artillery and at least 300 prisoners. Next marched to this place, whence we expect to start immediately. The 2nd Corps which laid at Bull Run Creek yesterday had a fight and came out victors. I am well.

With love to all

Edward

Let me hear from home soon. Am writing on the top of my cap.
Head Quarters, 4th Michigan Inft.
Near Kelley's Rd., Va. Nov. 20th, 1863

My dear Sister:

I received your letter of the 15th this evening. I was glad to hear from you once more. I wrote to you from Auburn on the 25th and to Fannie about the 6th inst., while at Three Mile Station, but owing to the irregularity of the mails you seem not to have received them. I wrote to Annie two or three days ago.

We have been "on the move" very much of late but now I hope we shall have a few days of quiet. We are fixing up our quarters, building fire places and putting up bunks, and hope we shall be able to enjoy them for a short time at least. You would laugh to see some of our contrivances in the way of chimneys, bunks, etc. At our last camp I put up a sod chimney which worked admirably. I worked from morning till past dark on it and had a man to help on it, but that evening I enjoyed the fire so much in it that I thought it fully paid for by one night's use. They told me that it would not stand the weather, but, as it proved, I had no chance to test it for before daylight the morning after it was built we were marching out of the camp. I tell the Chaplain (I tent with him in a wall tent) that we will have a good chimney tomorrow even if we move the next day.

Our present camp is the site of the Secesh camp of a month ago. On the very ground on which we lie the 45th N. Carolina Infty. had built log pens for winter quarters. Such holes as the Johnnies lived in! Respectable northern pigs would hardly like to live in them. The 45th N. C. would hardly know the spot if they were to see the neat comfortable quarters our boys have put up on the same ground. Our log houses, the roofs of which are formed of shelter tents. Most of the boys being used to axes, the huts are very neatly made and are very comfortable when "chinked" and plastered in the cracks. Many of the boys have fireplaces and if we stay here long, everyone will have his fire place and "stick" chimney.

I hope that there may occur some vacancy in the Marine Corps tho' I don't build much on that. I am much obliged, however, to Dr. Jackson for all he has done. Please tell him if you ever meet with him.

It is just seven months today before my time is out, or rather our time is justly out on the 14th May next but they will probably hold us till the 20th June. One month on the end of three years is not much, however.

Hugh is owing me a letter and has for six months past. Have you heard from Marie lately?

There is no news of any consequence at all -- "All is quiet along the lines." Remember me to Girtie and to all my cousins -- and to all my friends.

With love to Mother, yourself and all.

Your affectionate brother,

Edward
Bealeton, Va.
January 9th, 1864

My dear Sister:

Feeling somewhat "homesick" this evening after getting no mail today. I merely write to ask if anyone is ever going to write to me?

I haven't heard from Will about the pipe -- Has he sent it yet? The mail is closing so good by --

Love to all -- Do write soon.

Affectionately

Edward ——
Sealeton, Va.
January 11th, 1864

Dear Will --

Yours of the 5th was received today and the same mail bro't the pipe all sound.

The pipe was well packed and was uninjured by the journey. The job gave good satisfaction to Reubin (the owner) and was even more satisfactory than he or I anticipated. I am greatly obliged for the trouble you have taken in having it done and in forwarding it.

Our "veterans" are getting pay to day -- (advance pay and bounty) and the Camp is quite lively. The more I think of the matter, the more I congratulate myself on not having re-enlisted.

The only object I would have had would have been promotion. The bounty would be no object in my case. If I was obliged to enlist for fear of a draft it would be a good thing to secure the bounty, but I have no fear of that in my case. If I enlist at all it would be for the sake of promotion. How what right have they to ask me to re-enlist on that score? If I am worthy of promotion it is for past service and for actual worth. Give me my due thus without asking me to trust to promises, and without putting me to the risk of serving another three years as an enlisted man. If I am not worthy of promotion now, re-enlisting won't make me more worthy. Of course if I got a commission it would be for three years, and I think I would be willing to serve. But as an enlisted man no one can ask me to serve. I have done so as long as duty can require. Let others come and try it first, and when, after that, more men are required, then it may be my duty to come.

Let them first be a dearest of men. In going into the service again I have a right to look to my own interests now as well as to those of the country -- don't you think I am right? As yet I hardly know how my action has affected my interests. Lt. Brown of Co. "A", a particular friend, tells me I am perfectly right and says he will refuse to take the captaincy of his Co. ("A") unless I am made Lieutenant of it. He is offered the Captaincy if he goes in for three years more. Other officers also tell me I take the right ground but I fear the Colonel and Major don't like it at all -- What do I care? As old Davy Crockett says "Be sure you are right and then go ahead." That is my motto. One thing without my own will they can't make me remain in the service longer than the 30th day of June next. As it stands now I would take a Commission for the coming three years but will not enlist on a promise of one.

We are having cold weather.
Dear Lottie:

I received yours on the 24th enclosing one from Fannie. I was very glad to hear from you and would have answered before but that the Adjutant (Lt. Maltz) having gone home on a furlough, I have had to act in his place, so that I have plenty to occupy my time. Did I tell you that I had moved? I am now living in the same quarters with the Adjt., and while he is gone I have things my own way — We have two "wall tents" placed together so as to make one room about twenty by ten in size. We have a good fireplace and good beds and are very comfortable and it is much better for me than my old house.

I had a letter from Marie a short time ago but she did not mention any difficulty she had on her journey to Bethlehem. Fannie told me that there was no news and if there was you had told it all, while you told me that "no doubt Marie had told me." Between you all I am mystified. I am sorry I missed seeing Edwin. Had I known how things were here I might have stayed another day home as well as not.

I don't hear from Hugh yet do you? It is about seven months since I heard from him — tho' I have written three times.

Last evening we were notified that a party of "Rebs" were prowling in this vicinity, with the probable intention of "raiding" on the Railroad in this vicinity — We were a little nervous in consequence but they did not come. Bad luck to them if they attempt it. We have not got over sixty men to guard over a mile of Railroad and approaches.

Our "veterans" are expecting to go home within two days. That will take over a half of the 240 which compose the strength of our Regt. and then they will either move us from this place and put a full Regt. here or they will send other troops to help do the duty.

I received a package of papers today which I suppose Mrs. Lay sent. Give her my thanks —

Whose ring is it I carried off yours or Marie's? I forgot it till after I was on the way and it was too late to return it.

There is very little occurring about here. As soon as I get my reports and work done for Jany. I intend to take a ride around the country and will then have something to tell when I write.

I enclose a note for Fannie. I will write her again when I get more time and something to write about. Meanwhile remember that you have the advantage of me so far as news is concerned and have more items at your command than I for I am acquainted with Geneva people, while the sayings and doings of the 4th Mich. are generally of little interest to you,

Give my regards to all friends and with much love to all at home

I remain

Your affectionate Brother

Ed. H. C. Taylor

Does the "Daily Post" arrive as usual and how is the Postman?
Head Quarters, 4th Michigan Infy.

Dear Lottie:

Yours of Feb. 21st with one from Will was received a few days since. Will's I answered at once -- until now I have had no time to answer yours. I can't see what happened to the letters I wrote Will and Anna: perhaps they will turn up yet. Yesterday I received Anna's letter enclosing Hugh's, which I resend with this. I was much rejoiced at the news it contained. Marie wrote about it, but as she supposed I knew all about it she was not very explicit. It certainly is the best news I have heard for a long while. I am sure Hugh feels six years younger.

I am glad to hear that Charlie has got his commission, but would be better pleased had he his discharge. He will soon be out now however. If he will write to an "enlisted man" I would like to hear from him. Is his Regt, Infantry? In what Brig. Division and Corps is he, and how do you address him?

By the way, I think my time will expire by the 16th May, so I may be home near a month sooner than I expected unless I conclude in the mean while to accept a commission which is offered me. I do not wish to decide before May 1st (at which time the vacancy will have to be filled) if I can avoid it, for by that time I can see what my chances are out of the army. It is too late for me to think of a profession, and I don't want to go to checking with no view ahead. Could I go to some new country where one would stand a more equal chance of rising -- In Geneva one must have capital -- Besides I detest Geneva. We could find as many friends in any other place. I am in just the humor to take the "Idaho fever" that seems to be raging in the North. By the way what would you think if I should start for Idaho when discharged? Perhaps it might be a good thing -- if not all a humbug I could do as well as the majority. Hugh wants me to go to California and says that I could get good employ there. I am not particularly anxious to go -- quite the contrary, but perhaps I could do better there than at home -- certainly I could not do worse.

Did Dr. Bissell say anything about receiving a letter from me containing a recommendation for the Marine Corps from the Commanders of the Regt Brig. and Division? I sent it him in early February. Remember me to the Dr. also to Dr. Wiley and Family -- Did Chas, Wiley ever say anything about having received a letter from me written very soon after my return to the regiment? He has not answered it and I fear did not receive it.

We are having very fine weather, and in consequence parts of the army are moving out on "raids" "reconnoisances" etc. We have not moved as we have the R.R. to protect and it is quite necessary to have a force here for the present at least.

The "Veterans" of the Regt. went home on the 26th Feb. and by this are in Michigan having a big time. I am not sorry that I didn't re-enlist. I can get home too, this summer, without re-enlisting and need not run the risk of three years in the ranks either.

Remember me to Mr. Hurd and to all who ask for me. I get papers from Mrs. Long quite often for which give her my thanks.

With much love to all and to your self.

Your affectionate brother
Edward H. C. Taylor
March 4th, 1864.

I will write to Anna and Fannie in a few days — meanwhile don't let them wait for me. I shall have to appoint Mother a committee of one to make Fannie write. She ought to know that, as her letters are not half so good as mine, she ought to write two to my one. Ask Mother if she will please see to it.

Ed. H. C. Taylor
Dear Will:

Yours of the 7th was duly received and would have been answered before had I not been too busy, and but for a bad cold which was almost equal to a sickness, I am now, however, quite well again. I took cold owing to the Regiment being obliged one cold damp night to remain up all night under arms in expectation of an attack on the R. R. at this point. We didn't have an hour's sleep till after daylight and it was so cold and chilly and damp it took me a week to get warm again.

For most of the time since I got back to the Regt. I have had to act in two capacities, as Sergt. Major and as Adjutant -- sometimes as Regt. Clerk. Now, however, I expect to have a rest, unless we move, for Lt. Maltz has returned and I sink back to my old rank of Sergt. Major.

Gen. Grant is at Culpepper and superintending the reorganization and remodeling of this Army. A large number of troops have been sent out to the front from Washington and things look like a move in less than a month -- I think Grant will do well if not hampered by Washington with its dead weight of intrigue and politics. I do hope they will give a good fair chance and full power to use his skill and force.

They say he will fight this army in person -- if he does we will show him some fighting -- the equal of which he never saw West. They fight very well out West, but real fighting was taught them when Longstreet turned on them and drove them back till the "defeated troops of Chancellorsville" the 11th and 12th Corps under Hooker drove them back. The 11th (Sigel's men) and the 12th Corps used to be counted the poorest troops in the A.P. and they have a big name already among the Western Army. If Grant does fight us this summer and is allowed his way, I believe we will do a big thing. I hope so and have full confidence in his generalship as does most of the army.

Who is your candidate for President? Do you go for a military or civil candidate?

They seem to have got things "mixed" down in Florida -- a peculiarity of the Seymours I believe. Our Army up the Red River has had so far good luck. What do you think of Kilpatrick, Custer and Dahlgren's raid? I think it is one of the biggest things of the war. The miserable dogs will suffer for the horrid murderous mutilations they performed on the dead body of poor brave Dahlgren. Did you read those scurrive articles from the Richmond papers?

We just have the news of the murder of one of our Sergts, a prisoner at Richmond, who was shot in cold blood while in charge of a small detail of men (prisoners) who were policing (cleaning) the prison quarters. It seems an officer spoke to him but he did not hear, whereupon a guard drew up and shot him down -- O Chivalry!

Did that letter turn up yet? There is nothing new in these parts. Give my regards to all friends and love to all the family. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain

Affectionately,
March 27th, 1864

Your brother

Ed. H. C. Taylor

5th Army Corps

From indications tonight I look for a move in a few days, maybe within the week -- A concentration of our troops either to counteract a similar move of the enemy or for attack is now going on.

I do not think that this regiment will be called on to move, for it will be necessary for the present to hold this Rail Road.
Dear Mother:

I wrote while near Spotsylvania telling of my wound, but fear the letter failed to reach you. My wound was received on the 8th, Sunday morning, thro' the right foot from side to side thro' the sole. Is quite painful and prevents walking but am thankful it is not worse. I do not think my foot will be stiff tho' it will be useless for say a month. I reached this Hospital on the 18th. Am well cared for and as comfortable as possible.

Do not write till you hear from me again as they intend to transfer us to other hospitals tomorrow. As soon as possible I will send my address.

I have directed my letters from the Regt, to be sent to Geneva. Keep them till you hear from me. Also my valise I have directed to be expressed there if possible. When I was wounded it was not possible to get at it as the teams were miles away, but Lt. Watz will, I think, see to it.

love

I will write as soon as I get somewhere. Meantime with much to all and regards to all my friends.

I am your affectionate

Son

Edward

I wrote to Maria but fear it failed to reach her. Write her for me and give her my love --

E

May 18th, 1864

My address will be, it seems, for the present as below -- please send all letters for me which may be re-wailed from the Regt.

Sergt. Major E. H. C. Taylor
Ward 3 -- Finley Hospital
Washington, D. C.
Summit Hospital  
June 9th, 1864  

Dear Mother:

I received letters from Anna, Lottie and Fanny of May 26th, 31st and June 2d yesterday and day before. I was very glad to hear from home and that all were well.

My foot is rapidly getting well. One hole is closed up and the other is doing likewise. In two weeks I will be perfectly sound again.

I will try to get mustered out in Phil. when my time is up and save the trip to Michigan. At present I can't say how it will be, tho' the chances are in favor of discharge here. I have not heard from the Regt. since the 12th May but then they did not number twenty-five. There has been awful fighting since then, and I suppose the 4th was in also. Grant means to whip if fighting will do it, and I hope and believe he will succeed. He certainly has the best of the game now, and gets all the re-inforcements he wishes.

I expect to have a pleasant time when I get home, since Chris will visit us, and Maria will be home. Maria wants me to come up to Beth, but I will put it off till after June 20, as I find it will better suit my pocket and then I will be better able to walk around.

I got a letter from Charley Post just before we began the campaign and had no time since to answer. Tell Lottie to make may excuse to him.

It is only eleven days from today till I am discharged. I do not realize the fact that the time is so near.

I am writing this on a pillow which makes a very poor desk. Give my respects to all who ask for me, to the Misses Tillinghast in particular.

With much love to all I remain -- Your affectionate son

Edw. H. C. Taylor
Summit Hosp --
Phila, Penn.
June 18 -- 1864

Dear Folks --

Don't write more till you hear from me. Am all sound again and wear my shoe --

Love to all

Affectionately

Edw. H. C. Taylor
Detroit, Michigan
June 29, 1864

Dear Mother:

Had to come on here with Regt. to be mustered out. Could not do it in Washington. Will be dischd. tomorrow but will not be able to start for Geneva till sometime next week as there is so much business to be done here, and I wish also to see if I can get anything to do in this part of the world.

I am very busy and can write no more. As I will be in Geneva soon, do not write.

Affectionately

Edw. H. C. Taylor
seems now extinguished — Wherever he be his light has set and his glory's gone — Be a Traitor's peace of mind his — I wish no earthly vengeance to be wreaked on him or Davis and other Rebel leaders than will be theirs if they escape the hangman's rope. Like the first American traitor Arnold they will wander the world despised by the world and hated by once friends and followers.

Yes if abolitionism will let Lincoln and McClellan alone the war is soon over. I was pleased at Lincoln's course towards Fremont and Hunter — Nothing could be better or more just than his course towards such fanatics. I hope and trust he will also sustain Stanly of N.C. By so doing the old north state will soon come back to the Union she so unwillingly left — "The Constitution as it is and the Union as it was" has it seems, so far been Lincoln's motto — I hope it will still be his golden rule of policy — I think him firm enough to withstand the fanatic pressure of Sumner Wade & Co.

George Yates is Quarter Master Sergeant of the Regiment. He is well — There is something strange about the boy — He has been wandering over the South for some years by holding no communication with his friends — He is tolerably steady but a little "fast". I must close — I have no answers from letters to Marie. Do you hear from her? Excuse haste. Love to all and respects to the Misses Tillinghard — also to Mrs. Angell, Mrs. K and Miss S.

In haste Your affectionate
son and Brother

Ned

(Part of a letter. Rest seems to be missing)
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