

John Lord Otis



Letters from a Civil War Soldier
1861 -1864

November 2018

Dear Family,

This is a collection of letters written by my great grandfather, John Lord Otis of Manchester, Connecticut, to his wife, Catherine Preston Otis and two young sons, Harry and Philip, while serving in the Civil War. The letters span the period from his enlistment as a Private in the 10th Regiment of the Connecticut Volunteer Infantry in October of 1861 to October of 1864, seven months before the close of the war.

Prior to service, he was a successful businessman having progressed from working as an eight-year-old bobbin boy at a cotton factory to founding the Otis Manufacturing Company in South Manchester, Connecticut. As a highly regarded machinist, he was hired by the Cheney Brothers Manufacturing Company to put into operation the first machinery used in the United States to produce silk and wool knit goods. Having attended school only through age 7, he was largely self-educated which is reflected in the vivid, descriptive and well-crafted language contained in these letters.

The letters came down through the family from Harry, JLO's eldest son, who raised his three children, including my father, Charles Preston Otis, in a house on the corner of Lilly and North Main Streets in Florence, Massachusetts where the letters lived for many years. In the 1980s, my sister, Catherine Otis Merritt, began the difficult and time-consuming project of transcribing and typing the letters from JLO's original hand. The letters were often written while sitting on saddle blankets in his tent, by candlelight. In reading his accounts you will experience the weariness and discomfort he felt, often after a day of battle. We have kept the original spelling and grammatical style of the letters to preserve their context. With a shortage of paper, he sometimes reused the page by writing in a crosshatched fashion, which gave my sister a great challenge in transcribing! Much of the language concerning battles and terrain was unique to that era, often unfamiliar to us as modern readers. Our cousin, Ralmon Black, was a great help in deciphering these terms.

Over these past few years I have enjoyed reading these letters and learning what an extraordinary person my great grandfather was. Following the war, he went on to become a prominent businessman and community leader in Northampton. He was elected as a representative to the Legislature in 1877 and served as a State Senator in 1879 and 1880.

Following the letters, I include additional biographical and other material about John Lord Otis that I think you will find very interesting and helpful in getting to know this most wonderful man.

I'm sharing these letters with you in hopes that you will enjoy them as much as I have!

Charlotte P. Otis

Charlotte Preston Otis

John Lord Otis

Born July 15, 1827 Lyme, Connecticut
Died March 14, 1894 Tarpon Springs, Florida

Catherine Preston Otis

Born July 15, 1818 South Hadley, Massachusetts
Died February, 20 1901 Northampton, Massachusetts

Harry Preston Otis

Born November, 1851 Manchester, Connecticut
Died December 26, 1926 Florence, Massachusetts

Philip Arthur Otis

Born April, 1855 Manchester, Connecticut
Died May 22, 1914 Chicago, Illinois

Chronology of the letters

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1861 - 1864 | Written by John Lord Otis |
| 1987 - 1995 | Transcribed and typed by Catherine Otis Merritt with computer assistance from her son John Otis Merritt |
| 2015-2018 | Copy editing by Charlotte P. Otis and Laura Davenport per Catherine Merritt's notes. Additional materials compiled and edited. |
| April, 2018 | Review and consultation on the project by Daria D'Arienzo, Archivist, Meekins Library, Williamsburg, Massachusetts |
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JL001
Hartford
Oct 1st 1861

Dear Kate.

When you come in on wednesday do not fail to bring me a clean shirt and collar. I sent Mrs Horsly to you yesterday for something to eat they had nothing in the house. Our company was mustered into the service of Uncle Sam yesterday, so the men cannot get away if they wish. I shall write Cap. Parker to day that he must let Mrs. H have money to live on. I think I had better write Leander to come and see us next saturday, as I shall not be able to go to Mansfield again. We had lots of company from Manchester yesterday, and they all seemed glad to see us. Ward Cheney told Hudson yesterday that our uniforms should be paid for.

Give my love to the children.

I will come up town to meet you if I can, but it is doubtful whether I can

Yours Truly
J.L.Otis

JL002

[in pencil]

Camp Buckingham
Oct. 13th 1861

Dear Kate.

I forgot the Insurance policy today bring it in when you come without fail. The victuals I brought in tasted first rate, and were highly praised by both Hudson & Wiley.

If Henry can bring me in some butter and another chicken I wish he would. he can bring them in that dinner basket I used to carry my dinner in. I will buy him something to carry out.

Our Regt will not go this week.

Yours Truly
J.L.Otis

JL003
Hartford
Oct 22nd 1861

Dear Kate .

Mr Perkins was at camp today and I arranged with him to bring in my potatoes on thursday if the weather should prove pleasant Get my stockings ready also those two new shirts and let him bring them in. You probably will not have any victuals to spare if you do send it in, if Mr Perkins cannot come to camp he can leave the things at Fishers. Do them up in a compact bundle and put in that sheet Mrs White gave me. I got my Commission to-day so I suppose I am all right about that.

Yours Truly
J.L.Otis

JL004
Annapolis M.d.
Nov 4th 1861

Dear Wife.

I know you expected to hear from [me] before this, but it is the first moment I could call my own. But I will commence in regular order and give you as good an account of our trip as possible under the circumstances. We started from Hartford on thursday as you are doubtless aware. I had a good stateroom and slept well. We arrived in New York about daylight; the next morning and here commenced our troubles. The sons of Connecticut sent a committee down to take us up to the City Hall Park for breakfast. For some reason or no reason we did not leave the boat til 9 1/2 O. Clock, though the men had stood with knapsacks slung for 2 hours, waiting to move. Well we finally got under way for the park where we arrived about 11. I stood about half an hour tired and hungry my head commenced aching pretty bad so without waiting any longer for the committee to feed me I left and got my breakfast at a Hotel after which I felt decidedly better. We met our Commander Gen Burnside there who praised us highly, saying we were the best Regiment he had yet seen from any section of the country, and we recieved the same compliment from people all along the rout. Well we fineally got started from New York about 4 O.Clock got to So Amboy about 8 here we took the cars and arrived in Philadelphia at 11 1/2 here we found an excellent supper ready with hot tea and coffee. I never enjoyed supper away from home better in my life and the men were all delighted with it. But we liked never to have got away. We waited in the cars Eleven hours befor starting. It rained in torrents all the afternoon and the water was so high when we arrived at Wilmington Del. the water was so high that people were driving their cattle out of the meadows the water in many places coming halfway up their bodies. We got to Perryville Md. just about dusk but there were no transports ready for us so we slept in the cars that night and marched down to the Depot the next morning. I was appointed to command the Guard, so I had little opertunity to see the country. Five companies of the regiment got off about 11 O.Clock in a steam tug the other five our own among them got off about 7 in the evening. We were out all night and got here about daylight this morning. I stood the journey as well as any of them, but I am very tired tonight for I have not had my clothes off since the night we left Hartford I should like to write you something about the place but cannot tonight, but will try to write you agen to morrow. I want you to write me all about your mooving and how you got along.

I must close now but will write again as soon as possible. give my love to the children. I would have given more for a good quiet supper with you and a board to lay my whole length on than anything else I could think of on the journey

Yours

John L. Otis

JL005

In Camp at Annapolis

Nov 8th 1861

Dear Kate

I have written you several times already but suppose you would like to hear from me again. We have been in camp now three days but have not got settled down to business yet and it seems as though we never should. Our camp was not properly laid out and we have had to change it which used up one day, and our want of system or something else has used up the balance of the time and the prospect is we shall have our entire camp to pitch over again within a day or two, as its arrangement does not suit Col. Morse the commander. We had our first battallion drill since we arrived here this afternoon. We do very well but every other Regiment on the ground can beat us at present, but I hope we shall improve faster now.

I cannot give you any news as you doubtless get it faster than we do though I see a Baltimore paper nearly every day. We heard heavy firing to day in the direction of the Potomac commencing about 10 O. Clock and becoming more and more frequent till about 11 when it ceased, about 3 it was one continual boom. We know nothing about the occasion of it. The weather is pleasant here though rather cool for comfort. We had a white frost here last night - the first of the season but not even enough to kill vegetation. Niggers are plenty here and no mistake we see a dozen of them to one white person and they talk nigger just as you see it printed in the papers. I see something every day that I should like you to see and many I should like to tell you about if I could see you, but could not write about it so as to make it interesting. I will send you an envelope and want you to write me all the news I will close my letter and go to bed as I am detailed for what is called fatigue duty to morrow with 35 men and 2 Sergeants. I do not know just what it is to be but believe it is to see to the unloading of supplies from a vessel at the dock.

Good night

Yours J.L. Otis

JL006A

In Camp at Annapolis

Nov. 14th 1861

Dear Wife

I recieved your letter yesterday and it was the first word of any kind I had recieved from Manchester was glad enough to see it. I do not have much time to write because I spend my leisure in trying to learn my business. I have only half an hour to myself now when I shall attend an Officers meeting which will hold till 10 O. Clock.

You say you would like to know how we live, well I will tell you something about it. We have reveille and roll call at 6 1/4 O. Clock in the morning then 3/4 of an hour drill,

then march in and in and eat our breakfast. Guard mounting at 8 O.Clock which takes about half an hour from 9 to 11 Battalion drill from 1 till 2 Officers Drill from 2 to 4 Company drill at 4/4 Dress Parade. The Dress Parade is very showy the regiment is dran up in line, all the men must have their shoes blacked clothes brushed and hair combed. The Officers in full uniform with white gloves. this takes till nearly dark. We then eat our supper. At 8 O Clock we have an Officers school which lasts from an hour and a half to two hours. You see my time is all taken up I have only been to the city twice since we came here one I was sent by the Colonel to attend the funeral of an Officer in one of the Vermont Regiments, and one in command of a fatiugue party of 50 men and we were all out in a drenching rain three hours, But I had on my rubber coat and got along very well. Some of the men got awful wet. But for all I am so busy I like it well I do not get tired and exhausted as I did in the mill I sleep well and am ready to get up in the morning. I have not had the sick headache since we left Hartford and have felt first rate most of the time had a dreadful sore mouth when I wrote you last and yesterday had such a cold in my head that I could not drill in the afternoon but am much better today and have attended to my duties as usual. to morrow I shall be Officer of the Guard and have to be up all night but shall not mind it. So if you see the moon shining in the evening just think I am walking around the lines and looking at the same moon and stars that you are. I often wonder when I look up at the stars whether you are not seeing them at the same time You know how well I should like to come home and spend a quiet eveng with you but it cannot be at present of course. You ask how we live. It is not like living at home but we have enough to eat and that which is good enough.

I have not seen more than two or three white women since we came here till to-day. as I was passing the house of a planter named Taylor (with a water party) on whose land we are encamped. I saw four well dressed women sitting under the Verandah.

You will find some leaves in the letter which I picked in the woods close to the camp they were a beautiful dark green when I found them it appears to be a sort of shrub though I found quite a large tree today of this kind filled with bright red berries, and it looked beautiful It is called here prickly oak We have had four days of most beautiful weather just like Indian summer but it rains hard now 11 OClock PM and I am fearful it will not clear off so warm as it has been

I am glad you mooved I should not have wished you and the children to stay in that neighborhood this winter if you could have had the place rent free. It is a great relief to me to know that you are mooved and settled I do not know who you mean by Mrs. Kings' son. We have no such person in our Company and none in the Regiment that I know of.

I have forgotten who the shirt belonged to but will finde out and let you know. Give my regards to our neighbors and tell them I feel greatly obliged for their kindness to you

Your J.L. Otis

JLOO6B

In Camp at Annapolis

Nov 14th 1861

Harry and Phil.

My little boys. I am delighted to hear that you are good boys both at home and at school. I know you will continue so both from regard to your father who is away, and your mother who has no one else near to love her. I wish you could be here for a day to see what I saw day before yesterday, and if you had been with me you would have been delighted. I found ever so many black walnut trees and the ground under them was

covered with the nuts as large as lemons and looking very much like them. You could have picked up a cart load in a short time (they are real good to eat.) Close by the walnut trees was a persimmon tree filled with fruit about as large as pigeons eggs and tasting just like nice ripe plums. They grow wild and boys that have time to look for them and are smart enough to climb trees, can get as many as they like. Close by the camp there lives a planter named Taylor, he has a good many Slaves I don't know how many but I have seen at his house at least a Dozen no larger than you with the curliest heads and the blackest faces you ever saw. Today I saw one of them harness two more to a broken wheelbarrow and try to drive them but the[y] ran away and upset his load in the barnyard, while one a little larger laughed as if he would split to see the fun. I don't know how they got along afterwards for just then the water party I had charge of was ready to return to camp and I left with them. You must make haste and learn to read and write so that you can write me yourselves. I want to go to Washington where Abe Lincoln lives it is not far off, but I fear I shall not get time to go if I do I will write yo[u] what I see there. Capt. Hudson has gone up today. We have heard the roar of cannon in that direction all day. I suppose they are firing salutes on account of the victory at Port Royal and Beaufort S.C.

The seeds in the letter are persimmon seeds, each one having five or six of the seeds inside.

I expect to hear a good account of you every time mother writes

From Your Father

John L. Otis

JL007

Annapolis Md

20th Nov 1861

Dear Wife.

I should hardly take time to write you again so soon but but suppose you are out of envelopes and will not write again till you get some. But you must not wait for that. Direct them yourself or get some one to do it for you. I got a letter from Tudor to-day and was much pleased to hear from him, and you, through his letter. I shall direct this to Northampton as I suppose you will stay there some time. You may as well stay as long as you can content yourself there. I have just returned from an Officers School it takes place every night at the Colonels tent under the instruction of Lt. Col Drake. He is a strict disciplinarian a fine man and an excellent Officer I like him much. Hudson and Wiley have both been to Washington Wiley has returned but the Captain has not it is a week tomorrow since he left. I think he wants to get a place there if he can. I get along pretty well with my duties and feel very sure I shall like it well but there is so much I want to know and do not that I feel almost discouraged about making such an Officer as I should like to be; though Col. Drake paid me the compliment to-day of saying that I was an excellent Officer. I am sure I ought to be some time for I try hard enough. It is quite cold weather here but Wiley and myself have fixed up a fire place in our tent and make ourselves quite comfortable. Troops are collecting very fast here Secretary Cameron was here on Sunday last and we had a grand review in the afternoon. There were six regiments out of a thousand men each. one Mass reg't. and a Penn. regiment have come since to-day one of Zouave arrived about Eight Hundred in number. They had nice new uniforms and made quite a show but a more outlandish-looking rig could not be contrived by the ingenuity of man. I defy the world to produce an individual who would make a decent Christian like appearance in one of them. Take

one of our neighbor Taylors, slave women, dress her up in a red turban white stockings and short blue petticoat without hoops, and she would make as fine looking a Zouavue as can be found this side of Algeira. But to return to my subject as the preachers say. To-day Harlems Regiment of Cavalry passed our camp they are about Six Hundred strong and in double files extended about half a mile. They have been on service across the Potomac for two months past and look as if they had had a tough time of it I think there must be Ten Thousand men near here at present and more coming every day. I can step to my tent door now and see the camp fires of no less than six Regiments, lighting the horison around us

We have no idea when we shall leave here or where we shall go but most likely shall be sent down the coast somewhere I hope we shall go where it is warmer for we all take colds here every day or two. I have a cold or rather a succession of colds with a dreadful sore mouth for mor than a week, but aside from that have been in better health than anytime before for years

Give my love to the Children and my best regards to Father and Mother Look It is half past Eleven good night

Yours J. L. Otis

JL008

In Camp at Annapolis

24th Nov 1861

Dear Wife

It is 4 OClock in the morning bright moonlight, and frosty as in New England, but not quite so cold, though cold enough to make ones fingers ache if not well protected. You wonder what I am up for at this time of day while you are snug in bed. Well, I am on guard duty again and as I cannot sleep, or leave my quarters except on business connected with the guard, while in Command I take that time to write, as I cannot study without going to sleep. As I often refer to being on guard perhaps you would like to know something more about it. Well we like all other Regiments, at eight O.Clock every morning have what is called Guard Mounting. The guard each day is made up of about ten men from each Company. At a quarter before eight the Drum Corps beat a call at which the detail from each Company fall in, in their own streets for inspection by their Orderly Seargents. They must all have their shoes nicely blacked clothes brushed equipments clean ornaments well polished and everything in perfect order. The guard must all be dressed alike, not one of them being allowed to wear anything different from the rest, and none being allowed to take off their clothes or equipments for 24 hours. At eight O Clock another call is beaten when each detail is marched by the Orderly of the Co. to the regimental parade where they are formed in two ranks about three paces apart making a company of about 100 men The Officers of the guard, two Lieutenants, have to appear in full uniform wearing their swords sashes and white gloves. After a good deal of ceremony the Officers commence inspecting their guard taking every gun in their hands inspect it thouroughly and return it; They also inspect their clothes and equipments, one of them inspecting the front and the other the rear rank, after which both take post in front of the guard; the band playing all the while. The Adjutant now commands Troop beat off. The band now march down the front past the Officers of the guard and back to the right (we have a Brass Band of 20 pieces) The ranks are then closed the guard marched in review before the Officer of the day and of[f] to the guard quarters where more ceremonies take place between them and the old guard, but I have writen enough to give you some ide[a] of the thing. My duties when detailed are to

command the guard from 1 to 7 P.M. and 1 to half past eight A.M. and that is how I come to be up at this time in the morning. My turn comes abot one a week.

I did not get your last letter till to-day though I usualy get them the day after they are mailed. We shall not leave here for a week or two I think, so you may keep writing and dont wait for me I shall write as often as I can. People at home have no ide how the soldiers prize letters, if they had they would spend half their time writing. Men here have few conveniences for writing (I mean the privates) still they manage to write a great deal. As I was coming down from the guard tents about two this morning I saw a Soldier lying flat on the ground beside the cook stove (which have no Shanties over them as they had in Hartford) with his paper on the ground and his candle stuck up in the dirt writing a letter. That is what I call keeping up a correspondence under difficulties. It is six O Clock I mus[t] go and see the relief turned out and finish my letter by and bye

1 P.M. I am off guard duty but have been busy reading the Articles of War to the men. Our fine pleasent night has turned into a raw gusty november day , but I have just dined and feel pretty well. had some sweet potatoes and fried eggs. We get good sweet potatoes here for 87c per bushel. and oysters for 40c per gallon Wild ducks are quite pleanty in the waters here about. We had one roast for dinner yesterday and I thought I never tasted anything better

That shrub or tree I wrote about a leaf of which I sent you. I have since learned is the holly with which churches are trimed at Christmas I must tell you what Col. Drak said to me day before yesterday not in the way of boasting for I consider myself a novice in military tactics but because I know it will pleas you to find that I am learning something about my business. We were drilling in Battallion movements as we do every forenoon Wiley & Keach were both away and had been for a week so I had command. We were going through some new and difficult maneuvers and as our Company is on the left flank it has a very hard position. There had been mistakes made by most of the commanders during the day and the Col had told them once before that the companies Commanded by the Lieutenents were handled better than the others (There was one Lt in command of Co besides myself) The Col gave an order for a new and complicated movement, but one which I had studied out only the night before. As soon as he gave the order without waiting to see whether anyone else knew how to do it or not I faced the Company in the proper direction and as they were filing around the guide I had established on the line I heard Col Drakes voice off on the right reprimanding the Captains for not getting in position our Company was in position well alligned and standing at support arms while the rest were in confusion The Col rode down the line to where I was standing and said loud enough to be heard through the regiment: Lieut you done that well! I touched my hat to him for the compliment and felt like quite a Soldier the rest of the day.

I had a letter from Miles yesterday but it contained no news I was glad to get it however and shall write him as soon as I get time I have a piece of Gen Bakers Flag staff which I will send you in a paper this week. There is no mistake about its being genuine as Secretary Wills gave it to Wiley

I believe I have writen a foolish kind of a letter but a man cannot write so many letters and always write sense. The Surgeon says that the reason so many of us have colds is that we sleep without any covering on our heads. He says we should [have] something on at night no matter how thin a silk net is as good as anything If you can mak one and send it in a paper or letter I should like it by Express You had best stay at home as long as you like. I would not hurry abou going back write me all the news give my regards to our friends and I will try to write a better letter next time Hossington is a great plan for publishing letters If anyone should persuad you to have any part of mine published dont let anything personal either to myself or anyone else go in

Yours truly
J L Otis

JL009
Annapolis Md
28th Nov 1861

Dear Wife.

I have written you twice since receiving anything in reply but suppose you are busy with thanksgiving and visiting. I shall not be able to write much today as my ideas are all topsy turvy, in consequence of changing my quarters. I was yesterday promoted to the 1st Lieutenancy of Company F of this Regiment. They are all strangers to me Officers and men. The Co is from Baltic Capt Branch.

I feel sorry to leave this company for I have become attached to it, and know that most of the men like me well. I would not leave it for the extra pay which is only five Dollars per month, but the rank it gives me I value highly and the compliment paid me in the promotion, and yet I do dislike to leave our old Company. Capt Hudson and myself have been on excellent terms and Lieut Wiley also. We had got our arrangements made to board ourselves and got along first rate. living as well as one could wish under the circumstances, but I shall try to make some such arrangement with the Officers of the other company. The men are having boxes of good things from home sent by Express for thanksgiving. Hudson had a box from his Grand Mother, containing good things enough to last a week. I should have written you to send me some but thought it would cost too much, but when I saw so many have boxes come I was sorry I had not written you to send me something. I had a letter from Leander yesterday. his hand is a good deal better. he called to see you two days before, not knowing you were away. He thinks Keeny will have to go under and I am afraid he is right about it. Tell Harry I am very sorry he lost his cat but Phil must lend him his sometimes. I shall have to tell them about our kitten. Well: one of our men named Mahony found a little kitten in the street at Philadelphia and brought it along with him when he was marching it sat on the top of his knapsack. We have him here now and he comes in and sleeps on my bed almost every day, day before yesterday he caught a mouse and was as proud of it as a little boy would be who earned a sixpence. (I am sure a little boy who earn[s] sixpence ought to be proud of it.)]

The Ira Harris Cavalry arrived and went into camp today they are said to be Eleven Hundred strong but I doubt it. I noticed Ira Wright of Hartford in command of one of the companies. I have no news for I have not been out of camp since going to the Funeral I wrote you about. I mean to go this afternoon if I can as well as not. give my regards to all our friends. I have not time to write any more and my head is not very clear. you know how it is with me when anything happens to stir me up. give my love to the children and my best regards to all. Do not fail to write me as often as you can.

Yours Truly
J.L Otis

P.S. I forgot to tell you that our Brigadier General arrived here yesterday it is Gen. Foster. The Capt Foster who was in Fort Sumpter with Maj Anderson I think the appointment indicates our destination.

J.L.O

JL010

Annapolis Md.

3d Dec 1861

Dear Wife.

I have written you three letters and only got one in reply - but I will again to night though it is quite late, and I am pretty tired. The company into which I have been transfered is very poorly drilled and worse disiplied. the 2nd Lieutennent is no help at all as he knows nothing about Miletery. So it gives me a plenty of work. I did not know the difference between the Manchester Co and the others till now. It is certainly ahead of any Company in the Regiment I have heard that opinion express[ed] by almost every Officer in the line. I am sorry the children are not better contented to stay if you wish to, but I would not stay any longer than I could make it pleasant if I were you You must write me when you are to return so that I shall know about sending money when we are paid off. It is getting cold here the ground froze quite hard last night, we have not had much snow here and hope we shall not as it will make it very uncomfortable. I see by the Hartford papers that the 11th & 12th Regiments are furnished with the Sibly tents and stoves. They fare a good deal better than we do for we have the same little mean tents we had in Hartford, and no stoves furnished by the state though most of the men have bought little stoves themselves so they manage to keep warm and comfortable when off duty. The men have good rations and plenty of it and I hear very little grumbling now My feet are getting cold so I will go to bed and finish my letter tomorrow. Dec. 4th 10 P.M. I will now finish my letter though I have nothing new to write The Company I am now in want a good deal done for them they are no farther advanced than they were when they left Hartford in fact not as well I shall have to unband tho a good part of their drill and begin anew. I have no doubt about being able to improve them a good deal if I have time. They have improved a good deal already But I do not feel at home and mean to get back to the old company if a vacancy occurs there. Hudson tried hard to get his brother in to fill my place but will not succeed though he tried every means in his power both honorable and dishonorable to bring it about. His staff appointment is no go. I saw a letter from his uncle last week saying he could not procure it for him. He is now trying to get an appointment on Gen Foster's Staff.

Give my love to the children I wish it was possible for me to come home for a day or two but suppose I cannot. When I was at home last I meant to have brought away yours and the childrens Ambrotypes but forgot it.

I want you to go to town and have some taken either Ambrotypes or Photographs and send them by Express, get them in a single case if you can but be sure you get good pictures. Give my regards to our friends and write me as soon as you get this.

Yours Truly

J.L. Otis

JL011

Annapolis Md

Dec 15th 1861

Dear Wife

I recieved your letter last night about 11 O.Clock. I am sorry you have not enjoyed your visit more for I thought you would have such a grand time. You need not hurry home on my account for I think you will not be in time to send me anything and I really

do not need it for we live quite comfortably here. But things from home make us seem nearer our friends some how. I shall send you some money to Manchester about the middle of this week so you will most likely find it here when you arrive. I almost want a new uniform and one of Spencers carbines but if I get either this month I shall not be able to send you m[u]ch so I will get along another month and think I can send you about Fifty Dollars People are mistaken about our leaving to-morrow. I do not know certain about it but from what I do know I feel pretty sure we shall not leave for two weeks. We had a grand review yesterday of all the troops here eleven regiments of Infantry and two Battallions of Cavalry. I[t] was a splendid sight the 3 Brigades in open order cover[ing] a field 1/4 of mile long and half a mile wide It looked like a sea of gleaming bayonets. It was a glorious winter day and as the Troops wheeled into Column and passed the Coulers at double quick I thought it a sight worth coming from New England to see, and yet it is nothing to the reviews they have at Washington of Fifty Thousand men at a time But it was quite a sight for me and probably for most others who saw it

The right wing of the Mass 24th arrived two days ago, the left arrived today, their transport having got aground down the bay they had to remain there a day and two nights. It is a fine looking regiment and has a splendid band. But we can drill with any of them except the Mass 25th who are to many for us. I understand the Conn. Eleventh arrived in town to-day but do not know whether it is true or not. I wish I could think of some good boy about sixteen who would come down and go with me as a servant it is impossible to get a decent one here and I cannot draw pay for a servant unless I keep one John and Frank are both well but there are a good many men sick in camp it is the worst place to take cold I ever saw. We have from 10 to 15 sick in the Company all the time and some of the Companies more none less I believe. It is time for Dress Parade so I must stop

Parade over a splendid night warm as sumer I wish [I] had some more of that composition such as I brought with me it is all gone and I sent to Annapolis for more but could only get one paper and that not near so good as the other. If you know where to get it buy 1/2 [dozen?] boxes and I will write you how to send it. As for sending me any eatables you need not think any more about it at present after you get home if I think you will have time to send anything I will write you what, and how

When you get back to Manchester write me all the news you can pick up I should write my friends there occasionally but don't get much time. I was Officer of the day last wednesday and had to sit up till after 12 to make the Guard Rounds as it is called, so I wrote a few lines to Wadsworth on business I shall be on again in about three days and shall write somebody else Give my love to the boys.

Good night J.L.Otis

I should think Sherwin would be ashamed to say that he would enlist if he could, every man who wants to go can go, and will. But you may give him my regard for all that tell Joel to write me. I have not heard from Betsey yet.

JL012A

Annapolis Md

Dec 20th 1861

Dear Wife.

I have just time to write a few lines this morning. I shall go to town to-day and send you some money by Express. You may not get it till Monday. We had another Grand Review yesterdy. the weather is warm as October at home but is liable to change to

snow any time we shall be here about two weeks longer. The Conn 11th arrived yesterday . I shall have to put off writing you a long letter till Sunday as I must write Mr. Wadsworth to-day. I hope you are well settled at home by this time

Give my love to the boys.

Yours Truly

J.L.Otis

JL012B

Annapolis Md.

Dec 20th 1861

Dear Wife.

I sent you by Express today Fifty Five Dollars in Treasury Notes you will probably get the money and this letter about the same time. I should have sent just \$50 - but Horsly wished to send Four (\$4) Dollars to his wife and gave it me in gold so I sent 5 extra and you may give the Four Dollars to Wadsworth and let him hand it to Mrs Horsly. You had better not give it her yourself for she may trouble you afterwards, But you can act according to your own judgment in the matter better get a receipt however for that tribe will lie so they might say they never had the money, unless you had something to show for it

I got your Ambrotypes with a note from Atkins some days since. Yours and Harry's look quite natural but I thought yours looke[d] as if you were thinner than when I left home I could not see that Phil's looked at all like him at first but it begins to look a little like him now. I comenced this yesterday and had not time to finish it but will try to add something now. Hen[r]y Rogers took dinner with me to-day. I was glad to see him I can tell you. he said he would call and see you when he got home if he could. He took some pieces of my bedstead along with him and said he would give you a piece of it. That piece of Gen Bakers Flag staff which I was to send you was stolen from me while I was in Co F. I would like to write a long letter but cannot for want of time

Write me immediately when you get the money as I shall be somewhat anxious about it till I hear. I should like to get some little things and send home but there is nothing to be had here so I cannot. There is co[n]siderable sickness among our men but nothing serious, the Manchester men are all well however. Give my love to the children. Good bye for to day.

Yours Truly

John L. Otis.

JL013

Annapolis Md

Dec 24th 1861

Dear Wife

I recieved your letter last night and am pleased that you have got home again. I am sorry on your account for what took place on your leaving your mother, but don't know that I am much surprised. Mr. Look is just the kind of a man to expect such treatment from and the kind of religion he beleives in does not usualy alter men for the better I am realy glad that neither you or your mother are under any obligation to him. He and Mother both believe in the same religion and are both just what they would be without

it. She a kind hearted good woman. - he a morose selfish disagreeable man. so we will let that pass and write on more agreeable topics. But if I dont change my mind I shall send her a letter either through Mrs. Darrow or Mrs. Atkins and let her know that I am aware of the sircumstances under which she is liveing and that she has my sympathies. You say you was disappointed in not recieving a letter from me. but you must have got two the next day but rather short ones. Hudson left the company books all behind and it will take me a long time to get them up. I have been writing on them till now 11 O.Clock. but I am Officer of the day and cannot go to bed for some time yet I must visid all the sentries once after 12 O.Clock. But I cannot say anything against Hudson if he did keep rather loose accounts for he always treated me well and realy seems to think a good deal of me. and he has some fine traits of charicter. I shall not be at all surprised to see him get higher in the profession.

You can send me the composition if you get it immediately I am pretty sure we shall not leave here before the 5th of January. You need not try to send me anything else you can put the composition in a little paper box and send by Express. Write me if you have got the money I sent you and also how you are off for money Dec 25 a splendid morning I am not sure whether we shall be paid again before leaving here or not. We are making out the rolls and hope to get our pay. if we do I can send you some more. My uniform got so soiled and dirty I had to send Thirty Dollars to New York to get a new one, and the commissioned officers have to buy their food and have it cooked by their own servants, so we have to keep enough by us to pay our way but I mean to send home Fifty Dollars per month if possible Alfred has written me asking about a Photograph I promised him I had forgotten about it but if you have got one to spare you may let him have it, if not I will have an ambrotype taken here and send on

The 11th Regiment is here but there is no one in I am aquainted with among the officers Paschal Safford called on me sunday he belongs to that regiment and is a Corporal I was much surprised to see him.

I shall have to stop now or my letter will not go today. I wish you all a Merry Christmas. I suppose Harry and Phil are both good boys all the time.

Good by.

Your Otis

JL014

(also lock of hair)

Annapolis

Dec 29th 1861

Dear Wife

I recieved your last letter in due season and was glad to get it for I had not got a letter from anyone for some time. I designed to have written you a long letter to night but have got one of my old fashioned colds and am so sore I can hardly sit in my chair, my head and back ache dreadfully but I expect to be better in the morning, and am bound to be anyhow for it is no time to be sick here now and I am not going to be. I took the company out target shooting yesterday and that is the way I took cold. It was a raw day and while measuring the distance and instructing the men I had my overcoat off, and did not put it on as soon as I ought. But since I have mentioned the target shooting I will tell you the result. As we are the left flank our turn came last. Capt. Mead of Co I. the next street to us had beaten every other company, he came to me before we left saying "Capt Otis we don't want to be beaten but if we must I had rather it would be your company than any other. Well we did beat them by 20 shots. and of course beat

every other company out of sight. The best of it was all the companies had an instructor with them but ours. I declined his services

I suppose you have got the money all right before this I hope I shall be paid off before leaving but it is doubtful as we shall not remain here more than another week. I am sorry to go any farther from home but anything is better than staying here this climate at this season of the year will Kill men faster than Rebel Bullets. It is well enough for those who sleep in houses but for the dwellers in tents it is awful.

You spoke about the great time we were to have here Christmas but I don't know how it got there for we did not know it ourselves but three days before However we had a very good supper and some good singing. Dr. Duglass made a fine speech in response to the toast, "The loved ones at home"

I thought of a good many things to write about about for the last day or two but I feel so mean to night that I cannot think of anything. I have been engaged all my spare time for a week making out the company pay rolls we have four to make out every month and it is a job I can tell you.

The Fleet of Gunboats and transports is collecting fast in the Roads there are about Fifty of all classes here and more coming. The Vermont Cavalry 1030 strong arrived night befor last They are a fine body of men and have excellent horses A Battery of Artillery came down on the cars last night and to night a new regiment arrived but I don't know who, or where from. I have no knowledge whatever where we are going but have an opinion on the subject and if correct you will not here from me for a month after we leave here Our entire Brigade five regiments are learning the skirmish drill. It is new to me but I have learned it and drill the Company on it. I don't see but I get along as well as any of them. I keep your and the boys picture on my table all the time but I shall have to put it away for our servant upset the inkstand and like to have flooded it. I shall send down town tomorrow and get a case for it. It is now the holidays of the slaves they have from Christmas to New Year. And they troop past here in squads all the time. A few days since about 20 stopped in front of our Guard tents and sung their plantation melodies and it was really fine. I never heard any mock negro singing that would begin with it. I cannot write any more now but will do so in a day or two. Give my love to the children and my regards to our friends.

Your Otis.

[End of Year 1861]

JL014.1

[Written on stationery carrying an engraved illustration of Fortress Monroe and a map of the surroundings]

Schooner E.W.Farrington
Hampton Roads V.A.
Jan 11th 1862

Dear Wife

I sent you a letter this morning but having been on shore today will try to scratch off another. I send you a map of the Fort it gives you the position of the fort and form of the Bay but you of course cannot comprehend the magnitude of the work from such a little picture. The walls of the fort are a mile and a quarter in sircumference and so high that when we were walking on the parapet we were on a level with the housetops. The weather is warm and pleasant and the live oaks give the inside of the Fort quite a summer like look. You mus know there are large trees growing inside the fort buttonball an live oak mostly, the leaf of the live oak resembles that of the bayberry and

is an evergreen. We walked around on the parapet of the fort.(Col Drake Capt Mead and myself) I saw many things that interested me because I had often read about them. Sewells Point is in plain sight from the fort (and from the deck of the vessell) and we could see the rebel flag through the glass quite plainly. - I think the distance is but three miles. The rebels were practicing at at their guns and we could see the smoke and hear the report of the guns quite plainly. We could also see the ruins of the vilage of Hampton. the bare chimnies looking desolate enough across the water. I do not see why it was necessary to let the rebels burn the place for it [is] in range of the guns of the fort and a small force can resist a large one when in possession of a village. It was quite a village as large as Colchester I should think. I look through the glass at the fort and could see the rebel flag on Sewells Point and while I am writing the Batteries on Craney Island are fireing on one of our S[t]eamers. I have been on deck and can see the smoke roll up and the shot strik the waters in direction of the steamer. After waiting what seems to be a long time we hear the report, clear and distinct as if close to us. A boat just came along side with orders for us to sail immediately. We are to go outside that is out into the Ocean but where then we do not know. We have sealed orders aboard but cannot open them till we get out. But to go on with what I saw today one thing was the great Union gun you have read of the thick dark colored shell enclosed I picked up directly under the muzzle of it the light colored one under the famous Floyd gun which lies close beside it. The piece of stick I pulled of[f] the stopper of the Floyd gun. The little white shells I picked up on the beach. It is getting quite dark and I shall have to stop writing. I am not sure of an opertunity of sending this ashore but shall try hard to do so. And will write you again the first opertunity.

Give my love to the children I meant to have written something in particular for them but have not time.

Yours

Otis

Horsly disappeared from among the men about half an hour before we went on board the ship at Annapolis and I dont know what became of him [*the rest - about a line - is illegible*]

JL015

Hatteras Inlet Feb 1st 1861 [*i.e., 1862*]

Dear Wife

We recieved a mail to day the first for two weeks. I got a letter of one page note paper where I expected two or three letters at least. If you wait to get letters from me before you write I shall not get many. You must do as I do keep writing whether you get letters or not. most of the Officers get four or five long letters some as late as the 24th inst. Several of the soldiers had five letters each. We are still here but expect to leave tomorrow for Roanoake Island. It is almost three weeks since we arrived and the whole time has been spent in getting the vessells over the bar. but they are all over now and nothing to prevent our moving. The last letter I wrote was in the form of a journal and brought down the date to last sunday, since which time things have gone on about as usual though we have had rather more pleasant weather than formerly. On tuesday I took a boat with ten men and went ashore at fort Hatteras, and walked from there to fort Clark about 3/4 of a mile distant to see one of my men who had been sent ashore from the Hospital ship, sick with the small pox. He was better and so as to be out of doors. I had a good oppertunity to see the forts which are mere works of sand without gates or ditches Our orderly was with me and said he thought he could have taken either of them with about 100 men. The next day I took a boat over and went ashore for wood.

We rowed about five miles and then went a long way along the shore but could see no place to land the water is so shallow. We could not get within several rods of the shore. After rowing about fifteen miles we had to return and fill our boat with wood from an old wreck. The water in the sound is so shallow that we sometimes get aground with small boats, 3 miles from shore.

Saturday Feb 1st 1861 [i.e. 1862]

This is the day we were to sail for the Island, but many of the Officers and men are so much opposed to fighting on Sunday (which we must do if we sail today) that Gen. Foster in deference to their feelings, has decided to wait till Monday. I think there has been delay already, but it may be well for all that as a good many of the men think we shall surely be defeated if we begin the fight on that day. So I think we shall sail on Monday and the fight will be over long before you get this. I shall not write again before then so the next letter you get from me will give an account of the battle, if we have one. If the Island is captured we shall not remain there long but go aboard the transports and sail for some other place most likely Newbern. You are doubtless anxious to know how I feel about going into battle. Well I do not as yet feel at all afraid and do not expect to and though we expected to sail this morning I slept as sound as usual last night.

Some deserters came down from the rebels yesterday, bringing a schooner load of wood with them. They say that the rebels are preparing to give us a warm reception, and that the inhabitants are leaving as fast as possible both on the Island and the main land. They certainly ought to give us a big fight for they have had three weeks to prepare for us.

My men are mostly pretty well with the exception of a sort of sore throat distemper which many of them have myself among the number, in my case coupled with one of the worst colds I have yet had. but I am better to-day and only feel concerned about my voice I can barely speak aloud. It failed me about a week ago while drilling the company on board the ship, but I think it will return when I get over my cold.

I received two letters from Tudor and should be glad to get more anytime. Direct to me putting on the Co & regiment, adding. Coast Division on Burnside's Expedition and I shall get them. Be sure and write whether you got the last money \$125. I sent you. It is getting dark and I must close.

Tell Harry and Phil that papa thinks of them every day and hopes to come home and see them in the spring. They must go to school and learn fast so that I can write them letters, and above all be good boys and stand up for each other. good night and good bye for the present.

Yours Otis

JL016

Roanoke Island N.C. Feb 9th 1862

Roanoke Feb 10th 1862

Dear Wife.

We have finally landed and had battle. our regiment was in the hottest of the fight and suffered in consequence but we are highly praised by our Generals and don't feel like new troops now. I shall not try to write much news now but will wait till I get aboard the schooner. We lost our Colonel and one Lieutenant in the fight, two captains wounded, 10 or 12 men killed and 40 wounded. I had no one killed and only one wounded though it almost rained bullets but the enemy fired too high a large part of their balls went over our heads. Our side had in all about 50 killed and 200 wounded. I will write full particulars as soon as I get aboard the vessel. Our regiment is bivouac just

back of fort Barto which has been captured I slept on a board last night with nothing but my overcoat to cover me, night before last we stood out in the rain all night. the enemy being within about half a mile of us.

We have taken over 2,000 Prisoners among them O. Jennings Wise badly wounded. Am now sitting on a bundle of stalks in an old cabin which the owners evacuated during the bombardment of the fort. I shot two hogs with my revolver this morning My men have dressed and are roasting the meat by their camp fires. We hope to get aboard the schooner this afternoon.

Your, Otis

JL017

Roanoak Island Cum'tuck Co

N.C. Feb 11th 1861 [*i.e.*, 1862]

Dear Wife

You will hear long before you get this of the complete sweep of our expedition thus far. but I will give you in a[s] short a story as possible, an account of the whole. Our gun boats made an attack on one of the rebel batteries on Friday morning but did not make much impression about three O'clock Gen Fosters flag ship signalled us to land, the shore being about four miles distant. We loaded into our boats. I went in the first from our ship with 39 of my men. We hatched our boats to the stern of the flag ship and were towed close to the shore making two lines of boats of 20 each as we neared the shore we could see a long line of glistening bayonets drawn up in the bushes a short distance to our right to oppose our landing. but a gun boat followed close behind us and threw a few shells among [them] which frightened them so that they did not attack us. We jumped into the water where it was nearly three feet deep, and waded to the shore. I should have been the first ashore but Cap. Leggetts boat was much smaller and got nearer the shore than mine so he got to land first but I was next. We immediately formed a line of battle opposite the woods where the enemy lay and after waiting a short time and finding we were not likely to be attacked, Col Russell ordered me to deploy my company into the woods. Co A of ours also deployed on my right and a Co of the Mass 21st on my left we advanced as far as we could a dense swamp stopped us but we got so near that one of the Mass men was wounded in the leg by a rebel picket. At 8 in the evening we had orders to withdraw to an open lot. where we remained by our guns all night in the rain. without blankets or anything else to protect us. as soon as light we formed in a drizzling rain and commenced our march through the woods. There was now another regiment in advance of us where skirmishers soon became engaged. our Artillery advanced to the front and soon got in range but to no purpose, for the enemy were too well posted to be reached. They were in the center of an immense swamp where they had a mud fort with four guns sweeping the road for half a mile and the swamp was so thick it was almost impossible to advance except by the road. They had cut away the trees in front of them so as to leave an open space about a fourth of a mile long 40 rods wide directly in front of their guns. The road crossed this space to the point opposite our position when it turned and led down directly in front of their battery our regiment formed across this space directly in front and exposed to their full fire and remained there over two hours. After returning their fire for half an hour we were ordered by Gen Foster to lie down and save our ammunition as our field guns had got out of ammunition and we must save our fire to protect them. They had the advantage of us at first but as regiment after regiment of our troops came up they began to turn the enemys position by wading through the swamps to their right and left where the water came almost up to their cartridge boxes The rebels see we were bound to drive them at

any cost and about 1 O Clock took to their heels and we marched in and took possession. Our regiment lost our Col. & 1 Lieut killed. 2 Captains wounded. and 54 men killed and wounded. which is more than has been lost by all the Conn regiments together since the commencement of this war. But our work was not half done and after resting about half an hour we advanced up the Island. the roads wer awful sometime the black mud came over the tops of my boots The rebels were very strong on the upper end of the Island and we expected some awful hard fighting but driving them out of their stronghold in the woods scared all the fight out of them and as we approached the forts they surrendered then without firing another shot. Our regiment with the 4th R.I. (which had not been engaged) marched about six mils and took possession of Fort Barto mount[in]g 9 long 32 pounders. Where the men passed another wet night outdoors without bed or blanket I slept at Gen Parks headquarters (which consisted of a board shanty without a door) with Captain Hudson we lay on a bundle of stalks with only my overcoat to cover us both. We passed all the next day there the men spending their time about the woods hunt[in]g pigs and caught a good many. I shot two large ones with my revolver and my men got some more, and wer busy all day and nearly all night cooking and eating it we spent a third night outdoors without blankets but after I got to sleep one of my men covered me up with a blanket he picked up somewhere, and I sleped some early in the morning we marched to another fort three miles up the Island and finally got aboard our vessell at 5. P.M. as tired and dirty a lot of men as you ever saw. I had been unwell for nearly two weeks befor the battle, and the day before was barely able to sit up but I stood the fatigue as well as any of them and am ready for another trip anytime we are bound for Newbern next. Will write you again to-morrow.

Good bye Otis *[his handwriting trails off, showing fatigue]*

JL018

Feb. 19th 1862

Roanoke Island Cumtuck Co. N.C.

Dear Wife,

I have written you several letters since the late battle but really cannot recollect what I wrote; having written a short letter when ever I could find the time and could not remember from time to time the particulars of my last letter. I think I gave you all the particulars of the battle and of our march. But I remember one thing I neglected to mention, of no consequence in itself but a fine sight to me and one few but soldiers have have the oppertuni[t]ly of seeing. The sound on the west side of the Island is about ten miles wide.-It is called Croatan Sound. The rebels had a fort on the land nearly oposite Fort Barto and about Ten miles distant. They somehow learned that we had defeated their friends on the Island the same day, and just as our regiment arrived and took possession of Barto they set fire to their fort and decamped. it was allmost dark and I stood on the parapet leaning on a gun watching the fire, when it reached the magazine. At first I could hear no sound but as the powder took fire it seemed at first as if a ball of the most brilliant fire rose slowly in the air, expanding as it ascended with a slow regular motion till it formed a solid colum of the brightest fire at least Three Hundred feet high. It rose with a slow regular motion seeming a long time in attaining it[s] hight and then settled as slowly back into water. The sound of the explosion did not reach us till all was dark again. It seems as if I could see it now such vivid impression it made on my mind. The day after the capture of the Island our gun boats ran up to Elizabeth City on the mainland, one of the largest places in this vicinity The inhabitants deserted the place and a small party of rebel soldiers under the command of a Lieutenant were busy

setting fire to the houses, but a party landed in time to save most of the houses and take Mr Lieut. prisoner. The last I heard from there the inhabitants were returning. The people here are really made to believe that we design to murder them and burn their houses. In going ashore on Friday for a load of wood I landed near one of the most thrifty looking plantations I had seen on the Island. The owners name is Baum. He said the rebels told the people along shore that our gun boats would commence at the south end of the Island and shell every house as they went along till all were destroyed. To convince me of the fact he took me to a cave he had constructed in the ground some way from the house, in which he and his family were to take refuge from our bombs. I have no doubt he told the truth for the cave was newly made and could be of no other use to him

I had heard a great deal too about masked batteries but thought it more talk than anything else. But the day we had the fight in the swamp I found them a reality. The rebel battery was completely concealed by pine boughs stuck up around it and looked like a harmless clump of bushes.

One of our wounded men who fell in the bushes and was not seen at the time came to himself after we passed and starting off through the bushes to find his way to the place where we landed (he was wounded in the arm by a grape shot) could not find the way and after crawling through the bushes for quite a distance came upon another battery of two guns one a 32. Pounder completely concealed by brush. But we did not fall into the trap and they had deserted it. Some of the men went and found the place the next day. But to finish the story of the wounded man. It was almost night he was hurt tired and hungry. Looking about he found a deserted hut close by in which he found some hoe cake and honey. He made a meal of these and stayed all night and in the morning found his way to camp.

If you hear anything from Horsely, let me know. I have not been able to communicate with military authorities at Annapolis and don't know whether he has been arrested or not I lost some of my handkerchiefs the other day by their being blown overboard. I think you can send me some say about four by putting each in a newspaper. Silk ones of rather a dark color will be best I don't care about their being very fine.

We expect to move again tomorrow most likely on Newberne we are only waiting for the arrival of ammunition

Wiley was sick and did not go with us the day of the battle, he has been sick ever since and as I have never had a 2nd Lieutenant all the work comes on me. Wiley applied to Col Drake yesterday to resign and go home but the Col did not talk very encouraging to him. I wish he would let him go for a company as large as ours ought to have more than one Officer in the field. I had ten more men the day of the battle than any other company in the regiment and had no Lieutenant. once during the day I had to send 50 men off to act as pioneers under the command of a Sergeant I don't care for the work I can do it well enough, but if anything should happen to me, the company would be without an officer.

You will find some small beans in the letter, they are raised on the Island here and are different from any I have seen. (I think they are poll beans but am not sure) have them planted in a good place and see what they will do. I am badly off for stockings but do not know of any way you can send them I will try to get some of the Quartermaster.

You must keep writing whether you get letters from me or not. I only get one letter each mail (about one in four weeks - some of the Officers get five or six.

Give my regards to our friends I should like to write them occasionally but have not the time.

I have not got that letter from Betsy Wait yet think she must have given up the idea

[no ending given]

JL019

Albermarl Sound March 4th 1862

Dear Kate

We are again on our way up the sound lying at anchor for a gale of wind. When we shall proceed again or how far up we are going I do not know. It seems strange that we are kept here inactive so long. We are all impatient to move, we want to do what we have to do and go home. I was ashore on the mainland yesterday. it was a warm pleasant day and we had a good walk, it seemed to do me good. I have been troubled with the dyspepsia for more than a week but have not felt anything of it since. The people ashore are ploughing for corn though I believe they will not plant for about three weeks. We saw myrtle and daffodils in blossom. I picked a sprig of the myrtle but as they had but one bunch of daffodils and that not very large I did not trouble it. We did not succeed in getting a large quantity of eatables. I secured 2 doz. of eggs Lieut Smith a bottle of milk Lieut Perkins some sweet potatoes. I also bought a turtle for thirteen cents of a little darky, but as Capt Pardee had found nothing good I turned the turtle over to him and had to do without turtle soup at dinner. But I made up for it as I came across a fishing boat soon after and got some fine shad. When we returned to our boat we found the wind blowing almost a gale. We had a hard pull off shore and on reaching the place where our vessel lay in the morning (about three miles from the shore) found her gone. The General not knowing we were away had ordered her eight miles up the sound. The Capt of the schooner pretending to think he must not wait for us sailed without us and we had a row of eight miles to find her, but as the wind was in our favor it was not very hard work.

But what we cared most about was there had been a large mail waiting for us at Hatteras over a week and though steamers had come up every day they did not care enough for us to send it. It had just come up and our share of it was aboard the New Brunswick but we could not stop to get it, and had to go up the sound knowing we were leaving our letters behind. (You have no idea what an excitement we have whenever the mails arrive) But the steamer came up today and dropped anchor about a mile and a half above us and though it blew a small gale our boat has gone after the letters so when it comes back I expect to get 6 at least

3 P.M. the boat has returned and brought me two letters which I was glad to get one written on the 11th & one on 20th. It seems you had got no letters from me since the battle though I have written several, but you have most likely got them long before now. Tell Mrs. Parsons that Samuel King is well and hearty.

I have just come from on board the Pilot Boy (The flagship of our Brigade[]). One of my men named Seagram has been sick of heart disease and I have been trying to get him discharged. The surgeons said he ought to go, but I could not get them to attend to it though I have been back and forth in the boat any number of times in all sorts of weather. Today I managed to get some blanks and after filling them out took the boat and went aboard the New Brunswick to get them signed by the Brigade Surgeon but he would do nothing about it, saying that it was too late as the sick and wounded had already gone aboard the propeller to start for home and the man must wait. I started back for the schooner in no very pleasant humor for I felt provoked that they should care so little about it. But just as I got back Capt Hudson came along in a tug and ordered us all back to Roanoke Island. It was near dark but had cleared off quite pleasant. I waited till we got opposite the Flag Ship (which was aground off Fort Huger) and taking the boat put off to her though it was now after dark. I saw Gen Foster got his

assent to sending him home got a letter to the surgeon from Capt. Hudson the promise of a pass from Capt Messenger, took the Generals mail bag and put it aboard the propeller getting back to the schooner about 9 O Clock. I have got to go aboard the Brunswick which lies two miles off back to the schooner and get my man aboard the propeller go to headquarters and get his pass back again to the schooner before noon tomorrow, but I think I shall be able to accomplish it. I had a long talk with Capt. Hudson and am not sure but he will yet be Major of our regiment. I rather hope he will for he seems nearer to me than anyone here, and would make a much better major than the one we have.

One of my men who was wounded in the battle will go home to-morrow and I shall try to have him call on you. Perhaps you can send by him when he returns I will see about it and write you. Wiley has resigned and goes home by the same boat (The Ellen S. Terry of Hartford) he says he will call on you. He will carry this letter to New York and mail it there so I think you will get it pretty quick

You ask how John and Frank are they are both well John is a kind of nurse and assistant to the Dr and makes a good hand at it.

You wonder that jumping into the water up to my arms did not make me sick and think it would had I been at home. Well I dont know about it the water was not so deep as they told of it but it was quite deep enough and wet me thouroughly filling my boots full. As to the excitement it did not help me much, for I was about as uncomfortable as need be and had wet feet all the next day. But I have told you all about that befor so I wont go over the ground again. I heard at Head Quarters today that we are to sail for Newberne day after tomorrow but we may not after all. One thing I meant to have told you when ashore on the Island the day I got dinner there. The frogs were singing all over the Island and sang the same times the frogs do at home, but you wont hear them there these two months.

Tell the boys I was glad to get a letter from them and will send them one when I have time to write again. It is now Eleven O Clock I do not think of anything interesting to write and will stop but not seal my letter till morning.

JL020

Roanoke Island March 5th 1862

Dear Wife.

Wiley leaves to-day he has already gone aboard the steamer that is to take him to New York Corporal Root of my company goes with him. he was wounded at the battle on the Island and goes on a furlough of two months, and is about out of money I let him have Two Dollars which was all I could spare, being rather short myself If he calls on you let him have \$14 Dollars. four of it I owe the man who accompanies him home the rest is for his own use. He will repay me from his wages now due. I should have given the order on some one besides you, but knew you would be glad to see him. he is one of my best men I am simple enough to suppose you would be pleased to get some little thing I have worn about me constantly particularly something I wore at the fight, so if I can get another, I will send you my sword knot, but perhaps I cannot get another if I send it at all Root will give it you.

Yours, John L. Otis

JL021

Croatan Sound N.C. March 9th 1862

Dear Kate.

We are still in Croatan oposite Roanoke Island but are under orders to sail tomorrow morning where to we do not know but suppose Newberne. I have no news to write as one day is so much like another here, being a succession [of] gales of wind from day to day, varied by rain storms twice a week. We had the hardest gale wednesday night and thursday I have yet witnessed; it blew great guns, the ships pitched and tossed at their anchors as if they would tear themselves to pieces. Some of them dragged their anchors and went high and dry on the beach I believe four, whether they can be got off I don't know but bresume some of them can. During the hardest of the gale we thought we saw three men drifting past on a raft the sea breaking over them every moment and it was bitter cold. We got our boat alongside to go out and try to save them when two boats put off one from the steamer Northener the other from the New Brunswick they being much nearer than our vessell we concluded not to go, but it proved not to be men only board sticking up on an old piece of wreck. But the wind blew so hard the boats could not get back and had to tie up to a schooner till morning.

It has cleared off now and is the most lovely morning you can immagine, the sound is as smoothe as a mill pond, the ships and steamers are reflected in the water the shadow looking almost as clear and perfect in the water as the vessells do out, but it won't last long for it is never pleasant a whole day here.

Wiley left wednesday noon on the propeller Ellen G. Ferry she had on board a large number of sick and wounded men together with about thirty Officers who have resigned. I think there are others besides Wiley who have found out that being an officer in time of war is no boys play. I am afraid the propeller got outside before the gale came on but hope not. if they were on the way up they must have had a hard time of it.

I sent you a line by our Corporal Root who will call on you. I did not send the sword knot as I could not get another. I think I wrote you that there was talk that Hudson would be Major of our regiment, if his friends work hard for it at home he will get the place. Another Capt. of the regiment is trying hard to get the promotion through political influence at home, but I hope he won't sucseed for I know Hudson will make the best Officer. They are both good friends of mine but I believe Hudson thinks more of me than any other man in the regiment.

I cannot write much this morning as I am quite unwell We have not had a mail for about three weeks it does seem as if Government might do better than that by us I am much obliged to the children for their letter and hope they will write again. John and Frank are both well.

Yours Otis

JL022

Hatteras Inlet March 11th 1862

Dear Kate.

We are at Hatteras on our way south having come down from the Island today. We suppose ourselves to be on the way to Newberne, but do not know certain. Our mail met us here and I got three letters from you one from Leander and one from Mr. White besides two papers from you, they were all very acceptable yours especially so, and I was pleased to get so many When I wrote you last I did not expect to write again before

we landed but getting so many letters at once waked me up to writing; and another reason is that Capt. Mead got a pictorial paper having a picture representing the battle on Roanoke Island. And I must say that of all the humbugs generated by this war that is the greatest. - Talk about the charge of the Zouaves. - I feel so provoked when I read about it I can hardly keep my temper (and you know I am famous for that Christian virtue) The battery was never charged by the Zouaves or anyone else as everybody here knows and the Zouaves themselves do not pretend to say they did. The rebels left the battery before a Zouave got within three hundred yards of it, and the Mass 21st were the first men in the battery. Col Fereros' self gloryfying report to the contrary notwithstanding. The simple fact is the battery was not charged at all but was attacked by our own regiment in front the Mass 21st 25th and 23d RI 5th NY 9th Pen 51st & NY 51st on the flanks. The Mass 21st was the first in the battery, but ours had the most dangerous position done the hardest fighting and lost the most men. But all the reporters were from New York and that gave them all the glory. But I will say no more on that subject for I have no patience.

And now for their representation of our landing. The picture represents us landing on a kind of quay or embankment where the boats could run up and the men jump out and march off dry shod to a plantation hard by. I wish their Reporters could have landed where I did and all the rest landed at the same place though some of the boats found rather better places and some being smaller got nearer the shore but I know my boat grounded a rod from the shore and I jumped out as did the men where the water was a good deal over our knees and had to wade to the shore and then splash through mud and water as far as from where you live to Norman Spencers, and then remain under arms all night. We dont want more than our share of the credit, but it is too bad to have to stand under fire as we did two hours, loose more men than any other regiment and hardly be mentioned in connection with the fight. - The Zouaves were not under fire half an hour having only fourteen men wounded most of them slightly and none killed.

But all this is not interesting to you and I shall not care sixpence about it myself in a day or two but reading about it and looking at the pictures stired me up as it did all [the] rest of the Officers aboard I will not finish my letter to night and will write more in the morning if we do not leave too early. Mr. White writes that he has paid Parkers note if I had known of it before I should not have given Corp. Root an order on you for fear you would get out of money before I could send you more, but I think we shall be paid before long and then I can send you some more.

12th 3 P.M.

I have got another paper this morning making three papers and three letters from you. We sailed at sunrise this morning and are running in the direction of Newberne it is a most lovely day: warm as summer and not wind enough to ripple the water we have not had so pleasant a day since we left Annapolis. I hope it is as pleasant with you for all accounts agree that you have had a most disagreeable winter. I am glad you did not like Jane Eyre for I allways detested the book though I never read it. Tell Harry and Phil they need not spend their time contriving ways to scare me for if I spend another two months at sea and take part in a few more battles I shall not be very easily scared. I suppose there is not much going on there this winter as you write no news. What has become of the mill there.

You say Morrow Chapman goes out as a private. if he does he will wish he had stayed at home. I believe I am as patriotic as most of them, but with my present knowledge of soldiering, It would be hard work to get me to enlist as a private, though if a company have good officers the men fare much better than otherwise. the captain of a company can do a great deal for his men if he will, but a good many care more for

having an easy time themselves than they do to make their men comfortable. I have not time to write more now but may add a P.S. bye and Bye

Yours, Otis

10 PM. We are at anchor in the Neuce River I suppose not more than ten miles from Newberne. the river is about twice as wide as the Conn River at Springfield We made the mouth of the river about 4 o'clock and kept running till after eight we could see fires burning all along our cours as proceeded and suppose they were signal fires to keep the rebels posted as to our progress. About sun down we discovered a sail boat running up the land under all sail. the gun boat Pickett run out and sent a shot over her and then dispatched a boat which brought them aboard the Comodore but I don't know whether they got any information of them or not. Just before we anchored we saw a bright fire burning on the west bank of the river whether it was a signal to ourselves, to our enemies or whether it was neither we do not know. There is a brick yard somewhere in this vicinity and it may be that

There are plantations on both sides of the river, more on the east than the west side and on a larger and better scale than any I had seen in North Carolina. Some of the houses are large and well built and on two of the plantations the buildings were painted white. They are all surrounded by small buildings, kitchens and Negro quarters You must know that at the south the kitchen is a sepered building even on the smallest places. It is another beautiful night, the water like a mirror and the sky as clear and soft as sumer the moon shines clear and bright shadowing our vessells rigging on the deck making it look like a great cobweb. Not a sound is heard in all our fleet excep as the bells of the gun boats strike the hour or their sentinels challenge a passing boat. I can hardly realize as I look over our still and silent fleet: the latent power that it contains. I[t] seems impossible that in fifteen minutes as many thousand men could spring from the decks of our matchless vessells and a hundred cannon send distruction on any who approached us, but it is so, and I only hope we shall be able to meet our enemies here on equal terms and with equal numbers. If we do we shall give a good account of ourselves

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JL023

[written on Confederate stationery taken from the trunk of a rebel captain--very difficult to read as the ink soaked through]

Newberne N.C. March 13th 1862

Dear Wife

I am glad of an opertunity to write you again for when I wrote last I thought it very doubtful whether I should be able to write you again. I was well aware we were to have a desperate fight the next day but did not like to tell you so, but it is over and I have got off pretty well. I was wounded in the leg but not much to speak of My leg swelled pretty bad and pained me a good deal but I was able to keep up with my men all day though I think I should not but that we expected another fight before we got to the City and I did not like to have any one else take command of my company, but luckily we had no fight for the rebels were so frightened at the trouncing we gave them that they had no idea of trying it again. It was a much harder fight than the one we had on the Island we had to attact a breast work a mile long mounting fifteen brass guns and defended by nine regiments. I had three killed and four wounded in my Company but I have no time to write particulars now as theis letter has to go immediately but will write you a long letter just as soon as possible. This letter is written on paper I took from the

trunk of a rebel captain who ran away and left it. The envelope I picked up in the battery where we had the fight. I have enough to write to fill half a dozen sheets of paper but do not feel able to do it tonight. I am officer of the day today which I think is rather hard on me for I am quite lame but I suppose it is because I have the largest company of any. I have not seen Hudson since the fight but he is safe. I forgot to tell you that I got a bullet through my coat besides being wounded in the leg one of my shoulder straps was bent as if by a ball but I did not feel anything strike it so I suppose it was done some other way on looking at your ambrotype soon after the fight I found it broken so I shall want another or what would be better some photographs.

Give my regards to all tell Harry and Phil that the rebels always run when they finde the gallent 10th after them.

Frank Lyman I fear is dead he was badly wounded. I shall try to go back and see to morrow. Aurthur Slates gun was knocked out of his hand and his baynet bent by a bullet. Burton got one through his blanket and Frank got a hole cut in his cap cover.

Lieut. Camp is waiting for my letter

Good night.

Otis

JL024

Newberne N.C.

Sunday March 16th 1862

Dear wife

I wrote you a short note last night to let you know I was well I will now comens another and finish it as soon as possible though it may be a day or two before it is finished as we are pitching our tents preparitory to making a long stay and have a good deal to do. I am pretty lame too and cant get along as fast as usual. As I said in my note yesterday I knew the night before we were to land in the morning for a fight though I had no idea we should have to give battle at such a disadvantage. I slept first rate but was up bright and early in the morning and had hardly set down to breakfast when the signal for landing was set on the steamer Pilot Boy. I drank a cup of coffee took a hard bread in my hand jumped into the boat with about 40 men and pushed off. but the other boats were not ready and we lay on our oars more than half an hour waiting for them to get ready. It was a calm warm morning the water just rippleing under a light breze, our large fleet lay motionless on the still water, boats by hundreds were putting off from the different vessells and making fast to tugs. Fineally the Signal for Starting was hoisted and off we swept for the shore. We were towed in as near the shore as the tugs dared run and were then cast off. now commenced the race for the shore my boat groundred a long way off but we all jumped out the water was so deep the men had to hold up their cartridge boxes to prevent them getting wet. We soon got ashore but found no rebels there so we lay down among the trees and waited till another detachment from our regiment to land which took about three hours other troops were being landed at the same time and about noon we commenced our march. two or three regiments preceded us as did six howitzers drawn by soldiers and sailors, but we marched fast and soon passed all the artillery which got along very slowly. The enemy had Videttes stationed along the shore but they all left before day light. About two miles from the landing place we came to their cavalry barracks but they had vacated them leaving everything behind but their arms and horses. Here the roads began to be muddy and before we got another mile the marching became awful, but we kept on without halting untill I began to think we should all have to give up we had been aboard the vessells so long that we

had nearly lost the power of locomotion, but the men held out with true grit very few of our regiment falling out though they fell out of some of the regiments by scores it was a warm sultry day and as it looked like rain in the morning I took my rubber coat leaving my overcoat aboard but my clothes were wet through with perspiration so that I could have wrung water out of my coat still we kept on till about four miles from the place of debarkation we came to a line of breast work extending across an open field more than 3/4 of a mile long flanked on one side by rifle pits and on the other by a deep almost impassable thicket but the rebels had not got their guns mounted, luckily for us both so they fled before we came in sight and we passed through it unmolested soon after we came to a railroad where we came to a halt and rested about half an hour here the rest of my company overtook us making me 80 men about 20 more than any other company and twice as many as some of them.

Peach and cherry trees were in blossom along the road and I picked some curious looking daisies one of which I put in my pocket book and will send it to you if I have not lost it.

But to go on with my story we resumed our march though at a much slower rate the road was awful in some places the mud was over shoe and in places was like putty nearly pulling ones boots off at every step. We continued our march resting occasionally till sundown when we halted in a swamp to rest and eat our luncheon of hard bread. Here Gen Foster overtook us and said he had just got word that McClellan [had] driven the rebels out of Manassas, (I don't know yet whether it was true or whether he only told us so to encourage us) But you should have heard the cheering; the swamps of North Carolina never heard the like before I'll bet my Hardee, we jumped up and pushed on through the mud till long after dark when we filed off into the woods on the right of the road, it had been raining for the last two hours and was about as disagreeable a night as could be except that it was not cold -----My leg pains me a good deal to night so I will stop and go to bed -----

17th

The men soon had fires burning and as I had given my company rations of coffee and sugar each one was soon busy making coffee in his tin cup, it done them a world of good. only one other company had coffee and one at least had no rations with them of any kind. It rained by spells all night but the men had their rubber blankets with them and got along very well. I had my own servant follow with my blankets and about 11 O Clock spread them on the ground and laid down. it rained hard but I slept about three hours and got pretty well rested. There were some six regiments bivouacked around and their camp fires made the air lurid for a mile around us. I could see the fog all aglow away up in air and it must have been visible to the rebels miles away - I wonder what feelings it stirred up in their bosoms.

We were under arms at daylight and moved forward through the mud in the direction of Newbern we had not gone more than half a mile before we met Hudson coming back. he rode close up to me and said "the rebels are just ahead" I asked him where our artillery was and he said "coming up" and rode off. It was a critical time for us, our field guns behind and getting along very slowly the different regiments comprising our division were scattered over a space of several miles. Fortunately the rebels were afraid to come out of their entrenchments to meet us and so we had time to collect our scattered forces. Had they advanced to meet us any time during our march they would have inflicted great loss on us. -whip us they never could-as it was our advance was repulsed but others pressed on till we were too many for them. But I suppose you will be more interested in the part our own regiment took than in a general description of the battle Well, we had not gone more than fifty rods after meeting Hudson before the enemy opened fire we could see nothing but the roar of cannon and musketry was deafening. we were about half a mile from the field but could see nothing

but a dense smoke rising over the trees. We were now ordered to file off[f] to the left of the road which we did at double quick the shell were now screaming like devils over our heads but we went on through the swamp and over fallen trees till we came under the brow of a hill about 400 yards in fron of the enemies entrenchments here we were commanded to lie down and wait for orders we lay there about fifteen minutes the shells and bullets whistling over our heads like hail, - one of my men was wounded here. We soon got tired of doing nothing and Col Drake ordered us to advance and open fire. We marched up the hill and came out of the woods under fire and now for the first time I realized the extent of the work we had taken in hand. About 250 yards in front of us was the rebel breast work five feet high with a ditch in front 5 feet deep and ten wide half filled with water. The entire work was two miles long and mounted 14 brass field guns and defended by nearly Ten Thousand men this I had from a rebel colonel who was wounded and taken prisoner. When we came up in front of the work they were throwing shot and shell at a terrible rate one of their shells went the whole length of our regiment and struck right in the midst of a company of the 11th Conn killing four men. A part of the Mass 24th had charged the battery on our right but were driven off and our artillery had got out of amunition and they had manned the ropes to drag the guns off, but as they saw our regiment wheel into line in front they dropped the ropes and watched us. An old sailor who commanded one of the guns exclaiming "there is the 10th Conn now weel have them out." and though I had great confiden[c]e in the regiment I must say it exceeded my expectations we formed a line under fire allmost as perfect as at Dress Parade. As we opened fire the rebels put their heads over the breastwork and gave us a volley right in our faces but they paid dear for their temerity we fired again before they could get down and as their commander told us sixteen of them fell dead not a head appeared above the breaswork after it though they continued the fire of musketry for half an hour they fired at random merely sticking their guns up and firing without aim. They did not fire a cannon at us for they could not load we kept up such a shower of balls. Col Drake & Gen Foster both said they never heard such a roar of musketry kept up by any one regiment A Mass regiment now came up and under cover of our fire marched straight into the battery by the road without loosing a man and the rebels took to their heels. I suppose they will say as usual that they did not loose many men but one thing I know right in front of where my company stood during the fight fifteen of them lay dead within the space of two rods every one shot through the head. two of my seargents counted them the N.C. & Atlantic R.R. runs right through the battery. And they loaded their dead and wounded on the cars and took them away. Their loss was quite heavy I know. they had to leave all their guns for their horses were killed and they could not dra[w] them off. I stood in one place and counted 27 dead and wounded horses lying around me. Gen Burnside came up and told the men to shoot the wounded one[s] and put them out of their misery. It was now reported that the enemy would make a stand two miles further on so after resting a few minutes we pushed along, but they had got fighting enough and never stopped till they had put the river between us and burnt the bridge. About half a mile from the entrenchments we met Burnside and staff returning who told us the fighting was over and we need not hu[rr]y so we took it more leasurely stopping occasionally to rest. We soon reached the railroad and took the trak for Newberne as we approached the river bank a dense black smoke was rising all along the oposite side. We supposed it to be the city as every now and then as a gust of winde blew the smoke aside we could see the spires of churches and chimnies of dwelling houses breaking through the R.R. bridge had fallen and only a few timbers were left burning. We rested about two hours on the bank and were then ferried ove[r] in boats and took possession of the City and rebel camp. It was quite dark when we got over but we found the tents of four regiments all standing and took possession. The camp we took was that of the N.C. 33d on the fair ground close to the city I took possession of the tent of a Capt. W.F. Parker and feeling around for a place to have my

blankets spread found his sword, also an old purse containing a solitary three cent piece. I have also got the bed of another rebel captain and it is a good one too, everything indicated that they had left in a hurry there was something left in almost every tent and equipments scattered about everywhere. Early in the morning I walked up to some darky houses close by to see if I could get some eggs for breakfast, but the darkies were above selling eggs or anything else. I was passing a mean looking shanty and looking in saw three large trunks, and being one of the conquerors of course I walked in and asked then how he came by them, he said the Officers had their trunks taken to the Depot and were too much frightened to wait for them to be put on the cars and so they left without them the darkies immediately took possession and carried them home. I told him to open one I wished to see what it contained. he did so at once and I examined it The cover was filled with the finest table linen napkins table cloths and the like to the value at least of Fifty Dollars, in the tray was a fine gold watch pencil chain and various articles of fine jewelry the watch alone being worth \$70 - The body of the trunk contained ladies under clothing collars and sleeves of the finest quality. The contents of the trunk must have been worth at least \$300 - Another proved to be the trunk of Capt Nesbit of Georgia It contained all his outfit coats pants shirts handkerchiefs and all the thousand and one things that go to make out an officers outfit. I took some of his handkerchiefs stockings and a shoulder strap from his coat. the other trunk [??] I did not see the other trunk opened but the two I did see opened were worth in the aggregate at least \$400 - every negro shanty in the city has from one to four trunks taken from the camps or from deserted houses in the city. I walked down the street and found many of the best houses deserted and completely stripped of everything valuable, either by the darkies or soldiers mostly by the darkies. A citizen of the place told me that the niggers took Fifty Thousand Dollars worth of stuff from the houses and depot from noon to sunset. The rebel troops burnt everything they could before leaving in one place they set fire to 20,000 barrels of turpentine and another an immense quantity of Resin and cotton the dense black smoke from them covering the city and for a while concealing it from our sight. They also [burned] the largest hotel some fine boarding houses and a large block of buildings containing Quarter Masters stores. the corn is still burning three days after. They burned the R.R. bridge which cost \$150000 but we were so close to them they did not stop to burn the barracks and tents but left them all standing - enough for the accommodation of ten thousand men and a considerable quantity of commissary stores which they had not time to destroy. They have been carrying cotton back into the country for a week to prevent its falling into our hands. I will leave a description of the place to a future period as my time [is] very limited we have got our tents pitched our street fixed up and are fast getting things in shape but more of that bye and bye. The men of my company killed and wounded in the battle were

James C. Smith)

Levi F. Lyman) killed

Michael Heam)

Capt. J L Otis)

John Packer Jr) wounded

Deming G F Sherman)

Edward Risly)

Lyman is the only one from our place his Father and mother live in So Manchester
My wound is not at all serious. but my leg is swelled bad and pains me a good deal.
though I keep about and attend to my duties as usual - It is no place to play baby here

You would be surprised if you could see our Camp. the boys have picked up almost everything by way of furniture and decorations pictures looking glasses tables chairs and crockery ware many of them nice articles. one of the tents, the [one] occupied by Henry Barrows Sam King Levi House and Frank is carpeted in fine style. I have secured some fine trophies myself belonging to officers of the rebel Army among them the trunk of Col Lee late of the U.S. Army. I might have got Hundreds of Dollars worth but had no means of carrying them. One of the mementos of the battle I saved is the bullet which wounded me I will send it [to] you when I get an opportunity. I cannot close without referring to the battle again and may do so again in my letters as different incidents come to my mind in connection with it. The whole regiment behaved nobly and my company pleased me. by their good conduct. they stood in line before the battery and loaded and fired as promptly and regularly as if on drill. One of Fosters aids said to me Sunday that if we had been a little farther off I should not have had ten men left the balls went just over our heads and the trees behind it were literally cut to pieces. Give my love to the boys good night

Otis

[Written at top of sheet in pencil]

I sent the first of this off by mail yesterday not having time to finish it I have an invitation to dine with Gen Fosters staff to morrow

JL025

Camp near Newberne, N.C.
March 22nd 1862

Dear Wife

I have written you two or three letters since the last battle but in the confusion and bustle of landing our stores, tents, pitching camp, and getting the men comfortably settled I hardly know myself what I have written. I believe I told you all about the fight or at least all I saw of it. of our hard march and harder fight. The battle of Roanoke Island we thought rather a hard one, and it was so for the five or six regiments who had the fighting to do, but it was a mere skirmish compared to the battle here. It is over now however and we are encamped as comfortably as can be. It seems next to getting home to get in camp again after knocking about on ship board so long. You can hardly appreciate the discomfort of both officers and men during the ten weeks we spent on the water. The vessels became filthy in the extreme the men dirty and ragged while confinement and want of exercise unfitted them completely for the fatigue and exposure we had to endure But they did endure it like men and have won a name for courage discipline and conduct in the field that no other regiment from our state has done. I am proud of the regiment to which I belong and would not leave it for a higher grade in any other. And we shall keep the name we have won unless we are ruined by politicians at home. Col. Drake has gone home sick and I fear he will not return he is failing fast and our northern spring will kill him. In his state of health I should rather face ten rebel batteries than our New England spring. And so no doubt would he, for he is every inch a soldier, but I think he does not expect to live and has gone home to die among his friends.

Some officers here are already at work to get up political influence at home and get themselves promoted I hope they won't succeed for the man who is not satisfied

to rest his promotion on his own merits as a soldier does not deserve promotion. But I have got off the subject, for I feel so much pride and interest in our regiment I cannot help saying something about it and of course I think my company the best of [the] whole, and I do think Manchester may well be proud of sending out such a company. Both at Roanoke Island and here I landed more men than any other captain and twice as many as some of them. No men could behave better in a fight. One Edward H. Risley was struck in the back of the neck by a ball that went through his overcoat blouse and shirt knocking him senseless I stood beside him at the time helped pick him up and sent two men to take him to the rear, supposing him to be mortally wounded. I picked up his gun which he was loading when hit and had just got it loaded and capped when he came back snatched the gun out of my hands and took his place in the ranks as if nothing had happened. Another John Packer was struck in the thigh and I supposed by the looks the ball had gone through and given him a very severe wound and asked him if he wanted help. he said no and limped off to the rear taking his gun with him. he soon came back and commenced firing. After the action was over I asked him about his wound he said it was not as bad as he thought so he came back to help finish up the job. I looked at the wound and found it was made by a musket ball which instead of going through had followed around the limb and come out the other side. it was bad enough as it was for it swelled up and made him so lame he had to fall out and limp along behind on the march. I could not but contrast the conduct of our men with that of some other regiments in that respect not one of our men went to the rear with wounded men unless sent and then they returned and took their places in the ranks as [soon as] possible. In some of the regiments as soon as a man was hit three or four men would go off with him and not return and in one instance I saw five from a Conn regiment going off with a man who only had a finger shot off. One of my own men (Sherman) who had a rifle ball shot entirely through his arm went off by himself taking his gun with him went a mile to the hospital got it done up and walked up to camp two days after (3 miles) bringing all his equipments with him. But I commenced by telling you about being settled in our new camp we are just outside the city in a dry pleasant locality I have a good tent well floored a good bed formerly belonging to Capt Joseph H. Englehard of the rebel army. The men have got new shoes pants and caps. They make a fine appearance and all feel proud of themselves and their regiment. We have warm days and cool nights at first could not sleep much but I can keep warm now and sleep well. Roses were in full bloom when we arrived here and peas are a foot high. Peach and cherry trees are in blossom all around our camp though I sit shivering with cold while I write.

The contrabands flock in from the county in crowds and tell us all that is going on, in most cases I think they are to be relied on they are more intelligent than the poor whites we meet and know better what is going on in the county. According to the best information we can get the loss of our enemies in the late battle was larger than our own. Our own men have buried over two hundred of their dead besides large numbers they took away on the cars. The darkies all say that their loss in killed and wounded was Two Thousand, probably it was not so large as that but we know it was very heavy. Watson Salter lost a leg in the battle. I have not been to see him for it hurts me to walk so far. and if I walk much during the day my limb pains me at night but I think I shall go and find him day after tomorrow. I get all the papers you send. When you do send any, send the latest you can get. I am much obliged to Mrs. Cone for the perfume. Give my regards to all.

Otis

JL026

Newberne N.C. March 25th 1862

Dear Wife

We had a large mail last night so large they could not get it assorted till to day. There are lots of Newspapers but they are not assorted yet. I got three letters from you. Capt Hudson is in my tent writing now and I have thanked him for his kindness in writing you I had done so before. I sent a note by the same mail but it seems you did not get it Hudson comes to see me about every day, and we have great times talking over Manchester affairs. He is a fine good hearted fellow and a good Officer. I never thought I should like him half as well as I do. I hope his friends will stir around and get him appointed major of our regiment. We had a taste of what camp life in an enemy country.[is] saturday night. While out on dress parade a messenger came galloping from the outposts 5 miles distant and said that our pickets had been attacked and driven in and wanted reinforcement. We got our supper as soon as possible gave out ammunition and about sundown started for the scene. before we got through the city it was quite dark, but we pushed on through mud puddles and brooks one brook we crossed was knee deep and sevral rods wide. you must know brooks less than 5 feet deep are not bridged here. We had got over three miles on the road and were pushing on at a tremendous rate when word came back that it was a false alarm. the enemy pickets had come down in sight of ours who fired on them and they run. Major Bartholomew sent word to that effect. to Gen Foster but the messenger was scared and did not give it properly so all we had to do was about face and return to camp where we arrived at 9 OClock tired and wet. Hudson overtook me on the road and offered me his horse (as I was somewhat lame) but being a poor horseman I declined. My leg is nearly well but has a hard sore bunch on it but it is going off fast Our Regiment has to go out on picket duty tomorrow and remain out three days. but the duty is neither hard or dangerous at present. I have not time to write more now as the men are falling in for Dress Parade and the letter must go now or not at all.

Good by

Otis

JL027

Newberne N.C. March 30th 1862

Dear Wife

It being sunday I will write you a short letter though there is nothing of special interest transpiring here. I returned to camp late last night, lame foot sore and tired as a man need be, and feel pretty mean to day You allready know what my business was out of camp and would perhaps like to know what sort of soldiering pickett duty is.

Well, we were notified at noon on wednesday that we were to go out and relieve the Mass 23d the same day. five companies of ours going up the rail road to relieve their right wing and four companies (mine being included) were sent out on what is called the Trent River road to relieve their left. We left Camp in a pouring rain about two O Clock and arrived at our head quarters about five, the distance was about seven miles and the road horrible muddy. This was the position of the main body of our detachment. We now detached a company which had to advance two miles farther and then throw out pickets on the different roads. I[t] did not fall to my lot to advance the first night. So I found my men comfortable quarters in some deserted negro shanties. and had time to get some rest. As a discription of the plantation will give you a good idea of the state in which we find things here I will give you a short account of it. It is one of the best

plantations I have seen. the house stands well back from the road with a large yard in front - is nearly new high between joints and hard finished inside like all the house in this section of county the chimney is on the outside On the oposite side of the road is a long row of Negro shanties nine in number with shingle roofs and battened sides they are larger and better than most of the negro quarters here. They are all alike having but one room with a chimney at one end and on the outside there are two or three smaller shanties on the same side [of] the road with the house The owner of the place (Jackson) stayed at home some days after we took possession of Newberne and remained unmolested, but some rebel Cavalry came down one day and he gave them information which resulted in the capture of three men belonging to the 11th Conn. and not daring to stay any longer packed up what he could carry and taking his family , teams, and a part of his niggers he left just in time to save being taken. He might have remained however for I have never known of anyone being punished yet for any rascally act they have committed against us. His place had been used about a week as the station for the reserve of our advance posts, before our regiment was sent out. He must have had a pleanty of everything as there are still about fifty hens some ducks and a lot of hogs left, though about two hundred men have been station[ed] there for nearly two weeks, and have been allowed to kill and eat anything they wished. My men killed at least a dozen pigs. The officers make the house their head quarters and are perfectly at home. An old negro woman cooked supper for us which consisted of raw hoe cake and ham (the next day we ordered some chickens killed and fared better) It cleared off in the night and thursday was a beautiful day my turn to command the advance did not come till friday. I will give an account of that day which will perhaps answer very well for the experien[ce] of the others Friday morning I took 44 men and starting up the road marched two miles to our outposts and relieved another officer. having the same number of men he returned to our head quarters with his men. Having no Lieutenants of my own tw[o] from other companies were detailed to go with me. I was very tired and after seeing the pickets relieved, laid down in the bushes to rest. Soon after a young lieutenant came along with eight men saying he had permission from the commander of the main body of reserve to go outside the lines. I advised him not to go but he most likely thought he might "get his name in the papers" as the boys say, and pushed on taking with him three mounted Videtts who volunteered to go They had been gone about three hours. I was in a shanty with Lieut Camp eating some hoe-cake and sweet potatoes when I heard a terrible uproar among the darkies outside. they came rushing pell mell into the cabin The southerners are comeing the Southerners coming - I went out and found everybody in a great state of excitement Lieut Close had ordered the reserve to fall in and was about to send a messenger off to the main post to give the alarm I ordered the messenger to take his place in the ranks the men to stack arms, and then enquired what all the fuss was about. One of the Videetts now apeared frightened nearly out of his senses, he could hardly speak and his horse was dripping wet with sweat. he said the Lieut. and all our men were either killed or taken prisoners together with the other two Videtts. I enquired the distance to the place and he said five miles. Lieut. Camp was very desirous of trying to do something for them. I had no men to spare, but being desirous of saving them if possible gave him eight men and told him in no case to go beyound a place called the forks, three fourths of a mile from where the affair took place and something over four miles outside our pickets. He had not been gone long before the other two Videtts came in all safe, their statement was about as follows. After getting outside our lines they marched straight on till they came to the forks of the road where they left one of the Videtts and three of the riflemen the rest going 3/4 of a mile to the house of a man named Merritt. Merritt's wife and daughters came out to the gate and while talking with them a squad of rebel cavalry came down on them at a gallop faring a volley from their carbines at the same time. The Videtts left at a two forty gate persued by the rebels the riflemen run for the wods one of them loosing

his gun and the Lieutenant his cap. It appears that the men left at the forks were the best of the lot, for as soon as they heard the firing they took a double quick up the road to help their companions. As soon as the rebels who were pursuing the Videtts got sight of them they in turn became frightened and turning their horses in the other direction made the best time they knew how on the back track. The Videtts still supposing themselves pursued run their horses nearly all the way back. A part of these facts I learned from some darkies who saw the affair and thought it very funny that the parties should be running away from each other at the same time. One of the rebels dropped his pistol which was loaded and capped, he dared not stop to pick it up, but one of the darkies got it and gave it to Corporal Brown of my company who was in charge of the outside pickets on the road. Camp went out to the "forks" and remaining there about two hours found all the men but one, he also recovered the gun and cap, and got back about sundown. The other man came in about 8 the next morning having stayed in the woods all night. So they all got back safe and sound which was more than they deserved.

Every night while we were out there parties of slaves would come down within about half a mile of our pickets and building fires would stay till daylight and then come in. Sometimes twenty or thirty together all runaways and all going to Newberne with a vague kind of a notion in their heads that they would be all right if they once got there.

While lying in the bushes out there I could not help wondering what a state of mind some of the officers of our valliant Home Guard would be in if they could be suddenly transfered with their commands to where we then were. In an enemys, cou[n]try. a dense forrest all around me with 44 men over half of them scattered off some of them 3/4 of a mile distant on picket stations. The only force within nine miles of us was our main reserve of 100 men two miles in the rear. But we get used to it and can lie down and sleep about as well as in camp.

Otis

I saw Watson Salter today he is getting along well, and says he has never been sorry he came out as a soldier. Hudson has gone home on leave of absence and you have doubtless seen him before now. I did not see him after he got permission to go, so I could not send by him. Who could have told you I was so fat you would not know me. I have not seen anyone from Manchester.

JL028

Newberne N.C. April 6th 1862

Dear Wife

The "Mail" arrived to-day and I got two letters from you. It is strange my letters came to hand in such bad condition, I am quite sure. I sealed them and in one I acknowledged the receipt of the handkerchiefs. I have forgotten what flowers I promised to send you but think it must have been one resembling a daisy which I picked on our march the day before the battle, but I have lost it and in its place will send you strawberry blossom I picked on the field just after the battle was over, also some Spanish Moss (I believe they call it) which grows on the trees about here sometimes covering them completely, hanging from all the limbs and often three or four feet long.

I sent home a sword a few days since which you will get before this reaches you, and have a box packed and nailed to send by Express containing some fine "trophies" as we call them here. There is one thing in the box for the boys, and they must not quarrel about it but use it together like good boys. Whatever it lacks to make it complete you can get there. The shoes came out of the trunk of a Rebel Officer, and are for you. You

can wear them or keep them as trophies. The box of instruments. With the pocket book I took from the trunk of Col. Lee as you will see for yourself and value more than anything else in the box. Most of the other things were given me by the men who took them from Officers trunks left at the Depot. You will see by the mark on the coat who that belonged to press it out nicely and put it where it won't fade. The spoons and silver box came out of an Officers trunk but I have forgotten his name. The chess men came from the house of the Mayor of Newberne, Fred. Lane. He was a rank sesessionist and run away his house was rifled of everything by the soldiers and darkies. Andrew Spencer gave them to me. The silver in the bottom of the box I had of one of the men who found it in a letter box where it had been concealed. The shoulder strap stockings handkerchiefs and packet medicine case I took from the trunk of Capt Nesbit of the 3d La Regiment. The knife is such as nearly all the rebel soldiers carry, and we finde lots of them whenever we have a fight. I broke mine splitting wood with it I wish you would get Wadsworth to mend it I have not mentioned all the trinkets in the box but they all came from somewhere and we call them all "trophies" and say we "captured" them. I have some more but could not get them in the box. I might have secured Five Hundred Dollars worth in an hour the morning after the battle, but like a fool did not do it. My sense of honor would not allow it Afterwards I saw pious Methodist and Presbyterian Officers pocket the same things without compunction, and had the pleasure of hearing myself called a fool by one of Fosters Aids for not taking them myself.

You say you are glad we are going to stay here some time: If the rebels execute their threats we shall not, they say they are coming down to drive us away, I think they won't find it an easy job.

The health of our Regiment is very poor we have never had so many sick, out of the 960 men we left Hartford with we have now less than 400 fit for duty The length of time we spent aboard the trasports the hard service we have seen since and the ennervating effects of the climate here all tend to unfit us for duty some of the troops here ought to be exchanged with the Garrisons of Forts North and have an oportunity to recruit but that wont be done so we must make the best of it, but the number of our sick alarms me and they are our strongest and best men I am afraid I have written rather a blue letter but I feel more so than usual to night for yesterday was the sadest day I have seen since leaving Hartford. I have seen my men fall around me in battle killed and wounded by the bullets of our enemies, at such times the great interests at stake the knowledge that we must conquer overcomes all other feelings. But yesterday I had to follow one to the grave who went through the dangers of the field unhurt, and was killed by the accidental discharge of a gun in the hands of a friend while sitting in his tent. His name was Loren T. House Mr Cone's family know him well, he was one of the finest young men in the company.

I have allready sent you a Newberne paper, but you wont finde anything in it to interest you for it is all copied from Northern papers except the advertizements which are the same that were in before the proprietors run away.

You say you hope we shall not have any more fighting to do. I think we shall not if McClellan does his part if he whips the Rebels out in Virginia it will about finish up the war in this part of the country.

Sunday

One of my men died last night at the hospital and is to be buried at 4 this afternoon. He had a very bad type of fever but was not thought dangerously sick till just before he died. The Dr told me yesterday noon that he was doing well, he died at half past ten last night. I heard before that Wiley's resignation had not been accepted, though I did not know certain that it was so. Well, if he does come he will finde that he will have more work to do than he has ever had before. All he has ever done would not amount to one

week of hard work but he seemed to think a good deal of me and is a clever good for nothing kinde of a fellow.

I expect when they pay us off I shall be in better spirits you know how it effects me to be short of funds and I am getting rather hard up. But the Paymaster is said to be in town and I have no doubt we shall be paid soon I suppose you have seen Hudson and heard more from him than I could write in half a day. You may send the other handkerchiefs. I shall want them all.

Yours Truly

J.L Otis

JL029

Newberne N.C. April 9th 1862

Dear wife

We have been paid off to-day and I have just taken \$175 to the Express Office for you, and at the same time sent the box I wrote you about, all of which I hope you will get promptly and in good order, The first time you go to South Manchester after getting the money, pay Thomas Cheeney Nine Dollars for me; he will know what it is for, But do not pay it till you recieve the money. We got another mail yesterday, but I got no letter from you I suppose you sent one by Hudson thinking it would reach me sooner. I have made up my minde that Hudson cannot get the Majorship of our regiment and I am inclined to think he will not come here to stay, though I have heard nothing said about it. Foster mentioned all his aids by name in his Official report of the battle of Newberne, except Hudson. It seems very strange and I dont know what to make of it I did not see Hudson after the commencement of the action and dont know how he did behave. If Foster omitted his name intentionally, it must have been for good reasons but I hope it was an oversight. Phil wrote me a letter before he left which I will send you and want to know what you think about it.

I sent you another Newberne paper to-day containing some peas plant them in hills like beans without brush or poles I have found the little flower I mentioned and will send it. You will finde some letters in box I send by Express to day. Some of them quite amusing, the writers little thought in whose hands they would fall when they were writing them. Seeing so many of our men haveing letters about reading and making fun of them set me to thinking about my own, and how I should feel if the rebels came down and captured them. So the day before we went out on picket duty I burned up all I had recieved from anyone since leaving home. I[t] seemed like parting with old friends, but I was glad when it was done, and now when the mail comes and I get a new lot of letters I distroy the last lot. I am bound the rebels shant have any of my private letters for sirculation.

Samuel King has been quite sick at the Hospital but is getting better now.

Pay Mrs. Horsly six Dollars \$6 when you get that I sent to-day.

Yours Truly

J L Otis.

JL030

Newberne N.C. April 12th 1862

Dear Wife.

I will write you a short note to night though I have no news and dont know as I can think of enough to say to half fill a sheet. You see I have been all out of note paper for some time and have had to write my letters on foolcap which makes them about four times as long as they ought to be and four times as long as those I get in reply. I dont speak with reference to your letters for you do pretty well though I did not get anything from you the last mail, I sent you \$175- by Express a few days ago and a letter by mail at the same time. You mentioned in your last that you thought of getting a dog for the boys, if you can get a good one I think you had better do so, I have been thinking too about clothing for the children, if you have to get them any thick clothes this spring if you can get some of the sky blue cloth such as soldiers wear, for pants have a dark welt in the side seam and some dark blue broad cloth for jackets with the eagle buttons about the size of those on the cuffs of my coat, and some blue caps if you have to get them caps - they would look well, I think they are entitled to wear uniform. The buttons I speak of are about the right size for boys clothes and have an eagle and shield on them in the center of the shield a letter I or R. I meant to have sent you another paper to-day but could not get one yesterday it is not much loss however for they dont amount to much.

Everything we get to eat here costs us about three times as much as it would at home and if I was sure of staying here another month I would send home for what I want. I called on Watson Salter yesterday, he is getting along first rate I am detailed as member of a General Court Martial in the City which commences next tuesday there is no knowing how long it will last may be a week or two.

You enquired if I had got acquainted with any of the Northampton boys, the 27th is encamped close by us. Luke Lyman is Lieut Col. One day while on shore at Roanoke Island I met several Officers and getting into conversation learned that one was Amos Bond, leader of the 27th Band who used to live in Cabot one was one of the Dwight Boys from Northampton another was also from the same place but I have forgotten his name. I thought then I should call and see them but have been too busy to do so, Lieut Col Pettibone wants me to go to town and get excused from serving on the Court-Martial because I have got no Lieutenant but it is not my fault that I have none so I declined to do anything about it We hear that Capt. Pardee is to be Major of our Regiment, he is the senior Captain and is perhaps entitled to it. I almost wish I had tried for it myself. I am not sure but I could have got it, at any rate my chance would have been as good as Hudsons.

Hudsons leave of absence expired three days ago but he has not got back though two steamers have come in since. I am impatient for it will seem almost like going home to see some one who has just come from Manchester.

The health of our regiment is rather improving though we have a very large sick list. Yet I have sixteen sick in my company, but they all seem to be getting along pretty well now Write me as soon as you get the box I sent. Tell Harry and Phil I shall depend on them to do the farming this summer and raise a good lot of pop corn to eat next winter.

Good night. Otis

JL031

Newberne N.C. April 20th 1862

Dear Wife

Capt Hudson arrived night before last and came up to see me yesterday morning, he brought a letter from you and a bundle, tell Harry and Phil the candy was first rate and tasted good, a great deal better because it came from home. About 3 hours after the letter you sent by Hudson I got another by mail in which you say you got the sword I sent but dont know who brought it. Corporal Woodworth of my company left it at the Depot. There is a box on the road for you if you have not got it already, in which you will finde something more valuable than the sword. There is a package of money on the way too. containing \$175- dont fail to write as soon as you get them You think it strange I do not write anything about comeing home. You cannot be more anxious for me to come home than I am to do so, but it is entirely useless for me to say anything about it at present. I might have got away for fifteen days or so when we first came here, for there were some [who] got leave of absence on account of wound recieved who were not hurt as bad as I was but I dont want to come home on a leave of absence of less than thirty days.

Gen Foster refused leave to several Officers of our regiment. There are many vacancies existing in our regiment and Foster says none of the officers can be spared at present When the vacancies are filled and I can see any prospect of success I shall ask for leave of absence. As to how long we shall stay here I have no idea. We expect orders every day to move up five miles on the Kingston road and encamp there. We had orders to go last week but the day before we were to go the order was countermanded. but I think we shall go this week I think the health of our regiment is rather improving though our sick list is frightfully large now. Samuel King who used to work for Mr Parsons was buried yesterday He died of fever. It makes me homesick and heart-sick to see my best men sicken and die around me I have lost three of the best men in the company since we came here. they went through the battles of Roanoke and Newberne unhurt, to die in camp of disease,

You ought not to be low spirited at home you have the children with you. and good neighbors all around you, I expect to come home safe some day. I am not afraid of bullets, but when going into action it makes me feel sad to think I may fall and never see you and the children again.

There I have written a blue letter and it shall be the last, I had the sick-head-ache last night and feel mean to-day; but I shall be all right tomorrow Write me as often as you can. Hudson said he called on you but did not remember what you said except that you were all well, he said the boys had grown so he did not know them. Our Chaplain went home on ten days leave of absence to take care of Col. Drake on the way home. instead of ten days he was gone more than thirty. and spent his time Lionizing about the country and electioneering for his friends in the regiment. It is a shame that a Chaplain who is not worth his salt should have more influence in the appointments here than all the line officers of the regiment.

I cannot write any more now but will write again soon. I am still a little lame but not much.

Yours Otis

JL032

Newbern N.C. April 28th 1862

Dear Wife

I suppose the mail will leave to-morrow so I will write you a short letter though I suppose my last one has not gone yet. We are waiting anxiously for a mail, but suppose we shall get none till Yorktown is taken as they will most [likely] detain all the steamers there till the result of the siege at that place can be sent down. I got no letter the last mail so I expect to get three or four by the next. Fort Macon surrendered to us Saturday night after standing our fire ten hours another of Uncle Sam's fed. forts is recovered and another leaf is added to the chaplet of the Burnside Expedition. But I am getting poetical. We lost one man killed and three wounded. the rebels eight killed and fourteen wounded We took 320 prisoners and released them all on parole

Our regiment has gone out on pickett but I have not gone with them being still engaged on the Court Martial I think we shall get through this week.

I did not think Leander would be so foolish as to leave Merrow, hope he will do well but am afraid he has not capital enough to get along. Hudson tells me he heard you say to Horace White that you had got farming enough. I am sorry for that for I had about made up my minde to take to farming when I get home unless I can get a Commission in the regular Army.

We are having spells of very warm weather here some days it is as warm as the hottest weather in August and then again we have cold storms so that we have to wear overcoats. The trees are all leaved out and I saw ripe strawberries a week ago but have not tasted any. Mr. White sent me a nice piece of dried beef by Hudson but I have not been able to eat any of it yet but I am better to-day and shall soon be all right I hope The health of the troops here seems to improve gradully, but when the fever does get hold of a man here it goes hard with him.

I am glad Parker has got Buell to work for him they are well matched and will make a good team I must close or shall be to late for the mail. Give my love to the boys Good bye Otis.

JLO33

Newbern N.C. May 6th 1862

Harry & Phil

My little boys.

It has been a long time since I have written you a letter, and when I do write, you don't write any back. Perhaps you have not learned to write yet; if you have not it is all right and I shall have to excuse you. But I will write you a letter and if you cant write one you must get mother to do it for you. I shall tell you what I have been doing and what I have seen for the last two or three weeks. Most of the time I have been on what is called a Court-Martial. Now you want to know what a court-martial is, well I will tell you. You must know there are some bad men among the soldiers just as there are everywhere, who get drunk and steal and do other naughty things just as some bad men do in Hartford who have to be put in jail. Some times Officers get drunk and abuse the men then they have to be punished.

Well there are seven of us who constitute the Court-Martial. Col Amery Col Stewart, Major Frankle, Capt. Mitchell Capt. Stackpole Capt. Otis and Lieut Van Buren, all from different regiments Every day we go to the jail where there is a nice large room upstairs, there is a carpet on the floor, two sofas, and a lot of stuffed seat chairs to sit in. We have

to wear our best uniforms, swords sashes, and "everything grand" as the books say, and sit around a long table covered with books papers pens and ink. Then the naughty men are brought in to be tried, and if they have been getting drunk on duty, stealing, sleeping on guard or anything very bad we have them punished. The worst of all is getting to sleep when they are on guard, and men who do that have to be punished very severely, because while they are asleep the rebels might come in and kill us all. Sometimes Officers are brought before Courts Martial for getting drunk or being cruel to the men. Then they have to have their swords and mien sashes and shoulder straps taken away from them and be sent home and not allowed to come back any more, and if they are cowards and run away without fighting they have to be punished just the same. So you see I have been on the court for three weeks past, but as we only have to stay from 10 O Clock till 3 (we dont stop to get dinner) I have the rest of the time to myself, sometimes I go about the city after the Court adjourns, and occasionally see a regiment marching through the streets with a fine band of music, and such a crowd of niggers following them as you never saw, and perhaps never will. A few days ago I saw such a lot of them following a band most all children and twice as many as all the children who go to your school in the winter. These darkies are very fond of music and wherever there is a band playing they will gather around in crowds. I have seen two or three hundred collect around our band looking so funny with their black faces curly heads and great white eyes. But they are all good clever fellows and think everything of the soldiers. They are happy too for they know they are not to be slaves any more and are not to have their children sold and sent off where they will not see them again as they used to be. Don't you think it was too bad to sell their children to be carried away and never brought back? They no doubt think as much of their funny looking little black babies as white people do of theirs.

Well our regiment is off up the rail road five or six miles on picket duty (some time I will write you what picket duty is) and I had not seen my company for a week so yesterday being sunday I went up there. They were all glad to see me and wanted me to stay with them but I could not though on some accounts I should have been glad to. The woods up there are full of beautiful birds among them a great many mocking birds and the most beautiful singers I ever heard. The woods are so full of their music, it seems as if the very leaves on the trees had the "gift of song". But there are other residents of the forest there, whose acquaintance if not so agreeable, those rascally little gnats that plague Harry and Mother so bad are so thick the air seems alive with them and the men all looked as if they had the small pox they had been so bitten by them. And then the wood ticks were as "thick as fleas in a beggars blanket" so I am afraid the men would be Heathenish enough to agree to dispence with the beautiful birds if they could thereby get rid of the gnats and wood ticks, I suppose you think that after facing rebel bullets so long we might not care for a few little gnats and wood ticks, but we cant flank them as we did the Rebels; and quite unlike the rebels, they always return to the charge after being repulsed, and the gun-boats are of no us[e] whatever in repelling their attacks.

Well after staying up in the woods till most night I started to return and should have had a grand walk back but it rained most of the time I was on the road, I wish you and mother could see the forests and wild flowers here. you could go into the woods here anytime in the last fortnight and get such a boquet in a few minutes as could hardly be gathered in the best garden in Manchester the middle of june. The woods and swamps all the way from here to camp are full of flowering shrubs and wild woodbines. The trees are very tall running up to a great height before branching. from the branches hang long grey masses of Spanish moss swinging back and forward in [the] wind: All up the trunks of the trees and out on the branches among the grey moss run the wild woodbines, now all in blossom. One kinde having bright yellow blossoms, another deep red and still another, having clusters of trumpet shaped flowers with red cylex and yellow edge. The woods here are full of the American Boxwood now in full bloom, in

some places so near together that they make a solid mass of white blossoms for quite a long way. There are a great many Magnolia Trees too growing wild all about the woods. covered with their great white blossoms looking for all the world like water lilies growing on trees. The first I saw was some ways off the rail road but I thought I would get one and try to send it home in a paper After getting myself wet through in the bushes working my way to the tree I found it so high I could get none of the blossoms and had to give it up. But I soon found a plenty more on smaller trees, this time there was a swamp between me an[d] them but I was not afraid of the swamp for I skirmished through a good deal worse one on Roanoke looking for rebels instead [of] Magnolia trees. Who, when found were not like Magnolias armed with beautiful white flowers but with. Muskets, and those great wicked looking knives such as I sent home in the box. I got a plenty of the flowers but dont think you could tell much about how they look when fresh if I should send one home in a paper. I got back to camp before night all safe but very tired.

We have had thunder showers all day and some of the time it has rained as hard as I ever knew it to, and about three O Clock it hailed so I did not know but it would tear my tent down. Hail stones nearly as large as walnuts and as clear and hard as glass fell faster than I ever saw hail fall before, but I dont suppose it has done much damage except to knock the little peaches off the trees. They, the peaches - are about as large as robins eggs - You must be good boys and see that the gardening is done up first rate, "Papa"

Dear Kate,

I have writen this in the childrens' name because I thought it would pleas them. I suppose it will be just as acceptable to you.

Corporal Woodworth came back yesterday and brought me the tea it is very acceptable we don't get good tea here Evrything we get costs about three times what it would at home, Yours Otis

JL034

Newbern N.C. May 9th 1862

Dear Kate.

I got two letters from you yesterday one mailed the 26th of April and the other May 1st. I was of course highly pleased to get them as I always am. and am glad the box arrived all safe. You only mention the stove and slippers but you have found everything safe no doubt. you say nothing about the money in the box with the chess men so I suppose it was all right. Let Harry take the big knife to the blacksmiths, and get it mended, and if Thomas Cheney calls on you and wants it let him have it, He has been very thoughtful in sending me papers and if he would set any value on the knife as a trophy of the battle of Newbern let him have it The box you sent me came to night I have not unpacked it all, but have taken out some cake and found it very nice Tell Mrs. Cone I am greatly obliged for what she sent and will try not to do discredit to my Regiment here or my friends at home, by appearing on Dress parade with a dirty face while it lasts: And if she will keep her face nice and clean till I get home I will kiss her - (if Ralph will let me) and be glad of the opertunity for I have not seen three decent looking women since I left my Native State And I can assure her it is not every day that she can be kissed by a Captain in the Tenth Regiment.

Thank Mrs Grey also for he[r] kindness I am sorry any body persuaded William not to send me the whiskey and brandy for it would have come perfectly safe and been very

acceptable. If I could get a gallon or two of such whiskey as that I had at South Manchester, nothing would suit me better I cant drink the whiskey we get here though the Surgeons order it. I shall write Mr. White a letter soon and thank his wife for the butter. I am still engaged on the Court Martial but shall not be more than two or three days more We adjourned for two days this week and though I was not liable to be called on to do duty in the Regiment. I walked out seven miles to join my company on outpost - stayed with them in the woods two days and nights and then walked back to the City It made me about sick but it pleased the men so much I felt paid.

As to the Majorship of the Regiment I should of cours be proud of the appointment and it would not be very hard work for my friends to get me the place if it was vacant, but I shall never ask them to get it for me as others have done My reputation for courage and good conduct in battle is as good as that of any Officer in the Regiment. And there is but one who is considered my superior as a Military man, and that is Capt. Leggett. I had rather he would have the place than get it myself; for he certainly is far ahead of me in knowledge of Military affairs. Tell Phil I think he had better not use up my paints, they are valuable as trophies. but if you think he is old enough so that paints would be of any use to him you can get him some. they don't cost much. Tell Harry, when he gets the letter I wrote him an[d] Phil I think he will feel pretty cheap about being too lazy to send me any word when you wrote last. I am glad you are able to save something from what I send home. and will send all I can spare, but my expenses are frightfully large and I dont half live as far as eating is concerned. Clothing costs about twice what it would at home but we must have it let it cost what it may. My best boots and a good many other things were lost on the way down from Annapolis I have not bought any new boots yet but went to look at some to night and they asked me \$10 for a pair - "That's the way the money goes" Last week I thought I would send to Dr. Taylor for some medicine, but have felt so much better for two or three days I think I wont, -

Good night Otis

JL035

Camp of 10th C.V. May 16th 1862

Dear Kate.

I recieved two letters from you yesterday and also the papers (I think I get nearly all the papers you send) You speak of there being a long time that you got no letters from me it was most likely owing to the fact that at the time Fort Macon was attact the mail steamer waited some days after the mails were made up, so as to carry home Burnside dispatches.

For two or three weeks I did not write as often as usual. I had the worst attact of dyspepsia I ever had and for two weeks could hardly eat anything, and my hands trembled so I could not write. I was just getting over it and was able to eat something when I had an awful fit of nervous sick headache and the Surgeon gave me so much opium to put me to sleep it made me sick two days; but I am all right again now.

Our Regiment mooved camp last monday. We are now five miles out of Newbern. on the Neuce River Road as it is called. Oour pickets are in sight of those of the rebels. I am s[t]ill engaged on the Court-Martial but we adjourned over for a few days on Wednesday so I came out and joined the Regiment for duty till sent for. My company is ordered out on picket to-day and will have to start in about an hour, so I shant be able to write a long letter. We have thunder showers here that beat anything I ever saw or heard of, one came up day before yesterday just after I got to camp, it has rained hailed thundered and lightened ever since (about 36 hours) and has not cleared off yet. Our

Camp is a complete mud hole as you ever saw and such clouds of gnats and musquitoes as you neve[r] imagined they bit me so I could not sleep last night

You speak of a report there, that the Tenth was to be sent to York Town to fill up the Fourth. Never believe that our regiment will be sent to fill up any other, it has too good a reputation for that and will never lose its identity by being consolidated with another. But I wish they had sent us to reinforce McClellan for I think I should like to serve under him. I cannot write much more now as my company is nearly ready to march send my regards to your mother. tell Mrs Buell her son is well and has been ever since we came here and if he has not written her it is his own fault as he has more leisure time than any other men in the company. I will write you again as soon as we return from pickett.

Yours

Otis

Direct to
Capt. John L. Otis
10th Rgt C.V.
Newbern N.C.
(Burnside's Division)

JL036

Camp of 10th Rgt CV. May 18th 1862

Dear Kate.

I wrote you two days ago but had to close rather abruptly to go out on pickett duty. though I had written about all I could think of and must have stopped soon for want of something to say. There is nothing going on out here and we see no one except members of our own regiment. Our Camp is 5 miles from Newbern and our pickets extend 4 miles farther. Our camp is very muddy and disagreeable. the mud and water is standing in puddles all around us; but my men have laid a brick walk in front of my tent, and set out flowers along side of it which are growing finely. Some of them blossom every day. I will send you one in this letter. My cake is not all gone yet I gave Hudson a loaf and he took it down to Fosters' I stayed with him (Hudson) at Head Quarters two days after our camp was mooved, and they had the loaf of cake on the table. Gens Foster, Reno, and Park, were all there and ate some of it, all praising it highly. not to please me for they did not know that I had anything to do about it. I am inclined to think that if you had known what test the cake had got to stand you would have been nervous about the quality when making it. I believe I wrote before that I had found Henry Gleason here he was in the Mass 21st. When Hudson found it out he very kindly set to work to get him exchanged into my company (not that either Hudson or myself cared anything about it on his own account, but we wanted his family to have the benefit of our State. Bounty) Hudson brought me up his transfer paper last night and I expect Gleason here to-day; it will be quite a help to his wife.

I should like to come home in strawberry time but am afraid I shant be able to get away strawberries have gone bye here but I did not get many. I called on Col Ludley [Dudley?] of the 3d Artillery about three weeks ago and he said there was a bed of them at the back of his tent I went out and picked about a dozen just to say I had eaten strawberries in April and that is all I have had. As to peas it is about the season for them now but I dont expect to get any. The people about here have planted hardly anything this season what they are going to live on I cant see. If this section of North Carolina is a fair sample of what is being done in other parts of the south. the Northern People will have to contribute the necessaries of life for the south next winter. They will not begin

to raise enough to live on. If this war is brought to a close this summer as it seems likely to be - we shall have a goodly portion of our southern bretheren to feed next winter you would be astonished to see the people white and black who are fed by the government here at present And as there is no farming being done here somebody has got them to feed for a good while yet. Our Government not only feed the destitute here but furnish them medical attendance and medicines haveing a regular department organized for that purpose.

My men are all getting along very well now none of them being seriously ill. Samuel King died of fever he had good care, but did not report himself sick as soon as he might. He should not have landed with us at the battle of Newbern as he was quite unwell at the time but I knew nothing about it till some days after; he was in the same tent too and lying close beside Loren House when he was killed and seemed much worse and a good deal out of his head after it Some of the men think he would have got along but for that. My paper is used up so good bye. What do the boys say to their letter? Otis

JL037A

Camp of 10th C.V.

May 28th 1862

Dear Wife.

We got a mail today and I had two letters from you, I shall not be able to write much of a letter to night, I have been sick several days past and have not set up much till today I am a good deal better, though I have a nervous pain in my head, and my right arm and shoulder pain me so I can hardly hold a pen. There [were] several things in your letters I wish to remark about in particular, but shall have to defer it for a day or two. when I feel better able to write We are just paid off again and I have put up. \$220- to send you and shall send it to town to-morrow Give Mrs Burton \$12- Twelve and Mrs Horsly Six (6) Dollars. The balance is all yours. I don't know as I have kept enough to last me but think I can get along, if not I shall send home for some. I dont like to keep too much on hand here as there is no knowing what will happen.

Since I commenced writing the Officer call sounded (a bugle signal for the Officers to assemble at the Col tent) So I went over and learned that our regiment is ordered back to Newbern tomorrow except two companies which are to remain here and I am to stay in command I thought it rather hard as I have been so unwell lately, but I made up my minde before I left home that whatever came before me in the way to duty should be done, so I found no fault, though it leaves me five miles in advance of the regiment holding the junction of two roads with only 150 men. But I believe they are going to send me out some Cavalry for patroll duty.

Two very pleasant things have happened to me within two weeks. The first was last week we had a test drill of all the companies in the regiment. We were drawn up in line and the different companies sent out one at a time to drill before the regiment. After it was over every Officer in the regiment admitted at once that I had the best drilled company, there was not a dissenting voice. Col Pettibone said "Gentlemen your companies have all done well and the exercise was highly creditable to you and the regiment, but Capt Otis' company is decidedly the best." He afterwards told me that our drill was almost perfect. I cannot write any more tonight. Tell the children that the flowers they sent were beautiful and what is better look like home. I picked some such as they never saw before a few days ago on purpose to send home but was too sick to write till they were spoiled.

I am very tired, good night, Otis.

JL037B

Neuce River Road

May 28th [29th?] 1862

Dear Wife

I wrote you a letter last night but suppose it was not much of a letter but the fact is I don't know what I wrote, but believe I said something about our test drill we had here and was about to tell something else but gave out before I got to it. The something else was this. You know I have had no Lieutenants in my Company since Wiley left. But last week I got mad about it and made so much fuss they began to think they had waited about long enough and appointed one. My Orderly Sergeant Hill, a fine smart fellow and an excellent officer. He ought to have had the place four months ago. The day after his appointment the members of the company rasied money among themselves and bought him a fine sword sash and belt. And me an excellent field glass and regulation (Blue) sword belt. I shall send home the speeches for publication So you see we have a little something going on here in the woods.

Hudson had a letter from Mr. Salter yesterday. He appears to think that I did not write correctly as to Watson's health, and thinks it strange we did not tell him that Watson could not live so that he could come on here The fact is (and I think I wrote you to that effect) he was getting along well till 10 hours before he died, I saw and talked with him two days before and he was to all appearances getting along well and said he expected to start for home in two weeks. His father could not have been more surprised than I was to hear of his death. I looked him up as soon as I felt able to walk so far visited him often and always offered to get him anything he wanted, but he said he had good care and good food, had money by him and needed nothing I could have done no more if he had belonged to my own company, and felt hurt when I read Mr. Salters letter to Phil. Any surgeon will tell him that such cases as Watsons are of frequent occurence.

Keeney ought to have got his mill going before now or waited till another year he will get no goods in market this season, and will have to carry them a whole year as usual. You did not write me what kinde of goods he is going to make or who works for him. As to the Court-Martial (minde the (t,-) we tried several Officers on different charges and abot 20 men. One officer was tried for being drunk while on duty. he was cashiered another for cowardly and un Officer like conduct, one charge against him was kicking a private in the face while he was handcuffed. He was dismissed from the service.

Several who were to be tried for drunkenness and cowardice resigned and were allowed to go without trial. One Quartermaster was tried but his case was not a very bad one and he was let off with a reprimand.

We have no blood on our consciences as we sentenced no one to be shot though we passed some sentences about as bad.

I shall always have a great respect for Courts-Martial, all the proceedings were very impartial and the men were allowed every opportunity they could desire to prove their innocence. The court was in session four weeks and unless we move from here soon will be called together again. The potatoes were excellent and tasted as good to me as anything you sent but it was all good. The reason I did not unpack the box was, if I took the things out I had no where to put them I shall have to stop or be late for the mail.

JL038

Advanced Post 10th C.V.

Neuse River Road

June 1st 1862

Dear Wife

It is June down here and awful hot, you at home don't know anything about dog-days, but with the warm weather we have a few seasonal luxuries which you will not have for some weeks yet strawberries are gone but we are in the height of the blackberry season and they are very plenty the boys keep my table loaded with them all the time and I have to throw away lots of them every day. We had a mail last Thursday but I got no letters in it. Another came this morning and I thought I was again unfortunate, for the letters came up this morning and none for me, but when the papers came this afternoon there was a letter among them for me and three papers though the paper of 26th containing the medicine was not among them, I hope it will come as I want it much I have the sick-head ache a good deal. I am still at the out-post with two Companies of Infantry and a small squad of Cavalry our pickets extending to Batchelder Creek about four miles from the post. We had a slight alarm last night but it did not amount to much. We keep an advanced guard of 25 men at the junction of the Washington and Kingston Roads half a mile above our camp. My Lieutenant Hill was in command there last night and came down between eight and nine in the evening saying that the patrol had come in from the Washington Road and reported seeing rebels on the other bank of the Creek. Two mounted men and some Infantry soldiers. At the same time he said the patrol on the Kingston road had not come in though it was half an hour past the time. I immediately went up to the advance with him and just as we got there they came in one of them wounded in the arm. They said they had been attacked at the Creek by nine men but being mounted managed to escape. It was now past nine O'Clock at night so I could do nothing but visit the pickets and see that everything was right. I then sent down to the Camp of our regiment and got the Surgeon up to dress the man's arm, he arrived about 12 O'Clock and after doing what he could for him we went to bed, I with my clothes on. Early this morning I took 20 men and went up to the Creek to see if I could find anything of rebels but after scouting the ground all over and making a search both sides of the Creek had to give it up not being able to find a single seces anywhere about there. I rode one of the cavalry horses up and back, so you see I have taken one lesson in horsemanship. From present indications I shall not be in condition to take another for some time.

"You say come home as soon as you can" Well, I mean to and will tell you how it can be done. Go and tell Horace White to get me promoted into that new regiment that is being raised in Conn, and then I can come up and stay while it is being raised and fitted

out. I will guarantee that Col. Drake will back him. And if Hilliard Calhoun, and the Cheney's would ask it, it would be done. The reason I said I should like to serve under McClellan was not because I was not perfectly satisfied to serve under Burnside, but I thought McClellan was about to finish up the War and I want to be there and help. Burnside has not men enough to do much here with Fifteen Thousand more he could have taken possession of the entire state long ago. Unless he is to have more troops they may as well take away half of what he has here to reinforce Banks, for he don't need them all to simply hold Newberne. You may as well send me the Tribune when you have one that contains anything interesting, and send the Press whenever you can, as the local news it contains is interesting to us down here. Thomas Cheney sends me Hartford papers every few days. I have no papers to send him in return but write him a letter occasionally, I don't know but he considers them a bore but hope not. I know I cannot write much of a letter at the best though I take rather more pains with those I send him. Hudson comes up to see me often and whenever there are papers in town later than I have he brings them up. He often puts himself to a good deal of trouble to do me a favor, and brings up his letters if he thinks they contain anything that will interest me. Wiley has been out to Manchester and spent a week at Hudson's. I suppose he did not call on you or you would have mentioned it; he was a pretty clever fellow and thought a good deal of me but I don't think he was the greatest warrior that ever lived.

Burton tells me that his wife needs very much the money due her on the "allotment roll" but Wadsworth has not got the money yet and cannot pay it. The amount is \$20- and if Wadsworth will take her order and pay the money to you when it comes you might let her have it. If you do it let Wadsworth and Mr. Cone write the order. The pay is perfectly sure but rather slow about getting along.

I sent you \$220- last week write as soon as you get it

It is getting late and I am tired of writing so I will close give my love to Harry and Phil.

Your Otis

JL039

Newbern N.C.

June 4th 1862

Dear Wife.

I am back to our old camp near the city but got here through much tribulation. I believe I wrote you about going up to the Creek on a scout Sunday forenoon, it was very warm and we were about used up when we got back to our Camp. Monday morning was awful hot and I went down to the brook to wash and had just got about it when my boy came down and said the QM. was up at my tent waiting for me. I went up and found he had brought an order from the General for me to move one Company of my command up to the Red House Road Junction three mile farther up and one back to the Neuse Road Junction a mile nearer the City. leaving me in command of two Companies four miles apart. I sent Co 1 back to the Neuse junction and taking my own moved up to the other locality. It was terrible hot so that once I got sick and had to stop and lie down beside the road a long time, but we finally got there about sundown, pitched our tents and built fires to cook our rations. About 9 O.Clock (before our coffee was done) a man came up on a hand car, bringing an order for me to return to the City with my own Company in the morning and send Co 1 up to take the place of it. I didn't swear because

I am not in the habit of it, but there was swearing enough done at the Red House Junction that night to sink all Craven County.

Well, we started for the main camp at 4 in the morning without breakfast and got there about eight, a distance of seven miles. The Col apologized for sending for me by saying that there was to be a grand review in the City in the afternoon and there was great strife among the regiments as to which should make the best appearance, and as mine was unquestionably the finest looking and best drilled company in the regiment it could not be spared on such an occasion. I, of course felt flattered but how the Officers of the Company felt who had to go up and relieve us I cant say, Myself and men were completely fagged out with two weeks picket duty and hard marching, and of course we have had no drill while on picket. But the boys went at it with a will, cleaned up their clothes and equipments in fine style. and what is more sustained their reputation as the best company of the best regiment Connecticut has in the field. I heard Gov Stanley and the Generals praise our regiment highly for their fine appearance.

We got back to camp about sunset. I dont think there was a candle lighted in my street that night the men were so tired they took off their equipments and went to bed as soon as possible. I did the same but was too tired to sleep and lay awake till after twelve O,Clock. about that time.(midnight) an order came from Head Quarters for us to be ready to march at day light with three days cooked rations. our cook had just got his fire built when the order was countermanded and I suppose another regiment substituted for ours, at any rate we are here and as it rains a deluge we have nothing to do but rest. I know you will say that what I write about my Company is tall bragging but it is all true as every Officer and man in the regiment will say. I shall have to stop here as my company book[s] are behind hand and I must write them up. Tell the boys to take good care of the garden and see that they raise a lot of tomatoes.

Yours Otis

JL040

Newbern N.C.

June 9th 1862

Dear Wife,

I got a letter from you dated the 27th ult, by the last mail also the paper containing the medicine which I commenced taking this morning. I will tell you what disposition I made I made of it (the paper) The mail arrived late friday night. and soon after it came, Hudson rode up to see me and said he was going up to the rebel lines with a flag of truce and wanted me to go with him We went up on the Rail Road taking hand cars. We started at 9 O Clock saturday morning taking 12 men from my own company for motive power I took a piece of the linen sheet that Mrs. White gave me for a flag and with something to eat in a basket we started. The paper containing the medicine with a Hartford Press from Thomas Cheney had just been brought into my tent as I was ready to start. I put them in my pocket without reading them and started, We passed outside our own lines, half a mile beyond Batchelders Creek, and found ourselves in an enemy Country. The track had been partially destroyed in several places by burning cars on it and in one place a Car had been burnt on a bridge, burning the bridge with it of course. There we had to lay some timbers across and carry the cars over; We were fineally halted by the rebel pickets six miles beyond our own lines and about sixteen from Newbern. One of the rebel pickets mounted his horse and rode off after his Captain who soon returned with him also a Lieutennant We conversed with them some time

told them the news from Corinth and Richmond which seemed to make them feel rather blue. They asked for papers saying they never got any so I gave the Captain (whose name was Bryan) both my papers though I had not read them. They were all poorly dressed and the privates were about as forlorn looking a lot of individuals as I ever met, their clothing was of the poorest quality of homespun jeans they were armed with rusty sabers and doubl-barrel shot guns. The captain had on a suit grey that looked quite respectable with a white buckskin sword belt and brass plate, such as our privates wear, with the letters U.S. on it. The Lieut wore no uniform or shoulder straps but had on a belt like the captains, with an old U.S. plate tied on with a string. We laughed at them about their plates but they said they had not the means of getting such things as we had and must use such as they could get, If I felt as bitterly towards our Government as they pretend to I would not have one of their ornaments about on any account and instead of fastening a U.S. plate on with a string, I would tie my belt with the string and throw away the plate I fancied they looked at our clothes with longing eyes, certainly our privates were dressed quite as well as their Capatain and better than the Lieutennt I had on a beautiful blue sword belt quite new and the Lieutennt could not keep his eyes off it. The Officers were not very talkative and seemed ill at ease so after staying about half an hour we asked them to take some whiskey with us, which they did, but would not taste it till we had. Only think of Phil Hudson and I trying to poison a poor Confederate captain. We started back about one O Clock taking our time I stoped at a house within the rebel lines and picked some flowers to send you, but I laid them on the table and somebody has carried them off. But I will send you a blossom which I picked from a large bush I understand it is called a pomegrenate flower. You will see that the red berries are the buds, the bush from which I picked this was full of them.

The next day being sunday (I went down and stayed with Hudson that night) we had not much to do so Hudson borrowed a horse and brought his own up for me to ride and we started out to take a look around the country. We visited a large plantation only three miles from here though I had never seen it before This plantation has some 600 acres of cleared land all lying in a body around the principle house which in a fine grove of oaks is the center. I think by the looks they must have had fifty acres of cotton last year, and twice that of corn, now there as nothing but a few acres of corn and oats planted by some one who has taken possession of the place, but has no right to it whatever except that he found it deserted. Hudson says the place belongs to a young lady about 20 who is up at Rawleigh. After riding all over the plantation we returned to camp I enjoyed my ride very much I[t] seemed good to get away from duty and ride through the lots A mail has arrived since I commenced writing but I got no letter. We have had four mails in the last ten days and I have only got one letter. If you can learn anything about the new regiment write me about it I ought to get a place in it but suppose there are too many polititians who have friends to get in and I should stand no chance Tell the boys to make haste and learn to write so that I can get letters from them occasionally.

Otis.

JL041

Newbern N.C.

June 14th 1862

Dear Wife,

We got a mail last night and I had two short notes from you of the same date. You said nothing about the money I sent you so I suppose you have not recieved it yet though you ought you ought to have got it two weeks ago, You say you thought the

war would be closed and we should be at home before this time. It has been so long that I have forgotten what I did think at that time, but shall be well pleased if it is closed in a year from now. Halleck done well in compelling Beauregard to evacuate Corinth, but he did not do well in letting them escape him afterwards. He ought to have killed or captured on[e] half the rebel army it seems strange that so few of our Generals take advantage of a victory when they gain one. Bonaparte was right when he said that one half the Generals were so astonished to finde they had gained a victory that they did not know what to do next, and while they were making up their minds about it all the advantage slipped through their fingers. Our battles have been fought without Generalship (except in a very few cases) and have been won by the determined courage of the inferior officers and men. Siegel, Mitchell, Pope and Lyon, have shown themselves soldiers, McClellan has shown that he knows how to organize an army but has yet to show that he knows how to handle one in the field As for our Gov. Stanly he seems to be carrying out the ideas of our Government which has yet to learn that the rebels cannot be conciliated. Stanly may send back every nigger that has left his master since we came to North Carolina, and he will not make a single Union man by it. The Herald talks about Union men in Newbern, there are no Union men in Newbern and never will be while there is the ghost of a chance for the success of the Southern Confederacy. As near as I can learn the Generals here approve of Stanleys' course, but no other Officers or men do. If that line of policy is to be pursuid we may as well stop the war at once for both sides are fighting for the same object Viz. the perpetuation of slavery. I did not enlist to fight for the Abolition of slavery unless the course of events carried the institution down which I thought very likely. But when the Government begin to make use of the victories we win to perpetuate slavery even where it now exists I for one am done with fighting and shall come home Perhaps you would like to know how Stanly looks Well, take Frank Cowles, let his nose be just as long as it is now only make it twice as large s[t]raighten up his spine so that he will sit as upright as a post, put a rusty black frock coat and half worn plug hat on him set him on a big horse and you will have a Gov. Stanly complete. I know you will always think well of [-?-] after this--

The papers have just brought us the sad news of Col Drake's death, it is a sad blow to our regiment for we have no man that can make his place good and the promotions in our regiment are in such hands that the best men will stand no chance whatever I should be perfectly satisfied to see any Officer who is my senior made major of the regiment but I think now that the Adjutant will get it and he is my junior. If he does I ought to resign but dont know as I shall. If Col Drake had lived my chances for promotion were better than any other Captain in the regiment. He said at Roanoke Island in presence of more than half our officers, that I was the best Captain in regiment and after the battle of Newbern he said in the presence of our own officers and some of Fosters Aides that "I was a splendid Officer and the Model Captain of the regiment" those are his own words. I hoped through him to get promoted into the 14th but it is of no us[e] to think of it now though I think if I was at home I could get it, But the war may close soon and if it does I dont care much whether I am promoted or not. The Thermometer stands at 100 in the shade now - would you write a letter under such circumstances? I gess not. You will think I have a good deal to say about myself, but I dont do it when I write to anyone else. I suppose Wadsworth shows you the letters I write him if he dont ask him there may be something in them you would like to read.

Otis

JL042

Newbern N.C.

June 20th 1862

Dear Wife.

It is nearly two weeks since we have had a mail here and we begin to think that the Government [has] forgotten all about the Burnside Expedition I dont know as they would miss us if we should go off to Mexico or Central America like Walker or Aaron Burr and set up a "little Government of our own". But I do think it is a shame that we cant have a mail oftener

I thought I would not send home for anything as there is never any certainty of our staying anywhere long but everything costs so much here and for anythin I know now we may be here all summer (or may not be here a week) I will send you a list of some some things I want and if you can get them you may send them on send as soon as you can I should like much to have some nice butter sent on but the weather is so warm I dont know as you could send it. We have to pay 40c per lb for it here. A mail has arrived since I commenced writing but it brought nothing for me except a letter from G.D. Pardee of New Haven saying that the money due the families of my men on the Allotment Roll had been sent to him by mistake and asking what he should do about it. I felt vexed enough to think that after waiting so long for the money it should be sent wrong and make another delay of two or three weeks before the owners could get it. The mail boat also brought back our new Lieut Col. who went home on a furlough of 30 days and was gone 100, pretending to be sick, though he dont look much like it. A majors commission also arrived for Capt Mead, I am glad one of the Senior Captains got the promotion, but the man who has got it is known throughout the regiment as an arrant coward as ever lived and was reprimanded by Col Drake on the field of battle for hiding behinde a tree - Strange that the only two captains in the regiment against whom the charge of Cowardice was ever made are the ones promoted and all done through political influence But I am well satisfied. I was afraid that one of the junior captains would be promoted and in that case I should have felt bound to resign which I did not want to do

I was sadly disappointed at not getting anything from home by this mail I think a whole mail must have been lost between here and New York, there were no letters at all for my company and they seldom get less than a hundred when the mail comes only once a week. You can add to the list of articles I send for any thing you pleas you can hardly send anything that [would] not be acceptable. Send some more of that soap if you can get it I like it much

I suppose every soldier in Newbern fit for duty is wet to the skin about this time We have a grand review on the other side of the Trent River three miles from here every regiment here was ordered out. and one came up from Beaufort and two from Roanoke Island to be present. They marched out about three quarters of an hour ago and I wcan hear the roar of the guns now while I write, and it rains a flood. Imagine over Twenty Regiments out on parade with every General and Field Officer in the Expedition and it rains so you cannot see ten rods, I was lucky enough to be out of it I blistered one of my feet at the last Division Drill (Hudson let me take his horse to ride back) and as it has not got well yet I did not go, but Lieut Hill and the men will get a fine soaking. A mail has just arrived I got ONE letter. Cant stop to write any more.

Otis

JL043

Newbern N.C.

June 23rd 1862

Dear Wife

We got another mail yesterday and I recieved two letters from you dated the 12th and 16th To which I will reply serratin 1.* Tell Harry the musquetoos have the same habit of biting here and refuse just as presistantly to scratch as they do in Manchester. I have not been able to get any blackberries since I came in from pickett it is so far I dont send the boys after them. We get a mess of string beans or peas occasionally and also new potatoes beets have been in the market for some weeks past but I dont care for them peaches are pleanty here and will be ripe in about a month, but there wont be one a piece for us.

I got Tudors letter also one from his father. The Govenor refused me a place in the new regiment just as I supposed he would. though Mr. White thinks that if the place had been asked sooner I could have got it, but I dont think so. He said you told him you thought I would not accept it if it was offered me. I am not so modest as you suppose. I would not hesitate to accept a Brigadier Generals Commission if it was offered me.

Phil seems to have the ear ache a great deal have you ever asked the Dr. about it. You are not the only one who finds fault with McClellan for not mooving faster and at one time I was as impatient as anyone for the fight to come off. but now I am satisfied to wait. The rebels have done their utmost and from this time forward must grow weaker every day while we grow stronger. If the rebels wait for McClellan to attact them by regular approaches.- or as they say by "Compass and square"-They are whipped as sure as fate. They may collect more troops at Richmond but that will not add to their strength very materially. McClellan has all the men he wants or at least I suppose he has or he would call for more. Burnside could send him Ten Thousand and still have enough left to hold this position securely; but they are not sent so I suppose are not wanted. I am satisfied to wait McClellans time now feeling sure that every day only adds to the certainty of his success. If the rebels evacuate their Capitol without a battle, so much the worse for them. Heretofore they have given plausible reasons for their retreats saying that the places they left were of minor importance, and were only being given up temporarily to make the safety of the Capitol sure But let them loose that either by retiring or being defeated in battle they have no longer a vital point to rally on, they the leaders can show them nothing to fight for and demoralization and distruction must follow. I have not believed any of the stories told yet of their want of food and clothing or of their disorganized condition. I know they will fight hard for I have twice met them in battle. But let Richmond be taken and their cause is hopeless The strain that has kept them together will relax and their armies desolv into gurilla bands in a month. - And then for a years sharp police duty for us before we can come home. While there was a prospect that a man could win honor and promotion in active service I was anxious to for it either under MClellan or anyone else, but when cowards get the promotions through political influence I dont care to risk my life more than is necessary. I should think Fred Barbers talk about wanting to go to the war and being restrained by his wife was about played out. His wife's influence appears suffiscent to keep him from doing his duty to his country but not enough to keep him at home nights or to make a decent man of him. it looks as if his inclination must second his wifes influence in the former case

You speak of going to the village to work for the soldiers and that some of the wounded are coming to Hartford I think it a good idea to send wounded men North they have a better climate and better care than they can possibly get here. Tell Harry that wiser heads than his have got mudled over personifying the Rebellion in the form

of Jeff. They will yet finde that more men than Jeff must be "boxed" up before Papa and his fellow soldiers can come home The wintergreen came safe and was very good indeed I am pleased to learn that Harry is so good a farmer, and that Phil seconds him so well in his Agriculture persuits, they must both have a good lot of fire crackers for the 4th

The mail goes to night so good bye

J.L.Otis

1.* Seriatim, meaning serially, in order.

JL044

If we have a long march I am afraid I shall not stand it I have not [been] at all well for some weeks. I weigh th[i]rty pounds less than I did two months ago. Otis

Newbern N.C.

June 29th 1862

Dear Wife.

I receeved your letter of the 17th yesterday, and one from Wadsworth at the same time. He says you told him as you did Mr. White that I would not accept promotion. I do not see how you could have got such an idea into your head there is nothing I should have valued so highly as promotion at this time for promotion when we are in actual service means something and carries a preistage with it that nothing else can But though Wadsworth is sangune that he would have been successful had he applied sooner. I, am not so sure of it, the Gov. must say something to those who apply to him, and a soft answer is the best for politicians to make. Things have come to light within a week that make my promotion still more to be desired by myself and friends. I have not time to write you the particulars, but have writen to Wadsworth and he will show you the letter which will explain all Had this all come to light two week[s] sooner I should have resigned, but we are now under marching orders and it would look cowardly for me to resign just when we are about marching out to meet the enemy.

You will have to try my medicine for your cold before you get rid of it.

The ladies on the green could not be better employed than making up things for the hospitals. It is a sad sight. the inside of a solders hospital. and I dont wonder Wadsworth felt bad when he visited them but it seems to me that the thought of their being in New England and among their own people takes away the sadest part of the reflection. I have got used to scenes of blood and though I have as much sympathy for sick and wounded men as I ever did I feel no such sensations of horror as I did at the first sight [of] wounded men. but I shall never get over the dislike I feel of visiting a hospital and would never go near one but for my duty to my own men.---

I meant to have said when I referred to my affairs here (you must read my letter to W.(to understand them) That I am on the best of terms with all the officers of the regiment. Many of them wished and expected that I should be Major of the regiment-As to your putting the money you have to spare in the savings bank It is well of course that it should be drawing interest, but you know how much money was lost by depositors only a few years ago by one of the Hartford Savings Banks. I shall not be able to send so much money next time as I did the last My pay will not be as much by Forty Dollars for which I have to thank Hudson. And then I sent rather more than I ought before. But I think the best cours to pursue will be to get four or five Hundred Dollars ahead and then let Mr White or Mr Wadsworth finde some one who wants to borrow about that sum on real estate security. However as I am away so far probably as good a way as any would be to take Mr White's advise.Whose judgment would be better than mine in such a case

as that. I am sorry I wrote you to send a box in my last and if you have not procured the things dont do so. And dont send the box till you hear from me again anyhow. We are under marching orders and may leave with our whole force tomorrow morning. and may not for a day or two we are going some where howeve[r] and that immediately but whether by land or water none of us know. though all suppose we are going inland Write as usual and direct your letters the same as before I shall get them some time I know nothing about when I can write again or what oportunities I shall have for sending letters, but shall write as soon as possible. We are to leave our trunks and baggage of every discription here so I shall have to put a sheet of paper in my pocket and write when I can. I get the papers you send and you may continue to send New York papers when they contain news of interest, and send Hartford papers as often as you can.

It has been a terrible hot day and I have a bad headache and pain in my side but I thought I must write as I might not have another oportunity for some days. Tell the boys I saw a live alligator the other day five feet long and he was a scaly looking customer I do not think of anything more to write now so good night.

J.L. Otis

JL045

Newbern N.C.

June 30th 1862

Dear Wife.

A small mail arrived to-day and I was pleased to get a letter from you, the more so that it was unexpected, your last letter previous to it being mailed the 24th I did not mean to finde fault about your **notes** as I called them, but am glad you took it that way becaus I rather think I got a letter extra by it. I know you make hard work of writing letters as well as myself, only when I get a short letter I always wish it was longer. I dslike writing letters myself and should not write many except to you, but that I like so much to get letters back.

We have had very changeabl weather here as well as there till quite lately, it is now steady hot weather.

I had some lettuce here once and only once, everybody has run away here, or their niggers have run away from them, which amounts to the same thing as far as raising crops is concerned.

I feel very uneasy about the scarlet fever, it is with us as with you we feel more solicitous for the safety and health of our families at home than we do for our own: but I know you take every precaution to guard against it. You know grown people have the disease sometimes so you had better take some of that medicine yourself such as you used to give the children

About those secesh`s letters I sent. I did not think of the disapointment as I mailed another long letter from myself at the same time and thought you would get them together. You will see by my letters that there is not much prospect of my staying in Newbern next winter, but if I stay near any large place next winter I mean that you shall stay there too. I have sent home a box by Express to-day containing some things I dont need and cannot very well take care of. I send my overcoat because I have not room for it in my trunk and shall not need it here for a long time. The other coat and vest are not suitable for me to wear and are in my way. The blanket was given me by one of the men who captured it. I have enough without it. I send my watch becaus it wont run and I have bought a cheap one that is the best time keeper I ever had. I send my sword knot because after cudgeling my brain ever so long, I could think of nothing else to send that

I had worn about me in battle, and that has never been off my sword before since I first but it on at Annapolis and has of course been everywhere that I have been since so I think it will do to hang up under my picture I carried the port monnaie and watch with me in both battles, but dont care much for the old watch anyway, or what becomes of it. I had another woolle blanket I should have sent if the box had been larger. We have not got marching orders yet but expect them every hour.

July 1st

I had a bad pain in my side last night and had to give up writing about 11 O Clock and go to bed. it was dreadful hot yesterday but this morning it is cool and pleasant, I wish we were to march this morning.

We march in full force but take none of our baggage or tents with us. Where we are going or how long we shall be gone I do not know. I think we shall go inland from here becaus there is to be but a small force left here to protect the place. if we were away by water it would be necessary to leave more men here.

I am afraid my letter wont get off this mail I had to stop a long time to write on my pay rolls. but I cant think of much more we are so stirred up with moving and expecting to march any hour. ---

Just here the officers call sounded and off I started for the Cols. tent expecting to get orders to march at once, and was completely set back at getting orders to suspend all preparations at present. The programe is changed very sudenly and no one knows how I can finde out nothing as our Colonel knows no more about it than I do. But I have thought the matter all over and made up my minde that we are going to Charlestown. If we do they will have to fight some to keep us out of the City. My tent has been full of officers all day and I cant write much. We shall not leave here for three or four days so I shall write again before we leave

Tell Harry and Phil they must not teas to go near the water this summer at all for it would be dreadful if Papa was to hear that one of them was drowned and he away down here Otis

Write as usual. I shall get the letters after a while.

JL046

Picket Station Neuce River Road
July 4th 1862

Dear Wife.

The aniversa[r]ly of our Nation's birthday has again come round and here I am still in the swamps of the Old North State. A Year ago to day I went to Cedar swamp fishing. it is all Cedar swamp here but no fishing. My men are trying to get up a little fun for themselves and will doubtless succed. Six of them have gone to the City to see what they can buy to help out their jollification and though the weather is very unpromising they will contrive to do something worthy of the occasion. They are now gathered in knots around our camp talking of just what I am thinking of here in my tent; that is where they were and what they were doing a year ago to-day I [s]uppose the Five Hundred Thousand men who compose our armies are all talking on the same subject. And it is a satisfaction to me as I suppose it is to all of them to know that our friends at home are thinking and talking of the same. I suppose Harry and Phil both remember about the time we had with fire-crackers last year how they laid them on a tin pan and how they stood them up in the dirt and fired them from a gun mad[e] of a piece of broom-stick. All of wich I suppose they are reproducing to day with variations.

But I suppose you want to know how it comes about that I am here now when we expected to be away. Well, after getting the order of which I wrote you, to suspend our preparation for the time, we were told that we should go aboard transports as fast as they could be got ready, and go somewhere, but where none of us knew. most of the officers thought we were going to Charlestown and at first I was of the same opinion but after thinking the matter over I con[c]luded otherwise. I think our Government now sees the folly of dividing the army as they have done, and as one extreme always follows the other they will concentrate everything before Richmond to the neglect of all the rest of the Country. - and rightly too - so by night my minde was made up that we should be before Richmond by the end of the week. and by the time I had got it all settled in my minde, an order was issued from Head Quarters for Reno's and Park's Divisions to go aboard the transports and Foster to stay and defend Newbern, so there went my chances for glory, but there will be plenty more before the war is over.

I had been about sick all day and as soon as I found we were not going I went to bed though it was not dark. I felt some better in the morning so I went out to battallion drill at six O Clock but it about finished me and after it was over I went to bed again but having a bad head ache and pain in my side, I could not sleep till about 2 O Clock, when I got up and put some of the nervine you sent me into a little whiskey and drank it. It put me to sleep immediately but I was soon waked by some one coming in, it prooved to be the seargent major with orders for me to take two companies and go up on Picket, saying that the cavalry had been attact and one of them killed and one taken (Our pickets had all been taken in some days before only leaving a Cavalry patrol, and had taken all the tents in with them. Formerly they were left and each company when on picket occupied them leaving their own tents standing in camp) I got up and looked at my watch. it was 4.O Clock and there was a thunder cloud coming up. black Erebus, but I had my tents struck and subsistence packed and sent to the Q.M. for teams. Just as we got ready the storm came on, and such a thunder storm as they indulge in only at the south. We waited a few minutes for the worst of it to be over and then loaded up our tents and supplies and started. It rained all the way and was quite dark when we arrived at our post and we did not get our tents pitched till 9 O Clock I posted the pickets and we visited the Cavalry to enquire about the rebels who attact them and found the story all bosh there had not been a rebel within five miles of them that they knew of. As soon as my tent was pitched I opened my blanket on a board and tried to sleep but the gnats and musquitoes were so thick it was next to impossible. My head ached all night and it rained so hard it run right through the tent. I had to get up and put my rubber coat over my head to keep the water out of my face and I was glad when morning came so that I could get up. I am in command of two companies four miles apart and no way to get from one to the other except on foot unless I can borrow a hand car, which I did yesterday and went up. I found the officer in command of the other company sick so I took him on the car and brought him back and sent my own Lieutenant up to take his place. I got a good deal better before nigh[t] and slept well, this morning I feel pretty well and hope to come out bright after a while. There is not much chance to be off duty for so many of our officers are sick or pretend to be that I am ashamed to say anything about being unwell. Out of the thirty line officers we s[e]ldom have over ten on duty and hardly ever have enough out to command all the companies at battallion drill. which takes only eight Capt Athertoton of Co. S. and myself have not reported off duty a day though I think neither of us has set up all day for three weeks If some of the others would not be quite so babyish when they are a little unwell it would be easier for us all.

A runaway darky from Snow Hill aw[a]y above Kingston came down and was stopped by the outer pickets this morning. Corp Chadwick was on duty there and sent him back to the reserve under guard. He looked intelligent enough but seemed frightened so I could not get much out of him. I being at the outpost must be the first

Yankee Officer he had seen and he kept looking at me from head to foot as long as I was near him. I asked him if he saw many rebel soldiers on the way down & he said yes, he saw "right smart" of them. Right smart is used here to express a large quantity or large number if you ask a man, - white or black - if he has any corn he says, no. but such a man maming a neighbor - has got right smart of it. I asked a wealthy man mamed Baum if he had any sweet potatoes & he said no, he did not make much potatoes he made more corn and pork. "but Capt Mydett made right smart of potatoes" The phrase is used by all classes and colors. But to go back to my individual niggers who run away from Snow Hill, I tried to get something out of him whereby I could judge of the number of rebels he saw but he was too much frightened or to ignorant to give any information. I enquired how many tents they had. He said no tents but little bush[?] huts. He being hungry and tired, I told the boys to give him something to eat, and send him on the road to Newbern. I was just starting to visit the upper post four miles up the Red House road I was examining my revolver at the time to see if it was all right and I dont know but he thought I was going to shoot him

5th The boys had quite a good time yesterday up here in the woods. I am told they had great times at Camp and in the City yesterday Hudson came up and said there was not a single officer in the city who was sober. his coming away could have made no difference in the number of sober ones. he brought up five bottles of whiskey and treated the boys all round I had got a gallon out of the commissary for them before, so when I got back from the Red House Road they were about as happy a lot of soldiers as I ever saw, but none of them were drunk they had just enoug[h] to make them happy and with their cracker, Butter cheese, Rasin's nuts and lemonade enjoyed themselves finely. I was not well enough to eat any of the good things they had, but enjoyed it as well as any of them it pleased me to see them have a good time. High black berries are ripe and very pleanty the boys pick cart loads of them but they are rather bitter. One of the boys brought me three nice Cucumbers to day. I wish you had them for I cant eat vinegar and they are not very good without it. Yesterday Lieut Col. Pardee sent me up a bottle of nice whiskey and I have a pice of lamb baking for my supper and have some herring and soda crackers, and a pound of almonds and about half a pound of nice butter so I shall live pretty well to morrow certain I am going to send some wild flowers and will write about them when I do.

Otis

JL047

Picket station Neuce River Road

July 7th 1862

Dear Wife.

I have just recieved two letters from you dated 29th & 30th of June and though there is one of eight pages lying on my table to be sent off I will write another.

I do not suppose myself that what you said to Mr. White made any difference about my getting a position in the new regiment, and I of course would not leave my present company for a Captain's commission in any other, provided I had a Captain's Commission in this. and don't want a Captain's Commission in the 14th, unless there is a sure prospect of being promoted soon. I have not got the pictures yet but suppose I shall soon. You said nothing about your own but I suppose you have sent it of course I think with Keeney that Milo will hardly be able to get along with the cards but hope he will. I believe I did agree to write Keeney occasionally and would do so now, but am well aware that I write poor letters, my grammar is none of the best and as they are all scholars at Keeneys, I dislike the idea of my letters being read there, but for that I should

have written him Hudson brought me up a paper yesterday from which I learned that Fremont had resigned. It is the work of politicians and nothing is so discouraging to me as to see the fight continually going on among them, to aggrandize themselves at our expense. They are in no hurry for the war to close they are fighting each other to see who shall make the most political capital out of the war and have no wish to see it end. till some of them gets the advantage of the others so decidedly that there will be no use in trying any longer. The management of affairs in each regiment in the service is but a pocket edition of the same work.

The papers all came to hand pictures and all I am much obliged to the children for them.

We have had all sorts of strange rumors here for a few days past. At first it [was] reported that McClellan had taken Richmond with Seventy Thousand prisoners. Burnside had gone aboard his transports with Ten Thousand men and some of them had sailed. When he got the rumor, strangely enough he ordered them all back and set everybody to shouting over the victory. The rumor soon began to assume a different face and two days [later] news came that McClellan had been defeated. As I believed nothing about the first story neither did I [the] second, but there is no doubt I suppose that they have had a hard fight there. A sessionist named Richardson who lives just inside our lines where some of our men go every day, and who I think is in constant communication with the rebels told Lieut Hill that he had just [had] a letter from his son in the rebel army and that they had had five days fighting at Richmond, and said his son wrote that if McClellan had attacked them the sixth day he could have gone straight into Richmond. If McClellan made the change in his position of his own accord, he has displayed more Generalship than anyone has yet done during the war. The change of front of a large army like that in the presence of a superior force is what few Generals dare attempt and fewer still could execute. But what will people say of Burnside who turned back his reinforcement, when they were so much needed on a mere rumor th[at] McClellan had gained a Victory. I cannot write any more this morning as I have to go down to camp. I expect to be relieved with my command to morrow and return to camp and am going down this morning to see about it.

Otis

[postscript in pencil] These are wild flowers the yellow ones grow about the fields like daisies. I think they are jonquils the little white one[s] grow on a vine that spreads out on the ground as large as a bushel basket making a perfect mat and blossoming full

JL048

Look for an article in the Courant of June 30th or July 1st signed Nemo

Newbern N.C.

July 13th 1862

Dear Wife.

A mail arrived last night and came up to camp this morning. I got a letter from you and a short one from Leander. You have of course had your worst fears confirmed as to our reverses before Richmond. While our papers and people have been bragging about our ability to go into Richmond whenever we chose, and instead of strengthening McClellan have been boasting of his Generalship; and on the strength of it expecting him to do impossibilities. The rebels have been quietly collecting all their strength and when they outnumbered us two to one; gave battle and of course defeated us. Lucky for us McClellan was in command there had almost any other of our Generals been in command there our army would have been annihilated. It is my opinion that McClellan

Fremont and Siegel are the only men who could have done it. Our rulers have perhaps learned now that they must be in earnest, and that they cannot save the country except at the expense of slavery. The Administration will do more to retain one nigger in bondage than they would to save the lives of a whole regiment of their own men. If they are so tender of slavery out of regard to the Union men at the south they may as well spare themselves all trouble on that head; for there are not one hundred Union men in the whole south.

I suppose by the way people at the north talk of Burnside's Division and of his being below Fort Darling with Twenty Five Thousand men; they must think we are a great deal stronger than we really are. At the battle of Newbern we landed Eight Thousand and they were not all in the fight. We have been reinforced some since but Burnside has never had, Fifteen Thousand effective men under his command. He has gone up to reinforce McClellan but could not have taken Ten Thousand men with him. We have between Three and Four Thousand left to hold the place. Our forces are not so strong anywhere as the people suppose, taken all together our regiments will average more than 500 men. The men called for by the new levy will never volunteer, but must be drafted. and ought to be. I don't think much of the Volunteer System anyway, the Government might as well ask people to volunteer the money as the men to carry on war.

If our state raises her quota of regiments on the new levy I ought to get a place in one of them but have not much hope of doing so. Though, Gen Foster has recommended me to the Gov for promotion so I was told yesterday by one who knows Hudson got him to put his name in also but he had hard work to get it in, having asked the General to do it. I knew nothing about it till some days after. but I have no great hopes on the subject for Lt Col Pardee is doing his best to get a man named Jepson promoted. and as old Pardee of New Haven has great political influence will most likely succeed. White and Wadsworth cannot do much for me unless they get the Cheneys or some one else of influence to take interest in the matter.

I presume you feel more blue over reverses at Richmond than we do here. At first we all expected to go up there, and though I am not particularly anxious to get shot, I am sorry we did not go.

We can see that the war is not to be finished up at once so we had best settle down to that belief and try to make the best of it. We can and shall conquer the rebels but have first to learn not to despise them. Somebody, I don't know who - has said that "he who commences by despising his enemy finishes by being defeated" If we only make up our minds that the rebels will fight as well as ourselves we can then conquer them - not before.

I am much obliged to Mrs. Woodbridge for her kindness. Give her my best regards. Write me all about your 4th in Hartford and how the children enjoyed themselves.

JL049

Newbern N.C.

July 20th 1862

Dear Wife

I received two letters from you last night, and one from Wadsworth. He writes that his efforts in my behalf have proved entirely ineffectual. The fact is the Gov gives all the places to those whose friend[s] have political influence, and dare not do otherwise. He is offering the command of regiments to fancy soldiers like Price of Hartford whose time

through all this war has been spent selling ribbons and measuring tape. And will not give a soldier who has seen a year of hard service, a majorship though he brings recommendations from his Colonel and commanding General I would resign and come home, but it does not look well to do so at the present time. though I shall not stay in this regiment much longer. Things do not go as satisfactorily among the Officers since Pardee came back. He is partial to the New Haven Officers and being a politician and having the help of his father who is an inveterate wire puller will manage to get them promoted for all any one. I have never applied for a leave of absence but both Col Pettibone and Pardee knew I was very anxious to go home for a few days and only refrained from asking for it because there were so few officers on duty. I had told them that as soon as there was the least chance of being spared I should make an application. Last week Col Pettibone went to Beaufort and as soon as he was gone Pardee gave Capt Atherton leave of absence. to go home. Atherton has just been promoted to a captain He joined the regiment just before we left Annapolis and has not been from home so long by two months as I have, and he is a young man with no family. I think he has gone to carry out some of Pardee's engineering. The photographs came in first rate shape and so very well I agree with you about Harry's but they both look quite natural, I can see that Phil has grown tall much faster than Harry, but they are both getting along finely, I was disappointed at not getting yours as I supposed you was going to send all three.

I dont want you to borrow any trouble about what you said to White and Wadsworth for I know now it made no difference whatever. Buckingham treats the Officers of the old regiments very shabily Gen Foster wrote to Gov Andrews at the same time he did to Buckingham recommending officers for promotion. Gov Andrews replied that they should receive the appointments and at the same time asking that the Captains of companies recommend sergeants for promotion to lieutenants and lieutenants for captains at the same time. We shall see whether Buckingham will do it I am sure he will not. There is an excellent reason why the Mass. regiments are more efficient than our own

But I wont write any more on that subject I shall come home just as soon as possible and if they dont let me come before long will resign I would do so now if I was sure of getting business soon.

. I am sorry Harry has got a sore hand and cant write - hope he will be able to soon I shall endeavour to reply to Phil's epistle soon I am on a Court-Martial again and have been for the last two weeks. last Thursday the court adjourned to Washington to try some cases there and was furnished a steamboat to go with. We got back last evening I would write you all about the trip but I feel discontented uneasy and nervous and could not do it if I tried.

I dont care for a dressing-gown Hudson offered to give me one he found here at Newbern but I did not want it.

You need not send the box at present our stay here is so uncertain. I am sorry we did not go to Richmond, if we have got fighting to do the sooner we have it the better and I dont feel half so much afraid of bullets as I do of political officers who would ruin a mans reputation to get his place. besides when it comes to real hard service men find their proper level and such chaps go down. - Cant write another word now will try to write again this week.

Otis

Emily Cheney wrote Hudson that she wished to call on you and asked him if he thought you would like to have her do so. I told him to say you would be delighted - she said she would have called on you sooner but was a poor kind to get acquainted

JL050

Powers' Hotel N.Y.

Sunday Aug 18th 1862

Dear Wife.

I had my usual luck and got to New York just 10 hours after a steamer sailed for Newbern; if I had come a day sooner I could have sailed at once. The Quarter-Master could not tell when another would go, but certainly not before the first of the week so I had a great minde to go back home and stay over sunday, but was afraid a boat might come in saturday and leave monday so I dared not do it. It is possible one may come tonight. I met Maj. Meads brother-in-law here saturday he came to meet the major and said that a steamer was expected any moment from Newbern with him aboard. I was pleased to hear it for it would give me an oportunity to get away at once. But I have been watching for the steamer ever since and it has not come yet. I hope it will to-night for it makes me dreadful nervous waiting here.

I have seen Mrs Graves she regreted very much that you did not come down with me, and I did too when I fund I had got to stay here two or three days. I went over to Brooklyn to day expecting to hear Beecher. I went to his church but somebody else preached and that somebody was not at all smart.

You must not expect me to write much for as soon as I sit down I feel so nervous and uneasy at being here when I ought to be on the way south and so near home and cant go there that I cant write.

Give my love to the children and take a good lot for yourself.

Your Otis

JL051

New York

Aug 24th 1862

Dear Wife.

I have been waiting here for a passage to Newbern, a whole week. When I firts came down the Quarter Master told me they thought of chartering a small steamer to go there this was saturday so I waited patiently till monday and then called on him again. He said he had not chartered one but "in all human probability" there would be a steamer in from Newbern by tuesday morning. I then called on Col Almy and asked him what he thought about my going back home to wait for a steamer. He advised me not to go saying that when the last steamer sailed he only knew of it six hours before hand. so here I have been waiting ever since. But last night three steamers came in from Newbern all together one of them started from there last friday, and lay at Hatteras four days becaus the winde was so strong from the North East they did not dare go outside. But the "Haze" sails in the morning so to-morrow at this time I shall be on my way south. You cannot immagine how miserably nervous and uneasy I have been ever since I came down. and I might just as well have been at home as here if I had known it and if I had supposed I should be compelled to stay here half as long I should have brought you with me. Maj Bartholmew and Capt Cooley of Mass came down in the same train with me but having friends in Bridgeport went back there and staid though they have been down twice sinc to see about going. I heard that Hudson was in the City but have not seen him. Our Surgeon, Chaplain, and two Captains have resigned and come home I saw them here two of [them] stay at the same Hotel with me. they all say that H. will

have trouble when he gets back. he has been found out in a good many dishonorable practices there and the General is much displeased about it. The Chaplain said he had found out certain why Hudsons name was not mentioned in Fosters dispatches It was just what I suspected: he was sent back for something before the battle commenced and and did not return till it was over. Hall said he begged hard to have his name put in but the Gen. refused. Our Sutler who came on yesterday told me that Hudson owed him \$175- mostly borrowed money. I dont believe Phil will go back. John Walton has been waiting here several days but he stays with Brewster who married a Wheeler girl. They live but few miles from here. I [have] seen a good many acquaintances here Mr Keeny Milo Millard Mr. Merrow and Rob. Beebe but have had a terrible dull time, and if time goes as slowly as it has since I left home I shall never be able to stand it another nine months but I hope the war will be over before that time. But if we stay in Newbern this winter I shall have you down there for a while. Gen Corcoran came yesterday and the reception was a brilliant affair but you will see all about it in the papers I got a good look at him. he is a younger and better looking man than the pictures of him represent him to be. He has light brown hair and small moustache. But is is getting dark and I must stop writing. We sail in the morning. My next letter will be from Newbern. Kiss Harry and Phil for me. Good night. Otis

I have found out why I didn't get the Lieut Colonelcy of the 16th

JL052

Newbern N.C.

Aug 29th 1862

My Dear Wife,

I am again in Newbern as you will see by the heading of my letter. the boys gathered around and were so glad to see me. they cheered till they were hoars. No one expected me back here both Officers and men felt perfectly sure I was going into one of the new regiments and had got letters from home telling them so. There is something about it I cannot finde out. It is not the order from the War Department for a Commission came down on the same boat I did for a man in our regiment who is going into the 20th but I can wait and see how things go. It seems as if I had been from home a long time. in fact I can hardly realize that I have been home at all. Hudson has been ordered back to the regiment, he has not returned yet, but the order is issued for his return to the regiment Adj. Gen'l. Hoffman showed it me today. Perhaps a short account of my adventures on the way back will prove acceptable. As you already know I waited in New York ten days not daring to leave the City for fear of being left. and soon as the steamer arrived from Newbern set about getting my transportation, you must know that it is just about as much work to get a pass from New York as it is to recruit a military company. When I applied for transportation on saturday morning the Q.M. told me I must go to White St. about a mile and half up broadway and get an order from a mustering officer before I could get a pass; though that chap really had no more to do with my getting back here than Tom Noakes. There were about Two Hundred there waiting when I got there but soldiering has learned me something. so I pushed my way through the crowd, got inside the railing and either my good looks or shoulder straps got me a hearing in advance of the rest and in about an hour I was on my way back to the Quarter. Master. I might have done all that days before but did not know I must have such an order. Well, when I got back to the Q.M.'s and showed them the order they said "all right" call monday morning and we will give you a pass. I tried to get one then but they said there would be a plenty of time as the steamer would not sail before noon. so I had to be satisfied but was there bright and early monday morning the

office was not open so I took a walk on the battery close by. When I got back the office was open and two officers went in ahead of me and asked for passes to Newbern, they were both refused. I then asked and was also refused. but told them I must have one the senior said they had just got an order from the Sec. of War to pass a lady nurse and five children (the family of a rebel at Saulsbury [Salisbury] N.C.) who would fill the cabin and I must wait for the next steamer. I told him I could not wait and must have a pass if I had to stand up all the way down He still objected but I refused to leave and finally got a pass out of him. and immediately went aboard. Hudson soon after came on board the steamer also Major Bartholomew of Springfield and Capt Cooley They had been refused passes too but got a line from the Capt of the Haze saying he could take them after which the Q.M. gave them passes Hudson stayed aboard a short time complained some about the accomodations and went off saying he must go up street and get some dinner which was the last I saw of him He left his trunk and servant aboard after we got away from the dock I asked his servant what he thought would become of him. he said he reconed he was all right for Hudson told him before he left the boat that if he (Hudson) did not return Capt Otis would take care of him. So it seems he did not intend to return. I told Adgt. Gen. Hoffman about it. He said "Of course Hudson would not do anything in a straigh forward way, if he could possibly think of a crooked way", and then showed me the order sending him back to the regiment. it is no secret so if you wish to speak of it there is no objection. I believe I wrote you why his name was not mentioned in Foster's dispatches. But to return to my story about an hour before we were ready to start a lady came aboard dressed in mournin. and after sitting near me a short time asked me if I was going to Newbern. I said yes. Did I know Col Stewart? I did. She said she was trying to get to Newbern her husband had written her to come. she tried three weeks before to get through but could get no pass She came down again. Secretary Seward's son who lived in the same place she did had promised that she she have a pass. So I went back to the Q.M. and asked him if he had a dispatch ordering him to pass Mrs. Stewart he said he had not and that she could not go on the Haze as there was no room for her. She cried when I told her. She had lost her little girl five years old since her husband had been in service and said she was so lonely it seemed as if she must go where he was. I then went and talked with the Capt. of the steamer he said he felt very sorry for her she had been there when he was in before and begged so hard to [go] with him that he could hardly refuse her though he had no right to take her. I offered to give up my place in the cabin for her but he said that would make no difference. We talked about it till time to leave I advised Mrs Stewart to stay on board unless the capt ordered her off. I knew he would not for he seemed a very kinde man. so we finally swung out from the pier with her aboard and I did not see but that she got along without a pass just as well as the rest of us did with Mrs Myres with her five children and nurse were with us taking a large share of the accomodations. I thought it was so much like our Government to pass the family of a rebel and exclude officers who risked their lives every day for the good of their country. Mrs Myers called herself a union woman though her daughter a very plain miss of about sixteen was rank secesh. so I concluded the old woman knew enough to disguise her sentiments and the girl did not. They had nine large trunks with them I hope Hoffman had them examined before he sent them up to Saulsbury They were all terrible sea-sick children and all I did what I could for them till I got so sick I could not sit up I felt very sorry for them indeed for I thought of you and the children and how you would suffer if you came down this fall as I intended you should. I was very sick two days I think I was never so sick before but the last day I was much better though I did not enjoy the passage at all. We had pleasant weather except the last night out when we lay of[f] Hatteras and the wind blew a gale almost. but we arrived safe at six O Clock thursdy night Major Bartholomew was the only cabin passenger not sea-sick and he had his hands ful to take care of the rest, though I was able to do considerable for the women and children sick as I was. they were perfectly

helpless and so sick they lay on the cabin floor much of the time not being able to lie in the berths. Col Stewart was not at the landing when we arrived so I showed his wife the way up to his quarters you may be sure he was pleased to see her and was very grateful to me for the assistance I had rendered her. I told them I did just what I would like anyone to do for my wife under like circumstances. Mrs Stewart said she hoped that if you or Mrs Bartholomew ever did come down you would finde somebody half as kinde as we had been to her.

It is very warm here I tried to write to write last night but it was so warm and my tent got so full of bugs and musquitoes that I had to give it up and go to bed about 10 O Clock but I could not sleep it was so warm and I laid awake and heard all the bells strike on the Gun Boats till half past two, so I did not get much sleep and feel mean enough today If Hudson does come back to the Regiment I shall have to take command of another company though it is the general impression here that he will not come back.

There was a large mail came down on the steamer when I did and a small one came the next day I had some hopes of getting a letter from you but did not. I found two here however that were sent before I went home one of them had a piece of your dress in it and you said you was going to have your photograph taken and send it down. so I suppose it will come by the next mail. I suppose it will soon be pleasant weather here and I should like to have you come down. It rather discouraged me to see them all so sick and helpless on board the steamer and to see how hard it was to get passes though I think I could get the pass through the Member of Congress for our District.

Hudson told me that Ethan Strong had resigned and Fred Barber was Captain of the Manchester Company. But he will lie so I did not know whether to believe him or not.

I do not think of anything more that will interest you now and it is almost time for the mail to close. You will get the letter thursday I think. That box I sent along by express has not come yet I am sorry for I want the wine. The boxes I sent from [home?] are here all right. The first time you go to Hartford call on that boot maker and tell him to make me those boots and you take them and when you send me another box send them along. Give my regards to the neighbors send me Hartford papers as often as you can. send them any time for the mail is just as likely to leave New York one day as another.

Tell the boys they must learn to read and write fast for I want to get letters from them.

Good bye Otis

JL053

Newbern N.C.

Sept 2nd 1862

Dear Wife.

A steamer is to leave here to-morrow morning so I will write you a short letter to go by it, though I sent you two day before yesterday, or rather one in two envelopes for I thought it would seem so much better for you to get two letters instead of one. I dont know what to write I have such a cold in my head I cant think of anything. The weather is very warm and the dew so heavy nights that it wets my clothes inside the tent. everything in the tent was nearly spoiled with mildew when I returned and I took a severe cold sleeping in the bed that night. I have not recieved orders to leave Co. B. yet but expect to every day whether Hudson returns or not - Our band was mustered out of service and started for home yesterday they have mustered out all the bands here seven in all, and now we have no music but the rub-a-dub-dub of the drums. It is too bad to

loose all our bands for their music was a source of much pleasure to the men. And Lord knows their sources of pleasure are few enough. I think Corp Root, who came on with me will not get his discharge; he was married only a week or so before he left home and will not be likely to see his wife again in a hurry. He has no cause to complain however for he was home six months.

Our regiment with a battery of Artillery and large force of Cavalry went on an expedition to Trenton while I was at home. They drove the rebel pickets before them several miles. When the firing got pretty sharp Lt Col Pardee who was in command was taken crazy and had to be sent back to Newbern under an escort of Cavalry the Command devolved on Capt Leggett who does not get crazy at the sound of a few shots; but there was nobody hurt on our side during the picket firing though one of my men had the forefinger of his right hand shot off by the accidental discharge of his own gun and a Co K man had his right arm shot off in the same way. I found two of my men (Frank Lyman & Dennis Mahony) in jail when I got back. They went to the City on a pass and were insolent to a sentinel of the Provost Guard and the Marshall sent them to jail for 15 days.

I found Frank in the hospital though not very sick. he is now down to a place called Portsmouth on the Sea-shore - will be back in a few days. The men are having the chills and fever some though not very severe. It is no doubt owing to the heavy dews it is too warm to shut up the tents and everything inside gets wet so they take cold and get the chills.

I went to sleep with my tent closed but it is impossible, so last night I left it open and slept better

Burton is quite unwell but nothing serious. There was a rebel captain taken in the city this morning. He came down in a boat from Swift Creek bringing some produce for sale pretending to be a farmer. It is said that a neighbor of his who is a union man found it out and betrayed him but I hardly believe that part of the statement though it may be true. If the spy was treated as spies are by other people he would be hung, but most likely he will be allowed to take the oath and leave after seeing all that is to be seen here. It is almost drill time so I must close. everything is so dull here that I can find nothing to write about. Give my love to Harry and Phil I meant to have written them about the fish we caught coming down but cannot now.

Your Otis

JL054

Newbern N.C.

Sept 5th 1862

My dear Wife.

The steamer Guide arrived at Beaufort last night or rather yesterday morning and the mail got here in the evening. I got your letter of the 25th and don't wonder you were homesick at my being in New York so long. I staid there nearly as long as I did at home and was very sorry I did not take you with me, but it is no use talking now. and it seems as if I had been from home a year.

What a modest youth Hudson is to be sure - offering to take the responsibility of my staying over my time. The responsibility of his own conduct is more than he can assume and come out with credit, let alone mine. And besides I have four times the influence that he has anyway. He can talk as large in Manchester as he pleases and it will do very well but he finds his level here I was talking with some Mass. Officers last night. one of them (a field officer) remarked that Hudson appeared a nice fellow at first but when you

come to know him he was awful mean. He arrived here last night he did not say whether he should return to the regiment or not I think he will for the present but if he dont get promoted the first vacancy will resign I think I wrote you why his name was never mentioned in Fosters dispatches. if I did not write me and I will do so now. As you mentioned the subject of my promotion I will write you what I had a minde to in my last. I but refrained from doing so for fear you would think me disconted and uneasy and that would make you u[n]happy. But I do not feel so and write you about it because you will feel interested in what interests me. And becaus it will not do to talk much about it here. I met Capt Coit who has been our Adjutant and therefore knew all about our regimental affairs, and also our chaplain they had both resigned, and both expressed themselves much pleased that I was going back to the regiment. They said that Major Mead had concluded to resign as he could not get a furlough and that Lt Col Pardee would resign so[o]n his health was very poor and every little excitement made him crazy. They said I was sure of the promotion and were pleased that I was going back as the regiment needed me. Well when I got here I found sure enough that Mead had concluded to resign and sent word up to Pardee to make out his resignation and send it down to him. But instead of doing so Pardee went down and persuaded him not to resign telling him to hold on and he would get him a furlough. So he haunted Hoffman every day for a week who fineally gave the furlough to get rid of him so I lost that chance for promotion. I think Pardee will not resign though his health is quite poor he was tearing around the camp half the night last night crazy as a loon. I do think I shall get the place if a vacancy occurs so I can afford to wait But I am astonished to see the names of some of the Field Officers of the new regiments. One of them Burpee I know he was turned out of the 8th at Annapolis because he did not know enough to command a company. Ross is a regular I know but am not much acquainted with him. he looks like a hard drinker. his nose is as red as old Hubbards and he does not look smart at all but still he may be so. I commenced my letter this morning and should have finished it then but Hudson came up and has been here all day and I could not finish it then it is late and I have the headache. but it must be finished to night for I shall have to moove tomorrow and cant write. When Hudson came in this morning he told me the first thing that he had handed in his resignation on the staff. I felt so provoked to think he was trying to make it appear voluntary on his part that I told him I saw the order a week ago sending him back to his regiment. He looked pretty red and dropped the subject at once. The order was read at Dress parade to night and he takes command of my old company in the morning. I take command of Co I. to which I have really belonged for the last three months My new company gave three rousing cheers when the orders were read but Co B. looked blue enough they broke ranks and went into their tents without giving Hudson a single cheer. Still they would rather have him than anyone beside me. Co I needs a good captain if ever a company did and I shall have enough to do for a good while but I dont care for that. it will make the time pass the quicker.

The weather has been pleasant and cool for three days past so that I have slept under two blankets, and the musquitoes have not plagued me much. Col Pettibone arrived last night we were all glad to see him both the officers and men, he is quite popular with the regiment and is the only good Field Officer we have.

I shall have to stop soon for it is late and I don't feel like writing. I thought of a lot to write this morning but it is gone from me now. I will write again as soon as I get settled in my new quarters. Kiss Harry and Phil for me and tell them to do the same to you. Send me as many Hartford papers as you pleas. Strong could never have done his Country any better service than he did by resigning, he would never have made a soldier If Tudor's courage is up to the mark he will be the best officer of the lot.

Good night Otis

JL055A

[Newbern N.C.] Sept. 7th 1862

Dear Wife.

You will see that this letter [see accompanying letter] was not designed for you. but as it contains considerable I should have written you anyway, I send it along. My design was to write both to you and Parkhurst, but after I got that written it did not suit me so I wrote him another which pleased me much better but when I got it done I had not time to write you before the mail closed and I did not like to have the mail leave without carrying something for you so I send it along to you and and you must be satisfied with it for this time The weather has got very warm again but I hope wont last. I cant help thinking what glorious weather you are having at home now. I am very tired and can write no more so good night Otis

JL055B

Newbern N.C. Sept. 7th 1862

Friend Parkhurst

When in Manchester a short time since, you in common with several others of my personal friends, assured me that, whenever your influence could be useful to me it should not be wanting. I think the time has arrived when that influence will be very useful to me. Lt. Col Pardee has resigned and is going home by the next steamer, which of course leaves a vacancy in our regiment. I am desirous of being promoted to the position (or that of Major if Mead is promoted) and think that the influence of my friends at home can accomplish that result. I will not attempt to instruct you as to the means you shall use, as you understand that subject much better than I do. I would write some of my other friends, but have not time as the mail will close in a few minutes. Pleas consult some of my friends in regard to the matter, but say nothing to Calhoun I think he is not to be trusted.

Hudson is ordered back to the regiment and claimed the right to take command of my old company. so I have taken command of another. I was very sorry to have to leave the company I had commanded so long but Hudson insisted on his right, as he called it so I acquiesed.

We are having considerable excitement here now. the rebels threaten our pickets continually but as yet have made no serious demonstration at Newbern. But they made a dash on Washington yesterday which came near haveing a serious result. Col Mix of the cavalry had got his men (4 companies) mounted for a scout at half past three in the morning but the fog was so thick he concluded to wait a hour for it to lift; though he kept his men mounted and ready for a start, at the south end of the village (Washington has two beautiful streets nearly a mile long) Our force there besides the cavalry consists of one battery of Artillery, two companies of the 24th Mass and about 120 North Carolinians, called the 1st N.C. Vols Well, just as Col Mix was ab[o]ut to start two or three Officers who were riding out of the north end of the Village met the rebels comeing in to the number of about 1200 Cavalry and Infantry. It was a complete surprise and nothing saved the place but that our Cavalry was in the saddle just ready to start on a for[al]ging expedition. As soon as the enemy gained the streets they broke into small parties and went in for a promiscious fight. When Mix found what was going on he charged at the head of his men down the streets and engaged in a hand to hand fight.

Our whole force was engaged for three hours right among the houses The Gun Boat Louisiana was lying in the stream but dared not use her guns as she would be just as likely to kill friends as foes. A party of rebels went down to the dock and tried to shoot her men off as she lay at anchor, but they were engaged by the N.C. Vols. and driven off. The rebels were finally driven out of the village with the loss of 50 Killed and about 100 Wounded and prisoners. Our men have found 48 dead rebels now and think they have not got them all. Our loss is 9 killed and 25 wounded. The beautiful gun-boat Picket was blown up during the action and completely destroyed. The rebels carried off 3 pieces of Artillery they captured at the begining of the fight. The mail is about to close. good night,

J.L.Otis

JL056

New Berne N.C. Sept 12th 1862

Dear Wife

The steamer Haze arrived last night bringing a large mail. I got two letters from you mailed the 2nd and 6th.- You have learned before this, that I had to leave my old company and take command of Co I; there is one advantage to me in it it removes the strongest obligation I was under to remain in the regiment. Heretofore I have felt as if I had no right to leave the men who came out with me to be commanded by somebody I did not know whom. But now the command is taken from me against my wish, and if anything should hapen so that I wished to leave the regiment there is no obligation of that kinde resting on me. But they may send me home anyway. Every Officer who was absent from his regiment on the 18th of August must go before a Military Commission and if he can not give a good and sufficient reason for being absent is to be dismissed the service. The Commission has been appointed, and Col. Pettibone goes before it to-day. I don't know when my turn will come but most likely in a few days. You want to know what Hudson was sent back to the regiment for. He has been very unpopular on the staff for some time; but the immediate cause of his being ordered back was that he took a blood mare and colt belonging to Government and sent them home as his own. They were captured last spring and put on a plantation where one of my men was on guard I believe Gen. Foster designed to buy them for himself but Hudson took and sent them home without the Generals knowledge. This was told me by the officer I met in New York, and is the understanding here. I knew all about the mare and colt and knew that they belonged to the Government, also that Hudson called them his; though he owned to me that they did not belong to him. The Gen'l has not thought much of him since the battle of Newbern. He sent him to the rear for something before the action commenced and he did not return till it was over and could give no good reason for it Capt. Greeley (who knows) says that Hudson begged of Foster to put his name in his report but the General refused Hudson tells about here that he wrote Foster on the 10th of August asking to be sent back to the regiment and I saw him on the 20th and he then asked my advice about returning. I told him I had no advice to give he must do his own engineering. I was in Hoffman's office when the order was written to send him back it was the day after I got to Newbern though it was well known in the regiment long before that, that he was to be sent back but enough of Hudson, except that I dont think he will get the vacancy in the Field of our regiment. I think it is about an equal chance between myself and Capt Leggett. I cant finde fault if Legget gets it, but if Pardee had minded his own business we might have both been promoted for Mead would have resigned and that would have left two vacancies.

We have had miserable weather lately it commenced raining last sunday night and has kept it up ever since (four days) but it has cleared of this morning and is terrible hot now. The winde blew a hurricane sunday night and I had to get up in the night and fix my tent to prevent it from blowing down I got wet through and being Officer of the day got wet again at Guard mounting and was wet nearly all day. that night I had a slight attact of chills and fever but drank a lot of whiskey and that cured me but I have felt very stupid and lifeless ever since. You have no idea how damp everything gets here nights things in our tents mildew in a single night. Yesterdy morning Sam blacked my boots and brought them in I did not wear them yesterday and when I took them to put on this morning they were mildewed all over. Our sword belts and everything else hanging in our tents mildew in the same way. We have had no troubl with the rebels on picket lately, our picket force has been doubled within a week I dont think they will trouble us for some time. I[t] will be my turn to go out next tuesday. The news we get from the north now is very discourging, not a single bright spot since McClellan took his Army to the Penninsular and all for the want of Genralship. It is the same old story, one part of the Army attact and cut to pieces while another part that should be acting in conjunction with it lies safe in camp its Commanding General as indifferent to thir fate as if they were in China. They all seem to think that they have no responsibility except for the army under their immediate command. They do not appear to realize that each seperate Army Corps is but a part of the great machine, the different parts of which must all work in unison or it only wears itself out and produces no other result. It is said that the necessities of the times always brings forward a man equal to the emergency. Our condition is deplorable enough now to produce a demi-god and I hope he wont be long coming: of one thing I feel very sure, he wont be a West Pointer. But I am not entirely discouraged, the rebels are in a position to be whipped easier than they have been any time for the last four months, if any General has but the courage to try it, but I doubt whether they have. Fremont is the man, but West Point and Democracy are against him so he will never have an opertunity to try it.

I have used up my paper and not made out much of a letter either, but presume I shall have time to write another before the mail goes if I can finde anything to write about.

Give my love to Harry and Phil

Good bye Otis

JL057

NewBern N.C. Sept 14th 1862

Dear Wife

I will write you a few lines to night. as I may not be able to send a letter to you again for some days, and thought you would feel better to know why you did not get anything from me than to keep expecting a letter and not get any.

4 companies have been detailed from our regiment for some special service I dont know what 5 companies of the Mass 25th & 6 of the Mass 17th go with us all under the command of Col. Upton of the 25th I am to command the detachment from our regiment. We take ten (10) days rations with us, but where we are going I have not the least idea. You need borrow no trouble about it however for these expeditions seldom amount to anything and are not at all dangerous.

I regret much that my old company are not going with me. and they feel as bad as I do about it, but Hudson claims to be my senior so the Colonel could not send his company if I went in command.

I have no news to write and should not have written at all to night but thought you would feel uneasy unless you knew the reason for not getting the usual number of letters - shall take paper and envelopes with me and write if I have an opportunity. We leave at six tomorrow morning,

Good night Otis

JL058

New-Berne N.C. Sept 20th 1862

Dear Wife.

I am back again in New Berne rather sooner than I expected. I left here last Monday morning in command of f[o]ur companies with ten days rations. There was a detachment of the 17th Mass with us under the command of Maj Frankle and one from the 25th under Maj Pickett. Maj Frankle and myself went aboard the large fine steamer "Northerner" and the 25th men aboard the "Patuxent" and "Ocean-Wave" Our Flag Ship was the "Massasoit" which bore "Cesar and his fortune" in the shape of Col Upton the commander of the expedition and two "Aids" of Gen. Foster My orders were to be at the dock foot of Middle Street at six in the morning. I was on hand in season but had to stack arms and wait half an hour for the other two detachments The "Northerner" was out in the stream and we did not get on board till about 8 O'clock and then it was discovered that she was out of coal, so, we had to go to work and get coal aboard which took till 4 in the afternoon. We finally got off but no one aboard knew where we were bound only we were first going to Hatteras. I went to bed early was soon fast asleep I waked in the night and found we were at anchor but did not trouble myself to find out where. When I got up in the morning I found we were in the exact spot where we anchored the night before we landed on Roanoke Island. We soon got under way and passing the marshes steamed up Croatan Sound The Island looked like an old acquaintance but we did not land there. passing straight on to Albermarle Sound, and I soon found myself in strange waters. The Sound is some sixty miles long running nearly east and west - does not look to be more than from eight to twelve miles wide in any place. The southern shore of the Sound is a dense swamp the whole length. but the northern shore is the best looking country I have yet seen in North Carolina. There appeared to be very little swamp on that side of the Sound and the banks are high. The plantations large with fine dwellings and excellent negro quarters Near the mouth of the Chowan River at the western end of the Sound in the Village of Edenton We did not stop there but could see the place distinctly with our glasses. It is a beautiful place of about Four Thousand inhabitants, some of them said to be good Union men. one a man named Thompson who owns Fifteen Hundred niggers. He also owns about a million of property in New York. We could see his residence from the steamer and it is certainly a fine place. Our destination proved to be Plymouth, about eight miles up the Roanoke River. As I was watching our Flag Ship just at sunset, she took a short turn to the south and seemed to sail right in among the trees and go out of sight. We followed her and found ourselves steaming up a deep narrow river with low swampy shores and not much wider than the Hockanum. In some places it looked almost as if we could jump ashore. We anchored at Plymouth about eight in the evening. by water about Two Hundred miles from New Berne. A council of war was held that night and I then learned for the first time the object of the expedition. It was to capture a rebel force and fortification 50 miles farther up the River, but our means proved altogether inadequate to the purpose We found that the rebels had a fort mounting 9 guns a battery of 5 pieces of Flying Artillery Fifteen Hundred Infantry and two Companies of Cavalry. All the force we had with us was Eight Hundred Infantry without Cavalry or Artillery So it was

decided to return and let the rebels alone I was opposed to going back without a fight. Not that I thought we were strong enough to whip them, but I did not like the idea of backing out. But all the rest thought differently and probably thought right, We ought never to have been sent off so weak handed. Capt Flusser of the Navy first proposed the expedition, he said he sent word to Gen. Foster that he wanted Twenty Five Hundred men and it was no use trying to take the place with any less So, early in the morning without landing at all we took the back track and arrived at New Berne Thursday noon having had an excellent sail of 400 miles in a fine large steamer with excellent accomodations.

Plymouth is a village of considerable size on the Roanoke River eight miles from the mouth. It is low and swampy half the men stationed there are down with fever and ague. I dont know what could have induced anybody to build houses in such a place. A mail arrived here during our absence I got three papers from Thomas Cheney and one from you but no letters from any one. I was before the Court of Inquiry yesterday to give an account of my absence on the 18th perhaps they will dismiss me I dont know

23d Another mail came yesterday and one to day. I got a letter and several papers from you in each Tell the boys I will write all about the fish in my next You done right in lending the money, but you had better make sure that the note is all right. Both specia and demand Treasury notes are at a premium now and if you let any of either go you must get their full value I dont feel much like writing, but am Officer of the day and must sit up till after 12 so will comence another letter

Otis

JL059

This letter is rather imperfet and winds up very short but it is late and my head aches bad.

New Berne N.C. Sept 23rd 1862

My Dear Wife.

I got your letter of the 15th today as I told you in my last. The papers were very acceptable both from you and Thomas. As I have no papers to send him I shall have to write him a letter; though there is nothing to write about. You had best direct my letters to Co. I. I write you some of the names some day they are a very good set of men indeed and try hard to pleas me, if they could have chosen a Captain for themselves. there is no doubt they would have chosen me. They are improving very fast in drill and the officers all speak about it. The Col thinks it dont make much difference which company I take it is bound to be the best very soon. But I wont brag any more now.

I heard the death of Gen Reno by the same mail that brought your letter. He and Foster were like brothers and always called each other by their first names As you say we cant afford to loose many such officers, he was one of the few who had no sympathy. with the rebel officers. though they were his classmates. I was quite near him at the battle of Roanoke and he spoke to me several times. He was as brave as a man can be and as kinde as he was brave. I suppose you rejoice that the 10th was not with Burnside. but I do not I do not want to run into danger unnecessessarily but we are being forgotten here while others are winning honor in Virginia. And when I read the names of officers I know who were with us here it makes me uneasy to think they have opertunities to distinguish themselves that are denied us. But somebody must remain here, and I suppose it may as well be us.

I think that the matter of my promotion is in good hands and feel pretty confident I shall get it. If [I] do you will know of it before I do. I shall be glad to hear from Mr.

White any time whether he has got good news to tell me or not. and I expected to have got a letter from Tudor before this time; but suppose he has been on the march too much to write I am pleased to hear that Harry and Phil are doing something for their Country. I hope the time will come when they will feel proud of it. and I am sure I feel proud of them. I know they will make good and patriotic men, and will never forget that their first duty is to their Country. And though the affairs of the nation may be in bad or incompetent hands it is only another reason why evry true man should stand by her.

My hair is very short but I will try to send a little You have not sent me your photograph yet as you promised to.

Otis

JL060

New Berne N.C.Sept 29th 1862

Dear Wife.

I have sent you two letters since we recd our last mail, but as I am going to the outpost to morrow and shall most likely stay a fortnight I will write you a short letter to night. We were paid off day before yesterday so I shall send you \$100 by Express to night. It seems a small sum but I got out of money and had to run in debt the last time besides I have loaned \$25- which I shall not get till next pay day; But I shall not use all I have left unless I am promoted in that case I shall have to buy a horse and a new Coat and shall need it all and more too.

The particulars of the last great battle in Virginia come in slowly, and the more we hear the less it looks like a victory to us. We are all wearing crape on our arms and sword hilts for poor Reno. The battle was a dear one to us. I only hope it cost the Rebels as much. How little we know where we are liable to see fighting first there are regiments here which have been in service a year and a half and never saw a fight while our sixteenth less than two months in service has been in a bloody battle I suppose now you are glad I did not get into it. I heard to night that Frank Cheney was slightly wounded in the arm and that Fred Barber had lost a leg. I hope it is not so. but if it is Fred's character for courage is vindicated and that is worth more than his leg to him. But I hope to hear that he has vindicated his character without the loss of his leg. I borrowed a horse of the Quarter Master yesterday and went out to visit the pickets. I rode about ten miles in all and have not been able to sit on a chair since, and am so lame I can hardly walk.

I have some leaves from a very funny book to send the boys, but suppose if I send to one the other would make a fuss, so shall have to wait till I can finde something to send the other. Sweet potatoes are getting plenty and are very nice I wish I could send you some but suppose you will get all you want from Hartford. We get no apples now except what we buy of the Sutlers at two cents each and not very good at that. But we cant have them sent on by express it costs so much. I suppose it would cost three or four dollars per bbl to send them on. I cant write any more now as I have some other writing to do yet to night. So good night to you all. I have to start very early in the morning

J.L.Otis

JL061

Picket Station Neuce Road

Oct 3d 1862

Harry and Phil

My little boys.

I have been thinking of writing you a letter for some time but did not get to it till today. You see by the heading of this, I am out on picket duty and expect to be for about two weeks. I got a letter from mother yesterday mailed the 24th You can tell her about it as I shall not be able to write her today. Well what do you suppose is going on all about the woods here where we are on picket duty? Dont you remember the picture in that big book, where they are making tar in North Carolina; and how you used to look at and talk about it? and how many questions you used to ask about it? Well, that is just what the darkies are doing here and the woods are full of them the smoke of their tar-kilns rising in every direction I have been out to see them make tar and can tell you all about it. In the first place you must know, they only use old dead trees that are good for nothing else. They cut them down and chop them up about three or four feet long and then split them fine, none of them being left much larger than your wrist. When they have enough split they scoop out a round place in the earth like a shallow wooden bowl or a tea saucer. and then lay the sticks in piling them up in a circle with the small ends towards the center. They pile the sticks up in this way till they are ten feet high. making a solid circular mass of wood twenty or thirty feet th[r]ough. Then they build a Cob-House of logs all around it and fill in between the logs and split wood with dirt and then cover it over the top with turf; after which they set fire to the tar-wood all around the outside. They have a hole dug in the ground just outside the kiln and a trench leading from that to the center as the wood burns the tar drips down to the bottom and runs out through the trench to the hole outside where they dip it up and put it in barrels ready to send off. Yesterday I was trying to look up a white man who had been trying to hire a darky to get ammunition for him, and came across "a tar kiln which the men said would yield "right smart" of tar. I asked them how much. one man said "A hundred and fifty barrels I recon" It was a "mighty big one" I can tell you. The darkies up towards the outpost are afraid to stay at the kilns nights. There is an ugly Secesh darky with the rebels his name is Henry Palmer. He used to live here and knows every path through the woods and swamps as well as you know the way to school. He used to belong to a man named Rheims and was his overseer and Negro hunter when the slaves run away he used to track and catch them in the swamp and has killed no less than three, one of them a (free negro) only the week before we came to New-Berne. He is now with the rebels just above here, and is a guide and spy for them. The darkies are very much afraid of him because he knows all the paths and can get among them before they know it. If I catch him I will fix him so he wont kill any more niggers in a hurry.

Sweet potatoes are getting ripe and we have a plenty of them but have to pay pretty well for them I am afraid you wont be able to get many this year but you will have a plenty of nuts and apples wich are much better, and which we cant get here.

I have a horse to ride when on picket he is a pretty good one to go but not very fat I give him all the hay and oats I can get out of the Q.M. but that is not enough for him so we give him all the old bread we have but he dont get fat on it. I suppose because he has to eat it without butter but butter costs so much here I cant afford to give him any. We have got a little car that used to be a hand car, but the crank is broke so we get on and hitch the horse to it and he draws us down to camp in a hurry. I wish you could ride with us it would be such fun for you. - Persimmons are ripe and very good much better I think than those we used to get in Maryland. I shall direct this letter to Harry and some papers to Phil and that will make it all righ[t]

Give my love to Mother
Papa

JL062

New Berne N.C. Oct 6th 1862

Dear Wife

I have nothing to write about as usual, but will keep at it because I expect you will write about two letters for every one I write you. It will be a week to-morrow morning since I came out on picket - and a pleasanter week as far as weather is concerned could not be. Cool pleasant nights and bright warm days. Not a drop of rain has fallen, and there has been hardly a cloud in the sky since we came out here. The moon is nearly full and the night is nearly as light as the day. The weather is just like Indian summer at home - but the forests have none of the beautiful colors that Autumn brings to New England. All the year round they wear the same dull green dress. Nothing but tall straight pines with their eternal green spindles. Spring, Summer, and Autumn, always the same. I shall hate pine trees as long as I live.

We expected to stay up here two weeks when we came up, but the Gen. has ordered the 24th Mass to relieve us with two companies to-morrow, and it will be a relief indeed. Our regiment has done picket duty ever since we came to New-Berne, and now somebody else has to try it. but we have to keep two companies at Washington, but the duty is easy there. We have had no mail for a week, so of course I have had no letter from you or any one else. I shall most likely get letters from Harald[?] White and Parkhurst but from what you wrote I suppose they will convey no pleasant information. Well, if I am not promoted I shall not have to buy a horse that's a comfort. Leggett got his commission by the last mail and has been tight ever since, but that is nothing strange. He was the same the day before it came I saw him tumble off his horse right in the road, and he had all he could do to get up again, but he is a splendid soldier for all that.

Hudson says he has a paper which reports Fred. Barbers death. Poor fellow only two months in service; it was cruel to take those new regiments in under fire they could not possibly do much service, from want of drill and discipline and ought to have been left out. Do you know anything about Tudor was he in the fight, - what do you hear about it.

I promised to tell you the names of some of my men but there is not one whose name you ever heard before, or I either before I joined the regiment. My lieutenants are 1st Selleck L. White 2nd Wm H. Marshall, both taller than I am, so I fancy Co. I can turn out as many feet and inches of commissioned officers as any other. White was 2nd Lieut, and Marshall sergeant when I joined the company and I got them promoted it was the first time a sergeant had been promoted in the company and it pleased them much I could have had my old Lieut (Hill) who is one of the best officers in the regiment but I thought best to encourage my own company even if I did not get quite so good an Officer, but Marshall will make a good one in time. It is a glorious night if one was where he could enjoy it. The moon is at the full - not a cloud to be seen and as I look from the door of my tent I can see the bright barrels and brighter bayonets of the guard away off on the Rail Road gleaming in the light. But there are many things to try the nerves of a sensitive person for all that. The woods are full of the most unearthly sounds the whole night. Dogs howling in every direction, as if their last day (or rather night) had come. Owls hooting and groaning as owls never hooted or groaned before. Coons yell and crows caw continually, and the atmosphere is so clear and still that every noise can be heard we can hear the challenge of the pickets a quarter of a mile off. But, I

have run out of ideas and have no doubt you are glad of it. but I have done my best so good night.

Otis

JL063

New-Berne N.C. Oct 8th 1862

Dear Wife

I recieved a letter from you yesterday morning. and one from Leander. I have a letter in my pocket writen the last night we were on picket but thought best to write another to let you know that I had got yours. Every thing remains in "Status Quo" we are done with picket duty for the present but shall most likely have scouting to do occasionally. But the weather is getting cool and we can stand marching now. You wrote that your mother had been to see you but did not say anything about the people in Northampton, or how the old man is. I suppose he is about the same. I am very sorry your mother did not happen down while I was at home. Poor Barbers' campaign was a short and sharp one. He gave his life to his country, and the greatest can give no more. Wiley, for whom Fred. was engineered out of our old company proved himself a coward, and most miserable officer,. While Barber proved himself a brave man and good officer. I hope his family will not be forgotten, and that the citizens of Manchester will give him a fitting monument I suppose it made our friends at home realize the horrors of war to see one of their own soldiers brought home so soon after leaving them. I dont wonder Mr White feels bad but thousands and thousands have friends as dear who are in the same dangers position but I suppose that is no consolation to you or him. But you are more anxious for us than we are for ourselves. We have contemplated our position till we think very little of it except on account of those we leave behind us.

Tudors having the company on his hands will be an excellent thing for him and if he is active and attentive to his duties as I have no doubt he will be his promotion will be rapid. I think he will make an excellent officer.

Leander said nothing about holding any office so I suppose he is a private, but he ought not to be. He wants me to write and give him some advice, but advice dont amount to much and I shall spare him the infliction I suppose he got a large bounty or he would not have enlisted. He says Edward Woodbridge is with him and he likes him first rate. I suppose Maria thinks it is a hard case for Leander to go to war, but if he lives to return he will never be sorry. Cant you get a photograph of his and send me. The weather holds very fine yet and I hope the health of the men will begin to improve soon for our sick list is frightfully large though the men are none of them dangerously ill. My company has 23 on the sick list

I cant think of anything more to write it is about time for Dress Parade and I must close I meant to have written to Lan but shall not be able to, as the mail closes in two hours.

Give my love to the children I will write about the fish nex time

Otis

[Editor's note: A letter written by Captain P.W. Hudson on Oct. 19th 1862 (to Mrs. John L. Otis, informing her of Capt. Otis' illness) is not included in this series of letters by J.L.Otis]

JL064

New Berne N.C. Oct 23d 1862

Dear Wife,

As you have doubtless learned from Capt. Hudson, I am in the Hospital sick of billious fever. I was taken a week ago last sunday, and set up for the first time yesterday. I suffered a good deal and was very sick for several days but am coming out bright and shall be able to return to duty in a few days. We have had one mail since I have been in the hospital but I got no letter, only two papers. Dont trouble yourself much about getting butter to send it is not of much consequence. I think about 5 Bbs of winter apples will be enough. Ask John Spencer how much it will cost to send me a Bbl of apples, and if the expense is not more than Two Dollars, send me some that will be good to eat about the time they get here. I think you had better send me a box as soon as you can conveniently . I begin to want my overcoat and boots. Put up what is left of that wine (one bottle of the other got broke and I am using the last bottle now it is first rate) send me two cakes of magnesia put them in little paper boxes that will just hold them if you can. send me also two boxes good toothe- powder. I would like three or four pairs of thick soft wool stockings but dont suppose you can get them unless you can see Bennett send me a pair of good long knit undershirts with as much wool in as any you can get. I am afraid eatables wont keep if you send them so dont trouble yourself much about it. I presume there are other things I want but cant think now. Dont pay J.O.Pitkin anything but send me Alfreds' address immediately and I will write him. - Did you get the money I sent -

Bye the way I want a pair of pillow cases and would like a pair of narrow sheets about two thirds the usual width if you can send them without too much trouble. I dont think of any more wants except something to cure my head-ache. I have had a distressing headache ever since I was first taken sick night and day, and it has not left yet though it is not so bad to night. Give my compliments to Ralph Treat when you see him. Tell the children to get all the nuts they can and I will try to get home to help eat them I am tired out and can write no more good night

Otis

JL065

New-Berne N.C. Oct 26th 1862

Dear Wife

I got your letter of the 19th this morning, and am very glad indeed that you and the children continue in good health while there is so much sickness about. I am still in the hospital though I ride up to Camp every day and think I shall be able to report for duty on monday. Tell Mr. White that no apology is necessary for not writing I knew he must be busy and did not expect it. If the 16th fared as hard as they tell for; their Colonel is not fit for his position: there is no necessity for men going without food in the section of country where they were at that time.

No promotion of Lt. Col. has been made in our regiment yet and everybody wonders at the delay My chances are best so far and the officers all expect me to get it. I dont care half so much about it as I did, still should be glad of it. One thing is pretty certain all the influence that can be brought at home is of no use, it depends entirely on the Col. of the regiment and he has recommended me. So my chances are pretty good.

Barracks are being built for the troops here and it is said that several of the new Mass. are coming to join us here one arrived last night and a fine looking regiment it is, but very expensive they men must have cost about Five Hundred Dollars a ---? . Gen Foster

has written asking that some of the new Conn. regiments be sent down here but I dont know whether they will. I wish they would send some of them down The sickly season must be nearly over now and the men can stand it much better than they could a while ago. Our sick list does not decrease any yet but the weather is getting cold and I think the effect must be favorable. Capt Thomas R. Mead, (a brother in law of our late Major, died night before last he was sick but a few days. he was a particular friend of mine and one of the best officers in the regiment. I shall send some likenesses in this, the full length one is of Capt Hoyt who died of fever four days after the battle of New Berne the one in a hat is Lieut Wm H. Perkins of Co A. cousin to Aurthur Cheneys wife and the pet of the regiment he is 21 years old and about as large as Harry The one in a cap is Capt Horace Quinn of Co H just promoted to fill the place made vacant by the promotion of Capt Leggett. I shall send more from time to time as I get them I commenced this two days ago and must close now for the mail will close soon and I am not able to write much at a tin, but I am getting better every day and shall comence doing some duty to morrow. Give my love to the child[re]n I shall write again in a day or tw.

Yours Truly

Otis

Tell the girls that those two young officers are both in the market

[Writing shows fatigue--COM]

JL066

New Berne N.C. Nov 1st 1862

Dear Wife,

I must try to write you a short letter to day though I dont feel much like it. I left the hospital two days ago though I ought not to. All the troops here except two new regiments have gone off on an expedition, where to I dont know some by land and some by water. Ours has gone with the rest, but the Dr said I must not go. I had not left the hospital then, but as there was to be about 200 sick and convalescent men left in camp the Col. wanted me to come up and take charge of the Camp and I did so but it has been too much for me and made me about sick again. But for sleeping out nights I might as well have gone with the regiment. There is so much to see to that it takes me all the time. I shall stop running about now and stay in my tent

I regret very much not being able to go with the regiment but could not help it. You will be pleased to hear that I am appointed acting major of the regiment and there is not much doubt now that I shall get the Commission. The Officers all appear pleased about it except Hudson, who says that notwithstanding I am appointed acting major by order of the Gov. he is not bound to obey my orders till I get my Commission: He and I are very good friends, for I dont consider him worth falling out with, but he is about as unpopular with the officers as a man can be. We came near having a mail night before last. The Mail Boat was coming up the River as the expedition was going down. So Gen Foster took the mail off and carried it along with him It is doubtful whether we who are left here even get our part of it.

Aurthur Slate and Henry Barrows are both in the hospital. Henry has got so that he goes out some. I understand that Aurthur is better but not able to go out yet. I think the health of the regiment rather better than it has been though the sick list is not much smaller. My Company has 88 men and only forty of them were well enough to go on this expedition Hudson has 96 and only 38 to go six of them were new recruits. But we shall soon have frost now and that will help us We have had a few cases of Congestive

Fever here within the last two weeks and all terminated fatally within 48 hours but for that I should have gone with the regiment I was afraid if I slept out of doors nights in my weak state I should take cold and then it would be all up with me.

Write me whether you got the last money I sent you. Salmon Bidwell of Manchester goes home to-morrow discharged for disability he will call on you in the course of a few days

Give my regards to our friends I will write Phil a letter in a few days and tell about the fish.

Those Republicans are very acceptable I suppose you have subscribed again Give my love to the children I will write again in a day or two.

Yours Otis.

JL067

New Berne N.C. Nov 5th 1862

My little Boys.

I am going to write you a letter to-day but it will be rather a short one: when you get so as to write letters in reply perhaps I shall write longer ones. You may say to mother that the mail which Gen Foster took away came back two days after and brought me a letter from Geo. Parkhurst and one from Leander but none from home Mr. Parkhurst said that he had written me one letter before, but I never recieved it. I have not had time to write before since our regiment left There are about 200 sick men in camp to see to, and four died in three days after the regiment left I had everything to see to, and had to get a chaplain from another regiment to conduct the service. But none of the men are very sick now and they all seem to be doing well, so today I have a little leasure time. But I suppose you are impatient to hear about those fish we cought coming down from New York. Mother knows if you do not, that I am a poor hand at a fish story but I will do my best.

Well, the 2nd day out of New York we thought we would try and see how it would seem to fish in the Ocean (You must know we were entirely out of sight of land) So we got a hook and line of the Pilot and went at it. This hook and line would astonish you some if you could see it. The line was about as large as a clothes line and as long as four tied to-gether The hook was as large round as that brass wire they use on wringers and we baited it with a great piece of pork shine as large as my hand. We tied the end of the line to the rail of the steamer and let the hook tow astern. After about two hours Major Bartholomew thought by the feeling of the line that we had got a bite, so he pulled away at the line and it was all he could do to get it in. Pretty son the fish got up near enough so we could see him and he was a big one I can tell you. we thought we had got the biggest kinde of a blue fish; but we soon got him aboard and found he was no blue-fish but a big fellow as large as six shad with a back almost the color of the back of a mackerel and a narrow stripe looking just like a string of beads running all the way from the corner of his mouth to his tail the whole underside of his body was just the color of the mother of pearl He had not a very large mouth but it was armed with a set of as sharp Wicked looking teeth as I ever saw when the mate of the steamer tried to get the hook out of his mouth the fish bit his finger so that the blood run a stream. Just then the Capt of the steamer came along, when he saw the fish he held up both hands in astonishment. He said he had often seen such fish caught on the coast of Florida but never so far north before , he said it was called the King fish, and was the best fish in the world. Such an one as that was worth Five Dollars. Before night we caught two more making three in all They tasted some like shad only better We had some fried some

made into chowder, and one stuffed and baked. About 15 of us sat down to dinner the day we had the baked fish and did not eat more than half of it. I think it was the best fish I ever tasted. The first we had cooked I was too sea-sick to eat but after we got to Hatteras I could eat my share. How would you like to fish with four bed cord tied together and a hook that would hold a calf, and catch fish as long as a broomstick? I believe I have told you all about the fish we caught coming down. I have never been fishing here though some do go and have good luck. Fresh are plenty and cheap here now and some of the very good. There is one kind called "mulletts" about [as] large as good sized Porgies. they cost about 5c a piece and are good fish. There is another kind the darkies call "Robbins" but they are not as good.

I wish we had a good cat down here the rats are so thick in our tents that we often see them run across the floor in the day time, and nights they make so much noise we can hardly sleep. If I could only get them to drink a little Sutlers whiskey we would soon be rid of them but they are "old rats" and know better.

Tell Mother we have heard nothing from the regiment since it left Washington last Sunday morning. a sad accident occurred just as they were leaving. the horse of Capt Pendleton of Gen. Fosters staff ran with him and threw him against a tree injuring him so that he died in a few hours. He was a wealthy young man from New York. a Volunteer Aid serving without pay. I think he was married. I was somewhat acquainted with him but not particularly so.

We expect a mail every hour and as I have had no letter from home for more than two weeks I shall expect some.

Give my love to Mama and tell her to write for you immediately.

Papa

JL068

New Berne N.C. Nov 11th 1862

Dear Wife.

We recieved a mail yesterday the first for nearly two weeks. I got no letter from you dated the 1st of November. I think there must be one on the way written before it, as you said nothing about sending the things I wrote for. I am too tired to write much but as the mail goes in about four hours will do my best. I have been to the city to get the body of a soldier of my company sent north, and though I did not walk more than two miles, it used me up completely. You must not get the blues for I am all right again except strength, that, we do not recover as fast as we should at home. Mr White has not been here. I hope he will come. I should be delighted to see him. Grant returned about three weeks ago I wondered at it when he told me he did not call on you before he came away. I am rather sorry that Tudor has resigned, but have no doubt that Beach did treat him mean. many of the regular Officers who get command of Volunteer regiments set themselves so much above the Officers that there is no getting along with them. I still think that Tudor would make a good officer, and wish he was in our regiment.

We have had a good deal of bad weather here lately. Cold storms lasting several days, but it has cleared off now and is very pleasant. We have had two severe frosts and it will no doubt be healthier here now. Lillas and her sister are so much alike I dont see how they can live together without a third party to quarrel with. I should think it would be like a pair of shears when there is nothing between them to cut they would cut each other. I hope Keeneys clerk will be of the right sort this time it would be too bad if they have another girl. I should think Carrier done your work cheap. he is a very clever man I used to know him years ago. I think Phil got the best of the bargain in trading

chestnuts for pig walnuts. it does seem almost cruel to think of Phils' selling his nuts to buy a knife. but I suppose it is well for them to begin to think that they can get such things by their own exertions. I have thought about the little fellow ever since I read your letter and it seems as it did when they first went to school as if it was the beginning of sorrow and trouble for them and the commencement of a strife with the world for mere existence, that would terminate only with life. But it is necessary that they should learn the lesson, and much better that they should learn it with a good home and everything comfortable about them than to learn it as I did under the pressure of a hard necessity.

I suppose my own hard experience when a boy makes me more sensitive on the subject than I should otherwise be.

Tell Harry I remembered that it was his birthday on the first, and would have written him a letter, but was unwell and had a great deal to do. Tell Phil I think he was not very careful of the knife I gave him if he needs another so soon, but am glad to learn that he is earning money himself to buy one.

You missread my letter I did not tell you not to trouble yourself to get letters to send me. I have forgotten what it was now but something I wanted you to send me if you could get it without much trouble, or perhaps it was victuals. look again and see if you can make it out. I was not well enough to write much at that time and did not read the letter over after it was written perhaps I put in the wrong words in some places. The troops are just beginning to return from the expedition. But our regiment has not come yet. They have had hard marching but not much fighting. They had one slight skirmish killing half a dozen rebels, and having a man or two wounded near a place called Williamston you will find it on the map not far from Plymouth on the Roanoke River. They took (and it is reported burned) a place called Hamilton on the Roanoke and that is about all. I will write the particulars after the regiment gets back. I saw Arthur Slate yesterday he is much better but looks as if he would not be able to do duty for a good while I think he will have to be sent home. I can think of nothing more to write now and am too tired to write if I could. I have got to go to the City again this P.M. to see about getting a lot of sick men into the Hospitals. And have to [procure?] a team and squad of men to get wood for our regimental hospital (which is in the City.) I have all the sick of the regiment over two hundred to see to. And the man in charge of the hospital came to me for money saying he was out and could buy nothing for the sick. I am pretty short myself having lent \$35 but I shall have to let him have it.

Good bye for to day

Otis. [Confederate bill enclosed]

JL069

New-Berne N.C. Nov 16th 1862

Dear Wife.

We have received no mail since I wrote you last, but as I shall have a good deal to do for a few days will write now for fear I shall not have time to write again this week.

Our regiment returned three days ago having been gone 14 days. they had very hard marching but no fighting to speak of. They left Washington early Monday morning and marched till 10 O. Clock at night when they came up to the rebels posted on the opposite side of a creek. It was dark and they knew nothing about the strength of the enemy. They were ordered to cross and drive the rebels out they did so, our regiment being in advance. The enemy opened fire as they were crossing, not more than 50 yards distant, but fortunately being on much higher ground their shots all went over

and we had not a man hurt. Our boys returned the fire and the rebels left. Our troops marched about two miles farther and after resting 4 hours continued the march, having marched 19 hours and rested four. They took possession of Williamston without opposition, everybody had left in a hurry leaving everything in the houses: Stores stocked with goods and valuables of all kinds. They rested here till morning and then proceeded to Hamilton another large village, but not so large as Williamston. Here everybody had run away also and the men took possession of the houses and stores for quarters. They found here as at Williamston, well stocked liquor stores, and as there was not much order maintained everybody got drunk, and after getting drunk set fire to the houses and burned half the place to the ground. So they were marched out and had to sleep in a corn-field in consequence. The next day they marched toward Tarboro, but the rebels having R.R. communications in the rear collected so large a force that Foster dared not attack the place. So he returned through Williamston and Hamilton to Plymouth where the whole army took transports for New-Berne. The men had opportunities to get large quantities of goods from stores and houses but were so tired and had no means of transportation that they did not take them. Hudson was the only one who brought back anything and he had a large box full of stuff. He did not show me any of it but his Lieut. told me that he had silks and laces to a considerable amount. Among the rest a silk shawl which the Lieut thought must be worth Fifty Dollars. The way Hudson got the shawl was not very credible to him. One of his men named Parker got the shawl and Hudson asked him to let him look at it. he did so and Hudson refused to let him have it back, He took a music Box from a man named Washbourne in the same way. After they got back to New-Berne they asked him for them and he ordered them out of his tent and threatened to put them in irons. They went to Lieut. Hill of Co. C about it, he was my Orderly Sergeant and afterwards Lieut when I was in Co B. They wanted to complain to the Col. about it and Hill asked my advice. I told him they had best say nothing about it as he had every advantage of them and I did not think the Col would interfere. But it is a hard case and well for Hudson that I am not in command. His Lieut.(Hodge) and also Lieut Hill tell me that his men all got down on him during the march and they never heard men talk so bad about an Officer. And all say he acted cowardly. He is as unpopular with the officers as the men. But there is one part of the story which will probably prove more interesting to you than the account of the expedition. After they had been gone about three days I felt as if I might as well have gone with them. Lt. Col King of the Cavalry had also returned from home and wished to join his regiment, so we made enquiries about the means of going and found we should not be allowed to go. The commanding officer here said he thought our chances for a fight were better than if we were with the expedition and he wanted us all. Well, things went on about as usual till wednesday but one regiment the 24th Mass only had got back from Plymouth, and along towards night we heard Artillery fire about five miles off on the Trent Road. Col Steward of the Artillery was up here at the time he thought it was from our own troops so I borrowed no trouble about it. But after dark Col Kurtz who was in command came up and left an order for me to turn out all the men I had. I had the "long roll" beaten and turned out about 160 men all sick men but about twenty recruits. We stood out under arms for about two hours. it was a cold foggy evening and very hard on the men many of them just out of the Hospital. The men suffered so much that I allowed them to turn in, but as they had to keep all their clothing and equipments on and their guns in their hands suppose they did not sleep much. I laid down with my clothes on and slept well till about 1 O Clock when I was awakened by the sound of Artillery this time on the R.R. in the direction of Bachelers Creek. As it was a long way off I soon went to sleep again and slept till morning. The 24th poor fellows were out all night. There were all sorts of rumors afloat in the morning and good deal of alarm in the City but I could get no reliable information, so I took a horse and in company with Capt. Branch started out on the Trent Road to see what I could learn. It appeared that the rebels came down in force

the afternoon before and attack our pickets at Jacksons plantation driving them back to their Camp at Harrisons. The rebels had a large force of Infantry a battery of Artillery and 5 companies of Cavalry About 9 in the evening the commanding officer (Kurtz) sent an order for our picket force (4 companies 25th Mass) to retire to the rear of Fort Totten which brought them nearly into the City. When I got to the Fort in the morning I found that the picket force had started out and were feeling their way out again. I pushed on and soon overtook them. I was some acquainted with their Commander so we rode along with him till we met an old darky who told us that the rebels left early in the morning, so Capt Branch and myself pushed on ahead till we came to their camp (our picket) at Harrisons which was just as they left it the night before. The rebels not daring to come any nearer than Jacksons and did not know that they had left their Camp and retired to the fort. There was Three Thousand Dollars worth of nice new tents they might have taken as well as not. The firing in the night was occasioned by an attack on our pickets at the creek. They killed one man and wounded another and so ended the affair probably to be repeated at intervals during the winter.

Two interesting events have occurred since I commenced writing one very unexpected. The first is the arrival of a mail and the other the resignation of Col. Pettibone. The Colonels health is very poor and he was compelled to go. I am very sorry indeed to have him leave, though it will probably result in my promotion. He is a very fine man and liked much by all the officers.

I hope you have sent the box for I need my overcoat. I had a letter from Tudor today, and think he had sufficient reasons for resigning. This letter will be carried to Hartford by our "Adjutant" H.W. Camp. I shall ask him to call and see you. I will close now it [is] midnight but shall perhaps write you a business letter in the morning.

Otis.

JL 070

New Berne N.C. Nov 22nd 1862

Dear Wife.

A mail arrived yesterday and brought me one letter. - the one you wrote with a pencil after getting Hudson's letter. It has been nearly a month on the way.

There is little enough to write about here but perhaps I had better talk about myself. I find it necessary to write a letter occasionally in which the "first person singular" appears very prominent.

In the first place my Majors Commission has not come yet, where at everybody wonders, and it is strange that there should be so much trouble about my commissions. Col. Pettibone says he shall talk to the Governor about it. Col Pettibone has resigned as you doubtless know before this I shall doubtless be Lieut. Col. and Capt Greeley major. We were all sorry to have him resign. I had rather remain Major of the regiment and had him stay than to be Lieut Col. and have him leave. Lieut Col. Leggett thinks the same. Leggett will make a good Colonel. he is the most accomplished soldier that is now, or ever has been in the regiment and his courage is beyond question.

Hudson is crazy again about promotion and wanted me to use my influence with Col Pettibone for him. He did not know that Col.s Pettibone, Leggett and myself all held the same opinion of him, that he was entirely unfit for the position. They both told me privately that he acted cowardly on the late expedition. But I forget that I was going to talk about myself. Well, I have been on the lookout for a horse lately and tried several. I found one splendid saddle horse well broke and very handsome but was afraid he was not sound so did not buy him. When the Col. left he wanted me to buy his, a fine

looking black horse but poorly trained. I did not quite like him but several who were good judges advised me to take him so I did. But I had about my usual luck, for the first time I rode him at battalion drill he stuck a ten penny nail in his foot. I did not know it untill the next morning when it had got so sore that he held it up all the time We had to take a pair of Pincers to pull it out. He did not bear any weight on it for two days, but I believe it is a trifle better today but now he is sick and wont eat, my servant is sick with the ague so I have myself and a sick horse to take care of and it keeps me busy for the present I am no better off for a horse than I was before. Yesterday I rode the Chaplains and today Col Leggetts, Bye the way I ought to have spoken of our new Chaplain before, He has been with us several weeks and is getting to be a great favorite with officers and men He went with the regiment on the late expedition, made himself generally useful Kept their spirits up by telling funny stories was not at all afraid of bullets and if there had been much of a fight would doubtless have had a hand in it. Our old Chaplain was a discredit to the cloth but Trumbull is something like a chaplain. You will most likely see some letters from him before long I don't know what paper he writes for but believe it is the Independent.

I want you to go to Hartford as soon as you get this - go to Schultzes' and ask him if he can make me a double breasted coat by the measure of the single breasted one he made for me last year. Dr. Newton had one made at Smith's from such a measure. If he can do it let him make it at once tell him it is for a "Field Officer" and he will know how to make it. I want a first rate coat and would like it a trifle looser than my old one, with U.S. Infantry buttons. Tell him I want it as soon as possible. I will write you by the next mail how to send it. Adjutant Camp is at home and I may think best to have him bring it on. You will have to pay for it.

I see Burnside has superseded McClellan. I am not a McClellan man but think it rather a bad move. Mc. must be a dull scholar indeed if he has not learned something valuable by his last years experience. and in my opinion Burnside is not the man to command so large a force. Everyone who has served under Burnside likes him but I have never seen a man who considers him a great General But I have done borrowing trouble about the war I shall take things as they come and make the best of it. We have still roses in blossom in the open air. Mrs. Webb, wife of one of our Lieutenants said she would press me some to send you, but has not done it yet. This Mrs. Webb came on about three weeks ago. she got to New York the day after I left and remained there four of five weeks trying to get passage on a steamer she could not, and finally took passage on a schooner. They were driven out to sea in a gale, lost all their sails and drifted about three days without knowing where they were except that they were in the Gulf Stream. Finally it cleared off so they bent some new sails and got to New Berne just a fortnight after leaving New York. The regiment was gone but her husband was here having been sick when it left. But he was in the same situation as the man who drew an elephant in a lottery he did not know what to do with his wife. they stayed in his tent a day or two and then I gave them permission to take the garret of an old house in camp the lower part of which is used for an officers mess room. When the regiment returned the Col let them stay, and she now has charge of the cooking for the mess and we live much better than formerly. It seems like living to have such dishes as we were accustomed to at home Your Thanksgiving is at hand and you can imagine how I want to be at home. I have no doubt we can get something good to eat here but I finde now I am away from home that, that, is the poorer part of Thanksgiving I have no time or space to say anything in particular to the children but they must think of Papa when they eat supper next thursday

[this letter has no ending]

New-Berne N.C. Nov 29th 1862

My little boys,

We have had no mail here for ten days past. The last letter I had from home was written three weeks ago. so you see it is a long time since I have heard from you. But this is a mail going at 7 O Clock this evening and it being just after Thanksgiving I thought you might like to know how we spent the time. You must tell Mother all about it for I shall not be able to write two letters to-day.

To begin with it was one of the pleasantest days you could imagine. warm as Indian summer and not a breath of winde. The first bit of fun that came off was a foot race. A track was staked out half a mile around and then the racing commenced first two soldiers run and the one who beat got two dollars, next four run and the prize was three. Then four more and the prize was five dollars.

But the best of all was a "target shoot" I suppose you have heard of target shooting and know what it is. Ordinarily it is a company of soldiers going out with their rifle to shoot at a target and see who can get the nearest to it, But this target shoot was quite a different affair. It was Lieut. Coffings' company that had the shoot the prize was a box of tobacco. First the Lieut had a good stiff board stuck up in the ground with a ring painted on it, inside of the ring was a dot and the one who hit nearest the dot was to have the prize. And what do you think they had to shoot with? I know what you would say if you was to gess. One of you would say, "They had their guns of coure, the other would say the[y] had revolvers like papa's; but you would never guess, so I shall have to tell you. They had a "brace and bit" first the Lieut. stood them about as far from the target as from our door to Mr. Cones' fence and let them take a good look at the mark, then he tied a handkerchief over their eyes, gave them the brace and bit, made them turn around twice and start. then commenced the fun, the man could of course see nothing and was just as likely to go the wrong way as the right one. Some of them would go off in quite a different direction turning the bit round and round trying to finde the mark and after wandering around till the got tired. would take of the handkerchief and finde themselves farther off than they were when the started some would go so near as to almost hit the board finally one man started and and got farther from the mark than any had done before after he got almost out of sight of it another man caught oup a board and holding it up right before him he run the bit against it. he thought he had got it sure then and bored away like a good fellow till he got a hole through. and then took the handkerchief of his eyes. You can imagine how sheepish he looked when he found he had been boring through a piece of board that another man was holding up as far from the target as from our house to Mr. Wadsworths'.

Another company tried a still different target shoot. which was rolling a wheel barrow at a mark. They set up a big box right in the middle of the company street then the set a wheelbarrow at the end of the street pointing directly at the box. then they took the marksman blindfolded him and led him round the Captains' tent, while our man was doing that another turned the wheelbarrow around. He took hold of it not knowing that it had been changed and started off, pretty soon he run against a tent, after feeling around it a while he found it was an officers tent, thinking that it was his own captains tent he turned his wheelbarrow about and started again. He got into the street and wheeled his barrow up and down - across and back in every direction trying to finde the box. The men kept laughing as if they would split themselves and I suppose he wondered what they [were] laughing about. Finally he got out of patien[ce] - dropped the wheelbarrow and pulling the handkerchief off his eyes and found himself in another street entirely So you see that the soldiers got up a little fun among themselves and had quite a good time if they did not have much Thanksgiving supper.

I suppose you go to school every day and are learning to read fast, most likely to you have skating and sliding to attend to.. I dont care how much you slide or skate only I dont want you to go skating where the water is deep Little boys often get drowned by going where water is deep to skate, and you know how shocking it would be if anything of the kinde should happen to you and papa so far away.

Tell Mother that George Scott (D. Scott's) son is here a drumer in the 46th Mass. We are having very fine weather, it is now the 2nd of December. I am writing in my tent with no fire and it is warm and comfortable. We have had several days of just such weather we have to have fire nights and mornings, and some days it is so cold we can hardly keep fire enough. though there are still a few roses in blossom on the south side of the houses.

I can write you no more now for I finde I must write another letter and we are very busy just now.

So good bye for the present

Papa

JL072

New Berne N.C. Dec 2nd 1862

Dear Wife.

We have had no mail for a long time, the last letter I had from home was written just a month ago today. I have sent off two or three letters since, and did not design to write again till we get another, but Mr. White and Lemuel Howlett arrived here four days ago and will start for home tommorrow morning so I shall send by them We were pleased enough to see them and are sorry they cannot stay longer Mr White broke his arm on the way down which rather interferes with the pleasure of his visit, and we are moving from our tents into barracks while they are here which makes it rather bad for we cannot make their [stay] near as pleasant. Oour barracks were not half done, but a new regiment arrived and wanted our tents so we had to move into the barracks half finished as they were.

I hardly know how to have my new coat sent on the express is very slow and it might be a month getting here Our Adjutant Camp is at home in hartford if you could get some one to see him he would bring it directly to me, but if you cannot do so, you had better have it put up in a strong paper box (the tailor will do it for you) and have it sent by Express.

If you have any money to spare I would like you to send me some. there is now three months pay due us and no Pay-Master at hand. We cannot finde out when he is coming, I do not want you to send it unless you can spare it as well as not, because I can get along without it. I can go on tick as most of the Officers do but I have not had an account with the sutler since we came to New Berne and had rather not. If you can spare the money as well as not after paying for my coat, send me Fifty Dollars by Express. Pay freight and insurance yourself. Write me how much you have left, becaus if the Pay Master does not come before long I shall have to make some arrangment about paying for my horse. but I think he will come soon - and would wait for him but I do hate to get in debt here if I can help it. I will not try to think of the news to write you as you will see Mr White and he will tell you all about us. he knows how we live in camp and can tell you more in half an hour than I can write in half a day

I shall send home a cap by him it has got so small that I cannot wear it and I thought it might pleas Harry. I shall send a book also which tells its own story. I have written on

a fly leaf where it came from I am just ordered off on duty so I can write no more Mr White is waiting to take the letter.

Yours Otis

JL073

New-Berne N.C. Dec 5th 1862

Dear Wife

I sent you a letter on tuesday by Mr. White in which I told you I was ordered away on duty, but did not say what duty for we did not know and I did not think best to tell you that we were ordered to be ready in two hours with five days rations. We did not know where we were to go till we got on board the steamer at seven O Clock in the evening when we found we were to go and retake "Roanoke Island" It was reported that the regiment left in charge there had revolted, imprisoned their Officers, and taken possession of the Island. We started at 8 in the evening accompanied by the Gun Boat "Delaware", and arrived at the Island about the same time the next evening. It rained most of the night and all the next day. many of the men had to stay on the hurricane deck exposed to the weather and had a pretty tough time of it. It cleared off in the night and we landed in the morning, stacked arms and built our fires on the same ground that we did the night of the battle of Roanoke. We found that the story of the revolt of the "Marine-Artillery" (a hybred N.Y. regiment half sailor half soldier) was pretty much humbug there is no doubt that the men have been wronged by their officers and some of the officers were badly frightened lest there should be a mutiny but the men had not mutinied and were doing duty as usual when we got there. So without loading our guns we stacked arms built fires cooked breakfast and dinner, loafed about till 3 in the afternoon and then went aboard our steamer starting for New Berne where we arrived at 5 in the morning and marched to our Camp a mile distant in a drenching rain getting into camp about daylight Mr. White and Howlett accompanied us to the dock and saw us off. You have doubtless seen them before this and learned all about it.

I commenced this last night, after writing about half a page I learned that a mail had arrived so I stopped writing and waited to see what it brought me. I got two letters from you, one from Parkhurst one from Leander and one from Tudor. Also my Major's Commission. So you can direct your letters to Major J.L. Otis 10th C.V. I hope you sent someone to Hartford to see Camp for I shall not get my coat in a month if it comes by Express. The box you sent on the 12th has not come yet. Hudson says he recieved by this mail the offer of a postion on Burnside's staff, and that his Father and Mother both urge him to take it. He says he shall wait till another mail comes and see if he is not promoted in the regiment, if not he shall go. From what I hear I judge he has not the ghost of a chance there is not an officer in the regiment that wants to see him promoted, and the Governor is well posted about him. It does seem as if he grew mean every day. His men hate him and say they hope he will get killed, but I dont think he will, he will take precious good care not to get where there is much danger How do the Cheneys like his marriage or dont they care anything about it? In the book I sent home was a letter for the Children; I think directed to Phil if so he will have two to Harry one I had forgotten the fish letter entirely But perhaps it was directed to Harry I do not remember.

Our Chaplain goes with us everywhere and writes to the Courant if [you] keep a look out you will see them and get a better account of our doings than I could write if I tried

It is half past ten a cold windy night my fire [is] out so I must go to bed.

Good night Otis

JL074

New-Berne N.C. Dec 7th 1862

Dear Wife,

Another mail arrived last night only 24 hours after the first. The Chaplain waked me at half past one to give me a letter from you. I lighted my candle though it was bitter cold and about froze my arms holding them out of bed to read it. You said you had a minde not [to] write; you can hardly be convicted of spoiling a good minde on the streghth of that letter. I was surprised to finde that you got no letter from me in Thanksgiving week. I sent one by Adjutant Camp giving you directions about getting me a coat made and was in hopes it was done by this time. Camp is coming on the first of next week an if there is any possibility of getting it so that he can bring it I wish you would do so . Schultze will finde out for you whether he has started on his return. or George Williams will see to it for you no doubt The Express is so slow that I do not want to wait if I can help it. My box has not come yet though you sent it nearly a month ago.

I finished a letter for you today so shall not write much. Mr Alexander arrived to day and gave me a note from you, he is going to stay here this winter I got the Orpheus C. Kerr letters you sent me and read them to a lot of officers who were in my tent. They all thought them just the thing. The Quarter Master said I must have a correspondent who knew "what was what" I told him my wife sent them. He said he guessed my wife was sharp.

You speak about your fear that Burnside may be defeated I do not think he will. Not that he is a great General but that he is a man who will obey orders promptly. And Hallecks report to the Secretary of War shows that had McClellan obeyed orders the Rebel Army in Virginia would have been annihilated. Halleck has a head to plan a Campaign and Burnside has a fine army with some good officers. We must outnumber the Rebels largely in Virginia and with anything like decent mangement must conquer. I do not think Burnside a great General but he has always obeyed orders to the letter and moved with great activity. Troops are collecting here fast and we shall no doubt have a lively time this winter Winter Campaigns are rather tough sometimes but I am not sure that a winter would not be better than a summer campaign here, it is so very hot in the summer. but it is cold enough here now. It froze hard here last night and ice has not thawed on the north side of buildings to day. I could not keep warm last night though I had so many blankets on that it made my bones ache. I took cold on the Roanoke Island trip and have had a pain in my face and head most of the time since.

The Bidwell who called on you is not Warrens son He belongs at that house at the end of a road where we went that afternoon before I came away You speak of coming down here and I wish you could, but will not write about it now, in a day or two I shall have more time we are moving now and everything is at sixes and sevens. It is getting dark and the mail closes in half an hour. I hope you have got the lost letters. I want to write Tudor tonight but shall not be able to.

Tell Harry and Phil to send word how they like Lieut Marshall and the book he sent them.

Otis

JL075

New Berne N.C. Dec 10th 1862

Dear Wife,

We are again under marching orders and this time we are bound to do something, I shall not write a long letter for it is late and have had my hands full to day. We leave but one regiment here in New-Berne and for the safety of our baggage, put all on board vessells. My trunk and bedding is all packed and sent off except two blankets I take with me. We start at 7 to morrow morning where we are going I do not know, but no doubt into the interior. Doubtless the "back bone" of the rebellion is to be broken again You know that operation has to be performed about once a month; there never was a spinal column that united so quickly as this same back bone we hear so much about.

My box has not come to hand yet and now it will be a good while before I shall get it I am sorry that I sent home for money and if you have not sent it you need not do so, I suppose the whole force of our Government is advancing simultaneously and the rebels will have [to] meet us at every point, if we do moove as we ought all together, it does seem as if the rebels must be whipped.

I would not write you about our marching but you will learn it from other sources just as soon. Our force is stronger than it has ever been before, and unless the rebels are strong in the state they will not fight much. You must keep writing as usual and I shall get the letters our mails will no doubt follow us so that we shall get our letters though not quite so promptly as normal. I shall write a few lines as often as we have oportunities to send letters back.

I meant to have written to your mother before this but somehow could not get to it. Hudson says he has sent for his wife and expects her here within a week He thinks now that he did a very foolish thing in sending for her. But I suppose we shall finish the war soon now and all will be at home soon. But I must go to bed or I shall not get rested by morning.

We are having fine weather now but rather cold nights however it is better than marching in the sumer. I shall write you just as soon as I can get an oportunity. Good night.

Otis

JL076A

(in pencil)

New Berne N.C.

Dec 21st 1862

Dear Wife,

I am back again in New Berne safe and sound. We have had a terrible fight and long march. We lost in the fight 100 Officers and men killed and wounded from our regiment I was hit twice but only slightly wounded. I have a bad cold and dreadful sore mouth that it will take me a month to get over the mail goes in five minutes so good bye

Otis

Direct to Major Otis

JL076B

New-Berne N.C. Dec 21st 1862

My Dear Wife.

I wrote you a short note this morning to let you know that I had got safe back to New Berne, but having a few moments to myself to night, will write again - not to give you a full account of the expedition for I have not the time - but to give some of the main facts now and write you a full account as soon as possible.

I am glad to be able to write you for at one time during the battle of Kingston Bridge I thought that not only myself but our whole Regiment were fighting our last battle We were not engaged more than half an hour, but lost nearly one third our regiment killed and wounded. We lost three of our best Officers killed two of them being Lieuts Hill and Perkins whose pictures I sent you. but I will not stop to particularize now you will get the story from the papers before you get this letter and as soon as I get time I will write you a full account of the expedition. We were gone ten days marched 130 miles and fought the rebels three times. Our own Regiment finishing the battle of Kingston by a charge that won the highest praise from all, but the honors we won cost too much we can not afford to fight many more such battles.

I am sorry to see that Burnside has verified my predictions by being terribly defeated. I am not at all surprised for as I told you before he has not the capacity to handle such an army and the manner in which he attacked the Rebel Position at Fredricburg shows that he has not learned the first principles of warfare.

A General who waits for an ene[m]y to select a position fortify it at leasure and then attack it just where the enemy wishes to have him, deserves to be defeated. I predict that Burnside will soon be superseded for after such an exhibition of inefficiency it is usafe to keep him in command for a day.

I found my box here when I returned it having been six weeks on the way. It had been broken open before it arrived but I dont know that anything had been taken out as you did not write just what it contained. The eatables were very acceptable as we arrived late at night with not a thing to eat in camp. The stockings were just what I needed the cap is just the thing, the coat came all saf but is soaked through with preserves and badly mildewed but I don't think it is injured at all. The cake is good enough, the pears were spoiled, the things you sent were just what I wanted, but Keeney cheated you on the shirts they are nearly all cotton; he ought to be ashamed of it - The boots do not fit at all but that is not your fault. Goddard must have made a mistake, they were never mad from the measure of my foot I am sure.

Tell the boys I am much obliged for the chestnuts I had not seen one before this year Hudsons wife arrived here a week ago, and they are keeping house in the city - I dont know where Knox could have heard that I was coming home for I have never said anything about it. If I should make up my minde to come you would know it first of anybody. I forgot to tell you that at the Battle of Kingston I was hit three times, but not hurt much. A bullet struck my sword and a piece of it went into my hand making it bleed considerably but did not hurt much another. struck my right arm near the shoulder tearing my coat sleeve half off and hurting my arm so that it is quite lame. A shell burst within six feet of me killing a man instantly but did not hurt me at all It is the first time I ever had a shell burst near enough to endanger me

I feel as if I had not writen much of a letter, but am tired, dirty and ragged. My trunk and bedding are still on board a vessll where they were sent before we left. So I have no clean clothes to put on. I have a dreadful cold and my lips are one sore-throat ditto I feel as if another such a campaign would about finish me. You must write as often as you can. I only got one letter after being gone ten days

Otis

JL077

New-Berne N.C. Dec 22nd 1862

Dear Wife,

I wrote you a letter last night and dont know but it is foolish to attempt to write a particular account of our late Expedition as you will get a better account in the Courant from Mr. Trumbull than I could write if I tried never so hard. But I know you will expect it and value it higher than a better account from some other scource.

We left our camp at sunrise on the morning of the 11th inst. and soon took our position in the Column We did not get fairly under way till nearly noon being detained by the artillery and baggage. Our column which including the baggage train was twelve miles long The roads were bad so that the Artillery and baggage could proceed but slowly halting every few moments for them [to] fix a bad place in the road. But we made fifteen miles that afternoon. It was a sight to remember a life time to see our bivouac at night. We usually halted on a large plantation, forming alternate lines of Artillery Infantry and baggage wagons. The advanced regiments would begin to bivouac before dark but the last would not arrive till nine or ten O,Clock. As soon as a regiment halted the men commenced collecting rails from the fences and building fires. And by the time our regiment came in it looked like a great City. thousands of fires were glowing in the dark winter night and a mooving mass of humanity filled the whole plain. If you could only have seen us on these occasions I should have felt half paid for the exposure labor and fatigue we had to undergo. You would have seen pompious Field Officers sitting cross legged in the dirt munching a piece of hard bread which they held in one hand, while with the other they tended with the greatest solicitude a little tin cup in which they were trying to make a few swallows of smoky tea or coffee or perhaps roasting a bit of meat on a stick their hands a[nd] faces so black with smoke from the pine rails that their best friends would not have known them. It was every man for himself; and one who would not cook his supper must go without it. We all had servants with us but it was all they could do to take care of our horses and look up something for them to eat. One camp was just like another we had of course to sleep on the ground in the open air, with nothing but our blankets over us.

The second day of the march we got started about 8 in the morning and had not marched more than half a mile before we found the road obstructed by large trees which had been felled the night before for a long distance. Our pioneers soon cleared the road and we marched on halting from time to time for the Artillery to cross bad places in the road. Our advance guard of Cavalry had slight skirmishes during the day killing and wounding some rebels and taking some prisoner. We made about 18 miles and bivouacked on an immense plantation - Started in good season though the men had no breakfast whatever, they had eaten all they took in their hauversacks and our baggage and supplies were four miles in the rear. We marched till nearly noon when we came up to the eney in a very strong position but in no great force We formed in order of battle expecting a fight but did not have one. Our Cavalry took a road which turned their flank and compelled them to retire leaving a piece of Artillery in our hands. they had torn up a bridge which we had to replace before we could proceed. We arrived at this place about noon but the men complained so much about not having anything to eat that Foster concluded to remain till the next morning. The supply train did not come up till sundown. We then gave the men two days rations in their Haversacks and it being so late remained there over night. The next morning was sunday and we got away in good season, but had not marched more than two miles before we heard the roar of

cannon in front. Our advance was some miles ahead and we marched more than an hour before we came up. When within about a mile of the place where our Artillery was posted, we were halted and remained some time the Artillery fire was kept up with occasional volleys of musketry for some time but no progress seemed to be made though there was no less than ten Regiments of Infantry and a large force of artillery ahead. Soon an Aid-de-Camp came back with orders for the 10th to advance, we were taken from our position in column and marched past several other regiments till we came up to Gen Foster who was waiting for us. He halted us and said to Col Leggett, "I want you to go through that swamp and drive the rebels out. you will find three regiments in there lying down, if they wont advance march right over them." We went through the swamp, the briars so thick it seemed as if a pig could not get through I had on a pair of Cavalry boots which came up to my knees but went over them in water filling them full but finally got through. We found the three regiments lying down in the swamp as the Gen. said we should and went right over them. The swamp terminated in a little knoll covered with a few small trees and scrub oak bushes, beyond this was a long hollow at one end of it an old church. The rebels had possession of the church and formed a line from that through the hollow, which was so situated that we could [not] see them till close upon them. As soon as our heads appeared above the knoll they opened a most terrific fire upon us. We returned with a will for about twenty ["ten" written in pencil above the word "twenty"] minutes, when the rebels began to retire short as the time was we had lost over eighty men killed and wounded. As soon as the rebels commenced retreating we fixed bayonets and started after them at a run. They broke and run for the bridge as we came down on them and commenced pouring across it setting it on fire at the same time. Seeing them likely to escape we opened fire on the bridge which together with the fire of the burning bridge stopped them they threw their guns into the fire and turning back run down under the bank to escape our shots. when we came up they surrendered. But those who had got across formed under the bank on the opposite side and opened fire on us across the stream to prevent us putting out the burning bridge. We soon drove them back however and with the assistance of the men and pails from Jenny's N.Y. Battery which arrived about ten minutes after we did we put out the fire and crossed over taking a good many prisoners on the other side. We lost two officers and eight men at the bridge. It was by far the sharpest fight I was ever in while it lasted. Our regiment opposed to three rebel regiments, two of them South Carolinians many of the prisoners we took were South Carolina troops who said they were never whipped before. The three regiments we fought were commanded by Col Mallett whom we wounded and took prisoner at the bridge. I found him on the ground exposed to the fire of both parties and ordered two of the prisoners and two of our own men to take him into a house near by. I have his sword and revolver which I shall send home the first opportunity. As I told you before we suffered terribly losing nearly a third of our regiment. In the woods where we first met the enemy we lost between Eighty and Ninety killed and wounded. Capt Wells killed Lieut Hill whose picture I sent you also killed Lieuts Tomlinson and Simms wounded severely Col Liggett and myself slightly. At the bridge Lieut Perkins (cousin to Arthur Cheney's wife) killed and Lieut Coffing badly wounded losing his right leg. and ten or twelve men killed or wounded. Our entire loss in killed and wounded was just One Hundred out of 366 we took into the action. The other regiments all cheered us wherever we passed after the fight was over and General Foster made us a speech praising us in the highest terms. Our regiment won more praise and more honor that day than during the whole war before. But it cost us dear and we cannot afford to win honors at such a price. The officers we lost were the very flower of the regiment and can hardly be replaced. but it is the fate of war and if I could see that these sacrifices were doing anything towards terminating the struggle I should feel reconciled to it. But to lose such friends and Officers as Hill, Coffing, and Perkins and the gallant soldiers we left in bloody graves at Kingston and see no progress

made towards terminating the war is too much I begin to doubt whether so corrupt a government as we are fighting for is worth the sacrifice.

But I am running wild from my story and will proceed with it after giving you Gen. Foster's remarks to us. As he was passing down the lines after the fight was over he reined up his horse in front of us and taking off his hat said "I cannot pass this noble regiment without stopping to give them my heartiest thanks for the manner in which you have stood by me from the first, and today you have proved yourselves worthy of being called "the bravest of the brave" Stand by me in the future as you have done in the past and I will sweep the whole state. God bless the Connecticut"-

We then marched through the City of Kingsto[n] and bivouaced in a cornfield on the opposite side where we remained till morning. The Rebels had formed a line of battle about a mile beyond the City as if to give us a fight but night coming on they left. They probably had no intention of giving us battle as we captured all their Artillery at the bridge. but they meant to make a show that would delay us till dark and they succeeded. In the morning we recrossed the River and took up our line of march toward a place called White-Hall- higher up the stream. I do not remember how far we marched that day but we bivouaced as usual on a large plantation and started in good season the next morning. We had not got more than a mile from our bivouac before our Artillery again opened in advance The Infantry pressed on as fast as possible but had to halt every few minutes for ambulance and baggage wagons to get out of the way; when about a mile from White-Hall Gen Foster's orderly came back and said to Col Leggett "They are waiting for the tenth to come up and clear the way. I could see that the men thought it hard to be put forward again after the terrible fight we had had the day but one before, while there was a dozen regiments with us that had not been engaged at all, but they set their teeth together and pressed on. Here as at Kingston there was a bridge across the Neuse River, but in this case the village (a very small one) was on one side of the River. The rebels had retired to the other side and burned the bridge, so there was no chance for us to get together but our whole force of Ten Thousand men and over 40 pieces of Artillery was drawn up as if for a battle, exchanging shots with the enemy across the River. We were ordered to move down to the bank above the bridge and engage the enemy on the opposite bank. But for once we were in luck, there was no one opposite us to respond so we remained there with nothing to do but look on, getting tired of remaining idle we decided to fall some trees into the river and try to cross on them We called for volunteers to swim over and four men immediately responded. they swam the river with axes strapped to their backs and commenced falling trees into the stream. At the same time we set our pioneers to work chopping on our side. but before we could get the bridge done we had orders to withdraw Gen. Foster saying he did not wish to cross at that place. Our regiment lost no men at White Hall. We left the rebels to themselves as we could not get at them and continued our march to-wards Goldsboro. After marching several miles we bivouaced for the night within about six miles of the R.R. bridge over the Neuse River which we were told was the object of our expedition to destroy. We got away in good season next morning but had not marched many miles before our ears were again greeted by the sound of canon in front. which soon became mingled with the sharp rattle of musketry. We continued steadily on till we came out of the woods on a large plantation. The bridge was not more than half a mile distant but was so covered by the dense forest along the River bank that we could not see it. Between us and the bridge was a low open plain through which run the Rail Road and on, which our Artillery amounting to more than 40 pieces was in position supported by some 16 regiments of Infantry. Our own Brigade was not advanced into the plain but took position on the high ground in the rear where we could see everything that was going on below us. The small Rebel force on our side of the bridge had been driven back before our brigade arrived. but they had Artillery posted on the opposite side of the river from which they kept up a continuous fire But we succeeded in driving them back till

we set fire to the bridge and then commenced tearing up the track, distroying a long piece and besides burning the bridge, burned about half a mile of trestle work through a swamp. As soon as the bridge was fairly burned we begun to withdraw expecting to make a good piece on the road back that night. We had not got far on the road before we heard the rapid fire of Artillery in the rear; and though the firing was kept up we were not halted for some time. It was nearly sundown when an Orderly came back with orders for us to halt. Things looked rather serious; there was two Birgade in our rear with a strong force of artillery. but it seems they did not feel strong enough to meet the force coming against them. After waiting a short time we had orders to counter-march and back we went expecting a big fight and no mistake We marched back about a mile and a half and formed a line in the woods to support a battery which had taken position to protect our rear; but we had no fighting and soon recommenced our retreat which we continued till after ten O Clock when we arrived on the same ground we occupied the night before and bivouaced for the night.

The alarm in our rear was occasioned by a sharp attact from the rebels. After most of our forces had withdrawn leaving only Morrison's battery and a regiment or two of Infantry to cover our retreat The rebels who had been reinforced by the arrival of a Brigade and battery thought that they might do something. They crossed a common road bridge (which by some oversight we had neglected to distroy) and made a determined attact on Morrisons battery trying to get possession of it Morrison opened on them at 300 yards with grape and canister cutting them down like grass. They did not renew the attempt and night coming on we withdrew. As I said before we marched several miles that night the forest had been set on fire by straglers from our army and was all a blaze on both sides of the road which made our night march more cheerful than it would have been in the dark. Our experience in returning was about the same as on our march out except that we had no fighting to do We arrived at New Bern late saturday night just ten days from the time we started marching the last day 28 miles, It was very hard on the men though the weather was very fine for this season of the year. We had no rain but some of the time the weather was very cold, one night it froze as fast as ever I knew it to at home. While getting supper the water in the pail would freeze over every five minutes and most of the nights it was so cold I could not sleep much. When I first laid down I could get to sleep but in the course of three or four hours would get so cold I could not sleep and have to get up and sit by the fire till morning Two nights I did not get ready to lie down till One O Clock and had to get up at four. The men all had blistered feet and many of them threw away their shoes marching in their stocking feet or barefoot for four or five days There are no bridges over small streams here and several times a day the men would have to go through the water up to their knees with no opertunity to dry themselves till night. It would have made the hearts of their friends at home bleed to see the poor fellows limping along wet ragged and hungry marching all day and sleeping on the ground at night I had my horse and rode most of the time. but those who rode did not stand it much better than the others I never was nearer used up in my life than when I got back to to New-Berne I had spent 9 or 10 hours per day in the saddle for 10 days, and it would have been a relief to walk but my feet were so sore I could not. I cannot write any more on this subject now but may resume it.

Tell Phil I had no thought of slighting him and will send him something the first opertunity. Papa does not mean to be partial but does not always rember which he sent to last. The mail closes soon, and I have a letter to write to the sister of my poor friend Hill. Good night.

Otis

New Berne N.C. Dec 27th 1862

Dear Wife.

I am going to write a letter to night though I am not at all indebted to you on that score having written three within a week, one of them would make six ordinary letters at least I have enough to do that ought to be done at once in the way of writing. My position imposes the duty of taking care of the effects of all deceased officers, and I have been busy about it for three days past, and sent off the effects of Lieuts Hill and Perkins yesterday. I ought to write to their friends to night but cannot, - I dont feel a bit like it - It is saturday night (just a week since we got back from Goldsboro) a soft warm rain is falling and warm enough for comfort without a fire. Whether it is the weather that makes me feel so stupid or whether I ate too much Connecticut cake for supper I dont know but I am stupid and it is hard work to write, but I must do something to keep from thinking about and getting blue over our national affairs. - I dont know what can be done to help us. We want generals We have already "boxed the compass" and not found one fit to command an army. We have the best of soldiers but they are becoming demoralized from want of confidence in their leaders We are not surprised here at Burnside's defeat, those who knew him best never believed he had capacity to command so large an army as that of the Potomac. McClellan is the only man who has displayed any real Generalship, and he ruined a splendid army learning what little he knows. His removal was very bad policy and I think he will have to be replaced. I was never much of a McClellan man and think of him now just what I always did, but comparing him with others who have tried their hands at commanding the Army of the Potomac he is far superior to any of them. Banks has the best head of any of them, but instead of keeping him where he can be made useful he is sent off to Texas, or the Lord knows where , When will the Administration learn that cutting off a snake's tail does not kill him In sending off these expeditions the Administration is frittering away the time and means necessary to finish the war. The rebels can of course defeat these small armies in detail when combined they could not make head against them a week; And our Generals all commit the same blunder over and over again. Give one of our generals the command three Divisions and he is sure to send them against the enemy one at a time, never thinking of sending in a second till the enemy had thoroughly defeated the first and has nothing to do but to attend to the others. Just as Foster done at Kinston. We have never had so fair a chance at them during our North Carolina campaign as we had there. They were in a large open space between the woods and the river the only advantage they had of us was holding a long ridge behind which they could shelter themselves from our fire. This position was flanked by an old church which they occupied and from which they could pick us off at leisure as we approached. But there was a plenty of room for Foster to have attacked them with ten regiments at a time and driving them out in five minutes but instead of that he sent in one at a time waiting for one to be driven back before he sent in another, so the rebels had but one regiment to contend with when they ought to have had a dozen. He finally sent in his best regiment (the 10th) which drove them out but at a terrible cost. I believe it might have been done and not lost Fifty men from the whole division. It is just the way everything has been managed on our side from the commencement of the war. A few thousand men attack the rebels in a chosen position while twice their number look on with their hands in their pockets. I dont believe we have a general in the field capable of commanding an army of Fifty Thousand men. And some of them are not fit to command a company, Well, it is no use growling, we are in for it and must "do as we done" as they say in Scotland, but one thing I know something must be done soon for the time of the "Nine months" men is more than half expired four months more will about end their term of service and then there goes Three Hundred Thousand of our army in a day. But it will

not be much loss except in the moral effect, they only add to the number without adding to the strength of the army. Their time is so near out that they seem to think that by shirking a few months they will get rid of fighting entirely. So whenever we are on a march they have more straglers than they have men in the ranks, except one the 44th Mass which is the only nine months regiment that is worth much in this department

Otis

[written at the top of the page] Lieut Coffing who lost his right leg at Kinston bridge died yesterday, making four officer dead and two badly wounded in that fight.

[On the back of this sheet is a sketch of the battlefield (Kinston)] This rough sketch will give you some idea of the battle field. It does not show the position of our Artillery which was so far back on the road there is not room on the paper to show it. In my next I will send a better sketch.

JL078x

In your last you speak of Phil Hudson and what his father thinks him I did not mean to say one word about it, but will say it to you, on a seprate sheet of paper so that you can burn it, if you think best At the battle of Kinston Phil went through the swamp with his company and remained with them for a short time after they came under fire. He did not bring them up to the line well but let them fall considerably behinde it. You will notice that the loss of that company was less than any other. though it is the largest company in the regiment. it is because they were not brought up on a line with the rest, When we left the cover of the bushes and charged on the rebels, Hudson stayed behind I did not miss him till we got to the bridge. When the left of the regiment getting into slight disorder under a fire from the oposite bank. I went there to get them into line and missed him. I found only about a dozen of his men there (out of over 40) under the command of his orderly sergeant H.H.Lincoln. I asked Lincoln where H. was he said he did not know. I then said where is the rest of the company. Lincoln replied I cannot make the men come when the captain stays behinde Just then the order was given to cease fireng but I did not hear it and the left wing which was under my command kept up the fire. Col Leggett seeing the fring kept up on the left came down to tell me that the enemy had a white flag up (which I had not observed) he also missed Hudson and asked for him at the same time telling Lincoln to keep command of the company. After the fight was all over at the bridge and we had commenced putting out the fire Hudson came down bringing about thirty of his men with him. Leggett asked him where he had been. he said he had been getting his men together Leggett told him it was a poor time to pick up straglers while making a bayonet charge. Some wounded men who were going back say they saw Hudson some way back on the road so he must have run back when we charged. At White-Hall we were not actually engaged so he had no chance to show the white feather. When our rear-guard was attact at Goldsboro Bridge, our brigade was ordered back and we all expected a hard fight. We marched back a mile and a half, and then formed in line of battle to cover the retreat of our rear guard by the time we were in position it was pretty dark I went down the line in front looking sharp to see that everything was right. as I came to the left I again missed Hudson. Just then Henry Barrows said "Here we are Major, about a dozen of us and no captain at that." I said I am sorry to see this of my old company. one of them said what can you expect when the captain deserts us. I asked Lincoln where H was he said he had not seen him since we commenced our counter march. I afterwards learned that he kept on to the rear leaving us to go back and fight it out. I know "it was a time to try mens souls" We had been marching and fighting all day and after accomplishing our object had got three

miles on our return. when the rebels came out and attack us. the fact that they dared come out and attack us showed that they were in force. We were tired wet and hungry. As we returned toward the bridge there was a continuous roar of cannon in front of us which we were gradually approaching. Mingled with occasional volleys of musketry. It was so dark we could not distinguish friend from foe except by signal rockets. But it was no worse for H. than the rest of us and the men responded nobly going back at a tremendous rate and looking as if they meant to fight it out. When H. joined us that night he had [a] good story about not knowing that we were ordered back, but no one believed it of course Col Leggett talked with me about it. He said Hudson had received the finest company in the regiment, and he considered it his duty to have him court martialed for ***cowardice***. There the matter dropped till to-day when the Col called me into his tent and said that the story had got round to Hoffmans ears. Hoffman sent for Leggett and told him it was talked of all about the City that he ought in justice to the regiment have a stop put to the stories or have Hudson tried The Col did not tell him whether the stories were true or not but said he could not stop people's talk folks would say what they pleased The Col then told me that his mind was fully made up on the march to have Hudson put under arrest as soon as we arrived in camp and prefer charges against him at once but finding Hudson's wife here, he thought it would about kill her if he done it at the time still it must be done. I agreed with him that it would be only justice to him but would break the heart of his wife and parent I thought it would be better to give him a chance to resign. the Col said he thought he would make out the charges against him and then show them to him and give him a chance to get out of it by resigning. I think he may consider himself fortunate to get off so. Hudson's conduct is known and talked of by every officer and private in the regiment and I have no doubt it will reach home some way but you have the story just as it is and can burn or save it just as you please I am not afraid to trust your judgement about it. I hope the story will never get back to Manchester but am afraid it will. I owe Hudson no good will but I wish him no harm and would rather sacrifice a good deal than have people at home hear of his conduct. He was hated most cordially by most of the Officers before and now they despise him. And yet he might have been one of the best of Officers. Had he remained in the regiment and behaved like a man he would have been Colonel of the regiment now. I shall have to admit that for once meanness has not prospered. There, I have written another long letter and don't know as you can read it if you want to, and don't know as you care enough about Hudson to spell out such a scrawl but I can't help it now. But let me say one thing before I forget it, And I am proud that I can say it. Hudson is the only Officer now in the regiment against whom there has ever been a whisper of suspicion as to his courage. I hope you got my long letter for I used up all my spare time on it for days-Hope you have not sent me any money we are to be paid of money for two months which will leave two months more due. My coat has not come yet-Hope it will soon for I need it much. good night,

Otis --

THERE IS A GAP HERE FROM DECEMBER 27, 1862 TO NOVEMBER 11, 1863.

The following letter, written during that period, was found by searching Google for "John Lord Otis", and purchased online by John Merritt and Charlotte Otis.

Port Royal March 8th, 1863Transcription:

Dear Wife,

A mail arrived three or four days ago by which I received your two letters of the 10th & 16th of Feb, directed to New Berne. I do not know when a mail is to leave, but Samuel Howlett and Milton Russell are here and I shall send the letter by one of them. In one of your letters you inquire about how we are situated here and also whether I am Colonel of the regiment. Both questions I have answered before they were asked and you have most likely got the letter. Do not encourage the Irish woman much about the body of her husband being sent home, for it is very doubtful whether I can do it. Still I will do it if possible.

Tell the children I glad to hear that they have pleasant dreams about papa. A pleasant dream is a bright spot in a soldier's life, so well as a child's. When I was a boy I used to tell my dreams before breakfast because I was told that was the way to have them come to pass. I can't say that telling them ever produced that result, but they can try the experiment.

Burton is as well as usual, it is strange how such reports get in circulation. About that tree at the Athenaeum. I helped the chaplain get it myself and was at the trouble of getting down to New Berne. It was cut from a grove of small trees, where our regiment fought at Kinston. When you see it you will wonder that a single one of us even came out of the grove alive.

It had not been sent away three days before we left New Berne and I did not know that it was in Hartford. Most of the trees in the grove were marked nearly as bad as that. Harry and Phil must be getting on fast to wear suspenders but I had us idea I had an old over coat that was worth making over, but am pleased to think so far if treasury notes depreciate as fast as they have done for a few months past, my pay will not half support us six months from now. However, I hope things will brighten up before long, but must confess I don't see much prospect of it. It begins to look now as if the expedition against Charleston was going to fall through. One of the monitors came near being destroyed down at Ogceehee last week by a shell from a mortar, which nearly went through her deck. It is said now that they have got to send to New York and get more iron plating to put on their deck before they will be safe from mortars. If that is the case, Charleston will not be attacked at present. I am going to board Capt. Worden's monitor this afternoon to see the effect of the shots on her. Hudson talks of resigning and I hope he will. He is ruining his company as fast as possible. Complaints come to me about him every day and I shall have to notice them before long.

Now to furnish up my rambling letter. I want something as usual. I can get no shirts here without paying about eight dollars a pair for them and they don't suit me at that. I wish you to get some of the cloth such as we have our shirts made of. I don't know what they call it. Select the color to suit yourself and make me about three. Make them the same size you used to my white ones. Make them without collars of course and sew on the buttons so that they never can be got off. Those stockings you sent me last are the best I ever had, they wear remarkably.

You will think it extravagant to write on gilt edged papers and I don't know that I ever used any before in my life, but I could get no others that was decent and had to look half a day to find this. There are no stores or sutler establishments on the Island, and it is five miles over to Hilton Head by water. When you get there you find a long street called "Robbers Row" containing about twenty stores kept by sutlers of the different regiments. The name of the street is sufficiently significant. I will say nothing about prices. There are several vessels in the harbor having goods aboard, and we sometimes go out to them in boats. I had sent to every store in Robbers Row for paper collars and good writing paper but could get neither, so I took a boat and started out. After visiting three vessels I found one where I got both articles paying five dollars per hundred for the collars and two and a half for just such a package of paper and I paid Huntington a dollar for. Well, Milton is waiting for the letter and Dr. Newton is waiting for me to go with him so good morning.

Otis

JL079

St. Helena Island S.C.

March 11th 1863

Dear Wife

I sent you a letter by Milton Roussell. and Capt White being here will send a short note by him. I have no time to write, but know you will expect a note I rode up the Island yesterday and visited an orange plantation. The trees were not in blossom but I picked some buds which I send you.

My new Commission came yesterday, so I am Col. of the regiment. I am pleased to be promoted of course, but did not covet the position. I will write you some more things I want as soon as I get back to New Berne. save the shirts till I write for [them] What letters you write at present direct to. Col. John L. Otis 10th C/V. Port Royal S.C.

If you see by the papers that we are sent back to New Berne direct there. I have not time to write more so good morning.

(I have not had breakfast yet)

Otis

JL080

Seabrook Island S.C.

March 29th 1863

Dear Wife.

We are on an Island you probably never heard of before and would be very glad to know how we got here. Last thursday night about 10 O,Clock I was notified that my regiment would be ordered on board transports at early dawn the next morning. I laid down with my clothes on about half past ten but as I had to be up at half past two did not get much sleep. We were up most of the night and had everything packed ready to start before light. We got aboard the steamer Cawhawba but finally did not sail till friday morning. at sunrise. We reached Edisto Inlet a little after noon. My instructions from Gen. Stevenson were to land as soon as possible and as soon as my regiment was formed to push on up the Island, which was said to be only a mile and a half long, and if I found any rebels to drive them before us off the Island. We had three regiments in all but I was not to wait for the others. We landed from small boats which could not get very near the shore. As soon as they grounded we jumped out. I went in up to my waist and most of the men quite as deep. As soon as formed I had the men pile up their knapsacks on the beach. And sending the Manchester company (now commanded by Capt Atherton) forward as skirmishers pushed on as fast as possible. There was quite a respectable road up the Island but there was such a dense growth of underbrush and briars that it was terrible work for the skirmishers. The Island was more extensive than we supposed and it was night before we got out of the woods. Of course it was difficult as well as dangerous to advance in the night but Gen Stevenson as well as the Engineer Officers who accompanied us thought we must reach the upper end of the Island that night for fear the rebels would concentrate force enough to stop us the next day, so we continued our march about an hour after dark we reached a large plantation extending entirely across the Island. We had a negro guide who said he was born on the Island and knew all about it Events proved afterwards that we should have been better off without him. He told us that the plantation buildings were right before us and just beyond them a causeway leading to the next Island. I sent four companies forward under Lt. Col Leggett. He deployed one company as skirmishers and advanced across

the plantation. Soon after he sent a man back saying that he had found the caseway I had the regiment stack arms and in company with Capt. Atherton went forward to examine the ground. We found the house to be one of the largest and finest we had seen with fine negro quarters for at least two hundred slaves, the grounds were finely laid out and filled with orange trees and shrubbery. The place had every appearance of having been deserted for a year though there was considerable good furniture and quite a large number of books. After examining the grounds about the house I visited the outposts and started back for the regiment. I had got into the back yard of the house and was walking leasurly along toward the front. when I heard the sharp report of a pistol immediately in front. I supposed it to be an accidental discharge of one of our own guns and remarked to Capt. Atherton. that there was nothing I so much disliked as the accidental discharge of firearms. We walked directly towards the place but had proceeded only a few steps when four or five more discharges came in rapid succession at the same time some one called out "hold my horse. hold my horse" I knew we had no horses with us and they must be rebels. I got out my revolver and started forward as fast as possible. I was a quarter of a mile from the regiment and some of the enemies cavalry between us, but all inside our own out posts. The firing continued and I had got close to the place. when the firing suddenly ceased and everything looked so dark that I could distinguish nothing the shrubbery was quite thick and it was hard to distinguish objects. We found two of our men wounded on the ground but no one could tell where the enemy came from or which way they went. The took away one prisoner with them. Segt Park of Co. F. We examined the ground in every direction but could finde nothing. our skirmishers had passed over the ground half an hour before and I had passed over the spot myself within ten minutes and seen nothing. In three minutes more I should have been on the same spot again. I only wish we had been for Atherton and myself were both well armed and should have been sure to stop some of them. The men when they shot were entirely unarmed having stacked their guns and gone to the house to look for water. After having the wounded men taken care of and posting a strong guard around the house. I went back to the regment. and rolling myself in a blanket laid down in a furrow and though wet to the skin to above my waste was asleep in two minutes. I got up as soon as dawn and went forward to see where the rebels came from and where they went to. I found that there was another caseway of the Island away to our right which the darky guide said nothing about. He had told us that the caseway we were guarding was the only one which lead off the Island. Had we got there in the daytime we should have examined the ground and know all about it. I must stop now as the vessell leaves soon in my next I will give you some more interesting particulers of our experiance here. with a little sketch of the Island.

Otis

JL081

Seabrook Island S.C.

April 2nd 1863

Dear Wife,

I wrote you a hasty note a few days ago detailing some of our experiance here, but I doubt if you could read it after you got it. I was so tired wet and sleepy I hardly knew what I wrote. I think I left off with telling you of the capture [of] one man from the regiment and wounding of two more. The next morning the General decided that the position we held was untenable and decided to take two regiments back to the landing place leaving one there on picket duty. As my regiment had been in advance the day before and done the picket duty through the night having no knapsacks or blankets with

them, I was to return. Also the 56th N.Y. leaving the 24th Mass on picket. We started back for the landing place about 9 O Clock, it had been raining hard for an hour, and continued without cessation. I never knew it rain harder. We were over an hour marching back and if we had swam the Connecticut River we could not have been more thoroughly soaked. My Over coat must have weighed twenty five pounds at least. After we got to the landing we had to get tents ashore for the officers, who had to stand out in the rain till about two in the afternoon. the men had their little shelter tents with them and soon had them up. About the time I got a tent pitched for myself the winde had got into the North East and was blowing like fury. and wet as we were it seemed to go through us. The gale continued through the night. I went to bed early but my clothes and blankets were thoroughly wet and it took me a good while to get warm. I slept pretty well though but was still wet when I got up in the morning. The winde still blew strong and cold from the N.E. but the General wished to reconnoitre the Island and desired me to accompany him & Col Leggett. Capt Clark of the 24th and Capt McFarland of the U.S.Engineers composed the party. We went up to the plantation where we bivouaced the night before (It belongs to George Washington Seabrook) and then to the outpost nearest the enemies' lines. Col Leggett and myself going some distance beyound. After examining the country with our glasses we walked back toward the house, and were just entering the yard when we heard a loud report. I turned back and took a look but could see nothing and concluded it was the slamming of a door among the buildings but soon after messengers come in from both the outposts where we had been and said that the rebels came down in front of a house beyound with a pies of Artillery and blaced away at us. that they saw them distintly. The rebels probably knew by our dress and the manner in which we examined the position with f. Glasses that we were officers and thought to scare us off. or like enough get a shot among us. There is a beautiful little village about two miles from our Camp, called "Rockville". It is on Wandelaw Island and has a broad marsh and deep creek in front. There must be some twenty five houses with a store or two and church. It is deserted by the inhabitants but occupied by rebels. in what force we dont know. They keep very close so that for two days we had seen no one. Some of us wanted to take a boat and go over but the General said no so we determined to go as near as possible without a boat. Day before yesterday myself Col Leggett Dr Newton Major Greeley Chaplain Trumbull & Adjutant Camp started out. By taking a circuitous rout we got over most of the marsh to within about a thousand yards of it. and could get no farther. But were so near we could see the tassels of the window curtains with our glasses. We got nothing for our pains however but seeing three rebel soldiers watching us from the village. - Got back to camp at sundown about as lame and tired as we could well be. The next day (yesterday) we had a still more exciting experience. I was in bed about seven in the morning so lame and sore that I could hardly turn over, and trying to make up my minde whether to get up or lie abed all day when some body come to the door. I called come in and Gen. Stevenson made his appearance, considerably excited. He said the rebels were coming down on us in force. they were already on the Island with Artillery Infantry and Cavalry. and were shelling our pickets out of the woods. I forgot all about being lame in a moment and in about ten minutes had the regiment under arms waiting orders. We had no fighting to do however and after standing in line two or three hours returned to camp. The affair was about as follows. The rebels had seen a company of men and a good many officers around the plantation house I spoke of that we occupied the first night and probably thought that by a rapid move they might catch them. We had withdrawn our pickets from the house the evening before but they did not know it. As soon as light they posted some Artillery about a mile from the house on the oposite side of a small creek and after throwing a few shells at the house threw out two regiments of Infantry and a strong force of Cavalry from behinde some large buildings and came down at a double quick sourrounding the house at once and sending cavalry

skirmishers towards the wood where our boys lay waiting for them. but they did not come within range and we having no cavalry or artillery could not advance to attack them. so after waiting a while and seeing no one they withdrew the way they came. We have seen nothing of them since. but they are near us in strong force and will doubtless give us some trouble. Tomorrow I go on picket with my whole regiment if the[y] come down while we are out we shall give a good account of them. The fleet for the attack on Charleston is collecting quite rapidly there are eight monitors here now and more expected. A naval officer told me yesterday that he expected the attack would commence on the 4th which will be the day after to-morrow. I suppose the fighting will be done mostly by the Navy as there is not land force enough here to do much. I am glad it is so for we have no officers who in my opinion are fit to command an important Expedition by land. I have less and less confidence in the officers of this department every day and the more I see of them the better opinion I have of Foster. He is infinitely superior to any officer I have met since I entered the service and I cannot but regret that he has not the command of this expedition. I have no time to write more now so good night

Otis

[Sketch of the island should be inserted here]

JL082A

Seabrook Island S.C.

April 8th 1863

My Dear little Boys.

I have not heard from home for a long time past, but we got a mail last night by the way of New-Berne, in which I got a letter from Mama dated the 17th of march. There is another mail due via Port Royal, which we hoped to get to-morrow. Mother says you do not like my letters because they have so much politics but I have written two since I came here which you will no doubt like better. I did intend to write Phil a letter on his birthday but being away up the Island on picket Duty I had no paper and so could not write. We are still on picket but I begged this sheet of paper of the chaplain, and he borrowed the ink of somebody for me.

I believe I did not write you much about St. Helena Island while there for the very good reason that there was nothing to write about. but there are some things there you would be glad to see and I wish you could see them. Perhaps you never saw the real jessamine in blossom. I am sure I never did till I saw it on St. Helena Island. It completely covers the trees and bushes in the woods, its' slender vines making such a network that it was almost impossible to get through it and its clusters of bright yellow blossoms covered everything. and their fragrance loaded the whole atmosphere. They grow here too but not so plenty as there they are hanging on the trees now over my tent mingled with the long grey moss. But we had other and more disagreeable neighbors there. directly in the rear of my tent was a small pond of water inhabited by lots of snakes. The men killed three water moccasins there in two days one of them was about the largest snake I had seen. they are as poison as Rattle snakes having teeth just like them the pond was not farther from my tent than across the road in front of our house. We had King snakes too but never killed them as they do not bite people and always attack Rattle snakes and moccasins where ever they meet them and are sure to kill them. The King snake is very handsome being black and white. There is the "Copper-head" too a very poisonous reptile quite common here and still more so at home. They are quite different in appearance, however, the Kinde you have there being a good deal larger and walk on two legs like men. they are much more dangerous too. for they not

only poison all they bite but poison the "body politic" and demoralize public sentiment but you dont understand about that yet, and I am running into politic again. Then as to snakes again there was the "glass snake" as the darkies called it. the handsomest snake I ever saw, it looked like speckled glass and if you struck it hard with a stick it broke in pieces. The darkies said that if you left it the pieces would come to-gether and Mr snake walk off as good as new. but I didn't quite believe that. I caught one and Dr. Newton preserved it in alcohol But the queerest customer of all was an alligator that lived in our camp four weeks before we found him. One day a sentinel of the guard came to the tent and said there was an alligator close to his post inside the lines. he wanted permission to shoot him. I was not in but Col. Leggett gave him permission and he went back and shot him. Mr. Alligator was over six feet long with a mouth like an oven and monstrous sharp teeth. There is one about ten feet long in a swamp near our camp now but I am afraid we shant catch him. but the worst pests of all are those little mites of gnats that bite Mother and Harry so bad. They are so thick that sometimes we could not have Dress parades they bit us so bad.

Now Harry wants to know what we have to eat. Well, sometimes we dont fare very well. We have hard bread all the time, but I dont like hard bread much though I manage to make it go when we can get butter which we generally can. but are nearly out now and dont know where we shall get any more. The "Field and staff" that is the Col, Lt Col, major, Chaplain Adjutant two surgeons and Quarter-master mess together and our servants do the cooking. We have "salt horse" as the soldiers call it but I never eat any. When we are in a place where it can be procured we get fresh beef about twice a week, and when we have money can buy something good of the sutlers but we are pretty much out of money now, not having been paid for over five months. so we cant buy much. For the last few days we have lived nicely we are on picket about two or three miles from the main body and my pickets on one side extend to the beach. where there are a plenty of clams and oysters, which the pickets dig and send in to us every day. Yesterday I had a present of some fine fish called "sea trout" there was enough of them to make us all three good meals. Yesterday some of the men in Capt Greaves' company caught two fine coons which they dressed nicely and sent in to me. They are being cooked now and we are to have "Raccoon stew" for dinner I dont know what we shall have for dinner to-morrow, but if we succeed in catching the big alligator. think I shall try a small piece of "Alligator steak". There are hundreds of wild ducks here all about us and I could shoot a hundred in an hour, but we do not allow firing among the pickets so the ducks escape. As to sleeping. I sleep on the ground here with my blankets and a little grass. The rebel cavalry come down near our pickets every day but keep just out of shot. On Phil's birth-day. I went out scouting with fifty men and got inside the rebel pickets, but they did not trouble us. We are pretty near neighbors however . -so near that I do not take of my clothes nights at all, but turn in all standing "like a trooper horse" I have not my clothes of for a week. but my regiment will be relieved to-morrow. When on picket I unbuckle my sword and lay it down on the ground then pull off my boots and take them for a pillow. I dont sleep very well at such times. I can sleep the night before a battle well enough, but on picket duty I never sleep well.- The attack on Charleston commenced yesterday. We could hear the roar of the guns here quite plainly. there was but little firing to day and we dont know what to make of it. but shall probably hear soon.

Tell mother that I have no more of the little pictures I was to have had more taken but the weather was so bad the last five days before I left New Berne that they could not do it. I wish you could see our picket camp at night. You dont know much about picket duty so I will try to tell you something about it. You see if we all stayed together at the main camp the rebels could come close to us anytime before we knew anything about it. So we have to send men a good way off to watch and if the[y] see them coming let us know. The different regiments take turns about doing the duty. When it comes our turn

we load our guns take our blankets and march out taking a weeks provisions with us. After marching out two or three miles sometimes much farther. we halt in a good place and have four or five companies stack arms. These companies are called the "reserve" and remain in that position and the "Field Officers" stay with them most of [the] time except when they are watching the outpost to see that everything is done properly. the remainder of the companies are sent out on the different roads and after marching out a proper distance halt and establish their pickets by stationing from three to six men at each place where pickets are wanted. They only send out about half of each company in this way, the balance forming a reserve to go forward and assist the pickets in case they are attack. The picket posts are advanced from a half to three quarters of a mile beyond their company reserves and occupy all the roads and open ground leading back towards the main body. some of my outer pickets are a mile and a half from the reserve, and form a chain of Pickets over four miles long. I visit them nearly all every day and some times in the night. Our main reserve of four companies where I remain most of the time is encamped near the sea shore. The surf is roaring now as I write making a noise like thunder almost. Our tents are in a little opening between two small hills in a grove of magnificent live oaks from whose branches great masses of the long grey Spanish moss sway back and forth in the winde. Palmetto trees are growing all about us and immense bay trees with their crooked branches and shining green leaves are on every side. It is beautiful to look at in the evening and see our camp fires light up the branches of the great oaks and our nice little white tents pitched under them. Groups of soldiers are gathered around the fires talking of friends far away. and sentinels march up and down by the lines of bright muskets flashing in the fire light - It is a beautiful scene to look at - and anybody seen careless and unconcerned. The commander sits in his tent or stands by the fire in front talking with his officers and seems as unconcerned as anyone but if you watch him you will see that while he talks and laughs, he is giving almost painful attention to every sound in the distance. Let a messenger arrive from the outposts or [let] the sound of a few shots be heard - and the whole scene is changed in an instant. The laughing groups of men are changed into long dark lines of silent soldiers. The stacks of glittering arms disappear the fires go out, and the long line of soldiers moves silently away toward the threatened point and are lost in the dark woods. How would you like "Picket duty?" I meant to have written something more but cannot now tell Mama I will write her as soon as we get back to camp - Papa

JL082B

[a separate sheet written in pencil and found in the same envelope - was probably written to capture the scene before he had access to pen and ink, and then later the description was mailed with letter 82A to his boys]

It is a beautiful scene to look at: everybody seems careless and unconcerned: the Commander sits in his tent or stands by the fire in front of it talking and laughing with his officers, and seems as unconcerned as the rest, but if you could watch him closely you would see that while he seems so unconcerned, he is giving almost painful attention to every sound in the distance. Let a few shots be heard at the outposts and the whole scene is changed: the groups of men sitting about the fire instantly become long lines of silent soldiers: the glittering stacks of muskets disappear. the fires go out. the horses of the field and staff are brought forward and everybody stands motionless. If the firing at the outposts continues, the commander gives an order, mounts his horse, and with an officer or two gallops away towards the place where the firing is going on. The soldiers follow rapidly and soon disappear in the dark woods, moving rapidly to the assistance of their comrades whom they soon join and drive the enemy back the movement

amounts to what is called "reconnoiscan[ce] in force. As it often does, some of the poor fellows will never return to the pleasant camp under the trees but will be buried where they fell. While while others will be carried back wounded and suffering. this is picket duty: how would you like it.

JL083

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Seabrook Island S.C.

April 12th 1863

Dear Wife.

We have just recieved a mail and I got two letters from home. You must not expect letters with any regularity at present we have to send when we can as there is no regular mail from this place. I sent off a letter yesterday directed to Phil. but you may not get it for three weeks I have no idea when I can send you money for I know nothing of when we shall be paid. All the troops on St. Helena Island were paid off a few days after we left. but I dont think we should have been paid if we had remain as our "pay rolls were all left at New Berne - Our prospects of return to N.C. are lessening every day. Hunter.or rather Hunters' keeper. Seymour seems determined to keep here. and unless something is done about it at once we are likely to remain here. The Charleston expedition is a failure as we all supposed it would be, and there is no reason why we should stay here any longer. I am going to send an officer to New Berne at once and if we are not ordered back, have him bring us our trunks and baggage at once. but I have some hopes yet of returning, if we can stir up a little Political influence it will be all right. Nothing but such influence is of any use now. it is ruining everything, and I look for a dishonorable peace within three months We are building entrenchments here the first time our boys were ever called on for such work.

You will see by the papers that the "Nigger Regiments" have fulfilled my prediction and run away from Florida without a fight. - they never will fight - and it is useless to expect it.

I have not seen the "resolutions" sent home from our regiment yet so suppose they were too late to do any good.

If you have to spend the silver money I left. sell it for a premium and then use the money After the failure of the Charleston Expedition money must be high or rather Government shin plaster low. which amounts to the same thing.

I cant write much of a letter this morning having a good deal to do and nothing to write about.

I will write again in a day or two. I got out of ink and had to write a part of Phil's letter with pencil but you will most likely be able to read it. Leands' time is nearly out so I suppose he will be home soon. I have had no letter from him for a long time. I have not seen Horsly for nearly three months he was left at New Berne and discharged after we left. You must not complain about letters there is no mail from here and we can do nothing about sending letters except as some one goes to Port Royal we can send by. The man who is to carry this is waiting for it now.

Otis

JL084

Seabrook Island S.C.

May 2nd 1863

Dear Wife.

It has been a longer time than usual since I have written you though I recieved two letters from you by the last mail. But I have been on picket duty with my regiment for a week past and could not write much. You seem to be getting very deep in politics; when I get home I think I shall try it myself and see if I cannot get a living at it. I dont know what Thomas could have read from one of my letters that would interest an audience, but if there was anything that could help the cause of our country I am glad to hear it. It seems there was something at which Hudson feels aggrieved for he for he wrote me about it.

I have a splendid boquet in my tent which I wish I could send you. Two companies of my regiment went over to Edisto Island yesterday, about six miles from here, and visited a splendid plantation belonging to G W. Seabrook, the same man who owns the plantation on this Island. The place has been deserted over a year and about a year ago it was ocupied by some of our troops for a few days. After the battle of James Island they evacuated it. They ruined a large part of the furniture but brought none away. The place has not been visied by any of our people since, till yesterday. Two companies of my regiment with a few officers was all that went over. It is an elegant establishment. And shows evidence of great wealth. The house is surrounded by an extensive grove with beautiful drives running through it. The garden is a perfect paradise of roses and rare flowers. Japonicas, as large as peach trees, immense Oleanders fifteen feet high in bloom splendid Geraniums, roses of every shade from deep crimson to cloth of gold, all growing in the open air and in full bloom. Fountains filled with "gold fish" (I wonder some Yankee has not eaten them) and everything that taste could dictate and wealth purchas was there. There are still three pianoes there (all ruined by our soldiers last year) and a considerable quantity of furniture but most of it injured. Our boys brought away some chairs tables, a desk, a meat safe and various other articles which will be useful to us in camp. I have two chairs and a black walnut center table which must have cost Thirty Dollars, and though it has laid out of doors for the last year it is still a good one. They brough a sofa for Gen Stevenson. A large dining table for our field & staff mess, some wash stands & bed. I sent you some money two weeks ago nearly but I fear it will be a long time of the way, as the Express Steamers have been taken off. The weather is getting quite warm here so that it is uncomfortable during the day. Strawberries are ripe in the gardens of the deserted houses on Edisto Island. Blackberries are very pleanty there and are getting ripe. You would hardly believe what quantities of them grow there. The Col. of a New Hampshire regiment who was there last year told that he had often seen the men bring a tub or bushel basket full after an hours absence. The Chaplain of the same regiment told me that he had himself picked a water pail full in ten minutes. That sounds large but I have no doubt that it is true. You can have no idea of the quantity and size of the berries here till you see them. I suppose you are thinking about gardening by this time and I have no doubt have help enough from the boys. No prospect of our return to New Berne yet and I am getting discouraged. All my clothes are there in my trunk except what I wore away. In that climate trunks will mildew in a week if not taken care of, to say nothing about the risk of being stolen. I left my watch and chain about Twenty Five Dollars in gold and clothing to the amount of at 150 Dollars. The other officers are in the same fix. It is a shame to keep us here in this way. Besides if we had been in North Carolina we should have been able to gain a good deal of glory pretty cheap. I see many of the Officers and regiments are getting great praise for there conduct during the last few weeks though there has been no fighting and nobody hurt. We would like the opertunity of getting a little credit as cheap. We never

got a word of praise from any one without paying dear for it. But I suppose my military career is about run. The late order for consolidating regiments if carried out will be very likely to send me home. My regiment is above the number named in the order but another three months in this Department will reduce it to the prescribed limits. I should never think of resigning while I could be of service, but when the War Department says I am no longer wanted I shall be only too glad to lay aside a harness that I have hardly had off for nearly two years; to look at military affairs as an outsider, and see if I can get such preposterous ideas into my head as others do in that situation. I have considerable regimental business to do to day and shall have to close for the present.

Otis

JL085

Seabrook Island S.C.

May 6th 1863

Dear Wife,

We got a mail yesterday and I had several letters two from you and one from Betsey Wait. As I always answer your letters first I will commence this morning. My time is rather limited as I am president of a Court Martial which takes a good deal of time. We have some important cases to try One for killing a man.

Betsey wants to know if I have ever been in a battle. There is glory for you A man who has been with the 10th regiment constantly since its first organization is asked "has he ever been in battle. and that by one of his personal friends. I had no idea of being able to come home when I wrote you to delay your visit to Northampton. It was merely with reference to your own comfort. You know how uncomfortable it is there in the spring when the frost is coming out of the ground. I shall come home this summer if possible, but whether I shall be able to accomplish it I do not know. I am afraid the boys are getting into politics young, tell them they had better give their attention to gardening this summer and let politics alone. But I shall write them another letter soon though I dont know what I shall finde to write about unless it be politics. As to Hunter and Dupont, I think Hunter an old "Ass" and Dupont a good man. The Monitors are not calculated for such work as they were put to do at Charleston, but Dupont is not to blame for that. Our prospects for getting back to New-Berne are not very flattering.. I made an application to the Adjutant General of the U.S.A. for my regiment to be sent back. Hunter refused to forward the document, though he had no right to do so, at the same time saying that he would allow one of our Officers to go to New-Berne for our horses and baggage. The talk is that we may be sent to Virginia or Tennessee. I hope we may I am not sure but I had about as soon go to either place as back to North Carolina, and I dont know of a plan I had not rather go than stay here. You may as well cut over any of my clothes that you can make over. I have got some at New Berne I wished to send home if I could get them.

I should like the Photographs you speak of well, and your own with them.

Present my compliments to Miss Rich and say I feel greatly obliged for her kindness. You ask what I think of the "League" I have not the time to say much about it, but there is one way in which it may be of some practical benefit; but I fear it is the very last way in which the Ladies will think of making themselves useful. It is for every one who has a lover, son or brother to give them no peace till they join the army and help fill up the ranks of the old regiments that must soon become obliterated without such assistance. Our Chaplain left last Saturday and will call on you with his wife if he has not already done so.

How are the children getting along at school. Can they read much yet? Frank got a letter from home yesterday his mother is dead but you have doubtless heard of it. though I suppose you dont see any of them often I get papers from you nearly every mail. I wrote you so once before but suppose you did not get the letter or have forgotten it. The steamer "Arago" runs regularly from here to New York about once in two weeks staying in New York about four days Whenever you see by the papers that the "Arago" has arrived, mail some papers the next day or the next but one and then I shall get late papers. Mail letters anytime.

It is time for the court to meet and as the mail will leave before adjournment I shall have to close

Otis

JL086

Seabrook Island S.C.

May 14th 1863

My Dear Boys

I did not get a letter from you by the last mail, but got a paper with your names on it which I suppose will have to answer. I dont know how to begin or what to write about unless it is to tell you about a big alligator which I shot a few days ago. You see we were up on picket duty, and the camp of the reserve was close beside a Lagoon of fresh water which was inhabited by lots of Alligators. One day Capt Goodyear came to me and said "There is an immense Alligator out here, Come and look at him." I went out and there he was sure enough, with just his eyes and nose out of water. That is the way they always lie in the water you can see nothing of the body, only a great ugly looking head with eyes like a horse. They lie a long time without moving and you would hardly know what it was if you were not used to them. Then if anything disturbs them they settle down so slowly into the water that you dont see a ripple and hardly know they are moving till they disappear. Well, when I saw this old fellow lying there with the top of his great ugly head just out of the water I could not resist the temptation to have a shot at him. so I took a rifle and getting a good steady aim fired and shot him right through the eyes. He sank like a stone but coming to the top afterwards the men got him ashore, it took two of them to drag him out on to the land. His mouth was large enough to take in a good sized dog whole. The same day one of the men caught a little one about two yards long and brought him in alive. They kept him several days. he was a terrible ugly customer and tried to bite every one who came near him, occasionally some one would get their foot a little too near, and then he would bring his tail around like a flash and knock their foot into his mouth and set his teeth almost through their boots, and would hang on till he was lifted off the ground. After a while Dr. Newton killed and skinned him and is going to have the skin stuffed.

I believe I told you something about our dog that has claimed me for a master lately. He is a great shaggy fellow yellow and white; he seems to be a mixture of Newfoundland and shephard dog. Very large handsome and intelligent; will go in the water to get anything you shoot at, even an Alligator; will shake hand[s] on being introduced and howl at the top of his voice whenever the band plays. This dog came from York Town Va with the 56th N.Y. Reg't but as soon as we came here he left them and stays with us constantly. He will go straight through their camp and never notice them now. It is said that he deserted from the Rebels in Virginia and joined the 56th. Now he has deserted the 56th and joined the 10th I am afraid I shall have to covict him of being fickle minded. He stays with me or Col. Liggett mostly and did sleep under my

bed till the weather got so warm I would not allow it. If he was a young dog I would send him home but he is too old to take that trouble with.

You sent me a paper with a picture of the monitor in it. There [are] five of those monitors here now and has been every since the Charleston affair. They lie in the river close by I have got acquainted with most of the captains, so I go on board of them occasionally. A few days ago it was reported, or rather, it has been reported since we first came here that the rebels had a strong battery a few miles up the River at a place called Bear Bluff, and a few days ago the Naval Officers concluded to go up and shell it out. Two of the monitors, the "Patapsco" Capt Amnon and "Catskill". Capt. Rogers were going up, and I had an invitation from both Captains to go with them. I accepted of course there was nothing I so much wanted as to be on board a vessell in a fight. And a monitor in particular. I wanted to know how it would seem to see a hundred pound shell coming straight at you head and know it could not hurt you. Gen Stevenson and myself were the only Army officers on board. We started about 10 in the forenoon, and steamed slowly up the River there are fine large plantations all the way up on one side, but they are all deserted. About seven miles up we came to the place where the battery was said to be, but there was no battery there, so of course we could have no fight. but they loaded and fired the great guns of the Monitors for our satisfaction sending the shells howling through the woods cutting a perfect swathe of trees. After waiting a while and sending a boat ashore where we weighed anchor and came back arriving in camp about 4 in the afternoon. It was a fine day and I enjoyed it much. But the most interesting part of the days' proceedings was taking a Rebel deserter on board in the morning. He came down to the shore near the "Patapsco" quite early in the morning (before I went on board) and waved a white handkerchief. Capt Amnon sent a boat for him and took him on board the Gun Boat "Sebago" (they would not allow him to go on board a monitor) when he had a strange story to tell. He was an Englishman - had been in the U.S. service but was now Capt of a Gun on board the Rebel iron clad "Chickora" in Charleston Harbor. He belonged to a party of 50. which had come down the Edisto River and were then in Leadenhall Creek 3 miles from us with six boats and six officers three of whom formerly belonged to the U.S. Navy and are well known to the naval officers here, and have come down to blow up our shipping here in the Inlet. On the end of each boat they have a stick of timber 30 feet long and on the end of that a "Torpedo" with 25 Lbs of powder in it fixed so as to go off when it strikes anything. The deserter said they were going to get ready and the next favorable night come down to pay their respects to us. They were each to single out a war vessell and row against it when the "Torpedo" struck against the vessell it would explode and blow a hole in the vessell so it would sink. The deserter showed the place where the party was concealed, but we did not try to get them then thinking we should have a better opportunity at night. So at night the Gun Boats sent up a lot of boats and men to watch for, and catch them. and though they have watched every night since they have not caught them yet. Most likely they got frightened when they found that one of their men had had deserted and went back to Charleston. The deserter told us that Hooker was driven back over the Rappahannock, which was the first we knew of it. He also told us that things were looking quite blue for the rebels at the South West. and that Vicksburg would soon have to surrender unless reinforcements could be sent. As his information has proved correct in everything else we believe the latter statement also. I got a letter from Mother yesterday so I shall have to close yours and write to her. I commenced this three or four days ago, but have been pretty busy and could not finish it. I have got another dog. A little brown Scotch terrier is asleep under my bed he came two days ago and seems a very smart dog though quite lame. I don't know where he came from.

Good afternoon Papa

JL087

Seabrook Island S.C.

May 28th 1863

Dear Wife.

I recieved your letter of May 14th three days ago, and have just set down to answer it; though I cannot learn that there is any mail to leave here for the next week. I recieved a letter from Chaplain Trumbull at the same time in which he speaks of visiting you, but I suppose he did not stop long as neither of you have much to say about it. He says he means to call on you again before he returns. Lt Col. Leggett has not resigned, only gone home on leave of 20 days. The furloughed men, including Willie Lyman and Henry Grey, were sent down to Hilton Head last sunday expecting to go North on the "Arago" on tuesday, but Old Hunter sent them back saying that he expected orders for active operations and could not spare them. But it is all "book" - he expects no such thing. I have since learned pretty certainly that he had orders by the "Arago" to send Foster's troops back to him. But instead of doing so, he sent a fast Steamer North within an hour after the Arago arrived, with one of his Aids aboard to go to Washington with a "Cock & Bull" story about active operations here. And try to get the order recinded. There will be no active operations here I am sure, and Hunter has nothing for half his troops to do. He holds on to us out of personal spite against Foster. I hope to live to be out of the service and have it in my power to pay off some of Hunter's todies. some of them are Connecticut men and I shall not forget them in a hurry.

I believe I did not tell you that I wrote an application to the Adjutant Generall asking him to send my regiment back to New-Berne. Hunter would not allow it to be forwarded but said if I would detail an officer to go, he would furnish a steamer to get our baggage from New-Berne I have not sent anyone yet, and shall not till I see no hope of going back.

You must not be too sanguine about my coming home, it is more than doubtful whether I can get leave. We can make no calculation on Hunter he does a thing one day and undoes it the next - At one time he will grant furloughs to any extent - at another without any reason whatever; he will grant none at all, or revoke those already granted. so no man is sure of anything here till it becomes an accomplished fact. Hunter is a weak vicious, irresolute old man with as little of the soldier in him as any man I ever saw. And yet either because he came from Illinois or because he sets the nigger so much above the white man, he has more influence at Washington than our most successfull soldiers. It is interesting to see the means by which such a man as Hunter contrives through constant failures to keep up his influence with the Government. He keeps constantly on his staff, the sons or other relatives of prominent polititians in large numbers and through this has influence with all the Departments. Hunter has the sons of two senators (one of them Fessenden of Me.) on his staff. Also, Hay who was the Presidents private secretary. So through Hay he gets at Lincoln and through Fessenden at everybody else. The fact that things are managed by such means, and without reference to the good of the country is more discouraging than the worst defeats. A man who like Hunter will keep a large number of men inactive here, where they are of no earthly use, when they are so much needed in other departments; is the worst kinde of a traitor; and the fact that he can do it through political influence shows that we have not only one of the weakest but one of the most corrupt Administrations that ever cursed a nation. There! I think that will do. But it is true every word of it. though I am ashamed to say it.

I saved you an Aligator's tooth and am only waiting for an opertunity to send it home. The men are killing lots of rattle snakes. Day before yesterday Segt Chadwick of

Co. B. killed one out on picket, with thirteen rattles. - he was a monster. the same day a 24th man killed one with eleven and I met another man who had got one with five and was carrying it to camp. Chadwick killed his while visiting the pickets at eleven O Clock at night.

Speaking of Hudson I can have no respect for him of course, but I cannot bear to think that while I am engaged in my hazardous duties so far from home, that any one there is speaking or even thinking ill of me. Hudson thinks a good deal of me in his selfish way. and I would not do or say anything to injure his feelings, without good cause for it. It was something I said about his politics he did not like. But it is easy to prove that he talked "Copperhead" strong before he left the regiment. And I think now that both himself and his father would have voted that ticket but for the Government Contracts they get for paper.

I shall have a good deal to send home in the way of old clothes if I ever get my trunk. I suppose it would hardly be worth wile to cut up that heavy business coat of mine but I dont know of anything else but that you may as well use. but you know best. Cut up anything that will be useful.

I would not object if somebody would leave a shad at my door. I have not tasted one this season. The waters are full of fish here but we have no means of catching them The woods are full of game too, but I have no means of hunting it. as our army rifles will not do for shooting game. There are some deer on the Island, but not many some of the men caught a beautiful little doe alive a few mornings since. The dog I spoke of is a fine one but too old to send home. You did not send the photographs you spoke [of] so suppose you did not get them

I hope the next you hear from us we shall be on the way to N.C. but fear we shall not be so fortunate. If I do come now for twenty days are you going to Northampton. while I am there

Otis

JL088

Seabrook Island S.C.

June 21st 1863

Dear Wife

We have recieved no mail since I wrote you last, and expect none for some days yet. I am on picket with my regiment, having come up last thursday morning. As we had rather a lively time of it during the day perhaps you would like to hear about it. About the middle of the afternoon on wednesday, Gen. Stevenson sent for me and said that when Gen. Gilmore (our new commander) was there the day before he suggested that the pickets should be advanced so as to hold the whole Island, and he wanted me to start at one O.Clock the next morning, try to finde a place to cross the marsh without going over the causeway which the rebes guard - get in the rear of the rebel force with my regiment and try to capture them. I thought this "rather steep" My regiment was the smallest on the Island, (thanks to their pluck) and to send us out five miles in the night straight into the enemies' country where none of us had ever been before, and none but myself and fifty men had ever been beyond our outposts (I went out and drove in the enemies' pickets one day with fifty men but only went two miles out) He did not propose to send anyone to help us and after marching ten miles and most likely having a hard fight were to return and relieve another regiment on picket. However I made no objection and told him I would be ready. I considered it a foolhardy piece of business. and one I knew he dared not attempt himself. But along in the evening he sent me word

that he had altered his minde and I need not go till seven in the morning, and then go up and relieve the picket as usual, he was to come up himself at two in the afternoon and see what farther could be done. I marched at seven, as ordered and relieved the 56th N.Y. which was on picket. At two OClock the General came up accompanied by Capt Ashcroft of the artillery, and taking about a Hundred men from my reserve we started out. We first visited the Seabrook house where we had the skirmish the first night we were on the Island. It is about 800 yards in front of our picket line. It is ocupied by neither but visited occasionally by both parties. We found no one there, so throwing out a few skirmishers we advanced across the open plain which must be two miles wide. The rebel pickets are all mounted. they kept falling back as we advanced till they crossed over a high bridge on to what is called John's Island. On the oposite side of the bridge is quite a number of houses. the rebels got behinde and into them, and then opened fire on us at the same time sending for reinforcements. We had neither Cavalry or Artillery with us only a hundred Infantry. The rebels had both Artillery and Cavalry much nearer to us than our own troops, nearer even than our pickets. So after taking a look around to see what prospect there was of getting across and finding none. the General ordered us to return. We returned by another road in full sight of the rebels and they kept up a rapid fire on us all the time, but fortunately hit no one. though their shots kept whistling about our ears and falling among us in road constantly. Had they fired at the men they would no doubt have hit a good many, but there were some eight or ten of us officers together and several rods nearer the rebels than the men, so they kept firing at us. knowing from our dress that we were officers. Though the men were farther off they were in close column. and the rebels could hardly have failed to hit some of them had they directed their fire at them instead of the officers. When we got back to our outposts our pickets reported that there was a great dust rising just beyond the bridge where we had just come from. I halted my men under cover of some trees and going forward until I found a good place to see, found that a large force of Cavalry had croossed the bridge and was advancing cautiously towards us. I had left a small company in the open field as we advanced, to cover our left flank, with orders for them to remain there till I returned. As we returned by another road I had no oportunity of ordering them back and the rebels were quite as near them as I was. all mounted while all my men were on foot. I sent a mounted officer forward with orders for the company to retire slowly towards the woods, and I hastened forward as fast as possible towards them. When the rebels got in sight of them they seemed rather afraid to make an attact and halted well out of range. They did not see the company withdrawn from the field near the Seabrook house. and supposing them to be still there - remained about half a mile distant for a long time. I knew they were waiting, but could not imagine what for. But while watching their noovment saw some Artillery mooving slowly down the road. I saw now what they had been waiting for. They wanted to come down to the house but did not dare to for fear we ocupied it, so they had sent for Artillery to shell us out - I had my men formed in the road about seven hundred yards in front of the house, but completely concealed from them. They brought there artillery down within about half a mile of the house and after shelling it to their satisfaction and getting no response came cautiously down to the house. and posted their Artillery in the front yard. The position was about the same as if their guns had been posted in front of Uncle Wells' house and we draw up across the road in front of our house. The road was as straight as an arrow running from the front door of the house down to our position. As soon as they got in position they opened on us with their artillery with so good a range that their third shot went directly through two of our horses killing both instantly and wounding the rider of one of them. making a hole through the horse about as large as a stove pipe. their next shot cut off the ear of another horse so near his head as to take his bridle off with it. But we, had now two pieces of Artillery in position and returned their fire with interest, At first our shots as usual went about fifty feet over their heads, but we scolded the

Artillery men till we got them down out of the clouds and they soon silenced the rebels who limbered up and left. As soon as their artillery left we turned our attention to the cavalry and a few more shots sent them flying across the field in every direction three or four of their horses going off riderless. We went up to the house. but having no Cavalry could not pursue them. Gen Stevenson ordered up another regiment to our assistance but they did not get up till the rebels had been gone some time, so I sent them back. It was rather an exciting time and pleased the men mightily to see the "Artillery duel" as they called it, and they have not done laughing yet at the way the rebel Cavalry scattered when the shots fell among them. The rebels kept well out of range of our rifles, and being mounted could choose their own distance. I did not allow the men to return their fire when they opened on us from the Houses or John's Island because they were entirely concealed and it would be of no use. I never believed in firing just for the sake of making a noise. The rebels used to come down and fire at our pickets by the hour at about 800 yards but I never allow the men to return it at that distance and they seldom come nearer. It was a hot day when we went out and I got so tired and heated I have not got over it yet. The fact is I have not been able to do duty for the last month. and seldom set up all day, but on such an occasion as that I feel bound to be with the regiment sick or well.

Gen Gillmore is making a very favorable impression here. He is all activity - just the opposite of Hunter - Gillmore came down to review the troops on the Island a few days ago, and we had orders to get ready. it was a terrible hot day, but I felt bound to go because the last review we had I was sick and did not go. Before the time arrived Gen Stevenson sent me word that I was to take command of all the troops during the review. But when the time did arrive and we were all dressed ready it was so awful bad that the Gen. concluded not to have a review. I think I was never better pleased at getting rid of a job.

You will see accounts of the capture of the rebel-ram Fingal by the Weehawken. It was a fine thing indeed and John Rogers is a lucky fellow. I was sorry Downs did not get into the fight for he is a fine fellow. and it would have been quite a credit to him. I have got acquainted with nearly all the naval Captains here and am often on board their vessels. They are some of the finest and most gentlemanly men I have ever met. I like them much better than the regular Army officers I have met.

You will doubtless see accounts in the papers of the escape of a telegraph operator from Charleston a few days ago. I saw and talked with him the day he got here. His name is Wright. He seemed a very intelligent man and thoroughly posted. According to his statements the rebels cannot hold out another year. He says they already give up Vicksburgh and Port Hudson as lost - That they are very short of provisions but have a plenty of arms and ammunition. - That salt has gone up from fifteen to Thirty Dollars per bushel within a month. He says a lot of their naval officers have gone to England to buy out the fine war vessels being built there and will be back in about two months but you will see it all in the papers. I know this is a poorly written letter but I can't help it. I have not felt able to write much for a month past and have not written so much as my business demanded but I think I shall be better soon.

Give my love to all.

Otis

JL089

Seabrook Island S.C.

June 24th 1863

Dear Wife.

Enclosed you will find a Check for Two Hundred Dollars. payable to the order of Horace White. I had it made payable to his order so that some time when he is going to Hartford he can endorse it. take it in and get the money. I thought you would prefer that to being troubled with business you did not understand very well. Perhaps it would have been better had I made it payable to the order of Mr Cone. I can do so another time if you wish it. I recieved three letters late last night, one of them containing Phils' hook and line. Tell him I was glad enough to get them and have no doubt I shall be able to catch a lot of fish now. I am obliged to Harry too for his desire to send me a pole, but fish poles are plenty here and I can get one anytime. He can send me a hook because hooks often get broken and I shall soon want another. They are good boys to think of sending such things to Pappa. Tell Harry not to allow himself to get discouraged working in the garden he will soon learn, and we will have a farm of our own some day, and then it will be a grand thing for him to know how.

Hodge promised to call on you as soon as he got home and I knew he would be as good as his word. He would do anything for me, and thinks I am one of the first soldiers of the Age. I suppose the reason the Chaplain could not think of anything to say to me, was, that he and Camp are so much in love with each other that they have no time or inclination to attend to the officers of anyone else. They sit hugging each other up hours together like a pair of "true lovers[?]" and wont attend to anything that takes them out of each others society. The officers all make fun of it and the Chaplain is fast losing his influence with them in consequence. You would not believe how ridiculous they act without seeing it. I suppose Trumbull visited the families of at least a hundred officers and men of the Regiment while he was at the north, and I dont think he has told a word of conversation he had with one of them except Camps' friends. He and Camp tent together and sleep together, so he has a plenty of time to tell him everything, and cannot say a word to anyone else because he cannot stay away from Camp long enough to hold conversation with anyone else.

You say. "I seem to feel out of patience with people at the north because they take no more interest in the war." And you dont blame them for it, because the Government has squandered away so many lives and so much money to little purpose. I should feel no surprise to hear such an argument from some Coward who had staid at home all this time and was anxious for an excuse to remain there; but I never expected to hear it from a soldiers wife. If the Administration has betrayed us and sacrificed the lives of half our numbers, is that a reason why our friends should refuse us their sympathy and support? Is not every blunder of the Government, or failure of a General, but another reason why our numbers should be strengthened and our courage sustained by patriots at home? Because politicians have betrayed, us is it a reason that our friends should desert us? The argument is good enough for a Coward or a Copperhead, but would hardly do for a patriot. If such principles are taught by the "Loyal Leagues" the sooner their organizations are dissolved the better. I am sure you at least held no such belief before you joined them. If one man's treachery or imbecility absolved another from his obligations to his Country, then the treachery of the south absolves us all from the obligations we owe our country. Any reason that is good to keep a man at home is good [to] send a man who is now here. and everyone who can do so should resign and go home. Dont think I mean to scold you about your ideas on the subject. for I could not have the heart [to] do that Kate, but I want you to see how differently we who peril our lives every day for our Country, feel on the subject from those who are at home making money out of the war. I had rather spend the next ten years of my life amid the dangers

and privations in which I have spent the last two, than to see the war terminated by a disgraceful peace. We have a right to complain of the imbecility of the government. The stay-at-homes have no such right. With them it is but an excuse for not doing their duty. We expect it from them but cannot bear to think that our own families are insensibly falling into the habit of endorsing the sophism.

I am really glad to hear that the rebels are in Pensylvania. I want people at the North to know something about war. If Hooker does his duty the rebels will never recross the Potomac.

I returned from picket this morning feeling rather better than I did when we went up though I am by no means well yet.

Let me know as soon as you get this as I shall be somewhat anxious about the money. I send it in this way because it saves expense. It would cost about Three Dollars to send it by Express.

I shall enclose a receipt for Lt. Hodge which you can hand him if you see him again as you doubtless will. There is Two Dollars due on it but if he says nothing about it you need not.

I shall have to close now. I want to come home, - you dont know how bad - and shall apply for leave of absence, but have not much hope of getting it. I shall write agan soon but you know you cannot expect such long letters often.

I wish I had some of your strawberry cake for nothing has tasted goot to me for a moth past.

Good night.

Otis

Dont say I have written a cross letter because I have not.

JL090=

Seabrook Island S.C.

June 29th 1863

Dear Wife.

I have no news to write you at present and shall only send a short note. I sent a long letter containing a Check for Two Hundred Dollars some days ago. but I understand no mail has left the Head since so I suppose it has not gone. and this will doubtless accompany it. I write so that if you get this letter and not the containing the money you can write and let me know at once. Our letters do not go as regularly as they did from the Island here. No boat has taken a mail from here for a week, though a steamer has sailed for the North within that time. We are some 30 miles from Hilton Head and have to send our letters as the opertunity offers. The "Arago" arrived at the Head last night, but we have not got her mail yet and may not for some days.

Great activity prevails in this Department now. Gillmore appears to be a live man, and means to take Charleston But it is a work of time and if he is well sustained it will doubtless take months to accomplish much. He has commenced digging in earnest, and though as a general thing I dont believe in so much digging; in this case it is the only thing that can succeed

I am considerable better than when I wrote last but by no means well, though I think I shall get along well enough now. I did mean to come home this moth, but it is of no use now I could not get away if I tried and am sorry I said anything about it. When it comes time to make preserves I want you to do an extra quantity, for if we stay down here till fall I shall try to have more things sent from home than I have done. Nothing tastes good here except what does come from home, but the weather is too hot now I suppose. Nothing would keep.

were talking of doing when I left home the Dr says you can send to his care; it will save cost of transportation and insure speedy delivery. His directions are; put things in strong packages not too large. if apples are sent have them in strong barrels, and never mark on the outside of a box or barrel what it contains. If our friends wish to send anything for the regiment or for Co.B. Direct properly, say as follows. "Dr Marsh Agent Sanitary Commission Hilton Head S.C. for Co B. 10th C.V. Care of B.Collins Esq 823 Broadway N.Y." Send an Invoice to Dr Marsh one steamer before the goods are sent, and another to Mr. Collins with the goods. Dr Marsh says that this will insure a safe and speedy delivery of the goods free of costs, after reaching New York. If things should be sent in this way you can put in a box for me with the rest adding it to the Invoice. I have given this long direction because I have just recieved it from Dr. Marsh and wished to write it down before I forgot it. It may be useful to you. Among the Express boxes I have in charge I noticed one for Aurthur Slate, and another for Henry Barrows. The Invoice I speak of should be an Invoice of the packages only, and not of the contents. I would like much to give you a discription of this place put it has rained ever since I came here and I have not been able to go about much. We brought down the Pay master and are waiting here for him to pay of the troops, and continue on with us to St. Augustine and shall have to wait another day at least. It will be two week from the time I left home reaching the regiment.

By what little I have seen of Ferdinandina I judge it must have been a dull old place at the best. It is a rambling irregular old place with large faded old houses and grass grown streets. Senator Dulee resided here; his house is one of the best in the place. The Finnegan House as it is called - the former residence of Gen Finnegan who now commands the Confederate troops in Florida - is just outside the village, and appears from a distance to be the best House in the place. I am told that it is now used as a Seminary for colored females, though I believe it is understood that the school consists of a few teachers without pupils who are quartered there and who have a good time generally at the expense of the government. Most of the houses here are occupied by darkies who prevail here to an unlimited extent. The regiment of soldiers quartered here are scattered about in tents outside the village.

Three miles from here, and near the mouth of the river is Fort Clinch a very extensive fortification commenced by the U.S. Government several years ago and never finished. The work is being pushed with vigor now I believe several Hundred men being employed on it. People say that it is to be a place of immense strength when finished. I have not visited the Fort yet and if we sail this afternoon as we hope to shall not be able to visit it. Near the fort is the "Old Town" as they call it; which consists of a few quaint old houses scattered about at random.

The rain has ceased in a measure; I have visited the village and been much surprised to learn that that the whole place has been built up within eight years.

10th. We sailed at 4 O.Clock yesterday and got out to sea about dark. Feeling quite sea sick at sundown I went to bed and did not get up until morning when I found that we were anchored of the bar in sight of St. Augustine.

11th. 10 P.M. We arrived at the dock at about 9- yesterday morning many of our officers were there waiting to see me, and all seemed rejoiced at my return. I visited the regiment and called on the the different Officers with whom I am aquainted; everybody seemed delighted to see me. I dined with Col. Osborn of the 24th and in the evening the Officers of my own regiment assembled at the Hotel and gave me a grand reception. Tables were laid for near fifty persons, and every seat was full. We had a glorious time and everybody was happy. I was proud indeed of my reception. Our Band which plays better than ever, was there all the evening and played until after 10 O.Clock.

I found Major Greeley boarding at the principle Hotel and of course went immediately there to stay until I finde how things are and what to do. I shall not attempt to discribe the place for I have seen nothinng of it as yet. As soon as I can finde time I shall visit the Forts and other notable objects here and will write you.

The Hotel where I am stopping is called the Florida House, and is kept by Signeur Papy, both himself and wife look like Creoles. They are very strong Union people, and have been throughout.

The oranges are large and fine but nearly gone. The regiment has still over a Hundred on the sick list, and those who are on duty do not look well and strong. They are improving however and after the hard service on Morris Island are contented and happy here I would like to write you all abut the place, but I have hardly seen it. It is past Eleven now and I am tired. But I will

write you again as soon as possible. The steamer leaves in the morning, and Major Greeley goes on it expecting to meet his wife at Hilton Head. I fear he will be disappointed; I hope not however, for I would give twice what I am able to, to have you here with me.

My light has been expiring for the last half hour so good night my dear to you and the children.

Otis

P.S. It has rained ever since I came here and is raining now in torrents.

JL093=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

St. Augustine Fla.

Dec 14th 1863

Dear Wife

It is very late but a steamer will leave for the Head to-morrow, and I must write you a few lines. The Chaplain arrived to-day quite unexpected to us all, we did not expect him under two weeks. and were both pleased and surprised to see him. I had hoped that he would be able to stay at home and assist us about recruiting, but the war department would not allow it so he had to come down immediately. But he is much needed here and everybody was looking for him with great interest. There is no chaplain or Protestant minister here and the union people of the place who are protestants have had no service for a long time. The minister who was here when the war broke out, though a northern-man was a rampant sesessionist; and had to leave when our people took possession, - or soon after. I believe he was caught in correspondence with the enemy and had to leave at ten minutes notice - served him right -

It rained for three days after I came here, but has cleared off finely now and the weather is very fine. I have not visited the fort yet or been about the place so as to give you much idea about it, having been so very busy with my duties, but I shall get to it soon and then you may look for a long letter containing such an amount of historical information as will astonish you.

I spent last evening at Dr. Newton's boarding place. The lady with whom he boards is from Northampton Mass. - a Miss Mather - she kept a school here and was I judge very successful; but being like most Massachusetts women intensely patriotic and loyal, had about as uncomfortable a time here until our troops came, as it was possible for a poor unprotected woman to have under the reign of terror inaugurated by the southern chivalry. She is now keeping boarders and quite a large number of our officers board there. I had a long talk with her about Northampton people she knows everybody there. I know very few indeed personally, but knowing the names of most of the prominent men was much pleased to talk about them.

St. Augustine is a queer old place and its history quite interesting. As soon as I get time I shall write you a full discription of it with so much of the history as I think will prove interesting to you.

There are a plenty of houses here to live in and if you could get here we should have no trouble in living nicely while I remain here. I dont know as you could do anything about coming unless the Cheney's would interest themselves to find you means of getting here. It takes so long for letters to go that by the time an arrangement could be made by correspondence I should be sent off.

15th. The steamer did not go today as was expected so I did not finish and send off my letter. I was ordered last night to furnish One Hundred men to-day to go out and collect cattle in the country. The started at 7 this morning - I designed to start one hour later and overtake them, but the Medical Director came and I had to go around with him, so did not get away until 11 I had no means of knowing which way they went except by the tracks in the road, but at one place we went a mile and a half where the water was knee deep, and for more than a hundred yards it came up to my stirrups - not much chance to track men there - I could hardly believe that the men had been marched through such a place, but on coming to dry land I found the track again and finally met the men returning, ten miles out. There was not the vestage of a human habitation the whole distance. I thought at one time it might be rather risky riding out ten miles accompanied only by

one officer (Capt Brewster) and my orderly. I carried my revolver, both Cap't Brewster and the orderly were entirely unarmed. But after seeing the country I made up my mind that no rebel was fool enough to go there and we were perfectly safe. I have just got back with my feet as thoroughly soaked as they ever were in the world though went on horseback. It was strange enough to be riding for more than a mile with the water swashing over my feet at every step of the horse. The thick Chapparal came close up to the road; which was just wide enough for two to ride abreast; in some places the bushes formed an arch over our heads. Nothing could be seen but our narrow track of water straight before us; the effect was precisely the same as riding up the arched raceway of a mill. Sometimes the road opened into quite a little lake which we would go splashing through nearly up to our saddle girths, and no indication where the road led out of it except a very narrow opening in the bushes with the same ditch like road as far ahead as you could see. Occasionally we would come to where another road branched off, which appeared just like a little brook emptying into a larger stream. About six miles out we came to a much better road, and after following that for about four miles met Captain White and his command returning.

The weather has been magnificent yesterday and to-day. just warm enough to be comfortable without an overcoat roses are blossoming in the open air and many flowers which are quite strange to me are in bloom in the gardens.

Yesterday we had venison and green peas for dinner. The venison was most excellent but the peas were only peas to the sight; I should never have recognized them by the taste. No mail came down from Hilton Head when Trumbull came the steamer left before the "Arago's" mail was ready, we are waiting with great interest the arrival of another boat. I expect a letter from home without fail.

I wish you and the children were down here. we should enjoy it so much. while I am stationed here our stay will probably not be very long though I hope we shall be here all winter.

The duty the men perform here is not so very easy they are on duty about every third day which is considered pretty hard work everywhere.

I think there is to be a general movement here in Florida soon though nothing is said about it, and nearly everyone supposes the movement to be against Savannah; I do not. I think it is against Florida and what is more it will be successful. It is getting quite late, so good night

With my best love, Otis

JL094=

St. Augustine Fla

Dec 18th 1863

Dear Wife.

A steamer arrived from Hilton Head yesterday bringing the Arago's mail, but no letter from you; at which I was somewhat surprised and disappointed. I wrote a letter three days ago to send by the steamer Cosmopolitan, but the steamer has been lying off the town two days waiting for the tide to rise sufficiently high for her to get over the bar, with the mail aboard and now if she gets off to-morrow which is extremely doubtful, she will not get to the Head in time to send her mail by the Fulton.

Mr Hawley goes north by the next steamer and will take this letter. He says that he will do his best to get you a passage down here, but I do not feel very sanguine about it. I told him that if he could do anything of the kind he must write you at least a week before hand, But don't think much about it and don't feel disappointed if he can do nothing of the kind for so may have been disappointed about coming down here that I have not much hope of seeing you here. But there is no harm in being ready if an opportunity should occur. I expect the first letter I get from you, you will tell me that you have got some new teeth and all about the horrid time you had about getting them. I think every day about it and wonder if you have got them yet and how you look with them. I can't tell you much about the place yet for I have not seen much of it, being very busy with my duties. I am very tired now and shall go to bed in a few minutes; though there is to be a dance at the hotel where I am boarding and I can hear the preparations going on now. It is

ten O. Clock and they have not commenced yet, so I take it for granted that it will be pretty late when they get through.

I succeeded in getting about twenty oranges yesterday. I think them much better than those we buy at the north, and some of them are nearly twice as large as anything I ever saw in the shape of an orange before. I tried to get some to send home but it is too late they are so ripe now that they will not keep more [than] three or four days after being picked.

19th. It is a bright cold day very much like a clear November morning at home an overcoat is absolutely necessary to comfort. I am to have a busy day. one half the regiment was paid of yesterday and the rest will be paid today. At 10 O.Clock we are to have an inspection the Chaplain is to address the regiment at two giving them a history of his prison experiance, at 4 we are to have a Dress Parade on the Plaza. So you see I shall be busy and what I write will have to be done early.

My horse came down by the "Arago" and is at Hilton Head; I shall expect it by the next boat. It was fortunate that I bought one for horses are very high here and one can hardly be bought at any price.

Dr. Newton wishes to resign and will probably do so soon I shall be sorry to have the Dr leave me but cannot help it; or at least do not feel disposed to help it. for I suppose I could prevent it if I wished.

There is said to be the finest of hunting and fishing about here but I have not had time to try it yet Dr. Newton goes fishing quite often and has excellent success. We have fresh fish on the table nearly every meal and the regiment have a mess of fish all around as often as twice a week. The waters here are full of fish and those who like the sport can have all they desire of it. I like the sport but have not yet fund time to indulge in it.

I think I wrote you that I sent a check of Two Hundred Dollars from New York Lt Close took the letter containing the check, and was to put it in the Post Office. I suppose you have got it all right.

Our breakfast bell is ringing so I must stop I shall have no time to write after breakfast so must finish now.

How does recruiting go on. is anyone going from Manchester.

I forgot to bring the childrens Photographs with me I wish you would send them. I have yours.

I am in such a hurry that I can think of noting to write so good morning. Otis

JL095=

St. Augustine Fla.

Jan 10th 1864

My dear Wife

I ought to have written you this morning but could not get the time: had I done so the letter would have gone today an most likely been sent north by the "Arago" on her next trip. As it is I fear the Arago will take no letter for you. It has been a busy time for us the past week. Gen. Aikin has been here attending to the re-inlistment of Veterans in my regiment. About two hundred and fifty re-enlisted and are all going home together in a few days. A steamer is coming down for them and will land them at New York or Stonington giving them 30 days in the state. Gen. Gillmore arrived here last night and reviewed the troops this morning. I tried to persuade his chief of staff that it would be for the interest of the service to allow the entire regiment to go home; that we could recruit men enough to fill the regiment to the maximum in two months, but he could not be persuaded. He had no doubt that we could do it but said that if he let the regiment go, it would be the last he should see of it, and he could not think of letting it go out of the Department. But two hundred and fifty of the men will go under command of one of the line officers. I wish I could go in command of them myself but others who have not been north have claims superior to mine so I shall remain here and let others go. Besides I suppose you will soon be down here, I think Hawley will be able to make arrangements for you. If you can get time you might run down to New Haven and see him. I have made enquiries and learn that there is not much difficulty in getting down here outside the Government Vessels. Hawley can make all

arrangements for you. As half the regiment is going home to be gone nearly two months from the post, we shall be quite likely to remain here for three months at least, so if you could get here in a month you would have at least two months to stay with me here before we can be ordered away. Our Quarter Master owns a house here, so you would not be turned out of doors even if I should be ordered away in a hurry. I have visited the old fort lately and find it an interesting relict of the old Spanish rule. Over the main entrance is a tablet bearing the Spanish Coat of Arms and a record of the commencement and finishing of the fort. If I recollect aright it was commenced in 1636 and finished just a century later. Its ancient appearance is suffisient proof that the record does not lie. In its day Old St. Mark must have been one of the most complete works of the kind in the world - still in an excellent state of preservation, it must look precisely the same now under the eye of the trim infantry soldier from New England, as it did in a former age to the dark Spaniard armed with his clumsy matchlock, who trod its ramparts and watched from its tall lookout for the wily savage, over the same landscape where our own soldiers look for a scarce less savage foe. Our sentries tread the same well worn stones, watch from the same watch towers and occupy the same casemates as did the savage Castilian bigot of a bygone age. And the Protestant Chaplain might now if he chose perform his simple worship in the same chapel where the Romish Priest taught his dark religion two centuries ago. Under the strong bastions of St. Mark are still to be seen the arched dungeons where the agents of the Inquisition executed sentence on the victims of its secret tribunals. These dungeons were discovered but a short time ago, having been walled up; not probably from want of use but for the punishment of some victim of the Inquisition. When discovered, one of them contained a human skeleton chained to the wall. There was no outlet or inlet to this dungeon and it was only discovered by a small portion of the stonework giving way, and letting a quantity of earth through from the top of the bastion; this being examined into led to the discovery of the first dungeon where the skeleton was found, he, was no doubt walled in there alive to die a horrible lingering death by starvation - a punishment often inflicted by the Inquisition. On examining the walls of this dungeon a place was found which looked like a doorway built up, a hole was made through it, and another dungeon similar to the first discovered. In the arched roof of the second are still the remains of ring bolts set in the stone, supposed to have been instruments of torture. But if you come down you will see it all and find it a much more interesting relict of other days than any discription I can give will lead you to suppose.

I have not been able to send Henry Grey's remains home yet becaus an order was issued against it last summer, but I shall be prepared and send by the steamer which takes our furloughed men home. Poor Mary can only recieve her husbands remains by the steamer which will bring joy to so many households.

It is getting quite dark and I will close for the present - tell Mr. Keeny I am very greatful for the drawers and hope he won't forget to make it up out of some Copperhead who buys of him.

Kiss the children for me.

Good night. Otis

JL096=

St. Augustine Fla
Jan 16th 1864

Dear Wife

The Arago's mail arrived yesterday bringing your letter of Dec 31st. I must congratulate you on getting rid of your teeth. It was an awful job I know but now it is done you will find it so much better for you. I suppose you will have a temporary set to use until you can get a good set made. I am glad Harry and Phil are such good boys, and able to help you so much. I felt sure they would both be the best of boys when I was away; but they must not forget errands. When they are sent on errands they must think of them for all anything else. They must not read too many exciting books because if they do they will not be able to learn their lessons at school, and I want them to learn as fast as possible so as to be able to help me when I get home.

You said nothing about coming down here. You had better come if you possibly can and come soon for I suppose I cannot stay here more than two or three months longer, and two or three months is not much, you ought to get away from the terrible cold weather you are having there. If you come, bring a plenty of shoes for yourself and the children, you cannot get them here. If you come you can have a strong wooden box made to put what you cannot put in your trunk into, with strong rope handles. Mrs. Freely had one as large as two trunks.

You had better copy the numbers of those "Bonds" and keep the numbers in a safe place, so that if you should loose or have them stolen payment could be stopped. If you come down here ask some one what you had better do with them. Mr. White or Thomas Cheney. My own idea is that they should be deposited in the Bank.

Yesterday was one of the most magnificent days I ever saw, like a fine September day at home, but this morning the wind blows cold and a good fire is necessary to comfort. But we have no snow and ice so it cannot be quite so disagreeable as in Connecticut day before yesterday I went fishing with Dr. Newton. The weather was just warm enough to be comfortable without an overcoat. But the sun was so hot it gave me the headache. When it is pleasant here it is warm enough to sit in the shade out of doors.

I understand that John Walton has gone home on a furlough - perhaps you will see him. He is not with the regiment but in a hospital on Morris Island.

My letter is ever so much longer than yours so I won't write any more now, but if anything interesting occurs will write again before the Fulton leaves the Head.

I heard from my men who were taken prisoners, yesterday three of them were wounded but not seriously. They say they are well treated and were about starting up the country, where to they did not know.

My love to all.

Otis

JL097=

Headquarters 10th C V

Jan. 24th 1864

Dear Wife.

A mail arrived yesterday bringing your letter of the 10th, a fortnight after it was written. You say you had recieved no letter from me for two weeks; at that rate the next mail must have brought at least four, and among them two or three advising you in relation to coming down here. As I wrote fully in those I will say nothing further at present except that if you come at all, you should come very soon for it will soon be spring and we shall be ordered away.

I congratulate you on being so fortunate about your teeth, but it seems hard to have to go hungry when there are so many good things to eat. It would not require great self denial to go without eating in the Army, but what we do get requires good teeth to masticate. I suppose you have new teeth by this time, however, and are able to eat all you can get.

We had 36 recruits arrive yesterday from the North. There were so few of them I wish they had not come at all. It is said that Connecticut has raised her quota by reenlisting Veteran soldiers in the field. That may be a fine thing for Connecticut but very bad for the Country. If the quota is made up by reenlisting men now in the field who have a year to serve, I fail to see how the Army is strengthened thereby. The means adopted for raising the requisite number of men defeats the object for which the President made the call for troops; Viz. the increase of the Army. The Veterans should have had the opertunity to reenlist with the full benefit of the bounties, but ought not to have been counted towards the quota. The weather has been the finest I ever saw here for the last few days, though it looks now as if we might have a storm soon. Oranges are all gone here now, having been sent in for more than two weeks.

My horse has come as I wrote you before and is doing well though he had a hard time getting down here.

I suppose you have decided by this time whether it will be practicable for you to come down here and very likely may be on the way before this letter gets home, so I won't write much as it will be labor lost if you come down. I want you to come if you possibly can, and can get here in any season.

I believe I wrote you in my last that the things for Company B came safely to hand, about two weeks after they arrived a letter was brought me from Mrs. White in relation to them. The letter was just put in one of the barrels and not discovered until everything had been eaten up. Day before yesterday another package of letters was brought me written for some of the soldiers of the regiment by Miss Cheney's sender. Mrs. White's letter should have been sent by mail so that I could have gotten it before the goods arrived. As everything was directed to Co. B. of course Co. B. got everything, and would had there been ten times as much. I do not know what was sent. I ordered the Quartermaster to deliver it to the Company without examining or knowing anything about it, which I should not have done had I recieved Mrs White's letter in season to have attended to it.

I shall write a letter to Mrs White but am doubtful whether it can go by this mail. Tell Phil if he brings fish hooks he must bring big ones for there are no small fish here. I suppose Harry won't want to fish so we will put him to soldiering.

My paper is used up goodbye,
Otis

JL098=
Headquarters 10th C.V.
St Augustine Fla
Jan. 31st, 1864

Dear Wife,

Your letter of the 17th has just reached me about an hour ago. It is very strange that so long a time should elaps without your recieving any letters, but you have probably recieved enough before this time to make it all up. I am sorry the letters did not go more expeditiously because I wrote you considerably about coming down here and was in hopes you would get the letters promptly. I do not think you will be able to come as you expect, but hope so. I am much more confident about you coming through the assistance of Mr. Hawley, and wonder you have not heard from him before now.

I have heard nothing from Spencer, but had made up my mind that he would not come. I am indeed surprised that Fred Bunce allowed himself to steal from his employers. Whatever the Cheney's may have done by others they certainly dealt generously by Bunce, and I think paid him more money then he earned. It may be very pleasant for most people to have "todies" like Fred about them, but I could never trust one. The meeting houses will probably take hold of the affair and smoothe it all over so that Bunce will be a brighter light than ever. It is very fortunate that he has recovered his hearing for having lost his place it may be necessary for him to teach singing for a living.

I did promise to write your mother a letter and will do so immediately. I am very glad the children love books but had much rather they would not read too many exciting stories. If they get their heads full of stories their studies will not be suffisciently entertaining to attract them. I would let them read as much as they liked but would select their books for them. They are old enough now to study a good deal and ought to do so. I can hardly realize that Abby has the consumption. I thought her health quite good last fall.

The weather has been delightful for the last two weeks; almost too warm though in the middle of the day.

I have left the hotel and take my meals at Major Greeley's sleeping in camp. I have had a bad cold though ever since I went to camp and quite unwell yesterday and today, but shall soon get used to it. I have had the headache a great deal since coming here, and think it oweing to the sun being so hot in the middle of the day.

Deserters from the Rebel Army come in here quite often, six or seven having come in the past week I really begin to think that large numbers of the rebel soldiers will desert if they can get the opportunity.

Dr. Hart and Quartermaster Fowler are both in Connecticut and will be coming back in about a week. I shall be on the lookout for you when they come though whether I shall be here at St. Augustine then is very doubtful.

Good night

Otis

JL099=

Gloucester Point V.A.

May 1st 1864

My Dear Wife.

I have written you once since coming but have recieved no letter from you. I have heard from you however, having recieved a letter from Mr. Irvin written in Philadelphia, and one from Mr. Bronson in New York. They were very kind to take so much trouble for us.

You are safe at home now and it must be a relief to you to get there it certainly is to me to know you are there. I hope to get a letter tonight telling of your arrival and know certain that you are at home. We are very busy preparing for the field and I get very tired yesterday we were reviewed by Gen. Butler and were kept under arms for seven hours the dust so thick you could not see the length of a Battalion and the east wind chilling us through. I have sent off your box and my trunk and bed by Express. I had to pack the bag over and had my Camp Secretary taken to pieces and put into it. Have it taken out and put carefully away, it can be put together again very nicely. The cork was not well put into the bottle of Bear oil and it came out covering everything with grease. I tried to send my camp stools but could not get them into the box, so I had to keep them. In my trunk you will find three little crosses, the two dark colored ones are made from the old house, the other one is from the old chest they were all made by a soldier of the regiment. You can get them trimmed to suit yourself in Hartford. I have sent home both my dress coats and have only my blouse and overcoat with me.

I don't know where our campaign is to be, but if I live through it I mean it shall be my last. I don't stand it as well as I did, in the field, and begin to think I have done about my share.

Mr. Bronson wrote that Harry appeared nearly as well as usual before he left you and that you were all well.

Trumbull has gone to Fortress Munroe hoping to meet Camp there Schroeder wrote up that Major Mulford would bring Camp down on his next trip. I recieved a letter from Dr. Newton a few days ago written the 26th of March, it was in the mail which went to St. Augustine and came back to us.

There is talk here that our letters are all stopped at the Fortress but I hardly believe it. I shall keep writing at all events until I learn about it sure.

Tell the boys they must go to school every day so as to learn as fast as possible.

Give my regards to all, thank the Ladies of the Loyal League for their present, and be sure to write often. it only takes two days for a letter to come here, and I ought to get one pretty often.

Good night.

Otis

JL100=

Headquarters 10th C.V.

May 7th 1864

My Dear Wife.

I have never felt so badly used up since entering the service as to night and could not possibly think of writing tonight, but you will doubtless hear through the papers that our Corps has been engaged and will feel concerned about it. I will give you a brief account of my experiences for the last few days that you may see how it corresponds with life in St. Augustine.

Last Wednesday we turned out at 3 o'clock in the morning to go on board transports, bound for some place to us unknown. I had the sick-headache terribly all day, and I was under the necessity of remaining in the hot sun until 4 in the afternoon when I got the regiment on board a transport. In the morning we found ourselves at Fortress Munroe and about sunrise started up the James River. We knew nothing about our destination, but even the Brigadier General supposed we were bound for Harrison's Landing; the scene of some of McLellan's exploits. But we passed that renowned locality; passed City Point and commenced disembarking a mile beyond, just above the mouth of the Appamattox and about 20 miles from Richmond. My regiment disembarked in the night in small boats, which kept us up all night. We started at 8 in the morning and marched all day, but only made 6 miles, having to halt often. The men being unused to moving in heavy marching order were very tired, but we had only been bivouac a short time, and it was just getting dark when the entire regiment officers and all were ordered out on fatigue duty digging Rifle Pits and worked till morning; making two nights we had no sleep, the 2nd one working hard all night. I got a bad fall about one o'clock while going around the works coming very near breaking my ribs. We got the rifle pits done at daylight and immediately fell in under arms, as a precaution against attack. In a few minutes I was notified that I must be ready to move at 8 O'clock. We left at that time and pushed on with a large force to cut the R.R. below Richmond. Our advance skirmished heavily all day, and reached the R.R. about 12 1/2. Sever fighting took place. The Rebs were driven across the track and a considerable portion of it was torn up. My regiment was not engaged at all, but with the 24th Mass was ordered to march to the extrem right of the enemy's position and try to tear up the track there. We reached it without opposition, and while the 24th were tearing up the track my regiment destroyed the telegraph for about a quarter of a mile, bringing away the wire. We were then ordered to retire and got back to our own bivouac just before sundown. I suppose we were within less than ten miles of Richmond.

So you see we were up two nights, one of which we worked all night, marching all day two days. Forty eight hours labor without sleep. I think we had as many as twelve men sun struck and before we got back I was so sick I could hardly sit on my horse.

Good night. I cannot write any more.

Otis

JL101=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Bermuda Hundred May 10th 1864

My Dear Wife

I received two letters from you last night but it was after dark and being on picket duty I had to wait until morning to read them, as I would not let the men have lights to read their letters I refrained from reading my own. Picket duty means picket duty here; only a few miles from Richmond and the enemy in strong force in front of us we have to be very vigilant. I went on Picket with my regiment Sunday night for 24 hours. picketing about a mile and a quarter, my right resting on the James River about four or five miles below Fort Darling. The Rebel pickets were close by in front and approached so near that we could hear their movements quite plainly. There was more or less firing all night and I did not pretend to sleep. the entire regiment was on duty all night. At day light just as I was taking a cup of tea, a rapid musketry fire opened immediately in front of our picket line in the woods. I dropped everything and deploying my pickets as skirmishers was advancing into the woods to find out what the firing meant when two

Contrabands came in, in great fright saying that there was a regiment of Rebel Cavalry just in front preparing to make a dash on us. I had but about 70 men at the reserve, and the darkies said that there was a thousand of the Rebels. I immediately advanced up the road towards them and finding a good position formed directly across the road and waited for them, but they did not come. Howell's Brigade had come up on our left about a mile distant, and his skirmishers had frightened them off, so we had no fight that time. We went on picket for 24 hours but were notified that there was no one who could be spared to relieve us and we must stay another day. On our left Gen Gillmore was out with a heavy force tearing up the R.R. without opposition but anticipated it before night. He has destroyed more of the same R.R. we cut the other day tearing up the track for miles, and burning the ties. He remained out last night and was attack about midnight but beat the rebels off handsomely with severe loss to them, about 8 O'clock today they attack Gen Terry's Division again and severe fighting took place in which the Rebels were handsomely whipped, losing heavily. They fought hard rushing up to the muzzles of our Cannon but were badly whipped and after retiring sent in a flag of truce for permission to bury their dead, and save the wounded from being burned in the woods, which were on fire. The Rebels suffered terribly. Brig. Gen. Foster who accompanied the Rebel Flag of Truce back to the field says it was the most shocking sight he ever saw. Our forces have been entirely successful ever since we landed. our losses have not been heavy, and at the same time we have damaged the Rebels badly. if Grant has been successful above Richmond the Confederacy is ruined, past redemption

I don't pretend that this is much of a letter for I cannot write I have been on picket duty 48 hours with no sleep and am suffering severely from my fall the night we arrived, but I have one thing to be thankful for at least. Though my regiment was with the advance the day we first destroyed the R.R. and assisted in tearing down the telegraph and have since been on picket two days with the enemy directly in front we have lost but one man. We have met with a different loss however and one we shall feel severely. We sent all our camp and garrison equipment to Norfolk also much of the baggage of the officers with the new and beautiful uniforms of the band for which we had just paid Eight Hundred Dollars. The Steamer they were on board of was run into and sunk at Fortress Munroe. I lost very little personally, but our guidons were on board directed to you to be sent by express they were of course lost and no money can replace them. The loss is very severe on our officers and should be made up to them, but I suppose it never will be.

Your letters were very interesting and contained a good deal of news; but you have got the funniest way of spelling "Signal Corps" I ever saw. Give my regards to all.- be sure and save that Camp Secretary of mine. I shall think a great deal of it. Your box was almost done and I had a mind to send it as it was but the man who was making it wanted to finish it, and said he would take care of it himself but he was on board the steamer when it sunk and I fear lost it, I[t] was to be a little writing case and one of the most beautiful little things I ever saw. A part of it was made from an old mahogany table brought from Spain. I have not seen the man who had it in charge but fear it is lost with everything else. I believe I wrote you about the chairms I sent in my trunk you can easily find a key that will open the trunk I think. Don't give away much of the old treasure chest. I want to save it. It is terrible hot weather here almost suffocating. It is a fine country here much superior to anything I have before seen at the south.

Our position is between the James and Appamattox Rivers about six miles from where we landed. But the best thing you can do to find it is to look for the Richmond and Petersburg R.R. we are close to it and keep the Rebs away from it. The main position is called Bermuda Hundred but you had best direct it to 10th Army Corps Fortress Munroe for the present. Tell Phil he shall have as fine a present as any Harry has had if I hear a good report from him: as I have no doubt I shall.

Good by, Otis

JL102=

Headquarters 10th C.V.
Bermuda Hundred
May 17th 1864

My dear Wife.

I have heard nothing from you since my last and fear you have refrained from writing on account of the report being circulated that no mails were allowed to come here. It is not so: the mails have come regularly ever since we came here. Trumbull and Greeley get letters every day. I have little time to write having just got back from "on the [road] to Richmond" Our entire force was out four days from the entrenchments, and the first three days done nobly beating the enemy everywhere and working our way slowly and surely towards the Rebel Capitol. We carried their first line of works more than two miles in extent by a brilliant flank movement, my own regiment being in the Advance Brigade. But yesterday morning, Butler allowed his right flank to be turned and before he knew it the enemy was in strong force in his rear. The 18th Army Corps under Gen. Smith was defeated and driven back in confusion losing 12 pieces of artillery. On the left our Corps was holding the Rebels in check splendidly and not all engaged at that, when word came that the 18th Corps was defeated and the enemy between us. Of course we had to abandon our position immediately and fight our way back to our communication. We accomplished it very handsomely. Covering the retreat of the right wing at the same time my regiment was twice engaged losing 35 killed and wounded. The balance of us are now inside the entrenchments. how long we shall remain here I do not know. I think not long, but hope we shall not take the field again under Butler. I have no confidence in him as a general.

I cannot write you a particular account of our campaign at present having so much other writing to do. Write me often your letters will come regularly.

Good night. Otis.

JL103=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't. C. V.
Bermuda Hundred
May 20th 1864

My dear Wife,

I closed my last letter very abruptly without giving a reason for it. I thought if you knew why I closed so suddenly you would feel uneasy until you heard from me again. The fact was that just at that moment after ten at night I received orders to get my regiment under arms immediately and march out to the picket line. An expedition was on foot to capture a rebel train. We went out as ordered but the expedition was a fizzle just as I supposed it would be. We remained out all night and returned to the entrenchments at 7 o'clock in the morning. The cavalry force which was to capture the train was afraid to proceed beyond our own picket line so the rebel train was not captured. I think I wrote you a short account of our four days campaign though not a very full one. I will send copies of my official reports when I get them done. But I am so constantly on duty night and day that I have little time to write. We have more or less fighting every day and we are constantly under arms losing some men nearly every day. Yesterday a sharp fight was going on at the picket line nearly all day so our loss must have been from Four to Five Hundred, but we drove the rebels back handsomely wounding Maj. Gen. Walker and taking him prisoner and also wounding Gen. Evans who commanded the Rebels at Kinston. We picketed the field after the battle was over and the rebel dead were lying very thick. Our men have buried a good many of them this morning but there are still lots of them left. The enemy is very active in front and means mischief. Beauregard is in command and was not ten yards from Walker yesterday when that worthy was taken prisoner. Butler is not soldier enough to deal with Beauregard and I hope someone else will be sent here. We whipped them handsomely at first, and got nearly halfway to Richmond when he allowed his right wing to be surprised and beaten which put us back where we started from. Butler lies outrageously in his dispatches you can tell nothing by them. Our

losses since we came here already reach nearly Seven Thousand. The rebel loss must be quite as heavy for in every action but one we have beaten them, but our Generals do not seem to know how to take advantage of a victory when they gain one.

You say you hope I shall do my duty wherever it is, which I take it implies a suspicion that I shall not. Those who serve with me have no such fear neither do my superior officers. The commander of the Brigade complimented me personally as well as my regiment for conduct in last Monday's fight. It is middle of the forenoon but I am so sleepy I cannot write though I have writing enough to keep me busy two days.

The rebels are directly in front of us, not more than a mile entrenching themselves strongly. I have just been up to look at them and went within three hundred yards of their works. If we wait a day or two longer the rebel shells will be falling among us thicker than they ever did on Morris Island.

I hear nothing said about being paid off yet so you will have to make calculations accordingly.

Give my regards to all. I got hardly any letters yours of the 14th I did not get until the 19th though we get New York papers the day after they are printed. I got the magazine. You need not send papers they will be too old to be interesting. I am asleep again.

Good day Otis

Love to the children

JL104=

Bermuda Hundred

May 23d 1864

My dear Wife,

I believe I sent you a short letter yesterday but don't know what I wrote. I really meant to have sent you an account of our campaign here, but it is an old story now and it seems such a job to write it. Night before last I was detailed as General Officer of the day, which means that I was to command all the pickets of our division for 24 hours. It takes two regiments to do it. I had the 6th and 7th Conn. My own regiment was in the night before so I could not take it out. My command did not get on until after dark. Our picket line is as near the enemy as from our house to Mr. Keeny's; both in Rifle Pits and fire at each other as often as they can get an opportunity. They are in heavy force in front of us and commanded by Beauregard. Bushrod Johnson is also here, and how many more generals of note it is impossible to say. My command consisted of about a thousand men and extended over about a mile and a half of ground. We had a sharp skirmish with the rebels at about 11 O'clock at night but it did not amount to much. We had a few men wounded but not seriously. The next morning it was very hot and the dead rebels in front of the lines began to be troublesome to the men on post, so in the afternoon I went out with a Flag of Truce and told the Rebels that they had better have them buried, or rather allow us to bury them, for they were so near our lines we could not allow them to come there. Col. Fason of the 30th N.C. and Major Owen of the Washington Artillery met me and requested me to have their dead sent in instead of burying them this I concented to, and had them collected and sent in. We found about 30 they had lain so long that none could be identified. I met several Officers of the Confederate Army, all except one very gentlemanly. Some of them were the worst dressed men I ever saw, nearly all were dressed the same as privates and could not be distinguished from them without a very close inspection. Col. Fason wore a citizens dress entirely having no sign of rank about him. Major Owen wore a uniform and was very nicely dressed indeed. They all said they were tired of war and reconed we were, and if we wanted to stop all we had to do was to stop fighting and they would. We talked together all the time the men were collecting the dead, and parted pretty good friends. They gave me a Richmond paper of the 21st but I sent it back to the General and have not been able to get it again. I was relieved at dark last night pretty well used up. The rebels amused themselves by shooting at me occasionally as I was going around to visit my command, but the trees were so thick they did not stand much chance to hit me. It seemed to amuse them and done me no harm so I did not care much about it. You say you would like to

know what we are getting to eat. Well we don't get any too much but for the last few days we have done very well having got fresh meat twice within a week. We manage to get bean soup or potato stew nearly every noon when not on the march, then we eat what we can catch which is little enough generally. When we can get nothing else we buy canned meats but they are very expensive and not very good. Even with our poor fare, it costs over a dollar a day for food alone. I thought until I met the rebel officers yesterday, that I was about the [most] forlorn looking object to be met with in Virginia. The binding worn off my blouse, some of the buttons missing. My pants torn to rags and about as dirty as they could be. A big hole in each boot and the lining of my coat torn from top to bottom, two big holes in my hat torn in riding [through] the the woods, made me think I was anything but an ornamental appendage to the regiment. But after spending two hours among the rebel officers I made up my mind that my personal appearance was a credit to the Union Army

the P.M. is waiting for my letter Good day, Otis
(Love to the children and regards to friends)

JL105=

Headquarters 10th Regt C.V.
Bermuda Hundred May 26th 1864

My dear Wife.

I have recieved no letters from you since yours of the 12th fourteen days ago, though I have written you several since that time. I have been notified that there is a letter for me at Fortress Munroe with six cents due on it, and have forwarded the six cents, perhaps that is from you. I have no news to write as nothing of importance occurred since my last. I write now for the purpose of sending a rough draft of my officer's report. It has been altered considerably in the copy I forwarded to the Adjutant General but is the same in substance. If you look into the Herald of the 24th you will see an account of a fight which took place between 11 and 12 O'clock on saturday night in which it is claimed that Gen. Ames whipped the rebels terribly. It is a very good story but a lie from beginning to end, almost. Ames was not there, and the only regiment of his command which was there run like a flock of sheep at the first fire. I was in command myself and all the fighting done was by the 6th Conn. Maj. Klien and 7th Conn. Maj. Sandford both under my command. I was present all the time and it was not much of a fight anyway. The bullets did fly so thick at one time that I was compelled to send my horse to the rear. He did not seem to care for the report of the guns but the whistling of the bullets seemed to frighten him. The rebels made an attack on us but we drove them back without any trouble and did not have more than half a dozen men hurt all together. The rebels may have lost a few more, probably did, but it could not have been serious. The story about the immense numbers of rebel dead left on the ground next morning has just this much truth in it and no more. When I took command of the outposts at six O'clock on saturday night, I found quite a number of rebel dead just outside our lines, and about a dozen inside. They were killed in the fight with Howell's Brigade on friday. Our men buried those inside the lines but could not those on the outside because the moment one of our men attempted to approach them or even show themselves outside the rifle pits a dozen rebel bullets whistled about their ears. It was very warm and by sunday the stench was so horrible that our men could hardly stay on post. So I went out with a flag of truce and offered to bury them. The rebel officers asked me to allow them to take them away and I consented. The Ambulance Corps of the 7th Reg't collecting and delivering them up to the number of about Thirty. We had buried Eleven before. Not more than three or four of them were killed in the saturday night skirmish, and I can certify that Ames' men did not kill one of them. It was an affair of no importance whatever. The rebels attack me just before midnight we drove them back without much loss to ourselves or them either. The two regiments under my command did all the fighting that was done and behaved first rate, but it was a small affair anyway.

I have written a good deal more about it than I designed at first but I want you to see what stories reporters tell and how little they can be depended on. I think Ames must pay well to have such lies told for him. If reports from other armies lie as the reports do here, God help us! We must be in a bad way. I shall expect a letter tonight certain. We have a strong position here and

can hold it against all Lee's Army, but we are fastened in here and cannot get out. I hope Grant is whipping Lee and wish we were there to help him.

Love to all. / good night.

Otis

JL106=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Bermuda Hundred May 29th 1864

My Dear Wife,

I am just in from picket again; or rather got in about dark last night having been out 24 hours. The 24 hours previous to that I lay in the trenches with my regiment which was just about as bad as picket duty. But I slept in my tent last night being just the fourth night out of the last fourteen. The last of my regiment got in from picket about half past ten last night and had to turn out under arms at half past three this morning, and the entire regiment go on fatigue duty at six this morning. Our routine of duty is so badly organized that it is killing the men faster than fighting would.

A large portion of the troops are being sent away from here, it is said to reinforce Grant. Some Fifteen thousand are now going on board transports. I feel so vexed and discouraged when I think of the failure of this expedition that it puts me out of patience entirely. At first it was a brilliant sweep, and though our Generals used the troops after their usual fashion, using but one brigade at a time, we were successful everywhere, cutting their railroads, and defeating their troops; or rather defeating their troops and cutting the R.R.s afterwards. In our main advance we whipped them out of strong fortifications, with heavy loss to them; our men fighting magnificently. But Butler failed miserably in generalship; allowed himself to be surprised in a fog, and then after we had fairly beaten them back notwithstanding the disadvantage, hurried back to his entrenchments, and now he could not get out if he wanted to. Lying reporters who are paid for it may whistle our losses down the wind as much as they please. Our entire loss on that bloody Monday was not much short of Seven Thousand men. Our own Division which comprised about one fifth of the force and was not defeated at all but retired in excellent order driving the rebels back easily every time they attack us, and did not retire at all until repeatedly ordered to do so, lost Thirteen Hundred and Seventy. You can judge what those lost who were driven back. Still, under a competent General this movement would have been a brilliant sweep. The enemy make quite a show of Infantry force in our front, but I think they have few troops here and what they have mostly Malitia. We picket so near together that the men would talk together if we would allow it. The enemies pickets are unusually strong which makes me think there is not much behind them. I send you a rebel paper I got by exchange with the Rebel pickets yesterday. There is no news in it, but I thought you might like to see it. We have a strong position here and can hold it without doubt, though I don't see much use in holding it. The enemy has repaired the R.R. and we can hear the cars run by several times a day.

Last tuesday we had all the strawberries for tea we could eat, and some to spare. Last night we had green peas but they were not half cooked and were only an aggravation. If they had had your style of cooking applied to them they would have been delicious.

I want you to send me some stockings as soon as you can conveniently, mine are giving out. Send about 3 pairs by mail directed to "Wm E. Whittlesy Head Qut. 10th C.V., Bermuda Hundred Va." You cannot send packages to an Officer by mail. Whittlesy is my clerk. You are not to send a letter in the bundle.

I am pleased to hear that the children take such an interest in the school. I felt sure they would if they had a good teacher. Their gardening to, will be a success, I know, for there are no boys who can do better at anything than they can. Otis

Give my regards to all. Tell Sophia I shall write her when I get time. I don't see what is to hinder Leander from writing whether I write or not.

JL107=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't. C.V.

Bermuda Hundred Va.

June 6th, 1864

Dear Wife,

I recieved your letter of May 31st three days ago which is rather quicker than they usually come. We have little enough to write about here now, as everything has settled down into a jog trot sort of existence, and one day's experience is very much like another. To be sure, our daily experience would prove suffisciently exciting to one not accustomed to it. Nearly every day an artillery duel takes place between us and the enemy. Sometimes it is quite severe, at others but few guns are used. Last evening while we were at tea, the Rebels commenced shelling us with about a dozen pieces of artillery - our own responded, but not very furiously. Shells burst all around us at the rate of about twenty per minute, but no one thought of leaving the table (for we have an old rickety apology for a table that can just stand alone) until the meal was finished.

Occasionally the Rebels open on us at night, and then, to one who can enjoy it without a sense of personal danger, the effect is grand beyound discription. I was out on picket one night with three regiments when an alarm was given somewhere along the line: our men commenced firing and the enemy responded with a tremendous fire of musketry; soon their light Artillery took part throwing Case shot and shell. Our heavy Parrot Guns replied to their fire throwing shot and shell over our heads at the rebel works. The enemy replied with his rifled guns on our principle fortifications. We were directly between them, but much nearer the enemie's line than our own. It was about the same relatively, as if our entrenchments, three miles in length, were down about to Hathways, and those of the enemy at the Green, with our picket line at our house and that of the enemy at Mr. Keeny's. The three regiments under my command stretched out about two miles in length, most of the way through thick pine woods. The enemy kept their light batteries playing on our picket line while their heavy guns returned the fire [of] our Parrots. We were fighting the Rebel picket line which was supported by the fire of their field guns while the fortifications opened on each other directly over our heads. I soon found that the enemy had no intention of advancing, and as the men all kept their places, I had a little time to look around me. It was between Eleven and Twelve of a beautiful starlight night: not a breath of wind stirring. The rattling vollies of musketry kept up by the pickets was perfectly deafning while every two seconds a shell or case shot, burst above our heads, echoing and re-echoing among the tall pines, their red flash bringing out every tree and bush in bold relief. above all, rose the deep boom of the heavy guns of the fortifications answering each other in rapid succession, their immense missiles crossing each other in firy arches directly over us; wonderfully distinct and near too as we looked up through the opening of the treetops to the dark sky above. Soon the gun boats took part in the noisy pastime their tremendous shells crashing through the woods cutting off the tall pines like grass sending them down with a crash that sounded far above the roar of ar[t]illery. Soon the smoke of our guns came drifting down from the front settling among the trees and shut out even the sight of each other. Nothing could be se[e]n but the flash of muskets close at hand, and the burst of shell which fell in our midst, their momentary light showing the faces of the half dozen officers surrounding me with their eager intent expression, who disappeared like phantoms before one could mark the place where they stood But the fight went on. though we could see nothing, we could still hear the deep roar of the heavy guns, the crash of the light batteries while the musketry seemed in our very faces. Shells tore through the woods sending down branches on our heads every minute. Shots from the fortifications still howled over us like demons, while the thunder of falling trees from the fire of the gun boats waked every echo of the grand old forest. But nearer, and more deadly to a practised ear was the wicked hum of rifle balls which cut the air in every direction and rattled like hail among the trees.-- In about half an hour the artillery fire slackened as if by common consent, though the musketry continued; fearing that our ammunition would give out I ordered the bugler to sound the signal to "Cease firing". At first the Rebels seemed to think that the bugle ment mischief and wherever I went to have the call sounded they responded with an increased volley in the direction from whence it came. But they soon found that silence followed the sound along our lines, and seemed quite ready to obey the signal themselves. After all was over I rode along the lines and finding all the detachments in their places returned to my position: threw myself on the ground and was asleep in five minutes.

Several times since the display has been repeated but never on so grand a scale. One night it was repeated when I was in camp. I went up to the entrenchments, and mounting the parapet watched the scene to its close. The immense shells went sailing through the air forming long fiery arches against the dark sky while the shot came screaming along in unseen, the effect being all the more terrible because of the agent being invisible. At the end of half an hour all was over. I returned to my tent to find that an unexploded shell had pass[ed] directly over it, striking a few feet in the rear frightening the Bu[t]cher and the servants about out of their wits. A solid shot had also struck just in front of the tent. The boys have got them saved, and show them to other darks with immense stories of hair breadth escapes on the night the "Colonel's tent was shelled".

Last friday night I was again in command of the pickets, and got into a fight in the most ridiculous manner. You must know that our pickets are so near that the men could easily talk together if we would allow it. They do not fire at each other during the day at all. I often when in command of the pickets pass along the line in full sight of the rebels where they could easily shoot a man if they desired to. Sometimes I go on foot and sometimes on horse back and the[y] have never yet fired at me in the daytime. But I was going to tell you how the fight commenced. Last friday night, about Eleven O'clock, I was sitting on an ammunition box near the center of the picket line. There was no one with me except Major Butler who was in command of one of the Regiments, and the four mounted orderlies who always attend the General Officer of the day (commander of the picket line) the Major was asleep on the ground: the orderlies ditto, their horses and my own, picketed in the bushes close at hand. I must have been pretty near asleep myself, for the first I remember hearing was the tip end of a most unearthly yell, but whether from one human throat or a thousand I was not wide awake enough to distinguish. What followed however there was no mistaking. Before I was fairly on my feet a volley of musketry from more than half a mile of the Rebel line came rattling through the woods responded to by our own before the flash of their guns had fairly died away. For the next fifteen minutes the air was alive with rifle balls their terrible music shutting out every other sound except the crack of the pieces which sent them. A few men more scared than hurt came rushing out of the rifle pits saying the Rebels had charged and driven them out. I knew better and made them go back to their places which they were not very loth to do for they all said the bullets flew thicker about head quarters a little thicker than anywhere else. This was owing to the line in front being semi-circular and head quarters of the picket in the center, the shots came from both flanks and the front at the same time. I soon gave orders to cease firing: the Rebels responded as usual by firing at me but being dark their shooting was nothing to brag of. We only lost one man killed and two wounded. When the firing was over I went along the line to ascertain who commenced the fuss.. It appeared that a man named Stevens belonging to the 85th P.a. got to sleep in one of the rifle pits just in rear of the pickets, and in a fit of nightmare, gave the horrid scream we heard at the beginning. The rebels thinking the yell indicated a charge immediately opened a tremendous fire to which our men responded and it was kept up for nearly half an hour.

You will see by the papers that a portion of the 7th Reg't. was surprised and captured. Among them their Commanding Officer Major Sandford. My regiment picketed the same ground two nights before, and I stayed at the same place Major Sandford was staying at when captured. Captain Mills (you of course remember his wife) was mortally wounded and has since died - Grant's Army is so near we can hear the roar of his artillery with great distinctness, and last friday evening their volleys of musketry could be plainly heard all along our lines. I have a Bridgeport paper containing letters from Col. Noble, who evidently considers himself a man of considerable importance by virtue of his position as Post Commandant at St. Augustine. It seems I never half appreciated my position while there, and had no idea of the immense responsibilities of a Post Commandant - catch me that way again. I am going to commence a Newspaper correspondence immediately.

I sent off a long letter to Captain Sweatland day before yesterday and immediately commenced this. I have an unanswered letter also from Dr. Newton.

I got your letter of the 3d last night. The Photograph of Mr. ---? he gave me on board the steamer at Fortress Munroe. I have not yet recieved the letters I mention. The other Photograph is that of Lieut. Savage of Co. B. - I should think you would prefer a New York to a Hartford paper. You would get so much more army news. - did Arthur's account of our operations correspond with mine?

Mrs. Hill had best not send her son much money he will not need it, and will be almost sure to spend it for what will do him no good. As we are situated here privates live as well as Officers,

and that too at no expense to themselves while it costs Officers half they get for food alone. Sugar 20 cts coffee 45! Beef 16 and everything else in proportion. We have to give Fourteen Dollars for a pair of flannel pants; soldiers get theirs for nothing.

The Enlisted men of the regiment were paid off yesterday - Officers not - The Paymaster gave as a reason that he had paid off so many Generals and their staffs that he had not money enough left to pay us - pretty cool considering that he was sent up expressly to pay us. - I am not surprised that Avery has been compelled to give up his place. I knew a long time ago that he was worth nothing.

Tell Phil he must be sure and not go fishing where the water is deep. When I get home I will go fishing with him. Tell Harry I am pleased to hear so good an account of his gardening. There. I believe this is the worst written letter I ever put my name to, and if I had time would write it over, but I have not the time. I don't know what I have found to write about or what I shall write next time. It is a source of wonder to me what Camp and Trumbull find to write about, they write at least 25 pages a day; but some folks do have so many hair breadth escapes to tell of everytime a shell explodes within half a mile that it takes a great deal of writing to give people a proper appreciation of the danger and hardships some people undergo. Between you and I, a few years hence a work will be published glorifying a Staff Officer or two in a way that would astonish anyone conversant with the facts. You think I am apt to exaggerate, but I think I am about the only man in the army who does not.

I ought to have addressed this letter to the children and would now if it was not so badly written.

It takes my last Postage stamp for this letter so I can send no more till you send me some stamps. Send also a skein or two of blk silk.

The rebels have been shelling us for the last half hour but I was bound to finish this letter.

Otis

JL108=

Bermuda Hundred

June 20th 1864

My Dear Wife

The last letter I recieved from you was mailed the 8th, twelve days ago, and I think it has been a week at least since I wrote you. A portion of the time fe[l]t too unwell to write, and the rest of the time I have been too busy. Last Wednesday we had quite an exciting time the Rebels evacuated all their works in front of us and we went out and occupied them without a fight. My regiment had the advance and took 30 prisoners. We sent out a force to distroy the R.R. track again and succeeded in doing it but this cutting up a little peice of railroad does not amo[u]nt to much as it can be repaired in about the same time it takes to tear it up. We occupied the enemy's works (which were very strong) all day. At the same time Lee's Army was crossing a pontoon bridge at Drury's Bluff, and marching across our front to Petersburg. At one time Lee himself was within a few hundred yards of us. We took some prisoners from his advanced regiment who said he was riding at the head of the regiment only a few moments before. But we had no force here to attact him with and had to let him go by. At night we withdrew and left the enemies works and they came back and took possession of them. Of all the stupid blunders that Butler has committed since coming here that was the worst, we had not men enough to go out and attact Lee, but we had enough to hold the enemies works easily. Butler was fool enough to suppose that the Rebels were not coming back and he could go back anytime and re-occupy them. But we had not been out of them half an hour before the Rebels were in them again and act as if they meant to stay there. I was left till the last with my regiment on the extreme right and not notified that the works were to be evacuated until evryone else had left. We came very near being caught the rebels getting into the works and opening fire on us when we were not more than three hundred yards distant. It would now cost ten thousand men probably to retake the works Butler was so wise as to give up and let the Rebels walk into. The old Rascal has managed to keep himself all right at home by sending lying reports to the papers and sacraficing subordinate officers, but how

he is to account for this blunder or whose is [to] be made a scapegoat of I don't see. Gillmore was never a favorite with me as you know but to see him sacrafiseced to save Butler is too much. Every Officer and man here except Butler's personal staff and paid Liars like the Correspondents of the Tribune and Indepent sympathyse with Gillmore, who could no more have taken Petersburg on the 9th than he could have taken Richmond. And the best proof of it is that Grant's entire Army has been trying five days and has not taken it yet. Though the same authority which says Gillmore could have taken the place on the 9th admits that that the Garrison had not been re-enforced when Grant's Army made the attact. But I have not much time so I will change the subject. The stockings came all right I should have preferred worsted ones but perhaps can get along with these. You paid just 30 cents too much postage on them as the P.M. there must have known if he is not a fool.

I was General Officer of the Day again day before yesterday and had quite a fight with the Rebels they took a portion of our rifle pits from us but we took them back, with quite a number of prisoners.

Grant is getting along pretty well, and his last move is the best of all, he is now just where he ought to be. If Sherman does not get defeated in Georgia we are all right.

Give my regards to all. I don't write many letters for I have not time. I sent you \$250 by Express a short time since have you got it.

My love to you all. Good day Otis

JL109=

Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.

Deep Bottom Va. June 28th 1864

Dear Wife. [in pencil--shaky writing]

I closed my last letter very suddenly but did not tell you the reason. I was ordered [a]way with my regiment while writing it, with two days rations and 100 rounds of ammunition. My regiment had the advance as usual. We crossed the River in boats during the night taking possession of this place and have been here ever since - on the bank of the James River 9 miles from Richmond. Having command of the advance I had to establish the outposts which took me until morning. I got very wet and the next day was taken sick with just such an attact as I had at So. Manchester when Jaques attended me. I am able to sit up a little now but cannot write much, and should not make the attempt but thought you would feel alarmed at not hearing from me. My love to all. I can write no more now.

Otis.

I am still with the Reg't. Direct as usual.

O.

JL110=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Deep Bottom Va. July 3d 1864

Dear Wife:

I recieved your letter of the 26th but yesterday, and will try to write a short answer though I am still quite sick and unabl to sit up but a little while at a time.

You speak of the heat there..it cannot possibly be as bad as it is here all agree that they never experienced anything like it either in South Carolina or Florida. When I get well enough I will give you some account of our experience here, and of my own while sick.

I have got no reply from Capt. Sweetland yet when I do I will send it.

I thought I had written you that Miss Mather, Miss Perrit & Lizzie Smith all went north nearly a month ago. Mrs. Trumbull wrote her husband in her last letter that Miss Mather had called on her.

I suppose you are aware that we are with Gen. Rob't. Foster forces on the north side of James River. Our men found an iron pot full of gold and silver coin soon after we came here. I will write you about it when I get well enough.

Have you collected the interest on your Bonds yet? You should do it promptly. it is payable in gold and you should see or get someone to see for you that you get the full value. Don't fail to have it collected at once if you have not already done so.

Tell Leander I got his letter but cannot answer it at present. The Campaign looks very discouraging to us here Grant may be able to accomplish something but I hardly see how. The taking of Petersburg would turn the campaign in our favor, but little progress is made in that direction. Kory's Cavalry Three Thousand strong has just been captured by the Rebels, and add to that the disgraceful surprise and capture of a portion of the 2nd Corps and the Rebels certainly have something to brag about.

I am completely exhausted and can write no more. My love to you all,

Otis

JL111=

Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.

Deep Bottom Va July 9th/64

Dear Wife,

I recieved letters from Harry and Phil day before yesterday without date but mailed on the 4th. last night I recieved one from you, mailed the same day and suppose they must have been put in to-gether. I wrote you a short note in pencil, nearly two weeks ago saying I was quite ill, and a few days later wrote you again. I judge by your letter that you recieved neither and fear you do not get my letters. One week while at Bermuda Hundred I wrote or rather sent three, one containing one of my reports and another some accounts of our night skirmishes, when on picket, but you did not mention getting either of them.

I am much pleased that the children can write so well, and will answer their letters seperately as soon as I get well enough. Next time I want the letters to be of their own composition and spelling entirely. The writing is quite creditable to them both. Harry writes well for a little boy who is left handed, and it will be all the more credit to him to make a good penman, as I am sure he will in time. Phil seems to take writing quite naturally.

It is still very hot and dry here though the weather is not quite as warm as it has been. We have had no rain however and the dust is perfectly suffocating.

I should like to help the children fire their crackers there well enough, but don't think I should enjoy them much here. I have not been out of the sound of Artillery and musketry night or day for Sixty Four days, and have not had my clothes off excep to change them for over Seventy Days, and during that time have had a severe attack of fever. I hope Dr. Woodbridge will have all the success he deserves - if he has no more he will not get rich very fast. I don't know the Mrs. Keeny you speak of unless it is Mrs. Roges' sister they lived in that vicinity.

Alonzo Risley lived up beyound Glass-Gut[?] on the Vernon road. I knew him very well you probably never saw him. his brother Frank married Bill Grey's sister I am quite ill yet and do not sit up much but am considerable better. The bad weather and want of proper food keeps me back, so that I get strength very slowly. I did not think I could write so much when I commenced, for my hand tremble[s] dreadfully.

You speak of taking the Press when your term for the Post expires. I think I would not. it is run, as far as military is concerned for the benefit of the 7th Regiment, and is ultra "nigger" I should suppose you would like a New York Daily better. I have read the Times a good deal since coming here and like its tone better than any other. You had best suit yourself however. but I think you would like the Courant better than the Press if you conclude to take a Hartford paper.

I.M. Fowler has resigned and is on the way home he says he shall call on you and I think he will, but not immediately.

My love to all. Good day Otis

JL112=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Deep Bottom V.A. July 13th 1864

Dear Wife.

I expected to have recieved a letter from you last night, but none came. I will write a note however, though if the reports we hear, that the Rebels have cut the communications between Philadelphia and Baltimore are true, it will not reach you very soon.

There has been some improvement in the weather since I wrote last, we have had a few light showers which lay the dust for a day and make the atmosphere more bearable. We get no news here except by way of New York, and know nothing of what is going on at Petersburg except what we see in Northern papers, and that we know is not to be depended on. We are near enough to Petersburg to hear every cannon shot, but never get any news from there. I think they cannot be making news there very fast. Here we spend most of the time entrenching; varying the amusement occasionally by a slight picket skirmish. Night before last our boys performed quite a little piece of service of which you will probably see an account in the papers. About 2 P.M. Capt Davis of Gen Fosters staff came to me with a telegram from Gen. Butler asking for 50 men for a dangerous expedition. He wanted volunteers and not a detail. I offered to furnish the men at once and soon had more offers than we could use. We selected 50 and about dark they were taken on board a steam tug and started up the River. They went up to a place called Dutch Gap where they landed and remained until about 3 in the morning and then started for a Rebel landing place about three miles farther up the river than our Gun Boats have dared to go, and only a quarter of a mile from where the Rebel rams are lying. The party made so rapid a decent on the place that they captured a Rebel lieutenant and 14 men. about as many more escaped. They then set fire to a large grist mill full of grain, four large store houses, also full and a Blacksmith's shop. They also captured a Torpedo just brought down from Richmond, with two large boxes of powder designed to fill it, and a galvanic Battery for exploding it. The steamer which brought these things from Richmond had not been gone more than 15 minutes when our men got there. The party having accomplished (as they supposed) the work for which they had been sent out, started back but after getting about half to their boat discovered that the mill was not burning. In the meantime the skirmishers of a party of Rebels sent to drive them off had got between them and the mill; but they were not to be frightened at trifles (I told them before they left they were not to be turned back by anything short of a brigade) so they turned back and drove in the rebel skirmishers, wounding and taking one of their Sergeants prisoner: set fire to the mill again and this time made a sure thing of it. The party got back to camp about 8 the next morning bringing prisoners torpedo and all, without loosing a man.

We hear great stories about the invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, but don't know how much of them to believe. If it is true that Thirty Thousand Rebels are in Maryland, not a man of them should ever get back to Richmond, but they will, for our people are too much frightened to do anything. I suppose Manchester is safe however, from southern traitors; whether it is from northern ones is doubtful.

I have nothing of personal interest to write. I am getting better slowly and can sit up about half the time. It troubles me to write yet, my hands tremble so that I have to write very slowly and stop often. Give my regards to our friends. tell the children I shall write them as soon as I am able. Much love to all,

Otis

JL113=

Headquarters 10 Regt.C.V.

Deep Bottom, Va. July 17th 1864

My dear Boy,

I got two letters from home on the 9th, one from you, and the other from Phil. Neither were dated, but as you talked about fire-crackers I suppose they must have been written on the 3d of July. The next day I recieved a letter from Mama written on the 2d and suppose they must all have been put in the office at the same time. Phil said he must have an answer to his letter all to himself. I shall be very glad indeed to answer all your letters, so write away as fast as you please, but you must not expect me to write very long letters when you only write a few lines. That would not be fair you know. Tell Phil I am going to answer his letter too, but I answer yours first because you are the oldest.

I was very glad to find you could write so well; being left-handed it will be much harder for you to learn and more credit to you to make a good writer, as I can see you will in time. You can write better now than I could at your age.

You have not known much of our proceedings since we left Bermuda Hundred. I have been sick and could not write, but will tell you something about it now though my hands still tremble so I can write but little at a time. On the 20th of June I recieved orders to have my regiment ready to march at 5 P.M. in light marching order with two days rations and 100 rounds of ammunition. We could not ascertain where we were to go; some said we were going out to make an assault on the enemy's works, but I could not think we were going to do anything so foolish; besides the taking of two day's rations looked as if we were going farther. We started at 5 O.Clock however and instead of marching to the front went directly to the rear. Our entire brigade 1500 strong was in motion and as we came out on another road we were joined by 600 more. Taking a road leading towards the James River we came out in sight of that stream about sunset and marching into a large oat field waited for the means to cross. The oats had been eaten down by the government cattle, but there was still enough left to make the field look green and refreshing to soldiers who had seen nothing but dusty roads and bare earth-works for a month. It was a fine sight to see our six splendid regiments each 400 strong file into the field one behind the other, stack arms and lie down on the ground, the setting sun shining on our long rows of glittering muskets making them shine like silver. Soon the teams containing Pontoons went rattling down the hill towards the river, and just at dark an order came from the General for me to take two regiments (my own and the 11th Maine) cross the river in the pontoons and take possession of a place called Deep Bottom about 10 miles from Richmond. I marched my command down to the bank of the river, and the pontoons not being ready stacked arms again in a splendid field of clover, and being very tired gave my horse to the orderly and laid down in the grass. I was soon fast asleep and must have slept an hour when a staff officer came and said the pontoons were ready. What would you think of lying down in the middle of a field without blankets and going to sleep with the dew falling and the cold moon shining full in your face. But perhaps before going farther you would like me to tell you just what a pontoon is. A "pontoon" is a large flat bottom boat about 20 feet long and somewhat wider in the middle than at the ends, also considerable deeper. The bridge is formed by anchoring these boats side by side across the River a few feet apart, and then placing four string pieces or small timbers from boat to boat, and laying plank on them the same as you would on any bridge, and fastening the plank on with ropes. The bridge is then complete; troops, wagons, Artillery or anything can pass over. But I was not to wait until the bridge was built. As soon as the boats were in the water I was to embark my Command in them and cross over leaving the bridge to be built afterwards and the balance of the troops to cross after it was finished. We got across the River about One O'clock at night, and leaving my men to land and form on the shore I clambered up the steep bank to take a look at the country and see what was best to be done. It was a magnificent moonlight night; so light that after establishing the picket line I was able to read and order from Gen. Foster by the light of the moon alone. After clambering up the bank I found myself on a fine plain extending half a mile from the River and covered with a fine crop of wheat and oats nearly ready for reaping. This plain was cut completely in two through the middle by a deep ravine running straight down to the River, the banks being more than 20 feet high and perpendicular like the sides of a ditch. On the right of the ravine the plain terminated in a thick wood; how many Rebels occupied the wood we did not know, but we had reason to suppose they were there. On the left of the ravine the plain

terminated in a hill nearly as high and as steep as that in the rear of Mr. Keeny's. On the top of this hill I could see the fine shade trees and tall chimnies of a plantation establishment, and was told that the Rebels had a strong picket force there. I was not long in making up my mind what to do. I divided my Command into three parties, one to skirmish across on the right of the ravine and through the woods until they reached the New Market road leading straight to Richmond. Another party was to skirt the plain on the extreme left, and keeping under the shadow of some woods try to get in the rear of the plantation and capture the Rebel pickets. With the balance of the force I advanced directly across the field towards the Rebel position. They did not wait for us but left as soon as they saw us coming. I was very glad they did, for when our men advanced through the ripe grain on the side hill their dark uniforms contrasted so strongly with the colour of the wheat that the Rebels might have picked them off as easily as in the day time. When we got to the top of the hill the enemy had left. There was no house where we had seen the chimnies; the buildings had been burned a few days before. The garden was in fine condition and all the plantation under cultivation. We advanced beyond the hill and found ourselves on another broad plain covered with acres on acres of wheat and oats. Having now advanced a good distance from the river and having but two regiments with me, I halted and uniting my three detachments established the picket line; it is now just where I established it that night, except that we have thrown out two advanced parties to occupy a couple of plantation houses just beyond our lines. In establishing the line that night I got very wet indeed. I had to leave my horses on the other side of the River until the bridge was completed, so that night was compelled to go on foot the same as the rest. I walked at least Five miles in establishing the picket line. The grain was up to my waist and as wet with dew as it would have been had it rained all day. It was almost like wading in water. My clothes became completely drenched, and at every step the water run through my clothes and down into my boots until they were full and run over. It was a very chilly night; we could have no fires, and before morning what with cold, fatigue and loss of sleep I was pretty nearly used up. In the morning the Rebels came down to take a look at us and see how strong we were, but Major Greeley ordered some of the men to fire on them and killed one of their horses, when they cleared out. Afterwards they came down with some artillery but did not fire on us.

I cannot write any more about military affairs now but will tell more about them in Phil's letter which I will write as soon as possible. We have to move camp to-morrow and I cannot tell how soon I shall be able to write again.

I got a letter from mama last night written on the 9th the first I had had for two weeks. I began to think I should never get any more letters; I don't know where it could have been so long. I commenced this letter two days ago, so you see I don't get along very fast though it is just as long as three of Mothers letters. Give my love to Mother and Phil; tell them they must be patient and not expect letters too soon.

Good night. Papa

Harry P. Otis
Manchester
Conn.

JL114=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.
Deep Bottom, V.A. July 21st 1864

My dear Boy,

I recieved your letter at the same time I did Harry's and answer it as soon as possible after answering his. I was much pleased with your letter and glad to find you improving so rapidly in your writing; as I have no doubt you do in your other studies. - Keep your fish-hook and line safe until I come home, and I shall be as ready to go fishing as you will.

We are still at Deep Bottom, but moved our camp yesterday about a quarter of a mile.

I think I wrote something about our men finding some money here in one of my former letters, but was not well enough to write a full account of it; but perhaps I had better take up the story where I left off in Harry's letter, and tell you what little of interest has taken place here. The first day after we came here I remained out in command of the picket, with the same two regiments on

duty until about 5 [O]Clock in the afternoon. I was then relieved [and] took my command back to the River. Myself and men had been without rest so long that I wished to get them a good place to sleep so instead of taking the ground assigned me where the fatigue parties would be marching past and over them all night, I found a quiet little valley down by the river bank and marched my own regiment down there. The men soon finished their supper of fat pork and hard bread, and without waiting for it to come dark, spread their blankets on the ground and went to sleep. But they were all wide awake and stirring early in the morning and some of them thinking they would have time to catch some fish before going to work on the entrenchments, commenced looking for worms. Nearby where we bivouacked and quite near the bank of the river was the chimneys of a house; the house itself having been burned by the gun-boats about a week before because the rebe Guerrilla's hid there and fired at them as they passed. Well, the boys went to the garden of this house and commenced digging for worms; soon one of them came to a board about a foot under ground, and not liking to take the trouble to pull it up went to another place. Another man coming along pulled up the board; there was an old iron pot under it which appeared to have some old rags in it; he tried to pull up the pot but it would not come so he put his hand down to see what was in it. The first thing he got hold of was quite a large bag of silver with a string tied around the middle. He held up the bag but it broke in two and one half fell on the ground. Another soldier standing near saw what the bag contained and catching up the fallen half, run away as hard as he could go. A dozen soldiers were standing around and all made a rush for the prize; there was rare scrambling I can tell you. Some of the money was gold and some silver; some in little boxes, and some in bags. When a man got one of the boxes or bags he run as hard as he could go, leaving the rest to get what they could. Some of the bags burst and the men pushed and scrambled for the money, so excited they hardly knew what they were about. I heard one good natured fellow sing out, "Fall in for your specie." At first I could hardly believe they had found the money supposing it was only a camp story. But soon a man came along with a box of gold, then another with a bag of silver, finally one came where I was lying and wanted me to see his "pile". He had his pockets full and commenced emptying them with both hands and piling the money up on the ground, he had at least a quart. Mexican dollars, quarte[r]s and halves; ten cent pieces and old fashioned sixpences evidently the hoarding of years. No one knows to whom it belonged or why the owner was so foolish as to bury and leave it in such a place. Some fifteen or twenty men got from Thirty to One Hundred and Fifty Dollars each. All told about a Thousand Dollars as near as I could find out. You may be sure that digging was very popular for the next week, every foot of ground withing a hundred yards of any old building or chimney was soon dug over the men not being content as long as a single particle of the "sacred soil" remained undisturbed, but as you would readily guess no more money was found.

That night we went on picket again. I was not General Officer of the Day, and not obliged to go, but I always go with the regiment and so went out tho I was quite sick and unable to ride the next day I was worse and lay on my blanket all day. That was nearly four weeks ago and I have done no duty since, but have been with the regiment all the time. Luckily we have had no fighting, though the Rebels shell our camp occasionally. Three days ago they shelled us sharply while we were at breakfast. One shell passed through three tents, one of them next to mine and lodged under the fourth without bursting. Another burst so near the tent that a piece came near knocking one of our servant's head off as he was bringing in our breakfast; but we get used to such things and only laugh at them, though it is not so very funny when one of them hits a man.

Last week I sent 50 men up the River under Lieut's Linsley[?] and Sharp, by order of Gen. Butler. The[y] went to a place called Cox's Wharf where they attack the Rebel force; took One officer and Fourteen men prisoners and drove the rest off. They then set fire to a steam grist mill, two store-Houses filled with grain and a Blacksmith's shop. They also captured and brought away a Rebel Torpedo two large boxes of powder designed to fill it with, and a Galvanic Battery. Aso the finest fish line you ever saw, wound on a little reel. One of our men has got the line now. He goes fishing with it occasionally but I don't think he catches much. The men fish a good deal here, but don't seem to be very successful. I expect we can catch more when I get home than all they get here. There seems to be a plenty of bull-heads, or cat-fish as the[y] call them here; and occasionally a man comes back with a good string of them, but oftener with nothing.

Several War Vessels or Gun Boats are lying in the river quite near us, and occasionally open fire on the enemy or where they suppose the enemy to be, sometimes they fire directly over our heads, the shells going away over our picket line and bursting in the woods two or three miles from the river. One night while I was sick they commenced shelling, the boats passing up and

down the river so as to shell all along the line. That night they kept it up for hours; it was before we got our tents over from Bermuda Hundred and I was lying on my blanket under a piece of shelter tent on a side hill about a quarter of a mile from the River. I lay with my face towards the River and as my shelter tent was put up like one half of the roof of a house and was only large enough to cover a little more than my head I could look directly up to the sky. A large number of the shells went right over the tent, and as I was too ill to sleep I had nothing to do but watch them. At first I would hear a rushing sound like the wind roaring in the chimney; at the same time the great flaming shell looking for all the world like an immense dinner-pot with a torch stuck in wend sailing over head. After it had passed would come the report of the gun making the earth shake under me. in a few seconds more which seemed a long time would come the report of the shell sounding nearly as loud as the gun itself I watched them until after midnight and finally went to sleep with the guns still booming and the monster shells still sailing through the clear sky over my head. Now, while I write a gun boat near by is firing away at a Rebel battery; every five minutes one of her immense guns go off making my tent shiver and flap as if frightened. Every few minutes the sound of musketry is heard on the picket line, some times in solitary shots then again a dozen or two follow each other as fast as you can count. Little harm is done however for the men keep themselves well covered and seldom get hit. And that is the way it is day after day and night after night.

Tell Mother I got a letter from her last night written on the 17th and shall write her tomorrow if nothing happens to prevent it.

I designed to have written you and Harry something about you[r] school but my letter is already long and my paper getting short, so I shall have to wait until another time. Uncle John Walton sends his love to you all give my love to Mama and Harry, and remember you are both to write longer letters next time. You know you are not obliged to write it all in one day. I have been two days writing this.

Good day Papa

JL115=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't. C.V.

Deep Bottom V.A. July 24th 1864

My Dear Wife:

I recieved your letter of the 17th three days since and should have answered it the next day but had just sent off a letter to Harry and was writing one to Phil, so have delayed answering yours. Since I have recovered suffisiently to write, I have been answering letters recieved while sick; but it is tiresome work and I have to spend about two days writing one.

You think it must be hard to be sick here, but you can hardly realize how hard it is. We get used to the whistle of bullets and howl of shells, so that we care very little about them, but one can never get used to being sick in the field so as to be indifferent to it.

When I was taken sick our baggage and camp equipage was at Bermuda Hundred, but I happened to have a piece of shelter tent with me. I never took one before and don't know how I happened to then for I usualy go on a march without anything of the kind. That piece of tent six feet square was all the tent I had. With that placed across some sticks; a single blanket on the ground and my overcoat for a pillow, I lay for nearly a week sick with intermittent fever; the sun pouring down on the thin bit of cloth over my head so as to almost blister my face. It may seem a very fine thing to people who have had no experience, to be in command of a fine regiment in the field, but if I recollect what my sensations were when I crawled from under my kennel at night and vomited till so weak I could not stand, then crawled back to my single blanket, suffering with pain and burning with fever; I felt that a sick homeless dog in Connecticut was better off than I. In about a week we were told that we were not to go back to Bermuda Hundred and could send for our own camp equipage. Our tents came the next day, I had mine pitched immediately; a little board bedstead made; some boughs put over the tent to shade it, and from that time was quite comfortable, though the weather was very hot and the constant passing and repassing of detachments of Cavalry and Infantry kept the air full of dust almost to suffocation. But it is all over now and I am nearly well again, though not able to ride yet.

I am very glad you can make use of my clothes for the children; I don't know what they would do else, for the Government seems determined that officers shall not only do the fighting, but pay the expenses. We have cheerfully submitted to every hardship, danger and privation; to the loss of two thirds of our pay by the depreciation of currency; to a three per cent income tax which operates unequally because we are taxed for money only paid us to hand over to others; and now comes a new five per cent tax on our last years pay which will take Eighty Dollars from my next two months pay; and last week an order was issued that any officer taking passage on a Government Vessel should pay his passage the same as if the vessel belonged to a private company. Soldiers pay has been raised 25 per cent. Laborers, clerks and mechanics get twice the pay they did before the war, but officers get no more pay and get no sympathy from the public. When an officer gets dishonorably dismissed for daring to ask to be mustered out of service after having served three years; or the brutal ignoramus of a Secretary of War who seems to have a particular aversion to officers, issues an order unusually hard on them; everybody says "served them right"

But I ought not to inflict this growl on you, for you cant help it, and it only makes you feel uncomfortable, but we talk of it among ourselves and it relieves us to write about it. You know I have to write such a letter periodically. It is a sort of safety valve and prevents saying something here which might get me into trouble.

You speak of getting a letter from your mother did she ever get my letter from St. Augustine. Speaking of Betsy Wait I owe her a letter but don't know as I shall ever write; it does seem such a job.

The children must not count on the 1st of October to confidently, for the War Department claims the right to hold officers as long as they choose, and last week "Dishonorably Dismissed" six Officers for asking to be mustered out with their regiment after having served three years; so you see Government claims the right to do just what it pleases with us after once getting hold of us. But a day of reconing is coming and Polititians know it - they are using their advantage while they have it; our turn is to come yet. There I go again on the old subject! I see I have not relieved my mind yet so I will write a letter to Thomas Cheney and make it all growl. I have had no letter from Florida but both the Chaplain and Lt. Wright have had letters from Miss Mather, written since she went North. She says: Mr.Biddlecorn is dead; Mr.& Mrs. Foster live at Mrs. Anderson's and she has let her place to some one who has a house full of boarders

Major Greeley has had a letter from Lizzie Smith she did not go North it was Lizzie Smith the "Lid" instead of her

I wish you would take that box of "tooth powder" from my trunk; do it up tight and send it me by mail. You will have to pay letter postage on it but it will not be much - send it immediately.

I am surprised to hear that Mrs. Thompsons boy did not get his shirts. I sent them to him by Hawley who said he left them either with the Sutler or Chaplain I have forgotten which but I shall probably see Hawley soon and will try to ascertain. I saw Darwin at Gloucester Point and talked with him but he said nothing to me about it. The letters I sent the children will not prove very interesting but I had nothing to write about and had to make the most of very little material.

Lt. Col. Hooper of the 24th Mass "Gen Officer of the Day" was taken prisoner on the picket line about three hours ago. I regret it much, he was a fine fellow in every respect and has served in the same brigade with me ever since I have been in the service. His time would be out in three months and he was to be married immediately after

I am just about tired to death and can write no more, whereat I am sure you will rejoice --
Give my love to the children and the same to yourself.

Good night. Otis

JL116=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.
Deep Bottom V.A. July 28th 1864

My Dear Wife,

I recieved you[r] letter of the 23d last night; or rather this morning for I was so sound asleep when the mail came that I did not wake though it was assorted in my tent and I found the letter on the table this morning. I had been so long without sleep that nothing less than an Earthquake could have waked me.

We have been expecting an attact on this position for some time past, our force here was known to the enemy to be small, and they have been constantly increasing their force in our front. Gen. Grant sent word that we must be very vigilant as he had certain information the we should be attack. Most of our force is on the north side of Four Mile Creek but we have kept a few men in a small Redan on the south side. About two weeks ago the enemy knowing we had but few men on that side brought out some Artillery and commenced throwing shells at the Gun Boats and across the Creek into our Camps. The Gun Boat was soon driven off and as we had not force enough south of the Creek to interfere with the Rebels they had it all their own way for a while. About a week ago the 11th Me. from our brigade was sent over and finding but few rebels there drove them away and took possession of the ground. After remaining there two days an entire brigade belonging to the 19 Corps just from New Orleans came and the 11th returned to our side of the Creek. But the 19th Corps did not seem to have much idea of fighting for a few rebels attact their picket that night and without fighting at all the whole line broke and [went] inside the entrenchments. This was on Monday night about Ten O'clock. The 11th Me. was again ordered over there though they had as many men as we and I was ordered up to our own front with my regiment. We remained out all night and early in the morning were ordered over to assist the 11th in retaking the position lost by the New Orleans chaps. We went over and had a desultory sort of a bush skirmish lasting nearly all the afternoon. By night we had recovered a good portion of the lost ground and forced our pickets to within fifty yards of the enemy's works, and not over a hundred yards from a battery they had constructed the night before. At night my entire regiment was placed on picket we were so near we could hear the rebels talk and hear the noise of their picks an[d] shovels. And indeed during the skirmishing through the day were so near that the men were constantly calling out to each other. About 12 O clock one of the captains sent me word that the Rebels were putting artillery into their Battery directly in front of him and soon after anothe[r] sent the same report, each was able to tell just how many pieces were put in, by the noise made in getting them placed. I sent word to Gen. Foster, well knowing that the enemy was preparing to attack us in force as soon as daylight. He sent word back that by morning there would be a plenty of help at hand; and sure enough morning put an entire new face on affairs. The Pontoon bridge had been muffled by spreading straw and manure on it and Hancock's (2nd) Corps, marching all the way from Petersburg since dark was half across the river before morning. The Infantry was all over and a good part of the Artillery and concealed in a thick wood at our right before it was light enough for the rebels to see anything. The Rebels commenced making arrangements to attact my regiment which was on picket and had got their Artillery in position to cover the road and prevent re-enforcements comming to our assistance. But just as they thought they were all ready for us, they were astonished to see a long line of skirmishers leave the wood on our right and advance straight across the open field towards their works. The Rebels opened on them with their Artillery and Infantry, but it was of no use; the men of the 2nd Corps were not to be stopped easily, and the rebels were soon driven out leaving four pieces of artillery behind them. My regiment was extended ove[r] a picket line a mile long so that only a part of two companies only were engaged, but they did good service by attacking the rebels in flank just when a regiment of Hancock's men attact them in front. My regiment lost nine men including an officer wounded but no one whom you know. The movement of the 2nd Corps had nothing to do with our affa[i]rs here, but is a movement of a portion of Grants Army which has been kept very secret. Hancock has a strong force of Artillery with him and at least Ten Thousand of the finest Cavalry I ever saw, commanded by Sheridan. It is a very mysterious move and ent[i]rely beyound my comprehension unless they are taking this rout to get between Richmond and Washington to prevent the Advance of the Rebels in that direction.

I returned to camp with my regiment yesterday after noon having been out two nights with scarcely any sleep, the last night I had the sick headache terribly. But last night I slept in my tent

and slept right through without waking from Eight O Clock till morning. I made haste to answer your letter for there is no knowing when one will have an opportunity to write here. Even now while writing I can hear the roar of Hancock's Artillery apparently Ten miles distant - not towards Richmond but towards the Chickahominy.

Henry Barrows has not arrived yet. I don't know what could have made you think I was coming home. I suppose I might have done so for not only the surgeons but the brigade commander advised me to do so. But I thought I had rather not go at present if there is any prospect of my leaving the service this fall. I can't bear the idea of leaving home again and when I go home mean to stay there.

I have sent a letter to Harry and another to Phil which I suppose they have got before now.

A young man named Walbridge[?] who came out as a recruit when the veterans returned died last week. He died in General hospital at Point of Rocks several miles from here and I cannot ascertain what of what disease he died. He left here only three days before and was not very sick at the time. His father lives in Spencer Street. I must close or my letter will not go in today's mail. I have not time ever to correct what I have written. Yours with much love

Otis

JL117=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Deep Bottom Va Aug 8th 1864

My Dear Wife

I received your letter of the 2nd on day before yesterday. You speak of having had a feast of letters the week before but do not say whether the children received theirs, I suppose they did and should like to know how they were pleased with them and how they acted when they got them from the office. As for the hot weather, it does not seem possible that the weather can be so hot in Connecticut as it has been here the last week.

I rec'd a letter from Captain Sweetland which I will send you also one from his wife in the same envelope. Strangely enough neither of them speak of Mrs. Mott. You will see by the captain's letter that soldiering pays him pretty well. I will also send a letter from Dr. Newton which I have answered. I would like you to see the answer, I think it is about the best letter I ever wrote. I had seen Wells Woodbridge's death in the papers but not Julie Clark's.

I shall not be able to make much of a letter for we are to have a military execution in about two hours from now and I shall have to take my regiment out to see it. A curious coincidence connected with this affair makes it quite remarkable. The man deserted from the 24th Mass when we were in North Carolina. He has been in the Rebel Army ever since and deserted about 3 weeks ago coming in here at Deep Bottom. His own regiment which he supposed to be in Florida was on picket that day, and the Col. of his own regiment was General Officer of the Day. Strangely enough he came to the very picket post where his own company was stationed and was recognized at once. Had he come on any other day; at any other post or even at any other part of our own line than where he did come he would have got through safe. But he was caught and is to be shot at 4 O'Clock this afternoon. I suppose I must go out and see it though I dread it. I will send you in this a letter written by Adj't Camp giving an account of our scrimmage across the Creek. I presume you have seen it before now but I wish to save it so send it home. I believe there is no news to write. no military movement is being made or is likely to be. The Campaign in Pennsylvania seems to be of paramount importance. It certainly is a disgrace to that state that Three Hundred men can burn a town of 5000 inhabitants, when in Georgia with not one tenth of the number of able bodied men at home they have there, their militia turns out and whips McCook with over 3000 of the best Cavalry in our service. It is getting late and I must stop the letters I send from others will have to make up for my own. Give my regards to those friends who enquire for me with so much interest. Tell the children I am delighted to hear so good an account of them. Although it is no more than I expected from such good boys. I expect they will both be fine scholars. Good day, Otis.

JL118=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.
Deep Bottom Va. Aug 11th 1864

My Dear Wife:

Your letter of the 7th came last evening, having been a much less time than usual on the way. I am glad it is cooler weather anywhere than it is here. We have had dreadful weather for weeks past; so hot every day that it made me sick to go out in the sun, and I invariably come off duty as General Officer of the day completely used up. But it is some cooler here this morning and fortunate for us it is so, for we are again moving camp back to the place we occupied when we first came to this side of the river; and moving camp is a hard day's work for both officers and men.

The military execution I mentioned in my last came off at the appointed time, and was very impressive. I suppose you don't want to hear about it, if you do I will write the children an account of it. Yes, we know all about the failure at Petersburg and know why it was a failure. Such failures will be an every day occurrence in our army until General Officers are held responsible for a proper performance of duty, as their subordinates are.

I have of course seen Camp's letters, he writes a much better one than Trumbull does in my judgement. I will send you before long my own Official Report of the same affair. You had better continue taking the Post if you want it. I presume it is as good as any Hartford paper. I don't see why Leander can't afford to take a New York Paper, He gets within about a Dollar a day of the same pay I do, and I have to keep two horses and a servant. I should be much better off at home with his wages than I am here with mine. - I have not the least objection to your reading any of my letters you think proper to Abby if it gives her any pleasure; or of your reading them to anyone else, except that I always fancied that my letters read very poorly in comparison with others. I very often write letters home when I have very little time to spare and cannot stop to correct or re-write my letters, so probably, my home letters do not read quite as well as some others; for I never write others except I have a plenty of time.

It looks more and more doubtful about my being able to come home at the end of my three years, but I think I shall make the attempt. I do not feel able to go through another active campaign and in fact am not fit for duty now. I get up tired in the morning; feel tired all day and go to bed completely used up at night. Very few officers indeed would think of doing duty feeling as I do, but it is no place to play baby here. And I shall never be better until I am entirely out of service and can feel that I am my own master for a short time, at least.

My tooth powder came very promptly and all right. I am delighted that the children have learned to love and appreciate going to school. They will soon be able to write their own letters though not this summer I expect.

The little articles you send from the papers, are often quite acceptable. We only get daily papers and they seldom contain anything of the kind. Tell Harry I am obliged to him for his.

We get news from Rebel papers several days sooner than from our own, and the news is just about as unreliable. The last time I was General Officer of the Day I had Richmond dailies of that date before noon. We knew from rebel papers three days ago that Farragut had annihilated their fleet in Mobile Bay; had taken Fort Gaines and blown up Fort Powell. The Rebels own up to the whole thing. They say however that he cannot take the city, and in that are doubtless correct. They also say that Averill has whipped McCausland badly; of which we are not yet informed by our own papers.

Military movements have simmered down to perfect quiet since the last failure at Petersburg. Considerable artillery fire is heard in that direction every day (I can hear it now while I write) but it amounts to nothing. The 100 day men are going home their time having expired, but as they added no real strength to the army they of course take none from it. We have not had even a picket skirmish since the one my regiment was engaged in a week ago. Strange to say, I have not heard the hum of a bullet or howl of a shell for several days. That however is no indication that I shall not within the next half hour.

Atlanta holds out and Rebel papers say we cannot take it. But if the Rebel force west of the Mississippi is kept there as it should be Atlanta must go down. Such a termination of Sherman's campaign would redeem the sum[m]e[r]'s operations from being characterized as a failure, and give us renewed confidence in the future. We c[e]rtainly ought to take Atlanta for nothing less

can compensate for the loss of McPherson who was by far the most brilliant military general of the country.

I think I must stop writing and rest. I go on as General Officer of the day this afternoon and must try to rest before commencing 24 hours unremitting duty; besides I can think of nothing more to say so good morning with much love to all. Otis

JL119=

Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.

Deep Bottom V.a. Aug 23rd 1864

My Dear Wife:

I start to redeem my promise of writing you an account of our last week's Campaign but probably shall not be able to finish it today. I shall send what I do write however and forward the balance as soon as I can get time to write it. The first person singular will doubtless appear pretty often but you will take none the less interest on that account. I suppose both yourself and the children will take more interest in what concerns me, personally, than in the affairs of the regiment. I have got so discouraged and disgusted with the management of the army, and of national affairs generally, that I care a good deal more for myself than for the Government, and though I shall do my duty fearlessly and faithfully as long as I remain in the service, shall not remain in that service a day longer than I am compelled to. But to go on with my story; or rather begin my story.(I made a mistake here and commenced on the wrong page.) A week ago last Saturday we received orders to have everything packed in readiness to march at a moment's notice, with three days cooked rations. We anticipated leaving here for good so we packed everything and got ready for a start. At 4 o'clock Sunday morning an order came to fall in ready to move immediately, leaving our Camp standing. In ten minutes more I received orders to move forward at double quick on the Deep Bottom Road and assist in driving in the enemy's pickets. It was a hot dog-day morning, we had had no breakfast, not even a cup of coffee, and taking a double quick for half a mile, loaded with gun, blanket and 60 rounds of ammunition was very trying to the men. As soon as we arrived at the picket line I deployed three Companies as skirmishers connecting with the 11th Me. Vols on the right and 10th Maryland dismounted Cavalry on the left. We pushed ahead as soon as formed, but had not proceeded fifty paces when the enemy opened on us from their rifle pits. It was here that Captain Quin and Lt. Sharp were killed with several men killed and wounded. We maintained our ground but were not strong enough to drive the enemy from his pits so Gen. Foster sent up the 24th Mass to assist us. As soon as they were in position we dashed forward at a run with a yell you might have heard a mile. We took both lines of their rifle pits without stopping with over a Hundred prisoners. The last line was more like one earth work than a rifle pit being formed by laying logs on top of each other and banking up the outside with earth. The ground over which we charged was covered with large forest trees and a dense growth of underbrush and small pines so thick one would hardly think of go[ing] through alone except in case of absolute necessity. The last line of works we captured were on the top of a deep ravine with enemy's main fortifications on the opposite side on an elevation called Spring Hill. We sent our skirmishers across the ravine and they advanced until fired on from the enemy's work on the hill when they were ordered to lie down. The main body of the regiment remained in the rifle pit awaiting orders so I sent back to camp and had coffee brought out for the men also some breakfast for myself which I got about noon. We remained in this position until three in the afternoon and were then ordered to move off by the right keeping ourselves connected with the 24 Mass with flankers out towards the enemy's position. We moved off accordingly passing through thick woods and deep ravines, halting occasionally and throwing skirmishers to ascertain the enemy's position. About dark we crossed a creek and coming into a well travelled road (The New Market road, I believe) halted for about two hours. It rained hard nearly all the time we were waiting there and we all got thoroughly soaked. Major Greely was quite sick and went back to camp but joined us again in the morning. At half past ten we started again but it was so dark I lost sight of the 24th Regt, and in consequence of that got lost myself and led my own regiment with the 1st Md Cavalry off the road into a swamp. Adg't. Camp while assisting me to look for the road got into a ditch with his horse where the banks were higher than his head. I had to send men from the regiment to help

him out. About the time he got relieved from his unpleasant dilemma I found the road and pushed on. We arrived at Strawberry Plain where we had the fight
[letter breaks off abruptly]

JL120=

Head Quarters 10th Regt C.V.

Deep Bottom V.A. Aug 24th 1864

My Dear Wife.

I have been looking over my valise and find that papers are accumulating so fast that I have no room for them, I have burned most of them, but find some I do not wish to destroy, and conclude to send them home. Look them over as much as you please but keep them together so that they may be found if wanted.

I have sent you off one unfinished letter to day but will finish it as soon as possible.

That letter of yours containing the pink reached me the night we lay at Strawberry Plain I received all your letters while on the march just as regularly as at any other time but a few hours later.

Judging from the Richmond papers Warren's move on the Weldon R.R. is a decided sweep and the rebels are very blue about it.

I have not much time to write now a days but will send you a note as often as possible.

My best love to you all.

Otis

The cord and tassels belonged to our state Flag and have been through every engagement with us. The[y] got broken off recently and I thought you would like them to keep.

Otis

JL121=

Head Quarters 10th Regt C. V.

In the Trenches before Petersburg

Aug 27th, 1864

My dear Wife,

Here I am before Petersburg with my command, having marched from Deep Bottom at 6 last night and arrived here at ten today: being out all night marching over muddy roads in a drenching rain. On my arrival here I found your note of the 22nd which had got ahead of me. It is very strange you did not get letters from me as I wrote you on the 17th you should certainly have got the letter by the 20th But you have got it now or some of the others I have written since. We are all in confusion now having our Camp to pitch and clean out. Our entire Army Corps is here having relieved the 18th. I shall not get much time to write for a few days.

I suppose you have seen Trumbull's letter in the "Courant" so you know pretty well about our week's campaign without getting any further account of it from me.

Hancock's Corps got roughly handled out on the R.R. yesterday. That 2nd Corps is a great humbug. The reputation is all made for them by N.Y. papers. The men of that Corps do less fighting and more straggling than any corps I have seen.

The fact is the entire army is worn out by this protracted and arduous campaign. Both officers and men look thin hollow eyed and pale. They can stand no fatigue but give out as soon as they start on a march. The men do not fight as they did and will not again until the ranks are filled and the men have an opportunity to rest. But I will write no more until I get rested and can write more cheerfully.

My best love to you all,
Otis

JL122=
In front of Petersburg
Aug 30th 1864

My Dear Wife,

We are still in front of Petersburg but not in the same location as when I wrote on Sunday. We moved about two miles on Sunday night being again up all night and getting no sleep. Last night I was determined to have some rest for I was so tired and exhausted by constant labor and loss of sleep that my eyes began to fail me. When looking at one object I would see a dozen of the same but of different colors. Last night I had a tent pitched and went to sleep at sunset. A most furious cannonade was going on all night. I only waked once and then an Orderly brought me an order from Head. There was one of the most terrific cannonade going on at the time I ever heard: pieces of shell and spherical case shot were falling all over the camp but nothing could keep me awake and went to sleep in the midst of it and slept till morning. A piece of shell struck the tent some time during the night but I did not know it until morning.

I recieved your note of the 25th and have written four or five letters to you within the last fortnight where they stay so long I cannot imagine. I shall try to write a letter regularly if I ever get time but our movements are so very irregular and uncertain that it is impossible for me to write long letters Trumbull and Camp do so, and so does Greely. But the first two neglect their own business to do it, and majors don't have much business to do. - I can't get time.

My love to all,
Otis

JL123=
Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.
In the Trenches before Petersburg
Aug. 31st 1864

My Dear Wife.

I have recieved several - no - two short notes from you since returning from our short and sharp campaign on the Richmond road nearly two weeks ago. In that time I have written several of the same kind, and two long letters, but I am neither going to complain or retaliate. "Nothing extenuate or set down aught in malice." but go right on just as the moon did when the little dog barked at it. So instead of telling you anything about our present position now, will begin where I left off and bring you to it by degrees - The same process by which we reached it.

Well, as I was telling you in my last, after we had driven the rebels out of their second line of pits and were chasing them to their main works; by some scientific generalship on the part of Birney we became entirely seperated from the brigade on our left, and the enemy getting in our rear captured three of my men. This compelled me to swing back the company of skirmishers on my left so as to meet them in that direction and wait for the coming up of the 100th N.Y. Vols which had been formed enechelon on my left, and from which we had become seperated in our rapid pursuit of the rebels. As soon as that regiment came up we again pushed forward and drove the enemy into his works which were on the oposite side of another deep ravine with very steep sides. Our Brigade carried a portion of these works on the right and held them for more than two hours, but as we could not extend our own line far enough to the left to take possession of the whole, and Birney either not having the men to send in, or, not being soldier enough to appreciate the situation refused to send anyone in there, we were finally compelled to leave them after loosing Five Hundred and Fifty men from our Brigade alone. Had a Brigade been sent in on our left no force at the enemy's command could have driven us out. Where the 2nd Corps was all this time I do not know. I only know they were not engaged, and that if a very small portion of their

force had been sent to take possession of the works on our left, and from which the enemy could shoot us down at their leisure, all would have been well. There was line after line of battle in our rear when we went into action but when those troops were wanted to assist in holding a position already captured they were not sent in, what became of them I don't know but suppose they must have been sent away according to the dictates of a strategy too deep for my simple understanding to comprehend. When we drove the Rebels from their works on the right they ran away all down the line on our left, but after waiting a while and finding we had no men there to occupy them they came back and re-occupied them themselves. The position being on our flank and rear compelled us to leave the works we had taken after losing about one third [of] our men.

We retired slowly across the ravine losing some men in doing so but the enemy did not follow - though they kept firing on us till sundown. That night we occupied the second line of pits we had taken from the enemy in the morning and spent the entire night entrenching our position. I was up all night and think I was never more exhausted than in the morning. The entire Regiment had been engaged chopping and shoveling without rest and I presume were all as tired as I was; although I labored under the disadvantage of not being fully recovered from my sickness. The next day (Wednesday) we had very little to do but to lie still and rest, but it rained a good deal during the day and kept us all pretty wet and uncomfortable. Besides that we were still within musket range of the enemy's works and they amused themselves by sending bullets among us pretty often. An officer of the 24th was killed within ten feet of me by a bullet which came in over the breast works. On Thursday we remained in the same position but towards night commenced making preparations to withdraw. I was ordered to deploy my regiment so as to cover the entire front of the Brigade and hold the position while the other four Regiments of the Brigade withdrew and then follow them, forming the rear guard. I had just got deployed and the others were making preparations to withdraw when the Rebels evidently suspecting what was going on came down on us driving in our pickets with a rush. We waited for our pickets to get in over the breast work and then opened on them. I think I never heard such a rattle of musketry except at Drury's Bluff in my life. Our Artillery opened also but being a long way in the rear did more harm than good as usual. Their shell and spherical case shot bursting right amongst us. The effect was very demoralizing particularly on a dismounted Cavalry regiment of our Brigade. They stood it for a while but when a 20 pounder shell from one of our own guns struck and burst right among them in the parapet, they left en-masse. Luckily I was standing, or rather passing by the very spot when it happened and a portion of my own regiment was deployed in rear of the Cavalry. I ordered them into the trenches and they walked in as coolly as if there had not been a musket or piece of artillery within a mile of them. One of the Captains saying as he saw me trying to stop some of the runaway Cavalry "Never mind Colonel we can keep out the whole Confederacy without them." We soon sent the Rebels back faster than they came down and I sent Adjutant Camp back to say to Gen. Birney that I wished he would order the Artillery to cease firing. As they were doing no harm to the enemy and a good deal to us. Camp thought the General seemed quite offended at our objecting to being shelled from the rear by our friends while the enemy engaged us in front. He ordered the Artillery to cease however and sent back his compliments by the Adjutant with a message to that effect. I had three men wounded in the affair; all by our own artillery. - I forgot to say that my Regiment lost on the 16th Two Officers wounded and 42 men killed and wounded. One of the wounded officers was Captain White; a splendid Officer; and dangerously but I hope not mortally wounded -

After the fighting was over our troops withdrew very quietly about a mile and a half. My regiment withdrew last forming the rear guard, and only withdrew about half a mile where we established a new picket line. The enemy did not discover our movement until morning, and then advanced cautiously to find us. As soon as they came in sight we fired on them and they withdrew. Picket firing was going on all day but we had no one hurt, and were relieved about Eleven O Clock at night in a drenching rain. We then marched a mile and a half through Virginia mud, bivouacked in the woods, and lying down on the saturated ground tried to sleep. I did get to sleep though it rained hard all night, but waked at daylight cold wet and miserable.

We remained idle through the day and at night made preparations to recross the James River. About sunset Gen. Foster informed me that we were to return to Deep Bottom and that he wished me to start immediately and as General Officer of the Day be prepared to establish the picket line as soon as the troops arrived. I started immediately but the mud was knee deep and it was so dark I had to walk my horse nearly all the way. As I approached the River the roads were blocked

with baggage wagons and artillery so that it was with difficulty that I could get along at all. The lanterns carried by the drivers sometimes flashing before me and revealing the roads and fields alive with Artillery, Cavalry and baggage trains. Then the light would be turned away and everything disappears in darkness; the jingling harnesses alone assuring me that that the immenc[e] trains were still moving along the road; for the wagons hardly made a sound in the soft clay. I crossed the Pontoon bridges at half past nine and reached my own tent at ten. Two Regiments and a Battalion had been assigned me for relieving picket at Deep Bottom and Gen. Foster thought they would reach there before midnight, but I saw by the immense amount of artillery and stores that must pass before the Infantry could come up that my command could not possibly cross before morning. So I got a cup of hot tea and went to bed; giving the sentinel in front of my tent orders to wake me at daylight. It was the first hours quiet sleep I had had for a week, and during the whole time my clothes had not once been dry, and there had not been a day in which I had not felt so miserable I should that I should have confined myself to house had I been at home.

I have just got your letter of the 27th It is late so good nig[ht]
Otis

JL124=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Before Petersburg V.a. Sept 6th 1864

My Dear Wife.

I hardly know what I did write on the last page of my last letter, I was so tired and sleepy. But to go on with my story, we left our wet bivouac at 6 oclock and again started for the entrenchments in front of Petersburg. The remainder of the road was more muddy and disagreeable than any we had yet passed over but it was now day light and we could see the way. By tu[r]ning into fields where the road was the worst, we got along quite comfortably. As we approached Petersburg the country became high and pleasant. Large open field that had till quite recently been fine plantations, with the houses surrounded by trees, still standing though riddled by shells, overlooking the beautiful green vallies running down to the River. This country was all under cultivation until our troops took possession this summer, and now, between the lines of the two armies are immense cornfields the crops of which can be gathered by niether. Some are trampled flat by marching squadrons, others still look green and fresh, but all alike is forbidden fruit to both, for on most of this line a man cannot show a hand, even, above the parapet without drawing a shot from a Rebel sharp-shooter. We arrived at what we then supposed to be our place of destination about 9 in the fornoon. I reported to the General and was told to relieve the 8th C.V. I found in Captain Coit commanding the Regiment, an old Conscript Camp friend whom I was very glad to meet. As I could not take possession of the ground until he left it, I marched my regiment to a fine little green field on a side hill close by and stacked arms to wait, in the meantime making Head Quarters under a small tree near by (the sun had now come out quite hot) and ordered the servants to get us some breakfast. I wondered why that little patch of green grass had been left undisturbed so long when every other spot about had been camped on, and was as filthy as a pig sty. I had just got cleverly laid down on a rubber coat when Captain Coit came over to know if we designed to stop there, saying that it had been avoided by everybody as the most danger[ous] spot on the line, shells falling so thickly when the batteries were engaged that no one could remain a moment. I told him I only designed stopping there until his regiment moved. We thought we might do it with safety as there had been no shelling for several days. I remained on my blanket until dinner was ready, which was spread on a rubber blanket close by. I then got up and drawing the coat along a little for a seat sat down to eat my dinner. We had just got fairly at it when a Rebel shell burst near us, a piece weighing about a pound coming down within abot 4 feet of my back, penetrating the hard earth about a foot exactly where I had [been] lying five minutes before. Had I remained there it would have gone directly through my body. But we were determind not to be shelled out, or loose our dinner so we remained and finished the meal; though I must confess to a sort of creeping sensation over my back everytime a shell burst in our vicinity until dinner was over.

About noon we moved into a ravine near by where it was said we were to be stationed, but soon after I recieved an intimation that we were not to remain, which pleased me much, for it was without exception the filthiest place I ever saw inhabited by human beings, excep some of the Irish localities in large cities. It had been occupied by Negro Troops and the stench was such that I could neither eat or sleep there.

The next morning I was told that we might possibly remain, so I immediately set the men to cleaning up and arranging camp. They worked like beavers all day and by night had made such improvement that that the Brigade commander complimented them highly; at the same time he informed me that we should probably move during the night and had had all our labor for nothing.

Before going however I had another narrow escape from a shell. Col. Plaistead, who was in temporary command of the Brigade sent one of his Orderlies (a nice little fellow belonging to my own Regiment) to say that he wished me to go up to the front to see what disposition to make of some of the troops in case of an attack in the night. I started immediately, but it was nearly night and by the time I had examined the situation suffisiently it was quite dusk. Our own and the Rebel mortar Batteries were shelling each other furiously and I stopped to watch the display: - A thing I can never help doing, it is such a magnificent sight to see the immense shells with their bright flaming fuses go sailing grandly through the air, crossing each other in their glorious flights as they form long arches of fire against the sky. I stood on the edge of the inner ditch watching the ground ply]rotechnic display, the little orderly standing close by me, when a shell burst rather nearer than usual but so far away that I took no particular notice of it until something fluttered past my face like the wings of a bird, and with a cry of pain down went the poor orderly into the ditch. A piece of the shell weighing about three pounds had struck him on the leg; luckily it did not strike full against it and did not break it but in a short time his leg and foot were swollen out of all semblance to human limbs. It will be a long time before he can walk again. I was standing almost directly between him and the the bursting shell; how it got past me and hit him was quite a mystery to those standing near. I soon after returned to the regiment but no further orders coming for us to move, I began to think we might be allowed to remain, and commenced making my preperations for a good night's rest.

I spread my rubber blanket in a bomb-proof built by some of the former occupants of the place, and taking a fine large buffalo robe presented me by I.M.Fowler when he left the Regiment, which is too bulky to be carried on a march, spread that down also and then with my blanket, shawl and overcoat made what I called, a bed fit for a soldier. I then took off my coat and boots, a thing I had not done three times in three weeks, and crawling into my bed was just pulling the shawl up nicely over my shoulders when a Staff Officer appeared in front of my kennel. I knew well what was coming and felt too cross to wait for the message. Well Selmen! said I, what do you want! Poor Selmen looked as if he had really been caught doing something uncommonly mean but he touched his cap very politely as usual and said, "The General's compliments: and you will please get under arms immediately and march your command to Head Quarters". I did not say a word; not being a swearing man I could not do the occasion justice; and not being a drinking man I could not soften the circumstances by getting tight. But I got under arms at once and marched to Head Quarters where another position was assigned us farther to the left. All we could ascertain about the position was the name of the Nigger Colonel I was to relieve, so we went blundering along in the darkness and finally succeeded in unearthing him about midnight. He started to show us the way to the entrenchments where his command was supposed to be, but I doubt if he knew much about it himself, for he got lost and led us a long way from where he wished to go. Finding that he was pretty much lost I offered to leave the regiment to go with him and look up the position, on his guarranteeing not to get me inside the Rebel lines. The pickets were keeping up a very sharp fire and it made me laugh to see the Darky Colonel dodge at every bullet which went past us, but we succeeded in finding his men and I got my Regiment into the trenches and his out just as it commenced growing light in the East. As usual it had rained just enough during the night [to] make us all particularly moist and uncomfortable. The next day but one I was detailed on a Court Martial which kept me away from the Regiment most of the time for a week. I send you one of the orders of the proceedings. The Court was dissolved on saturday. On Sunday I was detailed as Corps Officer of the Day which placed me in charge of the trenches on the whole front of our Corps. I went to the Appomattox and sending the horses and orderlies around to the 2nd Corps to wait for my arrival there I passed through the entire distance on foot taking me about five hours. I met several acquaintences on the way and they were all such everlasting talkers that they hindered me a good deal, but aside from that it would have taken me

at least four hours. I was very sick after getting through and had a bad spell of vomiting which lasted most of the night but I am too tired to write about what took place during the night and as I have brought this very proper account of my personal experience up to quite near the present time, will leave something to write about next time.

I suppose the children will think this is about their kind of a letter and should have been written to them. but you can call it theirs if you like. I think it sounds rather childish but it is about the style usually written by Trumbull and the rest so I thought I would try my hand at it. Had I been as fond of relating my personal adventures as most of the field & Staff are I should be quite a Hero.

My best love to you all.

Otis

JL125=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Before Petersburg V.a. Sept 10th 1864

My Dear Wife:

Your letter of the 4th arrived night before last but I was too busy to reply yesterday. Not particularly busy with my duties in the regiment, but in a futile attempt to find the Corps Hospital. I will not stop to tell about it for after having commenced to write up my personal adventures I am going to "fight it out on that line if it takes all summer" and bring the account down to the time of writing; after which I shall drop that style of correspondence. It sounds too much like magnifying one's personal dangers and hair breadth escapes to suit my taste. I know you think I am something of a brag, but when I compare my letters with those of veracious Chaplains and other superlatively good and pious Army correspondents, it gives me very satisfactory ideas of my own modesty.

You have seen in the papers no doubt, accounts of the salute fired last Sunday night by order of Gen. Grant in honor of Sherman's victories, but you can form no conception of the magnificence of the scene by reading any written account of it. The trenches as we call them consist of an irregular and continuous line of earth works from the Appomattox on the right to, -I don't know where, on the left, but somewhere beyond the Weldon R.R. On this line are occasional batteries of artillery with long intervals between filled only by Infantry. But in rear of this, and forming a second line are immense Redoubts and batteries on every prominent point, mounting guns and mortars by hundreds. As I told you before I was Corps Officer of the Day and had charge of the line on the entire front of our Corps. This line alone must mount from 100 to 150 guns and mortars. My orders being to remain near the center of the line during my tour of duty, I went up and stayed with Col. Osborn of the 24th now commanding a Brigade in the 1st Division, which gave me a much better opportunity to see than if I had remained in my own camp. The firing commenced about half past Eleven and as it was useless attempting to sleep, I took a fine position near the Col's quarters to watch [the] scene. Every gun on our own front and as far away as I could see to the left was in full play. It was not like the rapid and continuous firing of Artillery which we often hear in battle, but perfect volleys of Artillery, sounding like a magnified Infantry engagement. It seemed to shake the very world and required no great stretch of the imagination to see in the flaming fuses of the descending shells, stars shaken from their places by the fearful vibrations of the earth and air. The atmosphere seemed full of bursting shell, and the howling projectiles from rifled guns. The fearful messenger passing you at the very instant the report of the piece reached your ears. Between the terrible volleys of the light Artillery came the heavy boom of the immense mortars, answering each other in such rapid succession that their deep echoes made one constant roll of thunder; their gigantic missiles rising higher and higher until they could hardly be distinguished from the stars except by their course along the sky. In every direction these monster messengers were taking their aerial voyages on the errand of death. Rising from remote positions, at times a dozen would seem to concentrate on a single point: a fearful congregation it must have been to the occupants and terrible in effect and influence. Away down on the left so far that only the flash of the guns could be distinguished, the same scene was being enacted. A grander salute was never fired since Saltpetre became a moral

agent, and a victory more worthy of such a salute was never won. By twelve O'clock the heavy firing was over. Spasmodic fits of firing broke out from time to time from the different batteries for a while. Then single shots here and there with an occasional mortar shell winking along toward Petersburg as if loath to relapse into silence and darkness entirely until about one in the morning, when our lines resumed their usual quiet, and I returned to bed to make another fruitless effort to sleep off my sick-headache. At 9 O'clock I called on Gen. Birney to be relieved from duty the 24 hours being up. He excused me from writing my report until afternoon, and I went back to my own quarters to get a little rest before doing it.

Nothing of special interest has occurred since. The rebels shell our camp occasionally, but we are used to it and don't mind it. We were on picket two days ago at a place where the Rebels will make no truce with anyone. They commenced firing on us but for a while we did not respond thinking they would give it up, but finding they had no intention of doing so Capt Goodyear who had command of the line at that point disposed of his men so as to have about two men to fire at the flash of every gun the Rebels fired. It was in the night and the flashes could be seen without difficulty. Our men kept it up until broad daylight. The rebels apparently got sick of it and only fired an occasional shot, but there was no diminution of our fire until morning when both stopped as if by common consent. Soon after one of our men proposed to change papers and a Rebel came out to meet him. Well, says the Johnny "You fellows kept it up last night anyhow" Yes, said the men, we got sleepy and made a noise to keep ourselves awake that's all. You hit a good many more over in camp than you did here anyway says the rebel. We were very glad to hear it for we were not sure that we had hit anybody. They did not fire on us again until afternoon but about 2 O'clock they commenced again. Our boys were not slow in responding, and having daylight for it succeeded in bringing down three in course of the afternoon. We had one man very slightly wounded.

Yesterday I started off with Lt. Col. Greeley to go to the Corps Hospital, but got lost as usual, and before recovering ourselves found that we were within little more than a mile of City Point, and considerable further from the Hospital than when we started from Camp. So we gave up visiting the hospital and went to the point. We got back to camp at sunset so tired we could hardly ride. I have not ridden so far in a day for a long time. It has been all I could do to attend to my duties and should not have thought I could ride that distance had I contemplated it before leaving camp.

I was just taking supper when a Staff Officer came up, and said that Gen Terry wished all the regiments of his Division to turn out and cheer at 7 O'clock and all the Drum Corps' and Bands to play national airs. It was already seven when the Officer came and while he was yet speaking the noise commenced away on our right and was immediately taken up along the entire line. At first the cheers were clear and distinct as they rang out on the evening air but as Regiment after regiment took it up the noise lost all semblance of cheering or anything else I ever heard. The faint cheers which first reached us from the right of the line, came nearer and nearer louder and louder like a coming storm. As it swept through our own Division Camps and batteries swelled to a roar that would have drowned an Ocean storm. Passing us to the left it gradually died to a faint murmur away off on Warren's front beyond the Weldon Road. Then every Drum Corps struck up and band after band joined in the discordant noises. nothing could be heard but a continual crash and rattle except now and then a bar or two of some national air from some one of twenty bands and drum corps' snatches of Yankee Doodle, White Red 7 Blue, Star-Spangled Banner, Three Blind Mice etc. could be distinguished through the tempest of sounds. Finally it died away and then our own splendid Band commenced playing National Airs with fine effect. The Rebel pickets, doubtless wondering what it all meant kept up a rapid fire during the whole time, but we could neither hear the report of the muskets or whistle of the bullets. Luckily none of our men were hit, whether any were in other regiments I have not learned. The enemy kept up a sharp musketry fire on the picket line all night evidently expecting something unusual would follow such an ado, and in consequence of their firing I was ordered out at Three this morning to support the pickets line. No fighting took place, but our batteries opened sharply on the rebels, and getting a good position to see I watched them with a good deal of interest. When it got light enough to see well, a Rebel sharp shooter amused himself by shooting at me but being nearly a thousand yards off did not succeed in driving me down, though he did manage to get pretty near two or three times.

I am now in my tent writing, and within the last half hour twenty shells at least have gone through, or burst in our camp, but as that is an every day occurrence we never think of speaking

about it. Col. Greeley who has just come in suggests that you would think it rather strange to see me sit here writing so coolly while Parrot shells and Sphercil case shot are throwing up dirt all around, and the Guard of the Reg't huddled together under a breast work in front of my tent falling flat at every shot that passes. You need not think that the shocking work I have made writing this letter is owing to the effect the shot and shell produce on my nerves. The fact is I have been thinking of something else ever since commencing it, and consequently have had to scratch about half of it out.

But I suppose you wish to know what all the cheering was about last night. Well that is just what I was very anxious to learn after it was over and was told that it was on account of "Sherman's Victories" I supposed we had done cheering for that, but perhaps Grant has concluded that his murderous system of fighting will never win victories, and is going to let Sherman do the fighting while he does the cheering. And now to your letter. I liked Trumbull's letter very well, but don't think Merriam cares much about it although it may make some difference in his correspondence. It is five, instead of three weeks since Leander wrote me, and I am quite sure I answered his letter. - he said nothing about his knitting machine. Thompson need not borrow trouble about his son going into the Navy. He will be safer there than at home. They seldom have anyone killed in the Navy except in Farragut's Fleet. If Fox keeps out of that he is safe to die of old age

Tell Sophie that Arthur is here and quite well. I saw him this morning. He was poisoned badly at Deep Bottom, but is entirely recovered.

I sympathyze with you on account of the well. Ask the children how the[y] like to have you "give them rats"

You say all the marching you have to do is from the house to work. Where do you go to work? I am curious to know.

I sold that pretty horse yesterday. I had at St. Augustine for about 40 Dollars more than I gave. It is such awful hard times I had to sell him to get something to eat. I shall have to sell the other if I don't get paid off soon.

The government has decided not to let Officers go home when their time is up on the ground that so many can not be spared. But Lincoln had better take care. I have heard two hundred Officers say within the last two weeks that they would do everything in their power to defeat him unless the decision was changed

There, I think this will do for once.

Otis

JL126=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Before Petersburg Va. Sept. 14th /64

My Dear Wife:

I recieved your letter of the 7th last evening, and as you are getting rather concience stricken on the subject of notes I will refrain from mentioning the subject in this, leaving it to your newly awakened concience to dictate a proper and satisfactory compensation for the past. I suppose I have (as usual under such circumstances) done a foolish thing to-day. I had an order to send an officer to Connecticut for the purpose of making an attempt at recruiting for the Regiment. I had the option to go myself, or send another in my place. Greeley was anxious to go, but had no claim to the priviledge, as he has been north since I have. It looks so selfish to take a benefit to ones self that I always dislike to see it, and never take advantage of such circumstances. So I detailed Greeley and stay behind myself.

I don't know but I shall be sorry for it. I always say that, another time I will take the benefit myself, but never do it, it looks mean to take advantage of ones position in such matters, still almost everyone does it and I suppose there are not three Commanding Officers in Corps who would not have gone themselves under like circumstances.

If allowed to leave the army at the eve' of my three years, I shall not be sorry for having done it. But if compelled to stay very likely shall regret that I did not go home when I had the opportunity offered me.

Greeley said that if allowed to go he would agree to stay with the regiment after the expiration of his term of service, and as I do not intend to unless compelled to do so, it is perhaps but fair to let him go. I have little confidence in him however in that respect, for he is in my opinion just one of the kind who would promise that, while secretly trying to get out of service.

It is now said by some that Grant has decided to let officers go if they insist upon it, But to make an appeal to their patriotism to remain until the end of the Campaign. Of course if he does that I shall feel bound to stay, although the Regiment will be so small after the 1st of October that I might be spared as well as not.

I feel quite sure that Greeley will get no recruits. Everybody says the 10th is the best regiment in the service but everybody keeps out of it, so we have little hope of filling up.

It is hard for me to make up my mind what I ought to do about remaining in the Army. I want to do my whole duty but I am human and want to feel that the country knows and appreciates the terrible sacrifices we are making. I know they do not. Mrs. Knox may be proud to live in the town with me, but that would hardly be sufficient to make you and children comfortable if anything serious should happen to me.

However I suppose if the Government appeals to my patriotism I shall as usual be fool enough to respond, though in truth I do not feel strong and well enough to stand much more active campaigning.

I wrote a long letter to Leander a few days ago and presume he will show it you if you wish to see it. It was a curiously mixed up letter and I dont feel particularly proud of it.

I got a letter from Mrs. Webb asking about her husband saying she had not heard from him, only that he was wounded and she feared that he was wounded so badly that he could not write. I replied by the same mail saying that he was perfectly well having been but slightly bruised at the time he was reported wounded. My letter occupied about a page of note paper. A day or two ago Cap't Webb had a letter from her in which she informed him that she had just recieved a "letter from Col Otis" and saying nothing more about it. Why she did not write her husband in the first place I cant see, or why she should want him to know she had a letter from me without knowing the subject of it. Anyhow they are both rather queer.

Present my compliments and congratulations to Hattie Holton and wish her all sorts of felicity on her new relations. You see I am getting very saving of paper and have a very ingenious mode of manufacturing note out of letter paper. It not only saves paper but saves labor for I dont have to write the letters nearly as long.

Give my regards to our friends. Tell Harry and Phil that I hope they succeeded in making the rings you wrote of. If they did not they must try again. And not give it up until they succeed.

My love to you all,

Otis

JL127=

Head Quarters 10th Reg't C.V.

Before Petersburg, V.a Sept 16th 1864

My Dear little Boy:

I recieved your letter of the 11th inst last evening and was very glad indeed to see that you could do so well. I have often seen letters from grown up men, not so well written as yours, and indeed think it altogether very creditable to such a little boy as you. I shall be glad to get letters from you often, and will tell you of an excellent plan, I think, to always have something to write about. You must keep a bit of paper and a pencil in some handy place, and when anything happens or you see anything you think I would like to know about, take your pencil and write it down. After a few days you will have incidents enough noted down to make quite a letter. Then take your memorandum, your pen ink and paper, get the big dictionary so as to find the hard words, sit down to the table and give the whole of your mind to it as the man did to tying his

cravat. Perhaps you are not quite old enough to do all that yet, but you can keep this letter until you are and then do it. You will soon learn to write a fine letter and never have to look in the Dictionary at all.

It may be interesting to you, to know that I am writing (how do you spell it?) this letter, to the music of shot & shell, and the thunder of artillery. The big black guns along our line lie still for two or three days together, like great sleeping bears, finally one wakes up and gives a growl, this starts the rest. The Keepers (XXX) unchain them all and then the howling of their terrible voices shakes the very earth. After a while one seems to get tired and coil himself up to sleep, then another, and another, until the monsters are all silent and nothing is heard but the never ceasing bark of their cubs (The muskets). Well, somebody has just waked them up and they are snarling at each other now with all the venom of civilized human beings. The shell are falling in camp throwing up clouds of dust all about. Just where I made the three crosses a big shell went over my tent and burst in the field beyond. But the firing seems to be dying out and will soon be over, to be renewed again to morrow or the next day, or whenever some Artillery Officer wakes from his after dinner nap and takes a fancy to amuse himself by stirring up the bears again. I too wish I could be at home to go chestnutting with you, and really meant to be. But Secretary Stanton says, in effect, that an officer's time is never out so, I don't know when I shall get home.

I don't think it will be quite safe for you to go hunting without me, so we won't have the gun fixed until I come. You are right about the pork and potatoes, I don't care much for them though I think I would be quite willing [to] live on such fare if I could board at home. As for the pie, it has been so long since I have eaten any I hardly know whether I should like it or not, but think I could manage to dispose of a piece or two if nothing else was to be had.

You wrote nothing about your school but I suppose you have a good one you get along so well in your studies.

Don't you think Harry must be rather lazy not to spend the time to write me a letter? To be sure he was well employed if he was reading a good book, but if I was to spend my spare time entirely in reading and not write you any letters you would think it a pretty hard case. But I think Harry has concluded to write by this time and I am looking for a letter from him every day.

I shall not be able to write much more to day as I have to go to a funeral this afternoon, as bearer. Col. Howell, or as he is generally called General Howell, was killed by his horse falling on him a few nights ago. It seems to bad he was one of the finest old gentlemen I ever met so kind and polite to everybody and as brave as he was polite. His hair and beard were as white as snow. I have been near him in battle when shot and shell flew like hail and he seemed rather to enjoy it I almost thought he wished to die on the battle field, but he died in the cause of his country as much as if killed by a Whitworth bolt or Minnie Ball. His body is to be sent home today and I am to be one of the bearers at the funeral. Some time I will tell you some of the stories the men tell, illustrating his courage and politeness.

Give my love to Mother and Harry - tell them I should like to hear from them. the firing is all over. Papa

JL128=

Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.

Before Petersburg Va. Sept 19,/64

My Dear Wife,

Your letter of the 14th came last evening and as I have nothing in particular to write about I will send you a letter I recieved from Dr. Newton with my answer. Newton['s] letter was altered from this in some respects but only polished up a little and more care taken in writing it. I should not send it but it contains an item or two I was going to write you about in relation to Camps promotion. Some things I said in this I left out of the other as sounding badly on reading over. Altogether I was very well satisfied with the one I sent and not very well satisfied with this. But here it is for what it is worth and you can burn after reading it.

You speak of taking up the plants for winter. How is the pink Mrs. Keough gave you? I do not recollect whether I mentioned recieving the one you sent me, but I did get it the Monday morning we were at Strawberry Plains while on the week's Campaign in August. It had lost all its

fragrance before reaching me, but I think it must have been beautiful. About your going to work the blunder was in your writing. I knew it was a blunder at the time but you do not seem to appreciate the fun of being called to account for it.

O dear! I did not know this paper was so dirty when I wrote on the outside of it or I would not have used it, but I can't throw it away with so much writing on it.

I don't wonder Ralph Houghton looks coppery, it would take more than one fit of sickness to make a decent patriotic citizen of him.

I don't suppose the officers I spoke of expect to make anything by voting against the administration. But when men think themselves very ill used by individual men, or by parties, and experience a course of unvarying abuse and ill treatment until patience and forbearance is exhausted, they do not often think what they care to make by a change, but are very apt to feel that any change must be for the better. And besides, personal interest and personal feelings enter very largely into all mens politics & patriotism. Many of our loudest brawlers for Liberty and Union would subside very soon if Government Contracts were taken from them and they had to take their chances in the field with just pay enough to live on. The frantic efforts made by men nowadays to avoid serving their country in a military capacity, shows what stuff their patriotism is made of.

Those who say that the matter of Officer's terms of service, has been left with Gen. Grant to decide, know nothing about it. They who discuss the matter know just as little. The papers only speak of it as relating to officers who are promoted hereafter, none of them supposing the Order to have an Exporte facto application.

I notice that the papers say we are to be paid, but I cannot learn that any preparations are being made to fulfill the prophecy, and think we shall have to wait some time yet.

You say Leander recieved a letter from me and has written me since, or several, I cannot quite make out which. I have recieved two.

I think I get all your letters but some of them are a long time coming.

Alfred Pitkin and Daniel Lyman called on me yesterday, and I was much surprised to learn that Daniel has been at our Corps Head Qrs. for more than two months. He sent his card to me while I was there on Court Martial but I did not get it. I shall manage to call on him occasionally now I know he is there. He could give me no news. Alfred said he should be in Manchester this week.

My paper is used up so good night. Otis

Lt. Col. Greeley goes north to-morrow.

[The letter accompanying this one I have not attempted to transcribe. It is very difficult. COM]

JL129=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Near Petersburg V.a.

Sept 27th 1864

My Dear Wife.

I sent you a short note last night, but did not as I had anticipated recieve one from you.

We are still "before Petersburg," but not in the trenches.

About 3. O.Clock on saturday after noon the commanding officers of the entire Corps recieved orders to hold their commands in readiness to be relieved by the 2nd Corps during the night, and to be ready to march at a moments notice. In our Division orders were given to have three day's rations in haversacks, but in the other Divisions no such orders were given so I think the other Division Commanders must have kno[w]n that we were not going far. My Regiment was relieved from the trenches between 9. & 10. O Clock at night and got ready to march about 12. We marched first to Division next to Corps Head Quarters a distance of about two miles. Here we stacked arms and bivouacked until morning. As soon as it was light we hurried around to get something to eat expecting orders to march at any moment. It had been the coldest night we have yet had in Virginia, and I suffered with cold from the time we halted until sunrise, although I had my heavy overcoat and two small blankets with me. I was very glad when the sun

rose and began to impart some warmth to the atmosphere. At nine O Clock I mounted and rode to Corps Head Quarters to report as Corps Officer of the Day. Gen. Birney then informed me that we should remain in our present position several days and had better make ourselves comfortable. I thought it a great pity that we could not have been informed a little sooner, for we had only moved a couple of miles, but supposing we were going on a long march we had left everything behind which it was not perfectly convenient to carry. My tent had been nicely floored. I had a rough bunk to sleep on and a table to write on, with clits put up to hang up my "traps" but all had been left behind. But, as usual we made the best of it and soon had our tents pitched. My floor is the ground my bed four crotches driven down with two stick laid across at the head and foot and two board laid on legthwise. This with my buffalo robe and two blankets makes a good bed for a soldier but these cold nights give me the rheumatism badly and I don't enjoy it as I should have done in warmer weather. My table is my bed, and I am now writing on it.

I had a hard days work as Corps Officer of the Day, having to visit Gen. Hancock's Head Quarters. The Gen. was very polite and talkative showing me his Corps Flag with 6 bullet holes through it. Also asking me to take a glass of whiskey with him, which I am sorry to say I had not the moral courage to refuse. I got back to the Regiment about down sick and have been so ever since, although I attend to my duties as usual.

I would not hurry about buying more than what is wanted for the time Prices are falling.

Good day I can write no more now.

Otis

JL130=

[Writing shows fatigue--in pencil]

Head Quarters 10th Regt. C.V.

In the Field 6 miles from Richmond Va.

Oct. 1st 1864

My Dear Wife,

Unless you have seen something of our movements in the papers you will be surprised to hear from me in this locality, an still more surprised had you heard from me day before yesterday at 5 P.M. when I was in sight of Richmond and only two & half miles off. I have tried to write but it has been impossible until now.

I wrote you in my last that we were ordered from the trenches in front of Petersburg on saturday night and that we had pitched our camp about two miles in rear of our former position and although General Birney informed us that we were to remain there a few days to rest and we pitched our camp under the happy delusion that we really were to keep easy for a few days, the illusion was dispelled by our recieving orders. I have got to stop writing my eyes draw together in spite of every effort to the contrary and I have twice fallen asleep and dropped my pencil and pencil on the ground so I cannot write. I am pretty well though and that is all I can write now. Will write as soon as possible. Got a letter from you and one from Phil last ngh. but I can write no more now

J.L.Otis Col Comy the Regiment

JL131=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

In the Field near Richmond V.a. Oct 3d 1864

My Dear Boy:

I recieved your letter of the 19th several days ago! And you know by mothers letter from here, why I have not answered it. We have been very busy for a week, part campaigning it in Virginia mud knee deep. with no tents; no blankets; no anything in fact except what we stood in, so of course I had no opportunity to write. But I will begin at the beginning and tell my story.

We left the bivouac we occupied for a couple of days after withdrawing from the trenches at Petersburg, on Wednesday afternoon at Three O'clock, without the faintest idea where we were bound. Some men who are always wise, said we were going to join Warren on the Weldon R.R. Others that we were going to North Carolina to attack Wilmington, which was a favorite theory and generally believed. Many thought our destination was the Shenandoa Valley to re-enforce Sheridan and I must confess that I strongly inclined to that opinion myself. However we started as I said before at 3. O'clock, with no knowledge as to where we were bound, and marched towards the Appomattox at Point of Rocks. The men as usual were loaded with "Knapsack box and Gun" the carrying which for miles to gether was no light task. We had not expected to march far that afternoon but were disappointed, for after getting the column fairly started they kept us going almost without a halt. Past the Appomattox on the same old pontoon we had crossed a month before. Past the fort and tall tower at Point of Rocks. Past the blazing camp fires of the Bermuda Hundred front and into the dark pine woods to the rear. Still no signs of bivouacking although it was getting to wards midnight and the tired men were falling out by the score from sheer exhaustion. A thing that never occurred in my Regiment before. Still we marched on through the dark wood path taking our course back towards the James and soon after midnight reached the Pontoon at Deep Bottom. After some delay we commenced crossing and at half past two I marched my regiment on to the old camping ground and gave the men leave to rest. They were not long in availing themselves of the permission for all were too tired to stand a moment after halting. We had been marching for Eleven hours. But our rest was of short duration, at 4 O Clock we were again under arms and advancing up the same road on which we marched out on the 14th of August when we lost so many brave Officers and men. I expected another bloody fight but was happily disappointed. This time the Rebel Picket line was weak and they gave away easily. They made a stronger fight against the colored troops on our left though, and we lost a good many men. But we carried the the enemy's works the whole length and were soon travelling "On to Richmond". At the same time we were crossing at Deep Bottom the 18th Corps crossed higher up the River and carried a strong fort at what is called Chaffin's Bluff. The 10th Corps marched up to within six miles of Richmond where we came to some very strong forts, and disposition was at once made for attacking them. The 2nd Division of our Corps assaulted one of them but was repulsed with heavy loss. Our Brigade was ordered in to assault another, but before we were ready the order was countermanded and we were ordered to lie down in the woods, This rest was a blessing, for we had had neither rest or sleep for 56 hours. After waiting two hours orders came for us to move back to a road a short distance in rear and passing over by the right flank to the "Central" or Darby Town road move past the fortifications bearing then to the left, and push on towards Richmond in support of Kerty's Cavalry, which was reported in sight of the city. Terry's Division was alone in this movement and cutting loose from the main body pressed straight on towards Richmond without a halt, and without Artillery, until the head of the Column came in sight of the city and the entrenched Camps lying between the inner defences and the Capitol itself Here we halted to look for the Cavalry which was said to be there before us, but no Cavalry could be found although there was no doubt that they had been there. After waiting there until sunset General Grant began to feel alarmed for us and sent word for us to return, which we did reaching our present position four miles from Deep Bottom and six from Richmond about 9 O Clock in the evening. After getting some supper, I threw myself down on a bundle of corn stalks with my overcoat for a blanket and went to sleep. I had been that day in sight of Richmond.

To be continued

Papa

JL132=

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

October 6th 1864

My dear Wife:

I have not time to write much just now but having recieved Four month's pay to day, I am desirous of getting rid of a portion of it as soon as possible.

You will find enclosed a check for Six Hundred Dollars \$600 - on which you can get the money by edorsing it on the back. write your name on the back precisely as it is on the front. Do

not fail to write me the very day you get it for I shall feel somewhat anxious until I hear from you and know that you have recieved it. Whatever you can spare of it you can Invest in Government Bonds. I almost regret that I did not take it in Bonds of the Pay-Master as I could have done.

We are still lying where we were when I wrote the children. My Regiment or rather the Two Hundred men whose time has just expired went home two days ago. I was sorry to part with them and yet glad to see them well out of their danger and off for home. They gathered around my quarters and gave six [of] the heartiest cheers I ever heard before leaving. In response I made the longest and best speech I ever made, and shook hands with every one of them which pleased them much. - You will see no letter from Trumbull giving an account of it I will warrant - I[t] rained hard and the mud was knee deep almost when they left but they were happy notwithstanding. You will have seen Burton and probably John Walton before recieving this and John will tell you all about it in his usual prolix fashion.

I want to say something about coming home but everything is so uncertain that I can make no calculation about it. The War Department has mad[e] a decission in our favor but the "Beast" refuses to recognize it and we can do nothing. I am not without hope in the matter yet however.

I have a good deal of business on hand and shall not be able to write much more having a large amount of writing and no conveniences for doing it. Tell the children I shall continue my letters as soon as possible. I have recieved several letters from you lately but none for the last four days.

Much love to you all

J.L. Otis Col Comdy 10th C.V..

To
Mrs. J.L. Otis
Manchester Conn

JL133A

Head Quarters 10th C.V.
In the Field Oct 9th 1864

My Dear Wife:

I wrote you night before last sending you a check for \$600 - Six Hundred Dollars and ought to have sent another letter at the same time but was too busy to do so. Let me know the very day you get the letter. I am neglecting the children's letters but can't help it, for we are having busy times. I have been in two battles since I wrote Phil's letter. One did not amount to much my regiment only being engaged, and I only lost three men. We whipped the Rebels though and got considerable credit for it. Yesterday we had another fight whipping them again and getting more glory. But they licked our Cavalry bad first sending them in hatless coatless and generally demoralized. Lee commanded in person and after defeating the Cavalry pushed on expecting to finish up the affair by a grand Victory. But he found a Lion in his path in the shape of the 10th Army Corps and though he turned our right flank he got badly whipped and went back to Richmond quicker than he came down leaving his dead and a large number of wounded in our hands. My Regiment as usual got a plenty of credit and this time with little loss. My Command had been formed en-echelon - to protect the right flank of our forces. After a short time I was shifted a little to the left and advanced to the front line leaving the 100th N.Y. to protect our flank. The Rebels kept trying our line all along to find our flank and finally reached it, sending the skirmishers in at a run. As soon as the skirmishers reached the line of battle the 100th N.Y. broke and run with them: not a single Officer or man being left. According to all precedent and military teaching I should have taken my command back too as its right flank was entirely uncovered by the cowardly conduct of that Regiment and the enemy advancing in force beyond it. But I had often found fault with other officers for falling back under such circumstances without fighting and once gave Major Greeley and Lt. Col. Hill of the 11th Me. a terrible scolding for taking their commands back at Weirs Bottom church while I was in command of the line as General Officer of the Day. So I ordered my men to stand fast and throwing the right of my line back a little waited for the enemy to come on. We had not long to wait they came pushing through the woods

evidently thinking they had us for they had seen the 100th run. Suddenly discovering us in line of battle waiting for them they halted and attempted to form a better line having got somewhat broken coming through the woods. I suppose a great soldier like McClellan would have waited for them to form so as not to take advantage of their unfortunate position: as he would have fallen back to a safe position on finding his flank uncovered. But luckily for us all I am not a great soldier and did not know that according to all the rules of strategy we were already whipped before the fight commenced. So in my ignorance I ordered an attack before the rebels were ready for us and sent them out of the woods flying. They tried twice more to advance against us but our fire was too hot, and they left us in possession of the woods with the body of their commanding Officer and six men and several wounded when they had not time to take off. We took several prisoners representing three different Regiments, the 1st and 5th S.C. and 34th Ala. The commander of the Brigade was present and stated in his report that I had saved the entire Command from a disaster.

But it is getting mail time and I must stop for I have been writing all day and am not half done yet. Good day.

Otis

P.S. This of course only refers to that portion of the field where my own Regiment fought. There was fighting all along the line and the Rebels lost heavily. our own loss was light.

O

JL133B

Head Quarters 10th C.V.

Near Richmond V.A. Oct 9th 1864

My Dear Boy:

So long a time has elapsed and such rapidly shifting scenes have been enacted since my letter to Phil that I hardly remember myself what I wrote, or where I left off. I have an indistinct recollection however that I wrote several pages of personal reminiscences which I am afraid sound rather egotistical to you; or at least would to anyone but yourself and Mama and Phil. I think I remember too that I last wrote about going to sleep and being waked by Col Plaisted, about half crazy for want of sleep. At all events I will commence there with the continuation of my story. The rain continued by spells that day and the next, but notwithstanding the mud which was ankle deep and of the regular "boot jack" variety. Gen Terry started out again on the great Central Road towards Richmond; The same road on which we had marched up in sight of the city two days before. He had with him two Brigades of his own Division and a Battery of Artillery.

After the General had been gone a while it was discovered that the enemy was moving a force up towards the Central road and Gen Birney began to feel alarmed for Gen. Terry's safety. So he sent me orders to take my Regiment and march out on the New Market Road and make a Demonstration in his favor. That is, go out there and attack the enemy so as to prevent their sending up any more troops to fight Gen Terry. I started immediately although it rained hard and muddied soft. But we are used to all this, and took it as a matter of course. As soon as I got beyond the picket line, I deployed a line of skirmishers and pushed ahead, keeping the main body of the regiment well up to the skirmish line. We soon met the Rebels and pitching into them drove them back through the woods taking one of them prisoner and wounding some more who got away. Some of the men under a Sargeant came very near catching some rebel cavalry but they got away from us. The Rebels finding we were driving them back brought out another regiment but we sent them all back together and out of the woods into the open field. Catching another prisoner who was wounded and they could not get him off. He afterwards proved to be a Well Known Union man, from Richmond named Blake. The Rebels took him from his Blacksmith shop the day before and putting a gun in his hand compelled him to come down and fight us. There is no doubt of his loyalty he proved it to us beyond question. I am glad to be able to state that he was not badly wounded and we had him well taken care of. We stayed and fought the Rebels until quite dark and then returned to the entrenchment. I did not take my regiment into the open field because if I had the Rebels would have seen that I had but one

regiment with me and would have surrounded us, but I kept my command in the woods and they did not dare come in not knowing how many men I had.

I lost three men I am sorry to say but took them back with me as well as the wounded Rebels. The General was well pleased and said we did it up well.

We have had another and harder fight since but I cannot write about it now. We have moved about half a mile and are now bivouacked in a pine woods. It is a magnificent night but very cold. I have a tent fly pitched, one end open and the other, closed by fastening shelter tents across it. I am writing in the open end of the tent seated on my roll of blankets just as it was unbuckled from my saddle. My table is a candle box and my light a single adamantine candle stick on the corner of the box. A great log fire is burning right in front of my tent, so near as almost to blister my face while my back and feet ache with cold. On the opposite side of the fire the sentinel in front of my quarters is pacing back and forth his polished bayonet glittering in the firelight. Just beyond the soldiers are gathered around their fires being like me unable to sleep from cold if the[y] leave the close proximity of their blazing logs. It is a magnificent frosty night not a speck in the sky and the bright moon is sailing along so clear and bright as to render the stars invisible.

The flickering firelight plays fantastically now on the dark trunks of the tall pines and now on the stacks of glittering arms. Just beyond the narrow belt of pines in front, are our sleepless pickets resting in the edge of the open field. Beyond in another belt of pines are those of the enemy. There goes a musket! but no one takes notice of it it is too common a sound for that, yet possibly it ended the life of one of our faithful guardians in front.

But Col Greely is anxious to go to bed and says he thinks we can keep warm by putting our blankets together and lying close. I am going to try it so good night. Papa

(to Harry Preston Otis)

JL134=

Head Quarters 10th C.V. Near Richmond V.a.
Oct 13th 1864

My Dear Wife

I have heard nothing from you for a long time, over a week. But as we have had a sharp fight to day and you will hear about it, so I write just to say that I am safe and well. How I happen to be is more than I can tell for I took part to-day with a portion of my regiment in one of the most desperate and hopeless charges I have had anything to do with during the war and that is saying something. I lost Major Camp killed, and one third my men killed wounded and missing.

Good night I have so much to do I can write no more now.

Otis

JL135=

Name on the Check Mrs. C.P.Otis
Head Quarters 10th Reg't. Conn. Vols.
Near Richmond V.a. Oct 14th 1864

My Dear Wife.

I recieved your letter of the 9th this morning, being the first I have heard from home for a long time. I do not recall just how long, but certainly more than a week. I am busy writing Official Reports and having the monthly inspection but will stop to answer you[r] letter now. I thought to go on with my letter as I commenced and write up to date, but events transpire faster than I have time to record them.

We had a bloody fight yesterday, and thinking you would hear of it through the papers, and as the report got in circulation that I was wounded in consequence of an Officer [Lt. Col. Taylor] who resembles me and went into the fight at the same time wearing a dark blue overcoat with red lining like mine, being carried off mortally wounded. I wrote a short note last night to let you know I was well, and today neglect other duties to write a more satisfactory letter. Day before

yesterday at noon I got orders to hold my command in readiness to move at a moment's notice, and an hour later received orders to get my regiment under arms and be ready to march. The order soon came and the entire Division marched out of the entrenchments and formed in a large field nearby, at the same time the 3d Division ("Birneys" colored) marched out through another sally port further to the left. We waited a long time in this field evidently waiting for the proper hour to arrive. It soon commenced raining and kept it up by spells until night making everybody particularly wet and uncomfortable. Just before night we started towards Richmond but when the head of the column had nearly reached our picket line a counter march was ordered and we all went back inside the entrenchments, pitched the shelter tents in the rain which we had taken down four hours before, and soaking wet found ourselves where we were in the morning. It is said that the accidental arrival of a "Flag of Truce" was the reason of our returning that night. I am more inclined to think that the Rebels found what was going on and not being ready to receive us sent down the flag to delay us, knowing that an hour's delay so near night would prevent us moving until morning.

About an hour after getting well settled again I was notified to keep my command ready to march, and at one in the morning got an order to fall in under arms at 4 - I was ready at the appointed time and the entire Division again started out promptly, in the cold morning air - the roads awfully muddy from last night's rain. My overcoat was soaking wet and I shivered in the bleak October air till my boots rattled in the stirrups.

We marched on rapidly through a New Military Road cut through the woods expressly for us, and reached the Darbytown road, at the scene of Kory's late defeat just before sunrise. Here we deployed a body of skirmishers and advanced towards the enemy's position. Our skirmishers soon became hotly engaged and drove those of the enemy back to their works. I had about 70 men on the skirmish line five or six of whom were wounded, two mortally. The balance of my regiment was in reserve and though shots flew about pretty thickly, and the enemy's artillery shelled us considerably we were comparatively safe. Affairs remained in this condition until noon when I received orders to report with my command [to] Col Pond comd'g 1st Brigade of our Division. I reported accordingly well knowing that the movement meant mischief.

On reaching Col. Pond's position I found his Brigade "massed", as we call it and knew well that it meant an assault. I examined the ground in front and found between us and the enemy's work a dense thicket of scrub oaks, such an one as I would go miles out of my way to avoid at home rather than pass through. We could see nothing but could hear the Rebels chopping at a great rate. It was well known that the enemy had earth works there but of what strength was a matter of conjecture. - I had always found them strong enough however wherever I had been. - Seeing the utter impossibility of taking a column through such [a] place in any condition to be effective I returned and informed Col Pond what my opinion was in relation to the matter, urging him to represent the case to Gens Ames and Terry. Ames came down and pretended to look for himself. He said he could see no reason why we could not go through. I then sent a staff officer to say to Gen Terry in my name, that a successful assault at that point was in my opinion out of the question. But it was of no use Gen. Terry said that he left the matter entirely with Gen Ames. Gen Ames said he would take the responsibility. I told the staff officer who brought back the word that it was not Gen Ames who took the responsibility but we who went in there. However, at half past Two the order was given to charge! and forward we went forcing our way through the dense scrub oaks which were almost enough of themselves to bar our progress. Soon after passing our own picket line we were met by a storm of bullets from the rebel works, on we went with a cheer men falling at every step. Three men fell directly across each other either killed or wounded close beside me. We could keep little order in the ranks push[ing] and crowding our way through the thick bushes. I rushed on keeping my men as well together as possible till suddenly we found ourselves stopped by what we call a "slashing". That is trees felled across each other. I now for the first time looked up to see what was before me and not ten steps off was the rebel work lined with men and I was looking right down the barrels of their guns which seemed almost to touch me. I looked around and found myself nearly alone the last of our men were falling back or falling dead before the murderous musketry fire of the enemy. But they were not running some even stopped to return the deadly fire. I stepped back keeping my face to the front but had not taken more than two steps before the scabbard of my sword caught in a scrub oak, and the slings which had got broken in our fight of the 7th and only hitched up temporarily gave way and the scabbard fell to the ground. I thought I had as soon lose my life as that under such circumstances, and stopped to secure it. I had hardly done so when my field glass the strap

of which became broken in the advance also fell off. this I also secured but had not taken more than half a dozen more steps when a soldier who had dodged behind a tree to avoid the storm of bullets seeing himself being left alone sprang out to make his way to the rear and knocked my hat off with his bayonet. The gallant fellow stopped and picked it up for me but did not stay to apologize. A few steps more brought me among the color guard of my own Regiment who seeing me in advance of them waited for me to return. I was now out of sight of the Rebels though still within a hundred yards of their works. Their bullets whistled lively as ever but my dark blue coat with its firey lining could no longer be made a special mark of. I now saw that one of [the] color bearers was missing and with him the U.S. Flag which he carried. I questioned the color guard, they said the Seg't was shot and fell between where we stood and the enemy's works. I started again, one of the sergeants accompanying voluntarily. We returned nearly half way to the enemy's position looking everywhere. Our dead and wounded covered the ground but neither our color sergeant of his precious charge could be found. The Rebels soon discovered and commenced firing on us and I gave up the search for the time. Just as I was returning one of the Color Guard called me [to] say that the color had gone to the rear. I sent one of them back and he soon found it. The Sergeant though severely was not mortally wounded and after falling had got up and gone to the rear dragging the color along with him until he found Lt. Col. Greeley and gave it to him. After learning this I went back to where the troops were reorganizing and found that they had given me up for lost. But strange enough I never so much as got a scratch or a hole through my clothes.

Camp was killed so near the enemy's works that his body could not be brought off, but we went out a flag of Truce today and secured it, robbed and stripped of everything. I took but 90 men into the charge the rest of the Regiment being on the skirmish line in front of our own Brigade. Of this ninety I lost 39, within six of half I took in. In fact I lost half as many from my 90 as Ponds Brigade lost from 500.

That affair finished the day's work. we were thouroughly whipped and withdrew soon after and by sunset were back inside our entrenchments. Besides the 39 men I lost in the assault I lost 8 on the skirmish line of our own Brigade. Two or three more such days will finish the poor Tenth and then some of the new one years regiments now so carefully preserved at the rear must come to the front. When we started out Major Camp remarked "This is the first time we have had three Field Officers for a fight since the Battle of Roanoke Island". I am anything but superstitious as you know, but the remark shook my nerves for a moment. I said to myself at once, or something said to me We shall all not return. After the fight was over and we were returning, I said to Lt. Col. Greeley as we were riding together at the head of the Column, "Did you notice any particular remark of Major Camp's this morning". Yes I did he replied "and said to myself which of us three is to fall and when I saw an Officer in a dark Overcoat carried back on a stretcher I dared not look at him and walked the other way." As we went into the charge an Orderly Seargent named Northrop was on the right of the first sub-division and at my left hand. He was wounded in three places, they say mortally. But our Quarter Master saw him at the Field Hospital in the evening and he asked for me at once. "When I went down" said he "I saw the Col a long way ahead and felt sure he would never come back". The Quarter Master said that every wounded man enquired for me as soon as they saw him. But I think I have said enough on this subject and now for your letters.

You say you shall not object to my staying if I think best. I do not think best! My Regiment is now reduced to a major command though for all that I should have made up my mind to stay but for the row I had about Camp's promotion. A pretty sharp correspondence has taken place between myself and Governor Buckingham. In my opinion Trumbull was outrageously mean in the matter and for some time I hessitated whether I would not remain with the Regiment, fight it out and compel him to leave as I could have done, and as many Officers advised me to do, But I finally concluded to leave and let them run the machine themselves. So only two days before Camp's death I made an application to be mustered out of service by reason of the expiration of my term of service. I have not heard from the application and do not know whether it will be granted or not. Had I not mad[e] the application it is possible I should not do so now although, I could hardly make up my mind to write a civil letter to Gov. Buckingham again.

But aside from all that these cold nights would soon use me up we are allowed no baggage except such as we can carry ourselves, and two small blankets make all the load my horse is able to carry besides myself. The consiquence is I shiver all night and sneeze all day with a cold. My lu[n]gs are very sore now, and I have considerable cough.

I am rejoiced to hear how good the boys have been at school. I knew by the letters they wrote me that they were getting along finely and proud indeed to find they take such interest in their school. I shall try to write them both soon..

I shall have to send this off as it is a portion has been written in the dark and with constant interruptions but I have no time to correct it. 15th

Your letter acknowledging the receipt of the check came in the night. The name is Mrs. C.P.Otis. Of course you need not try to make your signature look like it only have the name right

Good day. Otis

JL136=

Head Quarters 10th Regt C.V.

Near Richmond Va. Oct 17th 1864

my Dear Wife:

I recieved your letter of the 12th this morning and though you deprecate it by saying that it is not much of a letter I have no fault to finde with it except the --- I came very near saying what I promised not to say any more. I do not expect or wish you to write me general news though I like to hear what is going on about home, and in the neighborhood I had much rather hear about yourself and the children What you all say and think about my letters and the like What you say and do at home is more interesting and of more consiquence to me than what anyone else does although as I said before I like very well to know what is going on in town We are in the same place we have occupied since the fight of the 7th with shelter from the rain but none from the cold. And the nights are very severe. I have not been quite as well as usual since our last demonstration against the enemy, having taken a severe cold I have not been able to ride for three days past.

Trumbull has gone home with Camp's body, you will probably hear from him before you get this.

I have no news to write I suppose John Walton told you all that has taken place lately he is such a talker you would be sure to get all the news from him. You often speak of Leander as stopping in on his way from church. Where does he live? I supposed that he lived in Mrs. Bidwell's house.

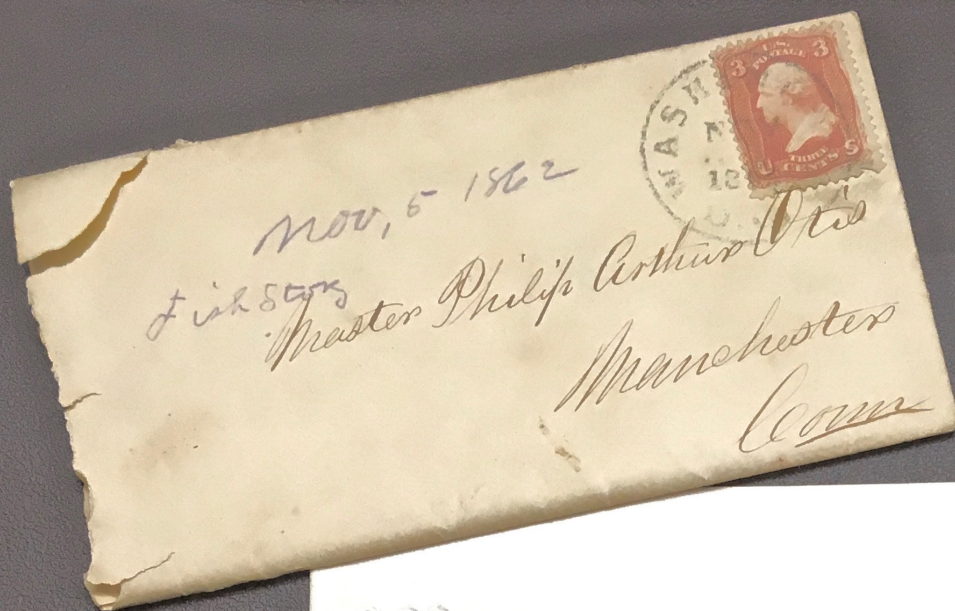
Probably there is considerable excitement with you on the subject of politics about now. Our Election is over. The Commissioners were here on the 11th and took our vote. I think there were about 110 cast of which all but one or two were for the Union ticket. We only know of one vote being cast for McClellan, and think it was the only one though it is quite possible that one or two more were put in.

Lts Enright & Savage and Capt Webb has been mustered out of service today and will start for home to-morrow or or next day. I should be sorry indeed to loose Lt Wright if I was sure of staying myself. But I shall leave the service if possible, and begin [to] think it possible If we are not ordered to make another charge on the enemy's works.

I think the Regiment will be consolidated into a battalion according to an act of Congress which will muster me out anyway whether I wish it or not. The law is that when a Regiment gets below 500 it shall be consolidated to a battalion and the Col Mustered out. And I expect that will be done before long.

Good night. Otis

[illegible]



New-Berne N.C. Nov 5th 1862
My little boys.

I am going to write you a letter today but it will be rather a short one, but when you get so as to write letters in reply, perhaps I shall write longer ones. You may say to mother that the mail which Son Horton took away came back two days after and brought me a letter from Leo, Parkhurst and one from Leander but none from home. Mr Parkhurst said that he had written me one letter before, but I never received it. I have not had time to write before since our regiment left. There are about 200 sick men in camp to see to, and four died in three days after the regiment left.

I had every thing to see to, and had to get a Chaplain from another regiment to conduct the service. But none of the men are very sick now and they all seem to be doing well, so today I have a little leisure time. But I suppose you are impatient to hear about those fish we caught coming down from New York. Mother knows if you do not, that I am a ^{hard} poor at a fish story but I will do my best.

Well, the 2nd day out of New York we thought we would try and see how it would seem to fish in the Ocean (you must know we were entirely out of sight of land) so we got a hook and line of the Pilot and went out it. This hook and line would astonish you some if you could see it. The line was about as large as a clothes line and as long as four tied together

The hook, was as large ^{round} as that
bass wire they use on Viringers
and we baited it with a great piece
of pork shine as large as my hand.

We tied the end of the line to the
rail of the steamer and let the hook
toss about. After about two hours
Major Bartholomew thought by
the feeling of the line that we had got
a biter. So he pulled away at the
line and it was all he could do to get
it in. Pretty soon the fish got up near
enough so we could see him and he
was a big one I can tell you. Not though
we had got the biggest prize of a
blue fish; but we soon got him aboard
and found he was no blue fish
but a big fellow as large as six shades
with a back almost the color of
the back of a mackerel and ^a narrow
stripe looking just like a string of
beads running all the way from

the corners of his mouth to his tail
the whole underside of his body was
just the color of the mother of pearl
He had not a very large mouth
but it was armed with a set of as sharp
Wicked looking ~~the~~ teeth as I ever saw
When the mate of the steamer tried
to get the hook out of his mouth the
fish bit his finger so that the blood
ran a stream. Just then the Capt of
the steamer came along, when he saw
the fish he held up both hands with
astonishment. He said he had
often seen such fish caught on the coast
of Florida but never so far north be-
fore, he said it was called the King
fish, and was the best fish in the
world, such an one as that was
worth Five Dollars. Before night we
caught two more making three in all
They tasted some like shad only better
We had some fried some made into
chowder, and one stuffed and baked
About 15 of us sat down to dinner
the day we had the baked fish and
did not eat more than half of it
I think it was the best fish I ever tas-
ted. The first one had cooked I was
too sea-sick to eat but after we got to
Hatteras I could eat my share. How
would you like to fish with four bed-
Cores tied together and a hook that

would hold a calf, and catch fish
as long as a broomstick?

I believe I have told you all about
the fish we caught coming down
I have never been fishing here though
some do go and have good luck.

Fish ~~fish~~ are plenty and cheap
here now and some of the very
good. There is one kind called "mul-
lets" about large as good sized Por-
gies. They cost about 5¢ a piece and
are good fish. There is another
kind the darkies call "Robbins"
but they are not so good.

I wish we had a good cat down here
the rats are so thick in our tents
that we often see them run across the
floor in the day time, and nights they
make so much noise we can hard-
ly sleep. If I could only get them
to drink a little better whiskey
we would soon be rid of them
but they are "old rats" and know
better.

Tell Mother we have heard nothing

from the regiment since it left
Washington last Sunday morning
~~but~~ a sad accident occurred just
as they were leaving. The horse of
Capt Penleton of Gen. Posters
staff ran with him and threw
him against a tree injuring
him so that he died in a few
hours. He was a wealthy young
man from New York. A Volun-
teer and serving without pay.
I think he was married. I was
somewhat acquainted with him
but not particularly so.

We expect a mail every hour and
as I have had no letter from
home for more than two weeks
I shall expect some.

Give my love to Mamma and
tell her to write for you soon -
affectionately.

Paper

On March 15, 1862, a day after grapeshot tore through the chest of 29-year-old Levi F. Lyman at the Battle of New Bern (N.C.), the 10th Connecticut private died from his wounds. The duty of informing Levi's family of the death of the married father of a 1-year-old son fell to the captain of Lyman's Company B, John L. Otis. The officer's short note, dated March 19, 1862, began like so many others letters to families of dead soldiers during the Civil War, including [this one](#), [this one](#) and [this one](#). "It becomes my painful duty to inform you ...," Otis wrote Levi's 52-year-old father in Manchester, Conn.

The final resting place of Lyman is unknown.

Newberne, N.C., March 19, 1862
Levi L. Lyman Esq.

Dear sir

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the death of your son Levi F. Lyman. He died on Saturday the 15th inst. of wounds received in battle the previous day, and though you and your family cannot but sorrow for the loss, you must feel proud of one who died a soldier's death, in the cause of Republican institutions. I have been witness to his courage and good conduct in the field, being beside him when he was struck. He dropped his gun, saying, "O, captain, I am shot." When his brother Willie went up to him, he said "Don't mind me Willie. Go back and help drive out the rebels." When we went in pursuit of the enemy I left Willie who stayed by him to the last. He rejoined his company last night.

Yours truly
J.L. Otis, Capt.
Co. B. 10 C.V.

Posted by [John Banks](#) at [8:52 PM](#)

From John Banks' Civil War Blog

Newbern N.C. March 17th 1862
Levi L. Lyman Esq.

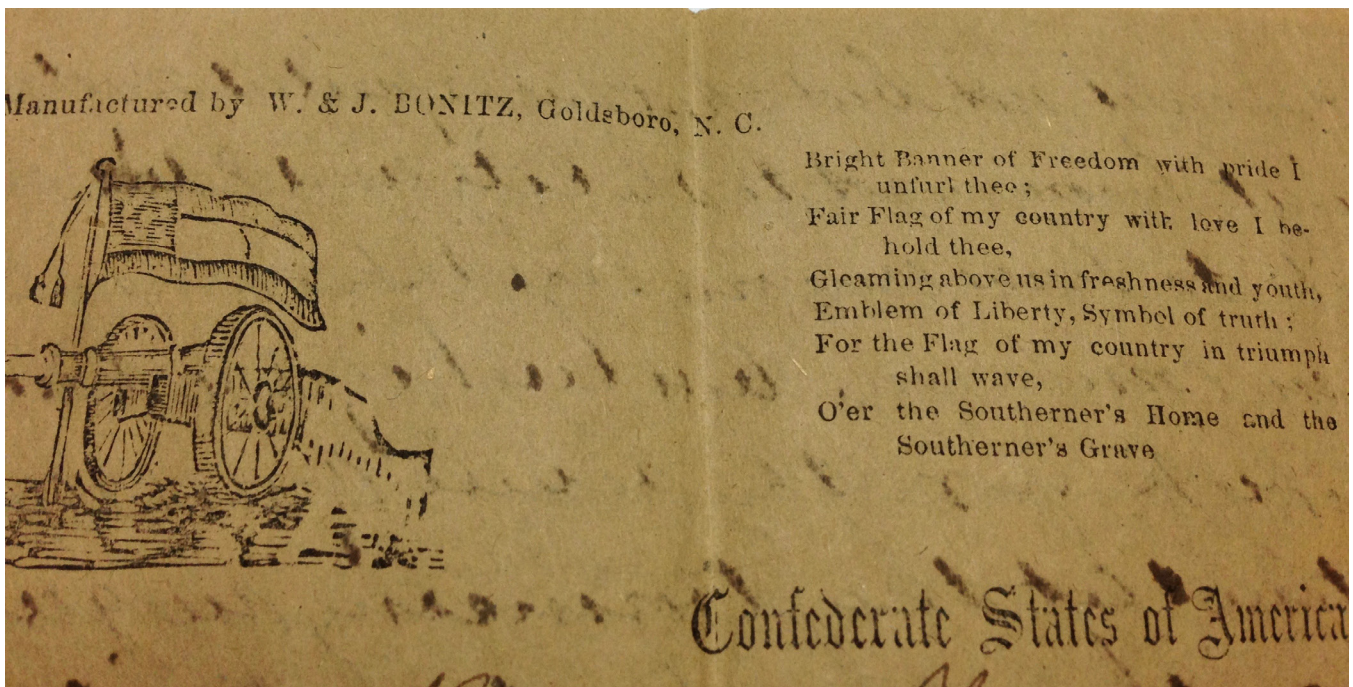
Dear Sir

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Yours Truly

J. L. Otis Capt.
Comd Co B 10th U.S. Col.

Items kept with the letters.



Additional Biographical, Genealogical and Civil War Reading Materials



Provided by:

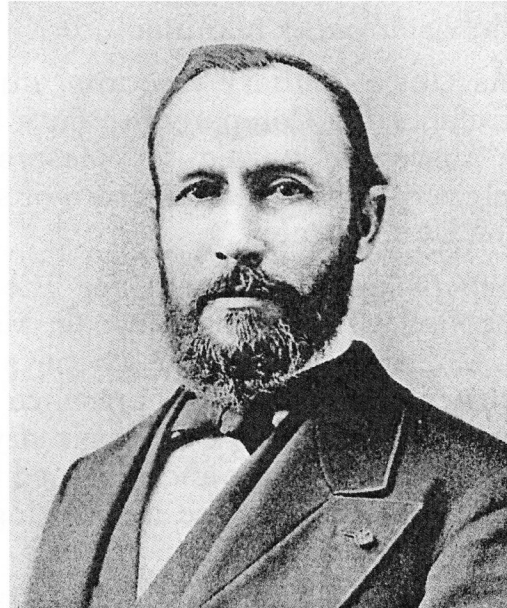
Charlotte Otis
John Merritt
Ralmon Black
Laura Davenport
Kenley Clark
Elise Feeley, Forbes Library

JOHN LORD OTIS

Colonel, 10TH Regt. Connecticut Volunteer Infantry
Brevet Brigadier-General U.S.V. March 13 1865

by Rick Dyer

He was, in many respects, an unlikely hero. When the Civil War first erupted, Manchester's John Lord Otis was a 34-year-old textile manufacturer who had no prior military experience. Married and the father of two children, he had solid connections to the Cheney Family and its business empire. By the time the "War of the Rebellion" ended, Otis had fought in more than 50 battles and skirmishes, been wounded four times, risen in rank from recruit to regimental commander, and earned a general's star for his bravery in combat.



1827 - 1894

John Lord Otis was born in Lyme, Connecticut on July 15, 1827, the son of Hayden E. Otis and Mary (Lord) Otis. He attended local schools there and, at age seven, was employed as a "bobbin boy" in a textile mill.

Through hard work and study, Otis became an exceptional machinist, and a self-taught mechanical engineer. He was particularly adept at installing and operating the new machinery which mass-produced cloth. New England was still in the midst of extensive industrial expansion, and Otis's reputation as a mechanical "wunderkind" soon made him a valuable resource in the local textile industry. In 1851, at the age of 24, Otis was named the superintendent of the Pacific Manufacturing Company's cotton mill at the Manchester Green.

Otis was hired by Pacific ". . . to put in operation several sets of delicate and intricate machinery, which had been imported from France, which the men, sent in charge of it, could not adjust."¹ He performed the task so well that Pacific Manufacturing made him a partner in the business in 1855. He left Pacific Manufacturing in 1856 and moved several miles across town to establish the Otis Manufacturing Company in Manchester's south end.

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MANCHESTER, CT IN 2 PARTS, SEPT 2005 AND NOV. 2005

A deed recorded in the Manchester Town Clerk's Office on April 1, 1856, indicates that Elisha G. Hilliard sold a 35-acre tract of land on that date to John L. Otis and Nehemiah Williams for \$8,500. Located on the parcel, which was adjacent to the factories of the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company, was ". . . a Sattinett Factory & all the machinery & utensils therein & two dwelling houses & other buildings thereon."² Although the new enterprise bore the 28-year-old Otis's name, it was probably financed and controlled by the Cheneys. The principal shareholders in the venture were Ward Cheney and Henry Rogers, a Manchester paper manufacturer.³

As Otis's obituary recounts, during 1856 he "...established the Otis Manufacturing Company in South Manchester. During the four years he was there he started for Messrs. Cheney Brothers the first set of machinery for the manufacture of silk and wool knit goods ever operated in the United States."⁴

When his assignment for the Cheney Brothers was successfully completed, Otis rejoined Pacific Manufacturing. He sold his interest in Otis Manufacturing to the Cheneys and returned to the textile mill at the Manchester Green. His presence there had apparently been greatly missed. According to Otis's obituary: "In 1859 he disposed of his interest in South Manchester and returned to the Pacific Mills which had suffered during his absence, the mills being obliged to suspend work for part of the time."⁵

Otis was married to Catherine Preston, of Northampton, Massachusetts, on March 1, 1847, in Manchester. The Reverend B.F. Northrop officiated at the wedding ceremony. The couple had two sons, Harry P. Otis, who was born in November, 1851, and Philip A. Otis, who was born in April, 1855.⁶ Otis lived with his family in Manchester and continued to oversee the Pacific mills until the outbreak of the Civil War.

When the first Confederate canon shots were fired upon Fort Sumter, the Union states scrambled to raise an Army. Each state attempted to fill its quota of volunteers, and conscripts were also drafted. The draft system at that time was highly inequitable. A man could pay the government a sum of money for a deferral, or he could hire a surrogate to fight in his place.

With a wife and two young children at home, and a substantial business enterprise to oversee, Otis certainly had reasons to avoid military service. With a comfortable income, "war industry" skills, and close ties to Manchester's power elite, he undoubtedly had the means to do so.

But when Connecticut Governor William A. Buckingham issued a call for volunteers, John Lord Otis was among the first Manchester residents to respond. At the time, the town had 3,294 residents and a voting list of 658 males. Otis was one of the 253 Manchester men who served in the

Civil War. Of that number, 222 volunteered, and 31 were draftees.⁷

Otis enlisted on August 29, 1861 as a private in Company B of the 10th Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry.⁸

The regiment officially mustered onto active duty at Camp Buckingham in Hartford on September 30, 1861. Otis, who was very instrumental in recruiting men from Manchester and other surrounding towns to join the unit, had been commissioned a second lieutenant in Company B ten days earlier.

The 10th Connecticut Volunteers spent a month at their Hartford encampment, drilling and making the transition from civilian to soldier. On October 31, 1861, the regiment boarded a steamship in Hartford for a voyage down the Connecticut River and the eastern coast to Annapolis, Maryland.

Annapolis was the site of the U.S. Naval Academy, but during the Civil War the midshipmen were dispatched to temporary quarters in Newport, R.I. while the Army commandeered the Maryland facility as a strategic wartime training and staging location. The 10th Connecticut Volunteers spent two months at Annapolis, preparing for combat. During that time, the unit was lauded for its “superior drill and discipline.”⁹

Otis, the self-taught mechanical engineer turned military officer, adapted easily to life in the Army and was quickly recognized for his leadership. He was promoted to first lieutenant of Company B on November 4, 1861, and was made captain of that unit just eight days later. As the war progressed, his advance in rank would be equally meteoric. Otis was selected for the rank of major on November 14, 1862, and sewed on the eagle Insignia of a full Army colonel on February 13, 1863. In all, it took him less than 18 months to advance in rank from buck private to bird colonel.

At Annapolis, the 10th Connecticut Volunteers were assigned to the First Brigade of General Ambrose K Burnside’s Division. The brigade was commanded by Brig. General John G. Foster. On January 2, 1862, Burnside’s Division was sent aboard a flotilla of ships to interdict Southern privateers and fight rebel forces along the North Carolina seacoast. Two companies of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers—including Company B commanded by Captain Otis—made the passage in the sooty hold of a schooner that had previously been used to haul coal. Cramped accommodations, poor rations, and winter storms combined to make it a very unpleasant voyage for the Connecticut soldiers.

Otis later wrote the unit’s history, that his regiment “remained on ship board, miserably provided for, over five weeks, then landed on February 7th and on the 8th fought like a regiment of veterans In the battle of Roanoke Island, losing 56 killed and wounded—the heaviest loss sustained by any regiment engaged.” Among those killed in action was the commander of the 10th Volunteers, Colonel Charles L Russell of

Derby. He was succeeded by Colonel Albert W. Drake of Windsor.

According to the unit history, 27 members of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers were killed or wounded during the fighting at New Berne on March 14th. Army casualty records indicate that Otis suffered a "slight leg wound during the battle.

Members of the 10th Volunteers saw extensive combat in North Carolina throughout the summer and fall of 1862. On December 14, 1862, their regiment engaged in fierce fighting with Confederate forces at Kinston, NC. The Connecticut infantrymen were part of an expeditionary force commanded by General Foster. The Union troops, on a mission to destroy the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad, encountered stiff enemy resistance at a bridge near Kinston.

Otis described the Kinston battle in the regimental history: "General French, of the rebel army, occupied the town with about 7,000 men; one of his brigades under Colonel Mallett occupied a strong position on the opposite side of the Neuse River, to defend the approach to the bridge. Several Union regiments had attempted to carry the enemy's position, but were all repulsed; the Tenth was then sent for from the rear, passing on its way to the front, one entire brigade and three regiments of another. Arriving in position, it charged the enemy over three regiments lying down in line of battle, drove the enemy from their position, pursued them to the Neuse River, charged and carried the bridge, which was on fire, and, swept by four guns in a tete-du-pont, captured 500 prisoners, a like number of small arms, and eleven pieces of artillery.

Although Otis modestly omitted any reference to his individual exploits in the unit history, he was in the thick of the fighting throughout the expedition in North Carolina. Now a major, he was wounded three times within four days:

On December 14 at Kinston; on December 16 during combat at Whitehall, NC; and on December 17 during a battle near Everettsville, NC, when Foster's troops captured and destroyed the Goldsborough Bridge.

On December 24, 1862, President Lincoln directed that the Union troops then in North Carolina would comprise the Eighteenth Corps, under the command of Foster, who had been promoted to the rank of major general. Otis and the other members of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers were part of a division that Foster led into South Carolina. On January 29, 1863, Foster's soldiers landed on St. Helena's Island in South Carolina.

On February 13, 1863, while still on St. Helena's Island, Otis was promoted to the rank of colonel and placed in command of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers. He subsequently fought in a number of battles

and skirmishes in South Carolina, including attacks on the James and Morris Islands.

While in South Carolina, Otis became ill with fever, which was probably attributable to malaria. He was sent back to Connecticut in July of 1863, and was subsequently placed in charge of a conscript camp in New Haven. Although the assignment as commandant of the "Draft Rendezvous" afforded Otis the opportunity to convalesce and reunite with his family, the detail proved to be the most onerous one of his military career.

Many of the conscripts were men who wanted no part of military life, but lacked the financial resources necessary to avoid the draft. For the most part, they were unmotivated and undisciplined. Otis's obituary in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* later noted: "This camp had a garrison of 500 men and 80 officers. The position was an arduous and disagreeable one, entailing constant care and watchfulness day and night and about as dangerous as service on the field."

At the end of this paper, Gen. Otis' *History of the 10th Regiment* is included in full.

Endnotes:

1. *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, (Northampton, MA), March 15, 1894.
2. Deed from Elisha G. Hilliard to John L. Otis and Nehemiah Williams, dated April 1, 1856 and recorded on the Manchester Land Records on April 1, 1856.
3. William E. Buckley, *A New England Pattern: The History of Manchester, Connecticut* (Chester, CT: Pequot Press, 1973), p.129.
4. Obituary, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), March 15, 1894.
5. Ibid.
6. Genealogical Information Sheet supplied by the Florence (MA) Historical Museum.
7. Buckley, p.127.
8. Muster Roll records of the 10th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
9. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During The War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Bvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p. 394.

* * * *

Gen. Otis wrote letters home to wife and children during his Civil War engagement, August, 1861 to October, 1864. Of them, 136 were preserved and Catherine Otis Merritt transcribed them in the 1990s. What a read! The last one such is here excerpted, in part. - RJB

Head Quarters 10th Regt C.V.
Near Richmond Va. Oct 17th 1864

"my Dear Wife:

"I recieved your letter of the 12th this morning and though you deprecate it by saying that it is not much of a letter I have no fault to finde with it except the --- I came very near saying what I promised not to say any more. I do not expect or wish you to write me general news though I like to hear what is going on about home, and in the neighborhood I had much rather hear about yourself and the children What you all say and think about my letters and the like What you say and do at home is more interesting and of more consiquence to me than what anyone else does although as I said before I like very well to know what is going on in ...

"Probably there is considerable excitement with you on the subject of politics about now. Our Election is over. The Commissioners were here on the 11th and took our vote. I think there were about 110 cast of which all but one or two were for the Union ticket. We only know of one vote being cast for McClellan, and think it was the only one though it is quite possible that one or two more were put in.

"Lts Enright & Savage and Capt Webb has been mustered out of service today and will start for home to-morrow or next day. I should be sorry indeed to loose Lt Wright if I was sure of staying myself. But I shall leave the service if possible, and begin [to] think it possible If we are not ordered to make another charge on the enemy's works.

"I think the Regiment will be consolidated into a battalion according to an act of Congress which will muster me out anyway whether I wish it or not. The law is that when a Regiment gets below 500 it shall be consolidated to a battalion and the Col Mustered out. And I expect that will be done before long.

"Good night. Otis"

* * * *

Gen. John Lord Otis in Massachusetts

Nearly 1,400 Federal officers were appointed to the rank of brevet general, brigadier or major, during the American Civil War.

A brevet has been defined as "a commission conferring upon an officer a grade in the army additional to and higher than that which, at the time it is bestowed, he holds by virtue of his commission in a particular corps of the legally established military organization". It makes him eligible for assignment to duty at the rank it confers, but without such assignment by the President it has no effect on the officers status with respect to pay, emoluments and seniority.

The brevet system was totally overwhelmed and effectively destroyed by the avalanche of brevet promotions resulting from the Civil War. With the formation of a huge volunteer army to fight the war, many regular army officers took leave from their regiments to seek promotion in the volunteer regiments. Thus it became possible for these officers to have four separate and distinct ranks at the same time. They could hold a lineal rank in both the regular and volunteer armies and also earn a brevet rank in both armies.

So it was that he returned to civilian life a war hero at the close of the war, with the title of General and to his chosen profession as superintendent of the Florence Sewing Machine Company at Florence, Mass., where he remained for three years, or until he established the Northampton Emory Wheel Company, in Leeds on the west bank of the Mill River just below the confluence with Roberts Brook, where something of it is still in use.

General Otis was held in the highest esteem by his fellow-townsmen, and had often been honored by election to office. He was a staunch Republican, and one of the party's leaders. He was a selectman, assessor and overseer of the poor in Northampton in 1875-76, and a year later was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, serving on the Committee on Military Affairs. He was elected to the State Senate in 1879, and reelected the next year, at both times serving on important committees. He made a most honorable record as a legislator, performing valuable service for his constituents and for the Commonwealth. General Otis was married, March 1, 1847, to Catherine, daughter of Cyrus & Sarah (Moody) Preston, of South Hadley, and had two children: Harry Preston Otis, born 1851 and Philip Arthur Otis, born 1855.

At the time of the Great Mill River Flood, 1874, General Otis was in New York City on his return from a reunion of the Army of the Potomac at Harrisburg, PA. He was co-owner and treasurer of the Northampton Emory Wheel Company, and an investor in the Florence Sewing Machine Company and like Skinner, Bodman and Hayden, had been a shareholder in the Mill River Reservoir Company. He took command of

recovering and documenting the casualties, as he, too often, had to do on the battlefield in the Civil War. He was chosen to chair the committee to distribute relief monies to individuals where most needed. He reported that 250 Leeds citizens were destitute, including 36 families and he had \$25,000 to portion out as he discerned just. Because there were accusations of corruption in the dispersal of aid, Otis requested each recipient to sign for their compensation and he had a third party witness each transferal.

Until he could harness the river again the General had his workers dam up the Roberts Brook, which ran very close to his factory, to power his Emory Wheel. With his machinery soon successfully repaired, the factory was running at near full capacity in a short time. To raise money for Tiffany's goldsmithing of the heroes' medals, General Otis donated \$25, which could seem like not much, but would have the labor value of more than \$5,000, comparing it to production worker compensation, today.

Although in no sense of the word a politician, General Otis was called to various offices in the gift of his fellow citizens. He was selectman two years, a representative to the Legislature in 1877, and State Senator in 1879 and 1880. He would undoubtedly have been the first Mayor of the city but for an unfortunate and what many felt an underhanded opposition. General Otis always took an active interest in the welfare of Northampton and its local civic matters. His arduous and successful efforts to secure the city charter will be remembered by many. He was prominent in the highest fraternal society life, and became Commander of the Military Legion, and Eminent Commander of the Northampton Commandery of Knights Templar. He was a director of the Northampton National Bank. Liberal minded in religious matters, he early connected himself with the Free Congregational Society of Florence, and was always a prominent and influential member of that organization.

General Otis died at Tarpon Springs, Florida, March 14, 1894. For several years ill health had led him to spend his winters in the South, thus avoiding the extreme cold of the New England climate.

In January, 1894, while preparing to leave Florence, he had an attack of heart disease, but rallied sufficiently to be able to make the journey. His strength, failed, however, soon after reaching Tarpon Springs, and the end came suddenly.

His funeral at Cosmian Hall will long be remembered by those who attended it, as an imposing and popular tribute not only of the whole community, but of the military and civic organizations and their officials, from far and near, to the worth of the man. A worthy citizen he certainly was, because he led a thoroughly upright life. He was kind, true, gentlemanly, fearless, and gave intelligent and conscientious attention to public affairs, contributing very much of himself in peace and war, to the general good in a fashion which showed true public spirit.

The Florence home of General Otis, erected by him in 1866, still called the Otis House in the 21st century, stands on North Main Street, diagonally across from Florence Civic Center, next north of the church, which for some years it served as parsonage.

* * * *

History of the 10th Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Infantry

by Brevet Brigadier-General John L. Otis,
formerly Colonel of the Regiment.

The 10th Regiment of Infantry was recruited late in the summer of 1861, mustered into the United States service September 30, at Camp Buckingham, Hartford, Connecticut, left there for Annapolis, Maryland, October 31, under command of Colonel Charles L. Russell, of Derby, and was assigned to the First (General J. G. Foster's) Brigade of Burnside's Division. The regiment remained at Annapolis two months, during which time it became noted for superior drill and discipline.

January 2, 1862, it took transports with the Burnside Expedition for North Carolina, remained on shipboard, miserably provided for, over five weeks; then landed February 7, and on the eight fought like a regiment of veterans in the Battle of Roanoke Island, losing fifty-six killed and wounded—the heaviest loss sustained by any regiment engaged. Colonel Russell was killed, and was succeeded by Colonel Albert W. Drake, of Windsor.

February 11, the regiment re-embarked and remained on transports over a month longer, landing at Slocum's Creek March 13, and after a hard day's march and a night bivouac in the mud again distinguished itself for steadiness and efficiency under fire on the morning of the fourteenth, in the Battle of Newbern, losing twenty-seven killed and wounded. Colonel Drake died June 5, and was succeeded by Colonel Ira W. Pettibone, of Winsted.

The 10th Regiment remained in North Carolina during the summer of 1862, taking part in all the movements of the Army. It was sent to Roanoke Island to suppress a mutiny, a battalion was sent to Plymouth to take part in capturing some rebel works on the Roanoke River, and the whole regiment took part in the Trenton and Tarboro expeditions, meeting the enemy at Rawle's Mills, Hamilton, and Williamstown.

July 22, all troops in North Carolina were organized into the 9th Corps, under command of Major-General Burnside.

November 15, Colonel Pettibone resigned, and the command of the regiment devolved for a short time upon Lieutenant-Colonel Pardee, and then on Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Leggett.

December 14, 1862, during the Goldsboro Expedition, there was a very sharp engagement at Kingston, North Carolina. General French, of the rebel army, occupied the town with about 7,000 men; one of his brigades under Colonel Mallett occupied a strong position on the opposite side of the Neuse River, to defend the approach to the bridge. Several Union regiments had at-tempted to carry the enemy's position, but were all repulsed; the 10th Regiment was then sent for from the rear, passing, on its way to the front, one entire brigade and three regiments of

another. Arriving in position, it charged the enemy over three regiments lying down in line of battle, drove the enemy from its position, pursued them to the Neuse River, charged and carried the bridge, which was on fire, and, swept by four guns in a *tete-du-pont*, captured five hundred prisoners, a like number of small arms, and eleven pieces of artillery, with a loss of one hundred and six killed and wounded. From the time the 10th Regiment commenced its charge, not a soldier of any other infantry regiment took part in the engagement. On the sixteenth the regiment took part in the engagement at Whitehall, and on the eighteenth, in that of Goldsboro. At this time Colonel T. G. Stevenson, 24th Massachusetts, commanded the brigade; General Foster, the expedition and the department.

December 24, the troops then in North Carolina were, by order of the President, made to constitute the 18th Corps, with Major-General J. G. Foster in command.

January 29, 1863 General Foster led a division of his troops (of which Stevenson's Brigade, including the 10th Regiment formed a part) to South Carolina, for the purpose of making an attack on Morris Island and Charleston. Foster's troops were landed on St. Helena Island, where on February 13, Major John L. Otis of Manchester, was commissioned Colonel and assumed command of the regiment. Before leaving the island the regiment established its well-earned reputation of being the best drilled and best disciplined of any troops in the service. While here General Forster, with thirty men from the 10th Regiment made a complete reconnaissance of Morris Is-land, and declared it in a condition to be easily captured by a small force. But difficulties with Hunter and his staff, arising from childish jealousies on their part, resulted in Foster's return to Newbern, leaving Stevenson's Brigade behind, which was soon after assigned to General O. S. Ferry's Division of the 10th Corps.

April 9, 1863, the brigade left St. Helena Island for Edisto Inlet, and on the next day the 10th Regiment landed under the guns of Commodore Rogers' monitor and drove the enemy from Seabrook Island, losing one killed and two wounded. While stationed on this island, the regiment was ordered to make a reconnaissance on John's Island, out of reach of support from the main body. The enemy had taken up the planking of the bridge connecting the two islands, and had a good force of infantry, artillery, and cavalry stationed so as to prevent relaying it. Colonel Otis, having but a single regiment of infantry with him retired to a good position and sent back for another regiment of infantry and a section of artillery. Meantime the enemy crossed to Seabrook Island with the hope of capturing the 10th Regiment before reinforcements could arrive; but they arrived in season and the enemy was attacked with such vigor that they were driven from the is-land in confusion, pulling up the bridge planking after them.

On July 14, Stevenson's Brigade took transports for James Island, landed there on the sixteenth, and became a part of Ferry's Division, 10th Corps. On the seventeenth the enemy drove the 54th Massachusetts from its position, where it was holding one of the causeways, marched five regiments of infantry, a battery, and a squadron of cavalry on the island, and unwittingly formed their line of battle so that it left the 10th Regiment on their right and rear. As our main line of battle outnumbered them two to one, and faced them at not more than two hundred and fifty yards distance, Colonel Otis begged permission to attack their right and rear while at this disadvantage, but permission was peremptorily refused. The two lines of battle faced each other for a few minutes without a shot being fired, then the enemy faced to the right, marched deliberately past our front, and off over one of the causeways, without molestation.

Colonel Otis was ordered to "follow them up closely, but in no case to bring on an action." This he did capturing several prisoners. There is no doubt that every rebel soldier who came on the island would have been killed or captured had an attack been ordered. On the morning of the eighteenth Ferry's Division marched across Cole's Island to a position opposite Folly Island, and after several hours' delay took transports for Morris Island—the whole brigade arriving just in time to form the third column of attack on Fort Wagner; but the order to charge was countermanded just as the brigade came under fire. Next morning Chaplain Trumbull and Adjutant Camp, understanding that a truce had been agreed upon, went out among the wounded, and inadvertently getting within the enemy's lines, were captured and taken to Charleston. Two weeks later Colonel Otis was detailed for special duty, and Lieutenant-Colonel Leggett having been severely wounded, the command of the regiment devolved temporarily upon Major E. S. Greeley, of New Haven. Although the regiment suffered but little loss on the Morris Island, its service there was arduous and trying. The courage and soldierly qualities of both officers and men were severely tested; they were constantly on duty, and at the front every third day, exposed to the fire of all the rebel fortifications about Charleston. When ordered to St. Augustine, after the capture of Fort Wagner, sixty per cent, of the men were on sick list.

In November Colonel Otis was relieved from special duty, resumed command of the regiment, and was placed in command of the Post and District of St. Augustine. While stationed here a force of the enemy's cavalry one hundred and sixty strong ambushed a detail of about thirty-five wood-choppers from the 10th, commanded by an officer from another regiment; the officer and two men were killed and twenty-one captured.

April 18, 1864, the regiment took transports for Virginia, reported at Gloucester Point the 25th, and was assigned to the Third Brigade, Ferry's (First) Division, 10th Corps, Army of the James. This army was composed of the 10th Corps under General Gillmore, and the 18th Corps under

General Smith, the whole under command of General B. F. Butler.

On May 7, the regiment took a conspicuous part in the affair at Port Walthall Junction, driving the enemy away from the railroad and destroying the telegraph, while other troops tore up the track. General Plaister the brigade commander, who had never before seen the 10th Regiment under fire, expressed astonishment and admiration at its matchless steadiness in action. May 13, 14, and 15, the regiment took an active part in all the preliminary movements and skirmishing pre-ceding the Battle of Drewry's Bluff, and on the sixteenth was conspicuous throughout the day in that engagement. The right flank of the 18th Corps should have rested on the James River, but "through somebody's blunder," it did not, and the enemy marched a force between that flank and the river, capturing two brigades and leaving the right in such condition that the 10th Corps, which was forcing back the enemy's right, was ordered to withdraw and send re-enforcements to the 18th Corps. To the 10th Regiment was assigned the duty of holding the enemy in check while Hawley's Brigade on its right and Pond's on the left withdrew from the front; a duty which rendered the regiment liable to be overwhelmed and captured by the heavy force sent against it. Here again it won the applause of many officers of rank who witnessed its conduct, holding the enemy in check until the other troops had gained a safe position, then retiring in perfect order, halting twice to drive back the pursuing forces. The brigade commander said of this affair in his official report:

"Of the 10th C. V., I need hardly say more than that they fully sustained the splendid reputation they have hitherto borne. For steady and soldierly behavior under most trying circumstances.... they may have been equaled, but never surpassed. Under a fire in which eighteen fell from the left of the regiment in almost as many seconds, not a man spoke a word or moved a heel from the alignment."

The moment this duty had been accomplished the regiment was sent to the front farther to the right, with orders to hold the enemy in check there until other troops could gain a safe position; this accomplished, Colonel Otis was ordered to take his own and another regiment of infantry, with a section of artillery, advance to the Half-Way House, and hold a position there on the Richmond and Petersburg pike until the last of the 18th Corps had passed to the rear. The enemy, with both infantry and artillery, attempted to force the position, but failed completely. The 10th Regiment was then sent far out to the right of our retreating army to protect its flank, and remained there until all had passed to the rear, then became the rear-guard back to Bermuda Hundred. In these movements the regiment lost thirty-six killed and wounded—none missing, al-though at three different times during the sixteenth it had been in danger of capture through holding its ground so tenaciously while the corps was retiring.

Early in June the regiment took part in repelling the attack of Beauregard on the Bermuda Hundred lines, when Major-General Walker of the rebel army was wounded, and captured; Beauregard himself barely escaped. June 15, the 10th Regiment was on duty at the front near Wier Bottom Church, Major Greeley in command. About three o'clock in the morning signs of a movement on the part of the enemy were observed. A skirmish line soon demonstrated that the enemy was retiring, on which the main body of the regiment advanced so rapidly as to capture, without loss, the famous Hewlett House Battery, with thirty men and two officers. On the evening of June 20, a division under General Ferry moved down to Jones' Landing, on the James River, with orders to cross by a pontoon bridge and capture Deep Bottom, a position north of the James, and only nine miles from Richmond. There was so much delay with the pontoons that the general, fearing daylight would reveal and defeat the movement before the bridge could be completed, ordered Colonel Otis to select another infantry regiment in addition to his own, cross the river in boats, and capture the position. The 1st Maine was selected in addition to the 10th Connecticut the movement promptly executed, and the position captured at two o'clock in the morning. At daylight the enemy appeared in force with infantry and artillery to retake it, but were promptly repulsed. From this time to the end of the war Deep Bottom was the base of operations against Richmond. A few days later two detachments were sent out from the regiment to go within the enemy's lines, capture and destroy a gristmill with a large amount of grain, and also capture a torpedo station and bring away the apparatus. Both expeditions were completely successful.

August 10, the regiment was on duty at the front. The enemy made determined attacks on the line and were repulsed with considerable loss. The 10th Regiment being well protected, lost but one killed and three wounded. The following correspondence between Generals Butler and Foster, relative to the affair, speaks for itself—no other troops than the 10th Regiment were engaged:

"Headquarters Third Brigade, First Division,
10th Corps, Army of the James,
Deep Bottom, Va., August 1, 1864.
Colonel J. L. Otis, Commanding 10th C. V.:

Sir: I have the honor to forward the following telegraph dispatch from Colonel J. W. Shafter, Chief-of-Staff, in answer to a dispatch in relation to the affair in which your regiment was engaged this afternoon.

General Butler's Headquarters
August 1, 1864.
General Foster:

Your dispatch is received. The Commanding General thanks

you and your troops for the gallant manner in which you repulsed the attack on your lines this evening.

J. W. Shafter, Colonel and Chief-of-Staff.
Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
P. A. Davis, Capt. and A. A. G."

July 26, Colonel Otis was again ordered to take the 10th Connecticut and the nth Maine, cross from Deep Bottom to Strawberry Plains, and retake a position from which a brigade of the 10th Corps had been driven the evening before. The two regiments recovered the position, forced the enemy back into their entrenchments, and held a position within fifty yards of their works through the night. In the morning the two regiments joined a brigade of the 2nd Corps in charging the works; the 10th Connecticut and the nth Maine carried an angle of the works, capturing three field guns. Loss of the 10th Connecticut, nine killed and wounded.

August 17, Lieutenant-Colonel Leggett, being too much disabled by wounds received on Morris Island to continue in the field, resigned and was succeeded by Major Greeley.

August 26, the regiment fought with its usual gallantry and steadiness in forcing the enemy's lines in front of Deep Bottom and Spring Hill, losing thirty-six killed and wounded. Two days later, with the 24th Massachusetts and 100th New York, all under command of Colonel Otis, it took the advance in moving against the enemy at Deep Gully and Fuzzell's Mills, losing thirty-two killed and wounded. In short, the 10th Connecticut was in all of the nameless and almost numberless fights and skirmishes of the Army of the James during the summer of 1864.

August 28, the regiment was ordered into the lines at Petersburg, where it remained thirty days, and although no serious engagement took place there during the time, it suffered a loss of nineteen killed and wounded, having been under fire night and day the whole time.

September 26, the regiment returned to the north bank of the James, and on the twenty-seventh took part in the engagement at Chapin's Farm, which resulted in the capture of Fort Harrison and Newmarket Heights.

October 1, General Birney found that the enemy was moving in force northward across the front of the 10th Corps, became alarmed for the safety of a body of troops under General Ferry that had been moved so far to the right as to become disconnected from the main body, and ordered the 10th Regiment to advance without support and attack the marching column of the enemy. The regiment advanced so promptly that it took a force of the enemy's cavalry by surprise and sent it flying from the field; then advancing rapidly, attacked the main body of the enemy in flank, compelling them to halt and form in line of battle facing the woods from which their cavalry and pickets had been driven. The 10th

Regiment, by changing position rapidly in the woods, gave the rebels the impression that they were attacked by a much heavier force, which kept them stationary until Ferry's safety was assured. General Birney personally thanked the regiment for the pluck and coolness it had displayed in attacking and keeping inactive for two hours a force that outnumbered it ten to one.

September 30, the three years' term of the regiment expired. Losses in battle, by disease, and the muster-out of the non-reenlisted men reduced the command to but little more than one hundred men present for duty.

October 7, when Kautz's Cavalry was stampeded without making a fight, and Lee's Army came down to drive the Army of the James back across the river, the regiment on the right of the 10th Connecticut broke and ran, leaving the 10th Connecticut on the extreme right of the army, where it was attacked by a rebel brigade pushed forward to turn our flank; the regiment stood its ground and drove back the entire brigade in confusion. The enemy rallied and again advanced, and was driven back the second time with heavy loss, leaving their dead, including three regimental commanders, on the field. The loss to the 10th Regiment was eight killed and wounded. General Plaisted said of this affair in his official report: "In my opinion, the conduct of the 10th Regiment, when the troops on its right broke and fled, saved the Army of the James from disaster."

October 13, the regiment, with but ninety men in the ranks, was ordered to join Pond's Brigade in charging a heavy and well-manned line of entrenchments on the Darby Road, five miles from Richmond. The force sent in was entirely inadequate and met with a bloody repulse, the 10th Regiment losing forty-six killed and wounded—just one more than half the number taken into the fight. The enemy was not only thoroughly entrenched, but outnumbered the assaulting column five to one. During the service of more than three years, this was the first time the regiment had fallen back under fire.

October 18, Colonel Otis was mustered out by reason of "expiration of term of service," and the command of the regiment devolved upon Colonel E. S. Greeley, of New Haven.

October 28, the 10th Regiment under his command, had a sharp skirmish near the Gerhardt plantation with the loss of five wounded, and near the Johnson place on the twenty-seventh with one wounded. The following week the 10th Connecticut was one of the regiments selected to go to New York City and preserve order there during the Presidential election. In November and December the regiment was recruited with substitutes up to about eight hundred men.

March 28, 1865, Colonel Greeley being absent on leave, the regiment, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel E. D. S. Goodyear, broke camp north of the James, with orders to march to the extreme left of the lines

south of Petersburg. It reached Dinwiddie on the evening of the twenty-ninth; on the thirty-first took post at Hatcher's Run, and the next morning at four o'clock was attacked by a brigade of North Carolina troops, which it whipped handsomely, taking a number of prisoners.

April 2, four companies being on picket, Lieutenant-Colonel Goodyear was ordered to take the other six and join in the assault on Fort Gregg, a key to the inner defenses of Petersburg. After a march of over three hours he joined the assaulting column, which had to advance under the fire of Forts Gregg, Bradley, and Cemetery Hill. The fighting for a foothold on the parapet of the fort was desperate, and continued for more than half an hour with the bayonet and clubbed muskets. The 10th Regiment carried the southern angle of the works, and its State flag, with twenty-three bullet holes through it and three through the staff, was the first banner planted on the parapet. The desperate character of the combat is shown by the losses sustained; out of thirteen officers and one hundred and eighty men of the 10th Regiment that were engaged, eight officers and one hundred and eighteen were killed or wounded. The corps commander, General Gibbons, presented to the regiment a bronze eagle in recognition of its services on the occasion. General Grant himself gave the order for the charge, and in his Memoirs speaks in high terms of the conduct of the troops engaged. Lieutenant-Colonel Goodyear was severely wounded in the charge, and the command of the regiment devolved upon Captain Hickerson, under whom it marched in the van of the infantry sent to support Sheridan. Lee's plan was to defeat the cavalry and escape around the flank of the Army of the Potomac. He had already broken through the cavalry when the infantry of the 24th Corps, after a march of almost unprecedented hardship, formed across his line of march, barring effectually his further progress. Sabers alone, as Sheridan had foreseen, could not stop Lee's strong infantry column, but the bayonets of the 10th and the 18th Corps (the old Army of the James), combined in the new 24th, proved an impassable barrier. The rebels advanced on the infantry and some sharp fighting took place, during which the 10th Regiment had several men wounded and seven captured. The prisoners all escaped and got back during the day, but thoroughly cleaned out of everything valuable. The regiment remained at Appomattox until the last rebel had been paroled, leaving there on the fifteenth day of April. On the sixteenth Colonel Greeley resumed command of the regiment, which moved deliberately "On to Richmond," where it remained until August 26, when it was ordered home and was mustered out of service at Hartford, Connecticut, September 5, 1865 — four years, lacking twenty-five days.

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENTS.

Roanoke Island, N. C., Feb. 8, 1862.

Newbern, N. C., Mar. 14, 1862.

Kinston, N. C., Dec. 14, 1862.
Whitehall, N. C., Dec. 16, 1862.
Goldsboro, N. C., Dec. 18, 1862.
Seabrook Island, S. C., Mar. 28, 1863.
St. Augustine, Fla., Dec. 30, 1863.
Siege of Charleston, S. C., from Jul 28 to Oct. 25, 1863.
Walthall Junction, Va., May 7, 1864.
Drewry's Bluff, Va., May 13 to 17 (inclusive), 1864.
Bermuda Hundred, Va., Jun 16, 1864.
Strawberry Plains, Va., Jul 26 and 27, 1864.
Deep Bottom, Va., Jun 20, 1864.
Deep Bottom, Va., Aug. 1, 1864.
Deep Bottom, Va., Aug. 14, 1864.
Deep Run, Va., Aug. 16, 1864.
Deep Gully and Fuzzell's Mills, Va., Aug. 28, 1864.
Siege of Petersburg, Va., Aug. 28 to Sep. 29, 1864.
Fort Harrison, Va., Sep. 27, 1864.
Laurel Hill Church, Va., Oct. 1, 1864.
Newmarket Road, Va., Oct. 7, 1864.
Darbytown Road, Va., Oct. 13, 1864.
Darbytown Road, Va., Oct. 27, 1864.
Johnson's Plantation, Va., Oct. 29, 1864.
Hatcher's Run, Va., Mar. 29 and 30, and Apr. 1, 1865.
Fort Gregg, Va., Apr. 2, 1865.
Appomattox Court House, Va., Apr. 9, 1865.

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Although the Otis Family Genealogy remains a work in progress, this is a brief report:

Descendants of John Lord Otis

Generation No. 1

1. BREVET BRIG-GEN. JOHN LORD³ OTIS (*HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born 15 Jul 1827 in Lyme, CT, and died 15 Mar 1894 in Tarpon Springs, FL. He married CATHERINE PRESTON 01 Mar 1847 in Northampton, daughter of CYRUS PRESTON and SARAH GLEASON. She was 9 years older, born 15 Jul 1818 in South Hadley, and died 20 Feb 1901 in Northampton.

Children of JOHN OTIS and CATHERINE PRESTON are:

2. i. HARRY PRESTON⁴ OTIS, b. Nov 1851, Manchester, CT; d. 26 Dec 1926, Florence.
- ii. PHILIP ARTHUR OTIS, b. Apr 1855, Manchester, CT; d. 22 May 1914, Chicago.

Generation No. 2

2. HARRY PRESTON⁴ OTIS (*JOHN LORD³, HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born Nov 1851 in Manchester, CT, and died 26 Dec 1926 in Florence. He married NANCY MCCLEAVE "NANNIE" WORTH Nov 1883, daughter of CHARLES WORTH and SARAH ELDRIDGE. She was born 1854 in Nantucket, and died 1920 in Florence.

Children of HARRY OTIS and NANCY WORTH are:

3. i. CHARLES PRESTON⁵ OTIS, b. 15 Sep 1884, Northampton, MA; d. 02 Oct 1945, Northampton, MA.
- ii. BERNICE OTIS, b. 08 Jun 1887, Northampton, MA; d. 18 Jul 1956, Ashfield.
- iii. MILDRED OTIS, b. 16 Apr 1896; d. 1987; m. THOMAS J. BYRNE, Sep 1934, Lebanon NY; b. 11 Aug 1885, Vermont; d. 09 Mar 1963.

Generation No. 3

3. CHARLES "PRESTON"⁵ OTIS (*HARRY PRESTON⁴, JOHN LORD³, HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born 15 Sep 1884 in Northampton, MA, and died 02 Oct 1945 in Northampton, MA. He married CARRIE MAY BENNETT 23 Feb 1910 in Florence, MA, daughter of JOHN BENNETT and NELLIE ANDERSON. She was born 26 Dec 1887 in Haydenville, and died 12 May 1955 in Williamsburg.

Children of PRESTON OTIS and CARRIE BENNETT are:

- i. MARJORIE⁶ OTIS, b. 19 Oct 1910; d. 1958, Worcester.
4. ii. CATHERINE OTIS, b. 04 Dec 1913, Springfield, MA; d. 24 May 2002, Northampton, MA.
5. iii. ROBERT BENNETT OTIS, b. 01 Mar 1918, Springfield, MA; d. 28 Jul 2006, Goshen, MA.
6. iv. DONALD WORTH OTIS, b. 17 Nov 1921, Williamsburg, MA; d. 14 Sep 1979, on the Sunderland Bridge.
- v. **CHARLOTTE** PRESTON OTIS, b. 11 Jan 1925, Williamsburg, MA.

Generation No. 4

4. CATHERINE⁶ OTIS (*CHARLES PRESTON⁵, HARRY PRESTON⁴, JOHN LORD³, HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born 04 Dec 1913 in Springfield, MA, and died 24 May 2002 in Leeds San, Northampton, MA. She married ROBERT CAIRNS MERRITT 17 Aug 1936 in Wash., DC, son of *WMSB, MA* LUCIUS MERRITT and SARAH HYDE. He was born 08 Oct 1912 in Northampton, and died 17 Nov 1971 in 82 South St., Williamsburg.

Children of CATHERINE OTIS and ROBERT MERRITT are:

- 7. i. JOHN OTIS⁷ MERRITT, b. So. Weymouth, MA.
- 8. ii. PHILIP CAIRNS MERRITT, b. Northampton.
- 9. iii. NANCY MERRITT, b. Northampton.

5. ROBERT BENNETT⁶ OTIS (*CHARLES PRESTON⁵, HARRY PRESTON⁴, JOHN LORD³, HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born 01 Mar 1918 in Springfield, MA, and died 28 Jul 2006 in Goshen, MA. He married VIRGINIA ADAMS LADD 13 Apr 1943 in West Hartford, CT, daughter of HENRY LADD and KATHERINE ADAMS. She was born 31 Oct 1916 in Belfast, ME.

Children of ROBERT OTIS and VIRGINIA LADD are:

- 10. i. CAROL LADD⁷ OTIS, b. Northampton, MA.
- ii. ROBERT PRESTON OTIS, b. Northampton; d. 30 Dec 1989, Goshen, MA.
- 11. iii. JOHN BENNETT OTIS, b. Northampton, MA.
- iv. DONALD LADD OTIS, b. Northampton.
- v. KATHERINE ADAMS OTIS, b. Northampton.

6. DONALD WORTH⁶ OTIS (*CHARLES PRESTON⁵, HARRY PRESTON⁴, JOHN LORD³, HAYDEN EBENEZER², STEPHEN¹*) was born 17 Nov 1921 in Williamsburg, MA, and died 14 Sep 1979 in on the Sunderland Bridge. He married MARGARETTE LORETTA HAMILTON 13 Jan 1945 in Williamsburg. She was born 19 Sep 1915 in Worcester, and died 03 Jun 1999 in Williamsburg, MA.

Children of DONALD OTIS and MARGARETTE HAMILTON are:

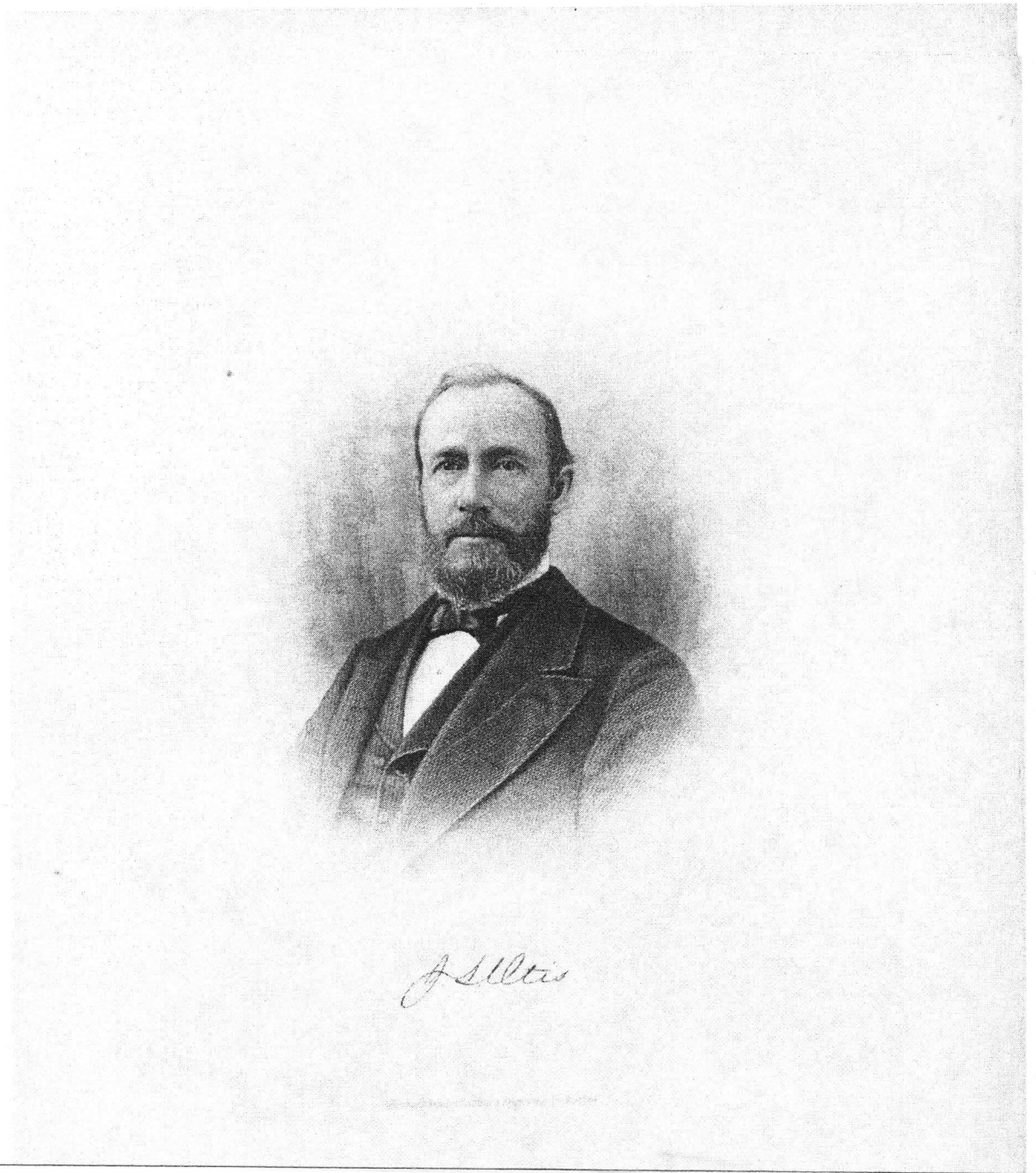
- i. KATHLEEN BENNETT⁷ OTIS, m. DAVID P WALDO; b. 01 May 1942.

BIOGRAPHICAL
ENCYCLOPÆDIA
OF
MASSACHUSETTS
OF
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

VOLUME II.



BOSTON:
METROPOLITAN PUBLISHING AND ENGRAVING COMPANY.
1883.



~ **O**TIS, JOHN LORD, of Northampton, Mass. Born in Lyme, New London County, Conn., July 15, 1827. He is a descendant of one of the earliest English emigrants to this country. John Otis, his first American ancestor, was born at Barnstable, England, in 1581. When he landed, or with whom he came, has not been ascertained with certainty. It is very probable that he crossed the Atlantic in company with the Rev. Peter Hobart, who settled at Hingham, Mass. It is certain that John Otis was among the number of those who followed the biblical precedent by drawing lots in the first distribution of lands in that town, in 1635. He was a

sturdy and substantial yeoman of the typical Anglo-Saxon stock, and bore unmurmuringly his share of the anxieties and labors incident to the first settlement of a new country. Twice married, he was the father of seven children, of whom several settled in Barnstable, Mass., and became conspicuous in the affairs of the town.

"The family of Otis," writes Tudor, "has produced some eminent persons, and its several branches are now widely extended." Among these "eminent persons" must be included James Otis, the contemporary of Quincy, Hancock, and the Adamses. He was born in 1702 and died in 1778. His son, the eloquent and fervid James Otis, familiarly known as "The Patriot" of the Revolution, was one of the very first in opposition to the unjust and unconstitutional demands of tyrannical government. Harrison Gray Otis, of Boston, was another equally talented member of the same family. General John L. Otis will also forever receive honorable recognition as one who has perpetuated the fame and adorned the patronymic of his ancient and honorable race. Hayden Otis, his father, was born in Lyme, Conn., in 1791. He was one of the youthful volunteers for the defence of New London, in the War of 1812. Subsequently he was interested in the fisheries carried on at the mouth of the Connecticut River. In 1811 he married Mary Gates Lord, by whom he had ten children. In 1851 he was drowned in the Thames River. His wife died in the following year.

John L., son of Hayden and Mary G. (Lord) Otis, received his literary education in the common schools of his native State. At the age of sixteen he left home and accepted employment in a cotton-mill. Endowed with mechanical and constructive genius, he naturally became a student of the science and a master of the art of mechanical engineering. Gradually and surely extending his practical knowledge, he acquired the ability of setting up and of putting into effective operation all kinds of cotton and wool machinery.

In 1851 Mr. Otis adjusted—and that in thorough working order—several sets of delicate foreign machinery for the Pacific Manufacturing Company, of Manchester, Conn. This machinery had been imported from France, and was designed for the manufacture of knit goods. The operatives who accompanied it failed in the attempt to construct and adjust it in productive wholes. But what they could not do, Mr. Otis did, and subsequently superintended the manufacture, which proved to be very successful, for about five years. In 1855 he relinquished his position, and established the Otis Manufacturing Company, for the production of stockinette goods, at South Manchester, Conn. There he remained for four years, and in that period set up in working order—for the Messrs. Cheney Brothers—the first plant of machinery ever put into operation in the United States for the manufacture of silk and wool knit goods. In 1859 he sold out his interests in South Manchester, and returned to the Pacific Mills, which during his absence had been so unsuccessfully conducted as to necessitate cessation of business.

Two years passed away in the diligent pursuance of congenial labor, but not without

the closest scrutiny by him of all that was passing in the political affairs of the nation. He saw its need; he foresaw its coming agony; he girded himself to render it indispensable aid. The great rebellion against the supreme government of the United States at length broke out with calculating, but still with volcanic, fury. President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for troops to preserve the life of the republic. Mr. Otis was one of vast numbers of the grand old Puritan blood who were fully determined that, cost what it might, government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from off the face of the earth. In August, 1861, he enlisted as a private in Company B, of the Tenth Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. In September he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant, on the 4th of November as First Lieutenant, and a week later as Captain. Promotion was rapid, but not more rapid than the sterling abilities and worth of the recipient justified. In November, 1862, he was commissioned as Major; and in February, 1863, succeeded to the Colonelcy of the regiment, in place of Colonel Ira W. Pettibone, who had been compelled by the failure of his health to resign the command. It is worthy of remark, that at the time Colonel Otis was placed in command of the regiment there was a lieutenant-colonel and seven captains in it, all of whom had been captains when he was a second lieutenant, and not a single officer resigned in consequence of his promotion. In 1864 he received the brevet of Brigadier-General, for the reasons recited in the commission accompanying it, namely, "for special gallantry at the crossing of the James River, June 20, 1864, and at the battles of Flusser's Mills and Deep Run." Had his own convictions of duty permitted him to remain in the army until the close of the struggle, there can be but little doubt that he would have attained more illustrious fame. But when he decided to return to private life, he had borne the brunt of the conflict, was confident of the speedy triumph of the Union arms, saw the "beginning of the end," and left to others the completion of what he had helped to bring to so near a conclusion. The valor and self-sacrifice of patriotism are always most valuable when most needed.

General John L. Otis first entered into the dread realities of war at the battle of Roanoke Island, February 8, 1862. His native coolness and bravery found their reward in victory; but the joy of himself and comrades was dimmed by the loss of Colonel Charles L. Russell, the gallant commander, who was killed while leading his regiment in a charge. The battle of Newberne followed, on the 14th of March. In it Captain Otis received an honorable wound. On the 14th of December, 1862, he — then Major Otis — received two additional wounds in the battle of Kinston, N. C. His regiment met with a total loss on that day of one hundred and six officers and men. This terrible decimation is an impressive testimony to their dauntless courage and daring. The Tenth Connecticut charged over three other regiments, which had previously been ordered to charge the works, but which had halted and lain down to escape the murderous fire. Major

Otis's regiment stormed the enemy's position, but with the sacrifice of one third the enlisted men engaged and of seven officers. They captured twice as many prisoners as the regiment had men in the ranks, and also several pieces of artillery. Although painfully wounded, Major Otis continued with his command. The next day he was a participant in the battle of White Hall, and two days later in that of Goldsborough.

In January, 1863, Major Otis accompanied his regiment, as an integral portion of the army under the command of General Foster, to South Carolina. There — having been commissioned as Colonel in February — he commanded the advance in the capture of Seabrook Island, landing under the guns of Commodore George Rogers's monitor. Several minor skirmishes, in which he was a participant, ensued. In July he went with General Terry's command to James and Morris Islands. James Island consists of two parts, of which one was held by the enemy and the other by the Union troops. Two causeways, half a mile apart, connected the several portions. Colonel Otis was ordered to advance in command of the Tenth Connecticut over the left causeway, while Colonel Shaw, with the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, executed a similar movement over the right. During the night of the 14th the enemy planted two batteries on Grimbail's plantation, just in front of the advancing troops, and at daylight opened a deadly fire on the gunboat "Pawnee," lying in Stono River, not more than a hundred yards distant. At the same time they poured destructive discharges over the causeways. The Tenth Connecticut heroically held its ground, and repulsed the Confederates; but the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts was driven back in confusion, and suffered considerable loss. The "Pawnee" was compelled to slip her cable and drop down the stream in order to get out of range. The Tenth Connecticut refused to retire until they had been twice ordered to do so by General Stevenson, notwithstanding the exposure of their right and rear by the repulse of the Fifty-fourth (Colored) Massachusetts. On the following day General Terry's entire command marched across Cole's to Morris Island.

Colonel Otis, while figuring so prominently in these stirring scenes, was suffering so severely from malarial fever as to be almost unfit for duty. A week later, and he was detailed to take command of the conscript camp at New Haven, Conn. Eighty officers and five hundred men constituted the garrison of the camp. The duties of his new position were at once arduous and disagreeable. Unceasing vigilance was needed. The *morale* of the conscript is not that of the volunteer. The spirit of the enforced and mercenary is not that of the bright, faithful, self-sacrificing patriot. Active service with the gallant Tenth was infinitely preferable to the command of a conscript camp. Colonel Otis held it for two months, and was then detailed by General Dix to preside at an important court-martial. Six weeks were engrossed by this duty. Finding that the court was likely to continue in session some time, he asked to be relieved and ordered to the front. The request was granted, and he rejoined his regiment at St. Augustine, Fla., in Novem-

ber. Colonel Otis was placed in command of the post. In April, 1864, at the head of his regiment, he embarked for Fortress Monroe, disembarked at Gloucester Point, joined the Army of the James, and bore an active part in all the subsequent movements of that organization.

Of the brilliant services rendered by Colonel Otis and his veteran command in those movements, many accounts might be extracted from different army reports. The following is among the most suggestive and noteworthy:—

"On the last day of the fighting at Drury's Bluff (May 16, 1864), the enemy turned the right flank of the Army of the James by gaining a position between the right of the Eighteenth Corps and the river, capturing Heckman's and Lee's brigades almost entire. General Butler sent peremptory orders to General Gillmore, commanding the Tenth Corps, which formed the left wing of the army, to withdraw from his position at once and aid in saving the Eighteenth Corps from annihilation. Gillmore was then sharply engaged with a force in front equal to his own, at least; and to withdraw was as dangerous as to advance, except that in pushing forward, our lines of communication would be left open to the force that had turned our right. Withdraw we must, and arrangements were promptly made for doing so; the second line holding advantageous positions in the rear, while the brigades in the front line, doubling on their centres, fell back through the vacant spaces left between the different commands of the second line.

"Colonel Otis was ordered by General Gillmore to hold a position in the open field, — two hundred yards in rear of a piece of woods, which the enemy must pass through in following up our retiring forces, — while Hawley's brigade on his right, and Pond's on his left, retired to a position in the rear. The Twenty-fourth Massachusetts (Colonel Osborne) occupied a similar position on the left of Pond's line of retreat. The enemy came on in heavy force and with great enthusiasm after the retiring troops, until they struck the covering forces, when they were driven back in confusion and with severe loss."

General (afterward Governor) Plaisted said of this affair in his official report:—

"Of the Tenth and Twenty-fourth, I need hardly say more than that they fully sustained the splendid reputation that they have hitherto borne. For steady and soldierly behavior under most trying circumstances that were entirely new to them (for never before had their backs been turned to the enemy), they may have been equalled, but were never surpassed. Under a fire in which eighteen fell from the left wing of the Tenth Connecticut Volunteers in almost as many seconds, not a man spoke a word or moved a heel from the alignment. Too much credit cannot be accorded to the commanding officers of these regiments — Colonels Otis and Osborne — for their coolness and self-possession under fire, and the skilful manner in which they handled their commands. . . .

"Colonel Otis has taught his men that their surest defence is their own fire, and his influence seems to hold them immovable in any position and under all circumstances. The enemy came down on his line, shouting like demons. Not a word was spoken, nor a musket moved, until the command, clear and prompt: 'Fire by file! Commence firing!' when, from the right of each company, began that deadly, unceasing roll which nothing seems able to stand before. The fire of the enemy was at first sharp and deadly, but was soon over. In a few minutes the command to cease firing was passed down the line, and in a moment, almost, all was calm as a summer morning, — except that, as if by some mechanical agency, a long line of skirmishers deployed in front of the line of battle swept

the open field in front and the belt of woods beyond, clearing them of the scattered forces of the enemy. This position Colonel Otis held until his own dead and wounded were cared for, and then retired to another position, to repeat the manœuvre. But the enemy had got enough of that kind of experience, and followed no further."

A few minutes after withdrawing from the last position, taken in order to hold the enemy in check, Colonel Otis, with two regiments of infantry and a section of artillery, was pushing rapidly across to the "Half-Way House," on the central turnpike, to assist in driving the enemy back and in extricating the Eighteenth Corps from its difficulties.

These splendid achievements were followed by others, equally signal, on the 20th of June. On that day Terry's Division of the Tenth Corps was ordered to cross to the north side of the James by a pontoon bridge to be laid at Jones's Landing, and capture the Rebel position at Deep Bottom. There was considerable difficulty and delay in placing the pontoons, and it was feared that daylight would reveal what was going on, and add another failure to the record of the army. Colonel Otis was directed to cross with two regiments in boats higher up the stream, and attempt to carry the position during the night. He was allowed to select the regiments himself, and chose his own Tenth Connecticut, and also the Eleventh Maine, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Hill. Otis crossed the river with his command a little after midnight, captured the position, and established the outposts before morning. The enemy advanced at daylight, with infantry and artillery, to recapture the position, but, finding the line so well established as to render such an attempt extremely hazardous, withdrew after some skirmishing and slight loss. At eight o'clock in the morning a strong detachment under General R. S. Foster crossed the river, and from that time Deep Bottom was held by an adequate force, and became the base of all movements north of the James towards Richmond. In his report of this affair General Plaisted said: "On Colonel Otis devolved the difficult and dangerous task of driving back the Rebel pickets in the darkness, and establishing a new picket line on ground he had never visited before. The work was successfully accomplished before daylight."

It was for these feats of prowess and skill, and for his gallantry at Flusser's Mills and Deep Run,—at both of which places he commanded the advance of his corps, and, at the latter, of the rear-guard in retreat,—that he was brevetted Brigadier-General. In the latter part of July, with two regiments, at Strawberry Plain, he attacked and drove back a force of the enemy that had just driven in a brigade of the Nineteenth Corps. Early the next morning, with the same regiments, he drove the enemy out of a strong work from which they had just repulsed Barlow's division and captured three guns. On August 1st the enemy assaulted that part of the line at Deep Bottom held by Colonel Otis's regiment, and was twice driven back with heavy loss; two hours afterward, General R. S. Foster, commanding the troops north of the James, sent him the following despatch:—

HEADQUARTERS, 3D BRIG., 1ST DIV., 1ST ARMY CORPS,
DEEP BOTTOM, VA., August 1, 1864.

COLONEL J. L. OTIS, *Commanding 10th Conn. Vols.* :—

SIR,— I have the honor to forward the following despatch from Colonel J. W. Schaffer, Chief of Staff, in answer to a despatch in relation to the affair in which your regiment was engaged this P. M.

By telegraph from General Butler's headquarters, August 1.

GENERAL FOSTER,— Your despatch received. The Commanding General thanks you and your troops for the gallant manner in which you repulsed the attack upon your lines this evening.

J. W. SCHAFFER, *Colonel and Chief of Staff.*

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

P. A. DAVIS, *Capt. and A. A. G.*

No troops were engaged in this affair, excepting the command of Colonel Otis; and General Foster, like the gallant soldier he was, sent the despatch to him at the front as soon as it was received. On the 15th of August General Foster, in writing of the affair of Deep Run, speaking of Colonel Otis, said: "He is one of the most brave, prompt, and resolute officers I have ever met."

Speaking of the battle of October 7, 1864, when Lee attacked with a large force the right of the Army of the James, General Plaisted said: "The Tenth Connecticut, Colonel Otis commanding, held the vital point of the position; and its splendid behavior when the regiment on its right gave way saved the army from disaster."

On October 1st, while the army was occupying a position at Fort Harrison and Chapin's Farm, General Terry was sent with a considerable force towards Richmond. Some time after his departure the Corps Commander, General Birney, then sick in his tent, becoming alarmed for Terry's command on account of the heavy fire of both artillery and musketry and the moving of a considerable body of troops across our front in the direction he had taken, sent a staff-officer to the front with an order that all the troops that could possibly be spared from the defences should be placed under command of General Otis to press the enemy on our front and stop, if possible, the movement of the enemy marching northward to overwhelm Terry. Less than three hundred could be spared; with these General Otis pressed rapidly forward, driving before him the enemy's pickets and a body of cavalry, killing and wounding a considerable number, and sending one wounded man who claimed to be "for the Union" back to General Birney. Emerging from a heavy piece of woods, General Otis found the enemy marching towards Richmond, and outnumbering him ten to one; but he attacked them in flank without a moment's hesitation, and compelled them to halt and face him. Taking cover in the edge of the wood, he kept up so continuous a fire that the enemy dared not advance on his position, which he held until dark, when General Birney sent an order for him to withdraw, — General Terry having already returned to his position. (This, on a much smaller scale, was exactly the movement that Fitz John Porter refused to do when ordered

by General Pope.) When General Otis arrived at his position in the lines, he found an officer from General Birney waiting to thank him "for the splendid manner in which the movement had been executed."

The fight on the Newmarket Road occurred on the 8th of October, 1864. In his report of it Colonel H. M. Plaisted, commanding the brigade, wrote: "In my opinion, the conduct of Colonel Otis and his command, after the regiment on his right gave way, saved the Army of the James from disaster."

His last, and possibly — the circumstances duly considered — the most heroic service of particularly remarkable character that he rendered, was on the 13th of October, in the charge on the Darbytown Road. He and his regiment seem to have been regarded by the higher military authorities as invincible, if not invulnerable. In his official report of it General Otis said: —

"My regiment has taken part in more than forty battles and skirmishes; never before fell back under fire, and never behaved better than on this occasion. But I have no apologies to make for it. I have not seen so hopeless a task undertaken since I entered the service as that assigned to the assaulting column to-day."

At the close of his three years' term, Colonel Otis was mustered out of service at his own request. His regimental chaplain, the Rev. Henry Clay Trumbull, in a letter published in the *Hartford Courant*, of December 3, 1864, voiced the general opinion of him that was entertained by his military superiors and inferiors alike, when he said: —

"Few regimental commanders have had the confidence of their superiors beyond what was conceded to him. Brigade, division, corps, and department commanders have commended his judgment and approved his course in the special duties to which he has been so often summoned in the field. The officers and men of the Tenth had implicit trust in his management in a fight, and the only fear they were ever known to express as to him, while the battle raged, was lest he should needlessly expose himself in his disregard of personal danger."

In closing the history of General Otis's military career, the writer appends extracts from letters received from Generals Terry and Foster. General Terry says: "Colonel Otis was an excellent officer, a very gallant and intelligent soldier." General Foster says: —

"While in command of the Tenth Connecticut Volunteers, he was in my command, and was ever ready and willing to lead his regiment in any engagement, or to perform any duty no matter how hazardous. General Otis, together with the Tenth Connecticut, was with me the night of June 20, 1864, when we crossed the James River at 'Deep Bottom,' a few miles below Richmond, and took possession of the north bank and held it successfully, and established a base from which all of the subsequent operations against Richmond were developed. General Otis was among the first to land and push forward to a point back from the landing. I am proud to say that I always held General Otis and his gallant Tenth Connecticut in high esteem, and when I had *business* on hand I felt I could rely on them. All honor to him and his brave regiment!"

Returning to civil life when the contest for liberty and union was virtually ended, General Otis took charge, in January, 1865, of the business of the Florence Sewing Machine Company, at Florence, Mass. Until he assumed the superintendency, the corporation had not been very successful; but under his management it achieved the maximum of success. Since he relinquished the administration, its prestige has been lost, its surplus swept away, and its capital stock impaired. The unappreciated fact was, that he was invaluable as a captain of industrial, no less than as a captain of military, art. He brought to the position a thorough knowledge of all the details of manufacture, rapidly improved the quality of the work, and largely increased the facilities of production, with only a slight augmentation of the number of operatives employed. When he assumed the direction of affairs, the monthly production was three hundred machines; when he abandoned it, the monthly production was twelve hundred machines.

General Otis began the manufacture of emery wheels in the spring of 1867, in association with L. B. Williams, of Northampton; the title of the firm being Otis & Williams. Each of the two partners contributed \$2,500 to the capital stock of \$5,000. In 1868 the firm was transformed into a joint-stock company, under the name of the Northampton Emery Wheel Company, of which General Otis became the treasurer and general manager. Its career has been one of remarkable prosperity. The capital stock has been increased to \$100,000. It has a branch establishment in Chicago, which carries a stock worth \$40,000; has agencies in all the principal cities of the United States, and sells its goods in almost every State and Territory of the Union. It has regularly paid excellent dividends, and has also laid aside a large surplus to meet contingencies. The thorough knowledge of mechanics and the superior administrative ability of General Otis have most efficiently ministered to the production of these satisfactory results.

General Otis is a director of the Northampton National Bank. Not only in financial and in manufacturing circles is he an intelligent and useful factor of society, but he is also influentially identified with all measures that aim at the advancement of the public good.

In political affiliations he is a Republican, and has earnestly labored in the ranks of its exponents and supporters. His disciplined abilities and eminent patriotic services have been honored by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, who have elected him to different local and State offices, which he has uniformly filled with credit to himself and with satisfaction to his constituents. In 1875-76 he was a selectman and assessor of Northampton. In 1878 he was chosen a representative to the lower branch of the Massachusetts Legislature, and served in the Committee on Military Affairs. In 1879 he was returned to the State Senate from the Hampshire District; served as chairman of the Committee on Manufactures, and as a member of the Committee on Military Affairs and on that of the Library. Re-elected to the Senate in 1880, he served therein as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, and also in the Committee on Public Service.

Whether in the workshop, on the battle-field, or in the Legislature, the many-sided ability of General Otis has invariably been illustrated to the admiration of all judicious observers. Socially and politically, his standing is of the highest, in the estimation of those who know him intimately. As a business man, and as a manager of corporate manufacturing operations, he has but few equals, and still fewer superiors, if any, in Western Massachusetts.

John Lord Otis was married on the 1st of February, 1848, to Catharine, daughter of Cyrus Preston, Esq., of South Hadley. Two sons are the fruit of their union. Harry P., who received his education at the Massachusetts Agricultural College, is now superintendent of the Northampton Emery Wheel Company; and Philip A., a graduate of Cornell University, is foreman of the machine-shop.

Representative Families

of

Northampton

A Demonstration of What High Character, Good
Ancestry and Heredity have Accomplished
in a New England Town



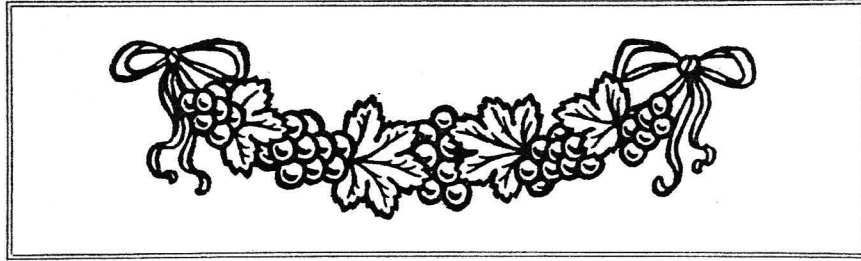
Greatest of earthly honors, from the great
And good to be descended. They alone
Against a great and noble ancestry cry out
Who have none of their own.

—Ben Jonson

VOLUME

I

Northampton
Picturesque Publishing Company
1917



GENERAL JOHN L. OTIS

Prominent Manufacturer and Distinguished Soldier

GENERAL JOHN L. OTIS will be remembered for many years as a well-beloved citizen of Florence. His popularity and value as a citizen, however, did not come from participation and comradeship in the old "Community" days, but rather from his success as a manufacturer and his sociable and unpretentious manners to all, rich and poor alike.

John Lord Otis was born in Lyme, Connecticut, July 15, 1827, the son of Hayden E. and Mary (Lord) Otis. During the earlier years of his life he was employed in a cotton factory, which he entered before he was eight years old, and where he worked fourteen hours a day. He followed this employment, from "bobbin boy" to overseer, for eighteen years, and meanwhile devoted his nights to hard study. His education included a knowledge of mechanical engineering, for which he had great aptitude. In 1851 he took charge of the Pacific Mills of Manchester, Connecticut, as superintendent, and later he established the Otis Manufacturing Company at South Manchester, where he was living when the war broke out. While in charge of that concern he put in operation for the Cheney Brothers of that place the first machine for the manufacture of silk and wool knit goods ever operated in this country.

It was the opening of the Civil War which led General



General John L. Otis

Otis away from his chosen business, for after the first battle of Bull Run he enlisted as a private soldier in the Tenth Regiment of Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, and started for the front. By heroic service he won many promotions, passing the different grades until, in February, 1863, he was advanced to a Colonelcy. He was mustered out of the army after three years and four months service, carrying home the title of Brevet Brigadier General. He had a long and exciting war record. He took part in all of Burnside's and Foster's engagements in North Carolina, and in 1863 was with Foster in South Carolina. The following year he was ordered to service in Virginia, and joined the Army of the James. In all his army experience the General showed himself the true soldier, and the scars of three wounds, received at Newbern and Kingston, were evidence of this.

Notwithstanding the wounds he received he was the next day in the battle of White Hall and two days later in that of Goldsboro Bridge. In January, 1863, while in South Carolina with Foster's army he did important service in commanding advances, holding positions and skirmishing. He then proceeded to accompany Terry's command to James and Morris islands, where he added to his already brilliant record. His health having suffered by exposure he was detailed to go North and take charge of a conscript camp at New Haven, Connecticut. He remained there about three months, when he asked to be relieved and sent back to the front. He rejoined his regiment at St. Augustine, Florida, and soon afterward was placed in command of the post. He was ordered to Virginia in April, 1864, and joined the Army of the James at Gloucester Point, and it was for special gallantry at the crossing of the James River that he received his commission as Brigadier General. During his three years and a half of service he was in more than fifty battles.

When he returned from the war he became superintendent of the Florence Sewing Machine Company at Florence, where he remained three years. Then he established, with L. B. Williams, the Northampton Emery Wheel Company, of which he was treasurer, and a most successful manager and financier. The business was conducted under the firm name of Otis and Williams, until a stock company was formed.

On March 1, 1847, General Otis married Catherine Preston, a daughter of Cyrus Preston of South Hadley. They had two sons, Philip A., who died in May, 1914, and Harry P., who has inherited his father's taste for manufacturing, and is president of the Norwood Engineering Company of Florence.

Although in no sense of the word a politician, General Otis was called to various offices in the gift of his fellow citizens. He was selectman two years, a representative to the Legislature in 1877, and State Senator in 1879 and 1880. He would undoubtedly have been the first Mayor of the city but for an unfortunate and what many felt an underhanded opposition. General Otis always took an active interest in the welfare of Northampton and its local civic matters. His arduous and successful efforts to secure the city charter will be remembered by many. He was prominent in the highest fraternal society life, and became Commander of the Military Legion, and Eminent Commander of the Northampton Commandery of Knights Templar. He was a director of the Northampton National Bank. Liberal minded in religious matters, he early connected himself with the Free Congregational Society of Florence, and was always a prominent and influential member of that organization.

General Otis died at Tarpon Springs, Florida, March 14, 1894. For several years ill health had led him to spend his winters in the South, thus avoiding the extreme cold of the

New England climate. In January, 1894, while preparing to leave Florence, he had an attack of heart disease, but rallied sufficiently to be able to make the journey. His strength, failed, however, soon after reaching Tarpon Springs, and the end came suddenly.

The funeral at Cosmian Hall will long be remembered by those who attended it, as an imposing and popular tribute not only of the whole community, but of the military and civic organizations and their officials, from far and near, to the worth of the man. A worthy citizen he certainly was, because he led a thoroughly upright life. He was kind, true, gentlemanly, fearless, and gave intelligent and conscientious attention to public affairs, contributing very much of himself in peace and war, to the general good in a fashion which showed true public spirit.



THE
HISTORY OF FLORENCE,
MASSACHUSETTS.

INCLUDING A COMPLETE ACCOUNT
OF THE
NORTHAMPTON ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY.

ILLUSTRATED.

EDITED BY
CHARLES A. SHEFFELD.

FLORENCE, MASS.:
PUBLISHED BY THE EDITOR.
1895.

JOHN LORD OTIS.

BY THE EDITOR.

GENERAL JOHN LORD OTIS was born in Lyme, Conn., July fifteenth, 1827, and commenced the life of a factory hand when only seven and a half years old, working fourteen hours a day. He followed this employment, from "bobbin boy" to overseer, for eighteen years, devoting nights to hard study. At twenty-five he was well versed in most of the branches of manufacturing, was a good machinist, and a mechanical engineer of acknowledged ability. At this time he took charge of the Pacific mills of Manchester, Conn., as superintendent, and later established the Otis Manufacturing Company at South Manchester, where he was living when the war broke out.

When the call for volunteers came he enlisted in what was afterward known as Company B, Tenth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers, and upon the organization of the company was commissioned as second lieutenant.

He served first in the Burnside expedition at North Carolina, and was in all the engagements in that department. Passing rapidly through the



GENERAL JOHN LORD OTIS.

intermediate grades, he was commissioned major of his regiment in November, 1862, and the following March he was promoted to the rank of colonel.

January twenty-ninth, 1863, he was ordered, with his command, to South Carolina, where he served until July, when, becoming disabled by an attack of fever, he was ordered north to take command of the conscript camp at New Haven, Conn. Here he remained for two months, and was then detailed by General Dix to preside over a court martial of thirteen members assembled for the trial of several officers, against whom serious charges had been preferred.

In November, Colonel Otis was relieved from detached service at his own request, and immediately rejoined his regiment, then in Florida, and was placed in command of St. Augustine, where he remained until April seventeenth, 1864, and then joined the "Army of the James" on its organization; was in all its engagements during the summer, and was brevetted a brigadier general for special gallantry at "the crossing of the James, June twentieth, and at the battle of Fuzzells Mills and Deep Gully." General Plaisted, who was the commander of Colonel Otis' brigade, wrote to a friend, as follows:—

"I have just heard that our old friend and comrade is dead. It touches me deeply, as I know it must you. You know my partiality for Colonel Otis—how I esteemed him as a man, patriot, and soldier. I recollect the first time we met. It was at the opening of the campaign in Virginia in '64, when the Tenth came under my command. We sat down on the grass together and talked of the business at hand, as one farmer might in the field, with a new neighbor, of the crops in prospect. I remember the impression he made. There was no military air about him, any more than about Grant, but I perceived the quality of his spirit and nerve.

"What I admired most in our lamented friend, next to his patriotic zeal, was his coolness and judgment. He rose with the emergency, always equal to the occasion. I never saw him excited but once. That was when we fell back from the Howlett house battery, June sixteenth, under the fire of Lee's veterans, and he thought the Tenth was not falling back becomingly. His sword flashed high, his voice rang out above the din, bringing his regiment to a standstill on the instant. Riding out, I said to him, 'The orders were to fall back on the run.' 'Oh, I did not understand,' sheathing his sword, so quietly. Ordinarily so quiet, but in battle how changed his manner, his voice and form! In the battle of October seventh his regiment was the rock of defense in our line, his the central figure; and how his voice then rang out in the pines, when taking position without a moment to spare! There was a ring in it, so commanding, as coming from the finest metal, how could his boys move from their tracks, 'except to make room for those who fell,' as you remarked at the time.

"But the crowning act of his three years' service was his charge of October

thirteenth, when the Tenth had lost so heavily, including our 'knightly soldier,' Major Camp, and every company commander! After the terrible ordeal, as I said to him, I looked upon him as one of the worthies come out of the fiery furnace. His reply was, 'Now I am ready to go home, I am mustered out—have my discharge,' tapping his breast. 'And you went into that charge with your discharge in your pocket!' He smiled. 'Well, colonel,' I said, 'that is beyond me. How could you do it—mustered out and all your thoughts turned toward home!'"

He was mustered out October eighteenth, 1864, on account of expiration of term of service, his service in the army amounting to three years



WOODED ROAD IN THE RAVINE—SPRING GROVE CEMETERY.

and four months, and he left the service with the rank of brigadier general. He was wounded three times, once at New Berne, and twice at Kingston.

At the close of the war General Otis came to Florence and became superintendent of the old Florence Sewing Machine Company, but after two years withdrew, and in company with L. B. Williams established the Northampton Emery Wheel Company, under the firm name of Otis & Williams. Later a stock company was formed with General Otis secre-

tary, treasurer, and business manager. He was a Northampton selectman twice, a representative to the legislature in 1877, and state senator in 1879 and 1880.

General Otis died at Tarpon Springs, Florida, March fourteenth, 1894. For several years ill health led him to spend his winters in the South, thus avoiding the extreme cold of the northern climate. In January, 1894, while preparing to leave Florence, he sustained an attack of heart disease, but rallied sufficiently to enable him to make the journey.



PINE STREET BRIDGE—A VISTA NEAR THE BRUSH FACTORY.

However, his strength failed soon after reaching Tarpon Springs, and the end came quite suddenly.

In 1848 Mr. Otis married Catherine Preston of Northampton, and his wife and two children, Harry P. and Philip A., survive him, all residing in Florence.

A loving husband, a kind father, a manly citizen, and a brave soldier was General Otis, and Florence will ever revere and cherish the memory of his noble life.

The subject of my talk tonight is a collection of letters written by my great-grandfather to his wife and children during the Civil War. I am not a Civil War scholar, but being interested in learning something about his character and personality, I decided to see what the letters contained. And so began a difficult, time-consuming, and fascinating project. For this talk, I have put together some of my own conclusions about him, with a few excerpts from his letters. Before going further, I will give you a brief summary of his life. John Lord Otis was born in Lyme, Conn. on July 15, 1827, the eighth of ten children. As often happened in those times, he went into the mills as a very young child. Working a fourteen hour day and studying at night, he progressed from bobbin boy to overseer. At twenty five, he took charge of the Pacific Mills of Manchester, Conn. He married Catherine Preston, a native of South Hadley and resident of Northampton, and they had two sons, Harry and Philip. After the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in response to a call for volunteers. *in August 1861.*

On Sept. 30th, 1861, at thirty four years of age, he was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in what was later to become Co. B, 10th Regiment of Conn. Volunteers. Having risen through the intermediate grades, he was commissioned major in Nov. '62, colonel in Mar. '63, and in 1864, for special gallantry, was brevetted a brigadier general. He took part in more than fifty battles and also did some personal reconnaissance behind enemy lines. Although wounded three times, his greatest physical suffering was due to bouts of severe illness

caused by fatigue and exposure. Soon after being mustered out in Oct. '64 at the end of his three-year term of service, he moved with his family to this area (they lived first in Leeds, then in Florence) where he became active in manufacturing and also in local and state affairs, serving in the Legislature and then in the Senate. He died in 1894 and was buried in the Spring Grove Cemetery in Florence.

The letters, 136 of them, most written in ink - a few in pencil, are in their original 3 by 5 ¹/₂ in. envelopes, addressed to Manchester, Conn. (no street address) with one or more 3-cent stamps affixed. A few went to Northampton, Mass. (no street address) at times when his wife was visiting her mother, Charity Look. He wrote home faithfully, usually to his wife, less frequently to his sons, who were about ten and six years old in 1861. Only the most extraordinary circumstances prevented his communication with them. Sometimes by day, but more often by candlelight, he poured out descriptions of the locality, what was happening, what he did, how he felt, and what he saw. Battle scenes and their outcomes were often depicted in specific but never gory detail. Letters to his children were particularly entertaining and informative, describing such things as picket duty, the construction of pontoon bridges, court-martial procedure, etc. And they were full of little stories: a stray dog that slept under his bed, the digging up of buried money, a huge alligator, etc. He sent money and occasional business advice to his wife. He also sent such things as flowers, a lock of his hair, his sword knot, trophies of

war, and also occasional requests for things he wished sent to him from home: among them clothes, tooth powder, medicine, barrels of apples, whiskey, wine, butter, and especially pictures of them. Unfortunately for us, he, with great reluctance, burned all of their letters to him, fearing that if captured, they might provide entertainment for the Rebels. The headings of his letters reflect his years of service: In Camp at Annapolis--his initial training; Albemarle Sound, Roanoke Island, Hatteras Inlet and New Berne--the Burnside Expedition in No. Carolina; then St. Helena Island and Seabrook Island in South Carolina with Gen. Foster's Command, where he was disabled by fever and ordered north to New Haven to take command of a conscript camp and a court martial of various officers. In Nov. of '63, at his own request, he rejoined his regiment in Florida and was placed in command of the post at St. Augustine. All the rest of his letter headings are in Virginia, with the Army of the James: Gloucester Point, Bermuda Hundred (under Gen. Butler), Deep Bottom (under Gen. Plaisted), In the Trenches before Petersburg, and In the Field Near Richmond (under Generals Ames and Terry). His term of service ended in extremely hard fighting and exhausting conditions. In his last battle in Oct. '64 (before which he sent his opinion to the General in command that he felt that it should not be undertaken) he lost one third of his men.

Now for the man himself, as revealed in his letters. I would say that he was complicated! Like countless others, deeply patriotic and highly

motivated, he seemed always ready to put his life on the line but at the same time was ambitious and critical. This combination runs throughout his letters.

He started out his military career by carrying into it his earlier work habits. From Annapolis in Nov. '61 he wrote: "I do not have much time to write, because I spend my leisure in trying to learn my business." One of the first qualities I noticed in him was his lack of fear. Not foolhardy, he was a man of great courage. In Feb. '62 he wrote to his wife: "You are doubtless anxious to know how I feel about going into battle. Well, I do not feel at all afraid and do not expect to." and "You are more anxious for us than we are for ourselves. We have contemplated our position till we think very little of it, except on account of those we leave behind us." Note the calmness of his writing the night before a hard fight--(they had approached the area by water): "Dear Kate, Mar. 11, 1862 10 P.M. We are at anchor in the Neuse River, I suppose not more than 10 miles from New Bern. We made the mouth of the river about 4 o'clock and kept running till after eight, and we could see fires burning all along our course as proceeded, and supposed they were signal fires to keep the rebels posted as to our progress. There are plantations on both sides of the river, more on the east than on the west side, and on a larger and better scale than any I had seen in No. Carolina. It is another beautiful night, the water like a mirror and the sky as clear and soft as summer, the moon shines clear and bright, shadowing our vessel's rigging on the deck, making it look like a great cobweb. Not a sound is heard in all our fleet, except

as the bells of the gun boats strike the hour, or their sentinels challenge a passing boat. I can hardly realize as I look over our still and silent fleet, the latent power that it contains. It seems impossible that in fifteen minutes as many thousand men could spring from the decks of our matchless vessels, and a hundred cannon send destruction on any who approached us, but it is so, and I only hope we shall be able to meet our enemies here on equal terms and with equal numbers. If we do, we shall give a good account of ourselves."

He seemed to have a comprehensive grasp of things. In June '62 he wrote: "it seems strange that so few of our Generals take advantage of a victory when they gain one." And in Sept.: "It is the same old story, one part of the Army attack and cut to pieces while another part that should be acting in conjunction with it, lies safe in camp...they do not appear to realize that each separate Army Corps is but a part of the great machine, the different parts of which must all work in unison."

He was critical of poor leadership, slanted reporting, and poor organization, and as far as I can see, had good reason to be. Of General Butler, whose ineptitude allowed them to be bottled up at Bermuda Hundred, he said: "Butler is not soldier enough to deal with Beauregard, and I hope someone else will be sent here." And "Butler lies outrageously in his dispatches, you can tell nothing by them." As for slanted news reports, on May 26th, 1864 he wrote: "If you look into the Herald of the 24th, you will see an account of a fight which took place between 11 and 12 o'clock on Saturday night in which it

is claimed that Gen. Ames whipped the rebels terribly. It is a very good story, but a lie from beginning to end, almost - Gen. Ames was not there...." His remarks were not always negative. At the time of Gen. Reno's death he wrote to his wife: "As you say, we can't afford to lose many such officers; he was one of the few who had no sympathy with the rebel officers, though they were his classmates. He was as brave as a man can be and as kind as he was brave."

The fighter was also a loving husband and father. His letters testify to a close relationship, although they begin and end rather formally and do not contain many terms of endearment. It is clearly evident that he valued his wife's opinion and discussed with her the progress of the war and other topics of interest. He took time to describe for her trees, flowers, and birds that he saw in the south. In one of his letters there is a reference to his pausing while on the march and pocketing an unusual variety of daisy to send to her. He apparently carried her ambrotype into battle. In a Mar. '62 letter: "I forgot to tell you, I got a bullet through my coat, besides being wounded in the leg...on looking at your ambrotype soon after the fight, I found it broken."

His letters to his boys are usually quite delightful. They often start on a serious note, but then go on to include an interesting story. Not long after he left home he wrote to them from training camp at Annapolis: "Harry and Phil, My little boys. I am delighted to hear that you are good boys both at home and at school. I know you will continue so." Later in the letter he writes: "Close by the camp there lives a

planter named Taylor. He has a good many slaves, I don't know how many, but I have seen at his house at least a Dozen no larger than you, with the curliest heads and the blackest faces you ever saw. Today I saw one of them harness two more to a broken wheelbarrow and try to drive them, but they ran away and upset his load in the barnyard, while one a little larger laughed as if he would split to see the fun... just then the water party I had charge of was ready to return to camp, and I left with them...I want to go to Washington where Abe Lincoln lives - it is not far off --- if I do I will write you what I see there." His message to his sons before he went into his first battle: "Above all, be good boys and stand up for each other."

His rapport with his men was good. The letters clearly show his pride in them, and also that he did all that he could for them and for their comfort. When he returned from a rare leave, after being delayed by severe storms at sea, "the boys gathered around and were so glad to see me, they cheered till they were hoarse."

Here are some excerpts which I think will interest you. I suppose I should include a battle scene. This is a portion of a description of a battle at New Bern in a Mar. 16, 1862 letter. "The shells were now screaming like devils over our heads, but we went on through the swamp and over the fallen trees, till we came under the brow of a hill about 400 yards in front of the enemies entrenchments...We marched up the hill and came out of the woods under fire and now for the first time I realized the extent of the work we had taken in hand.

About 250 yards in front of us was the rebel breast work 5 feet high with a ditch in front, 5 feet deep and ten wide, half filled with water. The entire work was two miles long and mounted 14 brass field guns and [was] defended by nearly ten thousand men - this I had from a rebel colonel who was wounded and taken prisoner. When we came up in front of the work they were throwing shot and shell at a terrible rate....and though I had great confidence in the regiment I must say that it exceeded my expectations - we formed a line under fire almost as perfect as at Dress Parade. As we opened fire the rebels put their heads over the breastwork and gave us a volley right in our faces, but they paid dear for their temerity - we fired again before they could get down,... not a head appeared above the breastwork after it... they fired at random, merely sticking their guns up and firing without aim. They did not fire a canon at us for they could not load - we kept up such a shower of balls...A Mass. regiment now came up, and under cover of our fire, marched straight into the battery by the road without losing a man."

The next excerpt : Deep Bottom, Va., July 21, 1864. I was then relieved and took my command back to the river. I found a quiet little valley... and marched my own regiment down there. The men soon finished their supper of fat pork and hard bread, and without waiting for it to come dark, spread their blankets on the ground and went to sleep. But they were all wide awake and stirring early in the morning, and some of them thinking they would have time to catch some fish before going to work on the entrenchments, commenced looking for

worms. Nearby, was the chimney of a house, the house itself having been burned by the gun-boats...because the rebel Guerrillas hid there and fired at them as they passed. Well, the boys went to the garden of this house and commenced digging for worms. Soon one of them came to a board about a foot underground and not liking to take the trouble to pull it up went to another place. Another man coming along pulled up the board; there was an old iron pot under it... he put his hand down to see what was in it. The first thing he got hold of was quite a large bag of silver, with a string tied around the middle. He held up the bag but it broke in two, and one half fell on the ground. Another soldier standing near saw what the bag contained and catching up the fallen half, ran away as hard as he could go. A dozen soldiers were standing around and all made a rush for the prize; there was rare scrambling I can tell you. Some of the money was gold and some silver; some in little boxes and some in little bags. Some of the bags burst, and the men pushed and scrambled for the money, so excited they hardly knew what they were about. I heard one good natured fellow sing out, "Fall in for your specie." At first I could hardly believe they had found the money... But soon a man came along with a box of gold, then another with a bag of silver, finally one came where I was lying and wanted me to see his "pile". He had his pockets full and commenced emptying them with both hands and piling the money up on the ground, he had at least a quart. Mexican dollars, quarters and halves, ten cent

pieces and old fashioned sixpences, evidently the hoarding of years..."

In May 1864, Col. Otis went out with a flag of truce to arrange for removal of Rebel dead for burial: Bermuda Hundred, Va. May 23rd, 1864:

"... I met several officers of the Confederate Army, all except one very gentlemanly. Some of them were the worst dressed men I ever saw, nearly all were dressed the same as privates, and could not be distinguished from them, without a very close inspection. Col. Fason wore a citizen's dress entirely, having no sign of rank about him. Major Owen wore a uniform and was very nicely dressed indeed. They all said they were tired of the war and reconed we were, and if we wanted to stop all we had to do was to stop fighting and they would. We talked together all the time the men were collecting the dead and parted pretty good friends. They gave me a Richmond paper of the 21st, but I sent it back to the General and have not been able to get it again."

The last excerpt which I will read was written near Richmond, Va. on Oct. 9th, 1864.

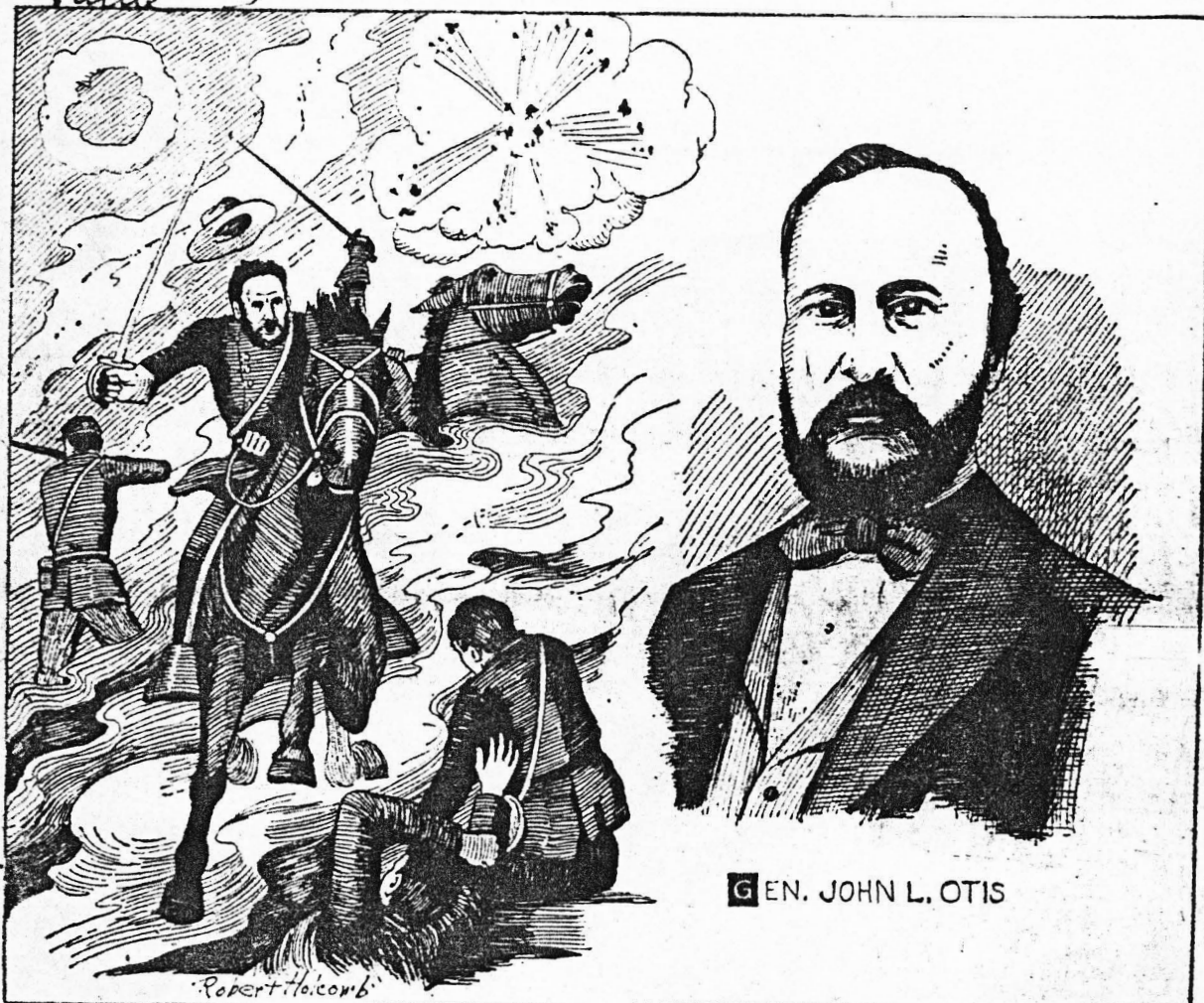
"It is a magnificent night, but very cold. I have a tent fly pitched, one end open and the other closed by fastening shelter tents across it. I am writing in the open end of the tent, seated on my roll of blankets, just as it was unbuckled from my saddle. My table is a candle box and my light a single adamantine candle stick on the corner of the box. A great log fire is burning right in front of my tent, so near as almost to blister my face, while my back and feet ache with cold. On the opposite side of the fire, the sentinel in front of my quarters is

pacing back and forth, his polished bayonet glittering in the firelight..." (I thought I would end my talk with this vivid letter-writing scene.)

This, of course, has been a mere glimpse into the collection. May I say, in conclusion, that after I had finally come to the end of his letters, had read the last one, I missed him, very much.

This is the text of a talk given to the Williamsburg Historical Society on May 9, 1989 by Catherine Otis Merritt, great-granddaughter of Gen. John Lord Otis.

Historical Sketches of Western New England *Value*



GEN. JOHN L. OTIS

NO. 244: GEN. JOHN L. OTIS OF FLORENCE

Lyme Ct.
John L. Otis, a native of ~~Florence~~, enlisted in the U. S. Army as a private soon after the start of the Civil War. Because of his gallantry in action and his ability as a leader he was rapidly promoted, reaching the grade of brigadier-general. He had an exceptionally distinguished combat record, taking part in 50 separate battles and skirmishes, and being wounded three times. After the war he became a prominent industrial figure in Northampton, serving as superintendent of the Northampton Sewing Machine Company and later establishing the Northampton Emery Wheel Company.

Daily Hampshire Gazette 1961



The provenance of these photos is unknown, but they are presumed to be John Lord Otis' wife, Catherine C. (Preston) Otis and their eldest son Harry Preston Otis.

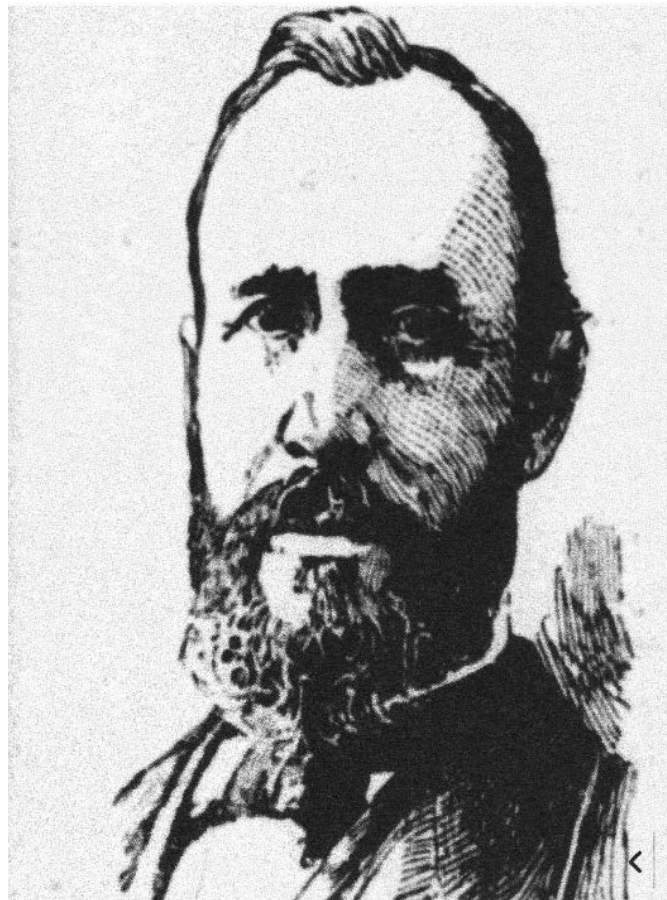
DEATH OF MRS CATHERINE OTIS.

Mrs Catherine Otis, 82, widow of Col J. L. Otis, died at her home in Florence yesterday afternoon at 3, after an illness of about two weeks, following an apoplectic shock. Mrs Otis was born at South Hadley Falls, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Preston. Her parents moved to North Farms, and she married Col Otis at that place in 1847. After their marriage Mr and Mrs Otis moved to Connecticut, where Mr Otis enlisted. Col Otis's regiment was the 10th Connecticut. Col Otis had a brilliant military record, and after the war he moved to Florence and established the Northampton emery wheel company at Leeds. Col Otis was a member of the state House of Representatives and of the Senate. He died seven years ago. Mrs Otis lived a quiet life, but was much interested in the Cosmian hall society and contributed generously to its support. Mrs Otis leaves two sons, H. P. Otis, secretary and treasurer of the Northampton emery wheel company, and Philip, who is at present living at home. The funeral will be held at the house Saturday at 2. Rev Alfred Free officiating.

Mortuary Notice, Springfield Republican
Friday, March 16, 1894
Springfield, Massachusetts

DEATH OF GEN JOHN L. OTIS.

A dispatch from Tarpon, Fla., yesterday announced the death of Gen John L. Otis of Florence, from heart disease Wednesday night. He had not enjoyed good health in recent years, and had usually spent a part of the winter in the South. Last summer his heart showed weakness, but he



GEN JOHN L. OTIS.

rallied from the first attack. Six weeks ago he started for Florida accompanied by Mrs Otis and his son Philip and his old army surgeon, Dr Newton and Mrs Newton. The body will be brought to his old home this week, but the arrangements have not been made for the funeral.

A brave soldier, successful business man, and generous, high-minded citizen, Gen Otis will be missed in the community where he was so well known and respected. His was an attractive personality, with a frank, open face, pleasing voice and winning manners. Always dignified and courteous, he was democratic and approachable but quiet and retiring. The black slouch hat he usually wore gave him a military appearance, and he always displayed the red, white and blue rosette of the Loyal Legion in the button-hole of a well-fitting Prince Albert. He was fine-grained and chivalrous by nature, and the frank face truthfully expressed a life of purity, patterned after high ideals. But his goodness was not weakness, for he had positive convictions and tenacity of purpose. His political belief was as firm as his faith in truth and righteousness, and made him a zealous partisan with little disposition to compromise. But while a strong party man, he could always be found with the self-respecting leaders who refused to stoop to methods which are encouraged by many. Gen Otis was the friend of young men, and took no little pride and delight

in starting them in life. Yet his generosity was bestowed so judiciously that he seldom suffered from misplaced confidence.

Gen John Lord Otis was the son of Hayden E. and Mary Lord Otis and was born at Lyme, Ct., on the Sound July 15, 1827. He was educated in the public schools and early in life displayed a taste for mechanical engineering, the study of which fitted him for his after life. When 24 years old he was employed as superintendent of the Pacific manufacturing company at Manchester, Ct. Subsequently he went to South Manchester, where he assisted in starting the Otis manufacturing company and is said to have put in motion the first machinery for the manufacture of knit and silk goods ever operated in this country, at the Cheney Bros' silk mills. Early in 1861 he went to the war, and quickly proved that he was a brave and daring soldier. He joined Co B of the 10th regiment of Connecticut volunteers, which was early recognized as a strong fighting body of men. He was in the many engagements of Foster's and Burnside's commands in North Carolina and was wounded at the battle of Newbern, and again at Kingston. He fought later on with Gen Foster's army in South Carolina and in the latter part of 1863 was placed in command of the post at St Augustine, Fla. He was ordered North again in April, 1864, and joined the army of the James, where he was engaged in several

serious battles. The military career of Gen Otis was one of conspicuous bravery, although he was an unselfish and modest man who shunned publicity. Among the brave deeds that his comrades recall with a thrill of pride was a personal reconnaissance of the confederate works made at imminent peril, but it saved a brigade from repulse and slaughter. He performed distinguished service at Bermuda Hundred, Deep Bottom, Strawberry Plains, White's Tavern and before Petersburg. He was brevetted March 13, 1865, "for gallantry at the crossing of the James river June 20, 1864, and at the battles of Flusser's Mill and Deep River." His promotions were as follows: 2d lieutenant September 25, 1861, 1st lieutenant, December 4, and captain December 12; major, November 21, 1862, colonel, February 18, 1863 mustered out November 25, 1864. He was an active member of the military order of the Loyal Legion and was elected commander of the Massachusetts commandery in May, 1891. He wrote the history of the 10th Connecticut regiment for the "Record of Connecticut Men in the War of the Rebellion."

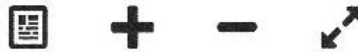
Soon after retiring from the army he moved to Northampton and took charge of the old Florence sewing-machine company's works as superintendent, a position he held for three years. He then started in a small way the manufacture of emery-wheels at Florence, and in a short time organized a strong company which built its works at Leeds. He had managed the

enterprise ever since and it has been a remarkably successful business concern for those who invested in it. Gen Otis had always been prominent and active in public affairs, and a recognized leader in the republican party councils of the state. In 1875-76 he was selectman, assessor and overseer of the poor in the old town of Northampton. He had much to do with the making of the city charter and was the first republican nominee for the mayoralty. He was a director in the Northampton national bank, and was once active in the Northampton club, serving as president. He was a Knight Templar. The Cosmian hall society, founded by the abolitionists at Florence, found in Gen Otis a warm supporter and generous contributor, and he was one of the pillars of that free religious body. In 1878 he served a term in the lower branch of the Legislature and was a member of the Senate in 1879 and 1880. He had frequently been urged for the congressional nomination and in 1892 was chosen a presidential elector to the convention which renominated President Harrison. He was married March 1, 1847, to Catherine, daughter of Cyrus Preston of South Hadley, who survives him with two sons, Philip A. and Harry P. Otis.



rd Otis"

Find



GEN. OTIS'S FUNERAL.

[Special Dispatch to the Boston Journal.]
FLORENCE, Mass., March 19 The funeral of Gen John Lord Otis will be held to-morrow at 2 p.m. at Cosmian Hall, and will be in charge of the U. A. R. The services will be brief, Rev. R. H. Hinkley reading a passage of Scripture, and Past Commander Ray of the U. A. R. will give a brief sketch of the General's army life and his connection with the U. A. R. The interment will be at Spring Grove Cemetery.

Boston Herald | Monday, May 16, 1892 | Boston, MA | Page: 5

JOHN L. OTIS OF NORTHAMPTON, Second District.



JOHN L. OTIS OF NORTHAMPTON,
Second District.

John Lord Otis was born in Lyme, Ct., in 1827. He early devoted himself to the study of mechanical engineering, and was employed as superintendent of the Pacific Manufacturing Company of Manchester. He remained with that corporation five years, and then established the Otis Manufacturing Company in South Manchester.

In 1861 he enlisted in the 10th Connecticut regiment, obtaining the rank of colonel two years later. He returned from the war with the brevet rank of brigadier-general.

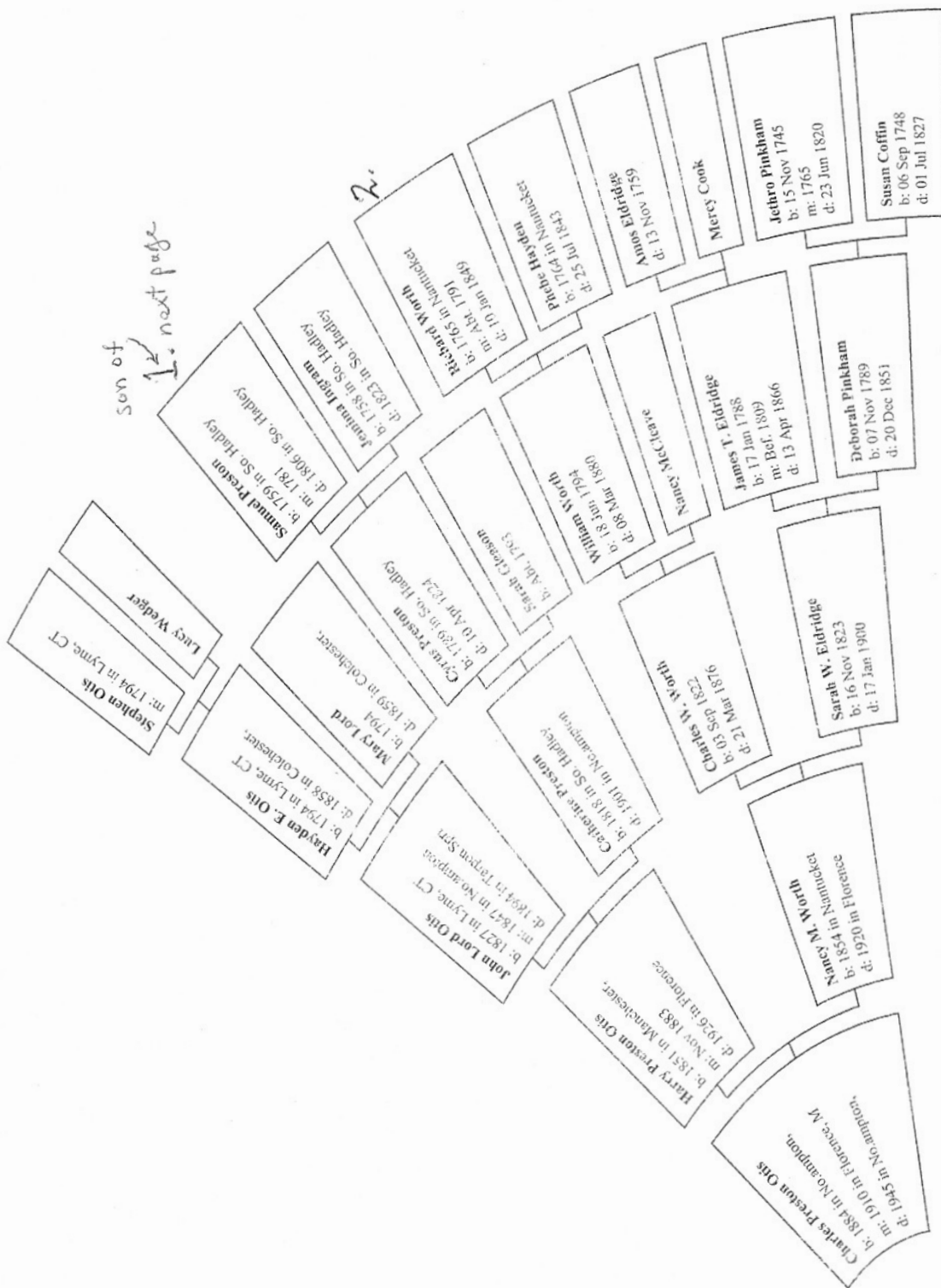
He has been superintendent of the Florence Sewing Machine Company, and is now treasurer of the Northampton Emery Wheel Company. He has held numerous town offices, and was a member of the Legislature in 1888. In 1879 he was elected as senator and again in 1880.



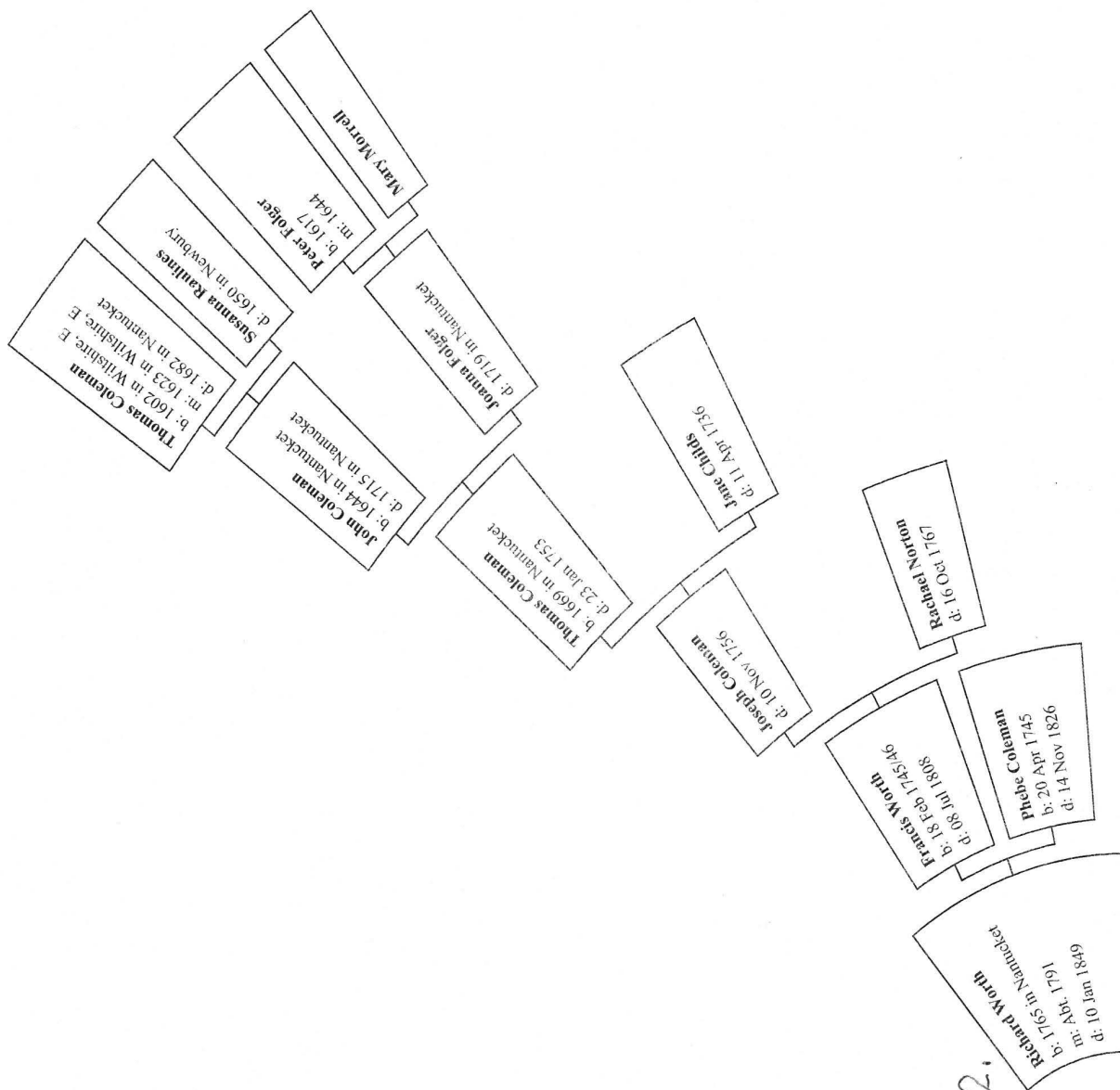
Spring Grove Cemetery, Florence, Massachusetts

The Family Trees in this section
 were prepared by Ralmon J. Black
 for Charlotte P. Otis.

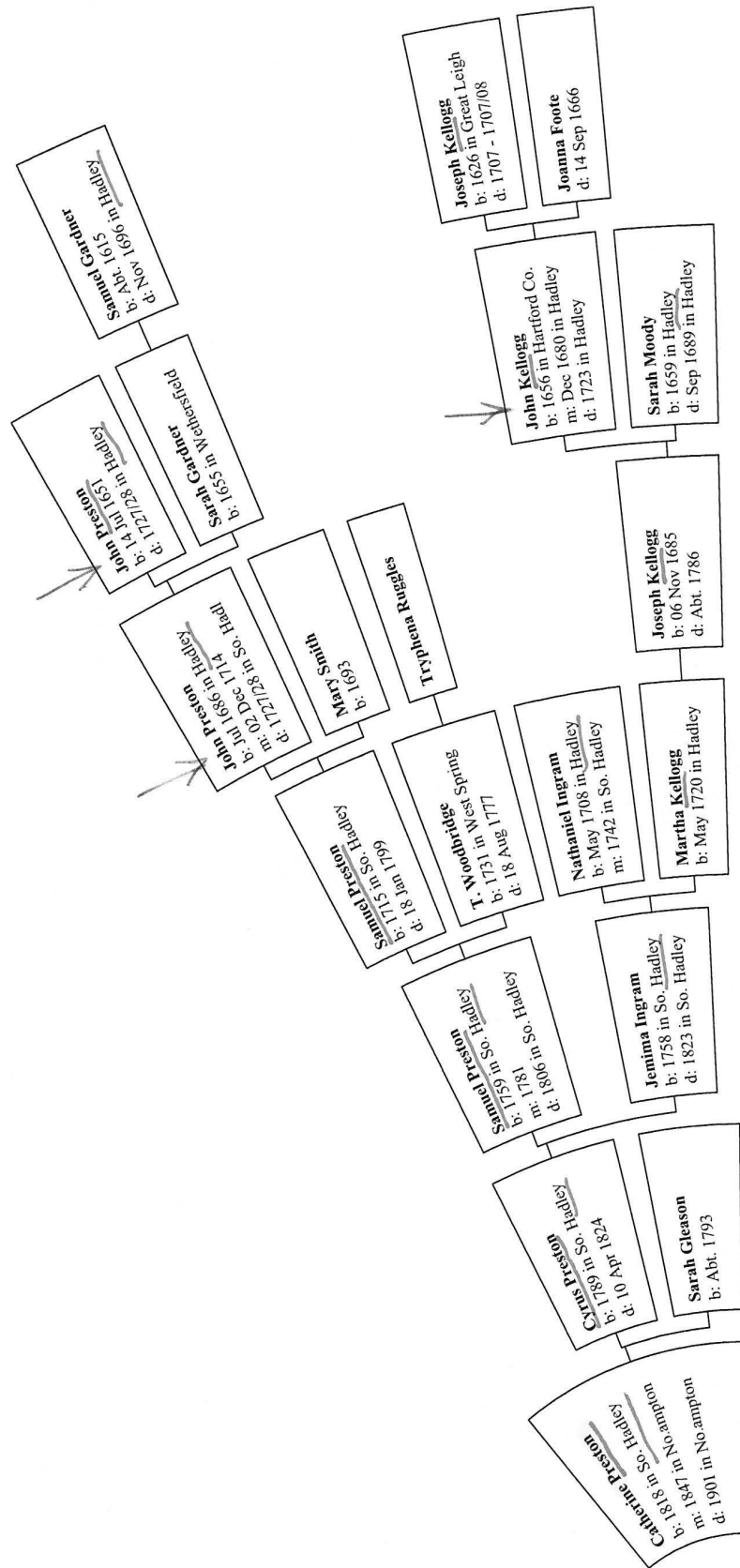
Ancestors of Charles Preston Otis



Ancestors of Richard Worth

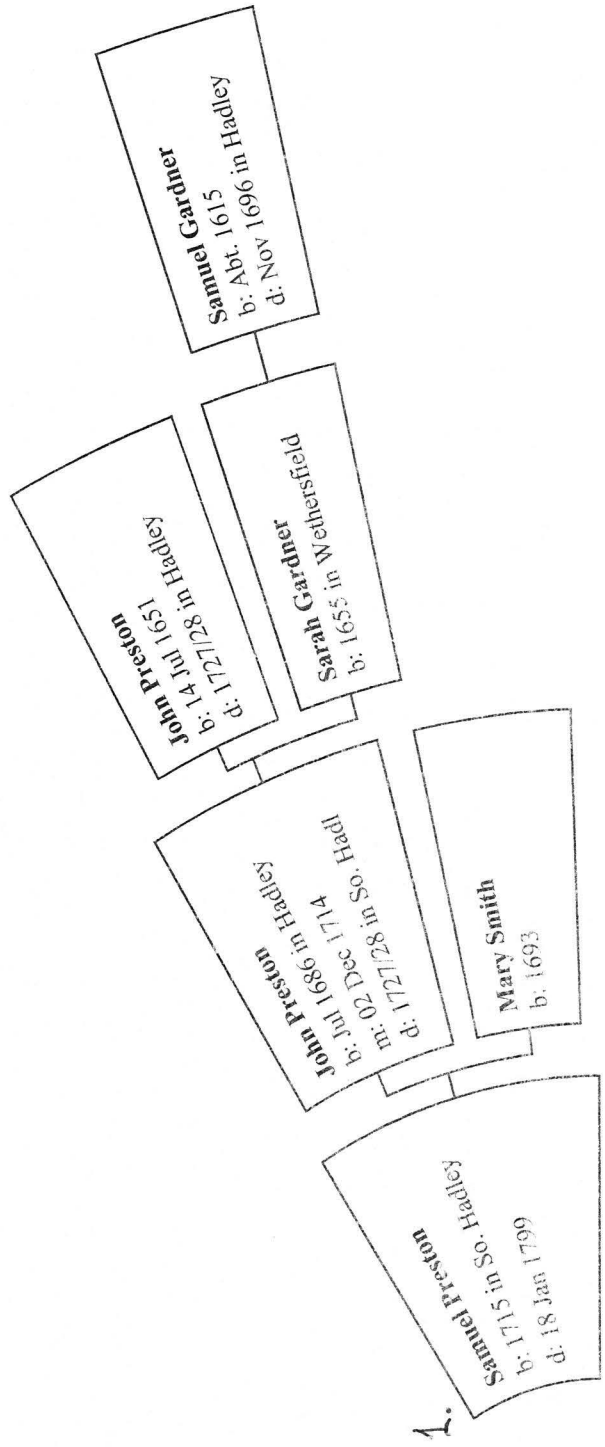


Ancestors of Catherine Preston



Samuel Preston, 4th Great-Grandfather of Charlotte Otis

Ancestors of Samuel Preston



BURNSIDE'S EXPEDITION IN HEAVY SEAS



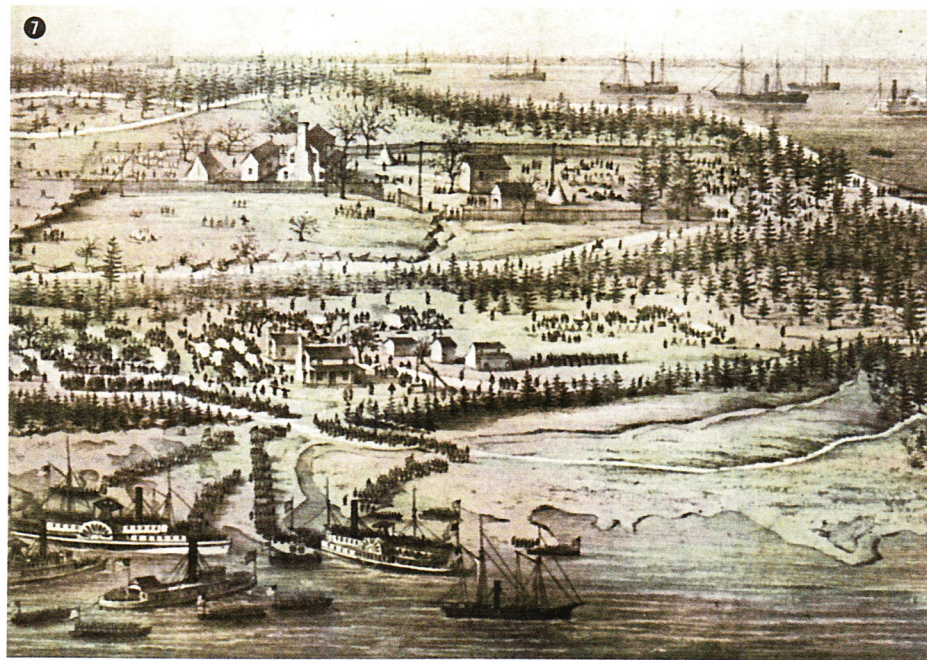
AMBROSE EVERETT
BURNSIDE

Renowned for his prominent sideburns—a term that originated as a play on his name—Ambrose Burnside was a meticulous New Englander better suited for overseeing slow, methodical operations like the amphibious assault on coastal North Carolina than for commanding troops in the heat of battle. He did not lack courage and demonstrated as much by taking as his headquarters the smallest of the boats bound for Hatteras Inlet. Time and again mountainous waves “would engulf us,” he wrote, “but the little vessel would ride them and stagger forward in her course.” The success of his North Carolina campaign led Lincoln to view him as a likely replacement for McClellan as chief of the Army of the Potomac, but Burnside held back, insisting that he was “not competent to command such a large army as this.” At the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, his corps was slow to advance across the span known thereafter as Burnside Bridge, and a golden chance to vanquish Lee’s army was lost. McClellan bore most of the blame, however, and Burnside reluctantly agreed to succeed him afterward. Spurred on by Lincoln, he threw his army into a desperate battle at Fredericksburg that December and suffered terrible losses. Staggered by his failure, he had to be restrained from personally leading a potentially suicidal attack the next day.

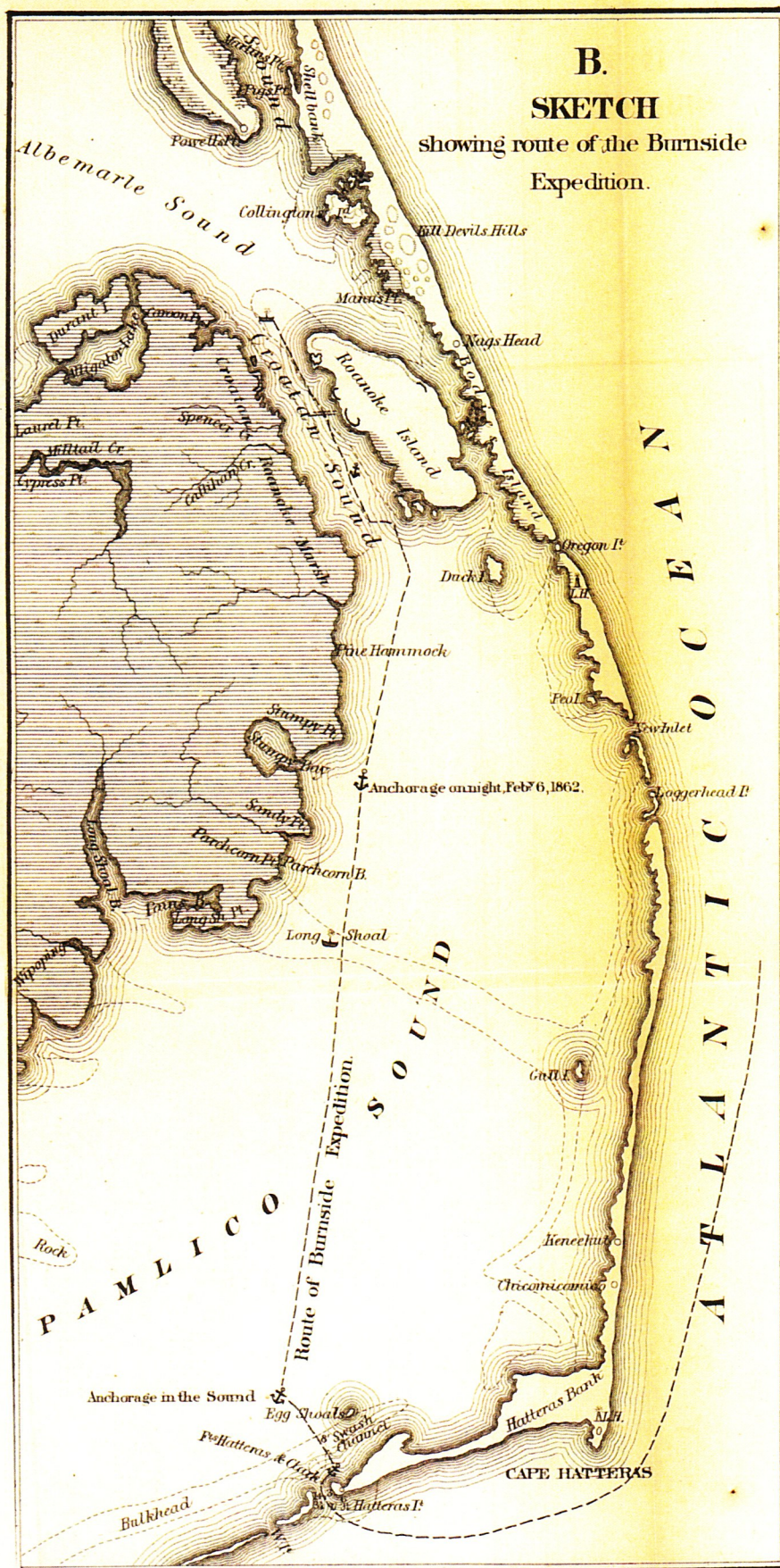
The Union launched its largest amphibious operation to date in January 1862 when 13,000 troops under Ambrose Burnside embarked from Annapolis, Maryland, and rendezvoused at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay with a squadron of 20 gunboats commanded by Louis Goldsborough. All the vessels selected for this expedition had suitably shallow drafts in order to pass through Hatteras Inlet ❶, which was only about eight feet deep, but that made them unstable in the high seas that often battered Cape Hatteras in midwinter. “As far as the eye can see, the water is rolling, foaming and dashing over the shoals,” wrote one soldier as the invasion fleet approached Hatteras Inlet. “This is no time for man to war against man.”

Burnside and his men wallowed miserably in swells for nearly two weeks before the seas grew calm enough for them to approach the treacherous inlet—only to discover that the sands there had shifted and the water was just six feet deep. By emptying boats of cargo and using the keels of heavy steamships as dredges, they made it

through into Pamlico Sound ❷ by early February and set their sights on Roanoke Island ❸, a Confederate bastion guarding the entrance to Albemarle Sound ❹. A pesky “mosquito fleet” of nine small Rebel gunboats lurked behind a barrier of sunken ships and pilings ❺ off the island’s west coast. But Goldsborough ignored that obstacle and opened fire on nearby Fort Bartow ❻ on February 7 to screen Federal troops as they landed south of that stronghold at Ashby’s Harbor ❼. The following day, Burnside’s men—who greatly outnumbered the island’s defenders—captured a redoubt ❽ blocking the island’s main road and went on to force the surrender of Bartow and other forts at the northern end of Roanoke. Goldsborough’s squadron capped the Federal victory by crushing the mosquito fleet, leaving the Union in full command of both Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. Burnside went on to capture New Bern, North Carolina’s second largest port after Wilmington, but he and most of his forces were called away to support the embattled McClellan near Richmond before they could advance inland. ■



❶ **LANDING AT ROANOKE** Ferryboats and other commercial vessels requisitioned as transports for Burnside’s campaign disembark troops at Ashby’s Harbor on February 7. Burnside chose this landing site on Roanoke Island after receiving intelligence from a slave who escaped from a plantation there.



Report of Maj. Gen. J. G. Foster to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Bowen & Co. Lith. Phila.

"As far as the eye can see, the water is rolling, foaming and dashing over the shoals.... This is no time for man to war against man."

SOLDIER'S DIARY
ON ROUNDING CAPE HATTARAS
IN HEAVY SEAS WITH
BURNSIDE'S EXPEDITION



PATH TO VICTORY Two maps accompanying an official report on Burnside's campaign by Brigadier General John Foster, who led the attack on Roanoke Island, show the path the Federal fleet followed through Hatteras Inlet into Pamlico Sound (left) and the situation at Roanoke Island as Union troops prepared to land there on February 7 (above). Federal gunboats pounded Fort Bartow and kept the Confederate mosquito fleet at bay while Burnside's transports entered Ashby's Harbor unopposed.

THE THRUST TO PETERSBURG



P.G.T. BEAUREGARD

The military career of Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard stood in marked contrast to that of Ulysses Grant, whose forces he fended off at Petersburg in June 1864. Unlike Grant, who rose from obscurity to fame during the war, Beauregard, a Louisianan of French ancestry, began the conflict as the South's most acclaimed general, hailed for capturing Fort Sumter, but gradually fell into disfavor. Having graduated second in his class at West Point in 1838, he was likened to Napoleon for his impressive appearance and command of military theory, but that was no guarantee of success in the field. "Oh, that I had the genius of a Napoleon," he wrote before the First Battle of Bull Run, "to be more worthy of our cause." He might not have won that battle without the aid of Joseph Johnston, who hurried troops there and helped counter a blistering Federal attack that left Beauregard shaken. At Shiloh a year later, he was faulted for not pressing his attack on Grant and finishing him off. Relieved a few months later, Beauregard took charge of the defenses of Charleston, frustrating Federal attempts to seize that city before thwarting Grant at Petersburg. As he demonstrated there, his great talent was not for bold Napoleonic strokes but for the gritty task of preparing defenses and holding out stubbornly against superior numbers.

Grant was at his best when things were at their worst. His calamitous assault at Cold Harbor, referred to as "Grant's slaughter pen," would have devastated a less-confident commander. But as Sherman told Grant, the "chief characteristic of your nature is the simple faith in success you have always manifested." Time and again—at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga—he had shrugged off setbacks and prevailed. Within days of his debacle at Cold Harbor, he salvaged his campaign by shifting course so abruptly that even Lee, who had matched his every move, was caught by surprise.

While Lee guarded against an assault on Richmond ❶, Grant planned to descend instead on Petersburg ❷, a hub through which supplies from the south reached Richmond and its defenders on the Weldon Railroad ❸. His Federals would be at great risk if Lee detected his movement and attacked while they were crossing the James River ❹. So Grant made a feint toward Richmond and sent Sheridan on a diversionary cavalry raid to the west, tearing up tracks used to haul supplies between the Shenandoah Valley and the capital. Confederate cavalry went after Sheridan, and Lee lost sight of Grant. He surmised on June 14 that Grant was "preparing to move south of the James River," but remained unsure of his whereabouts until June 17, by which time the entire Federal army had crossed on a pontoon bridge over the James below its confluence with the Appomattox River ❺.

Grant now had a secure supply line, for Federals controlled the James River up to City Point ❶, a Union base that he linked to Petersburg by repairing the City Point Railroad ❷. His bold thrust also relieved pressure on Benjamin Butler, pinned down at Bermuda Hundred ❸ with 30,000 Federals by a smaller Confederate force led by P. G. T. Beauregard, who now had to withdraw to Petersburg to shield that city. Beauregard dashed Grant's hopes of seizing Petersburg before Lee's forces arrived there and began strengthening their fortifications ❹. But as Lee declared earlier in the campaign, "This army cannot stand a siege." With his troops hemmed in at Petersburg by a much larger and better-supplied army, he now faced a prolonged siege that threatened to grind down his forces until surrender was his only option. ■

❷ **HUB ON THE APPOMATTOX** Located on the Appomattox River, lined with tobacco warehouses and cotton mills like those shown here, Petersburg was Virginia's second largest city and a rail hub vital to the defense of Richmond.

❹ **DIGGING DEEP** Confederates fortified their line at Petersburg by digging deep, wide trenches such as these, reinforced with log embankments called revetments, enabling troops to move readily to areas that came under attack.



1. City Point.—2. Bermuda Hundred.—3. City Point Railroad.—4, 4. Appomattox River.—5. Deep Bottom.—14. Canal at Dutch Gap.—15. Farrar's Island.—16. Weldon Railroad.





7 SERVING THE DICTATOR Federal gunners attend a monstrous mortar called the Dictator, used during the siege of Petersburg. Transported along the tracks of the City Point Railroad and a military railway nearby, the 12-inch mortar could hurl a 200-pound shell more than two miles.

PATHS TO PETERSBURG Published in the North after Grant's forces descended on Petersburg, this bird's-eye view of the area, looking westward, shows the rivers and railroads that proved crucial to the outcome as Federals secured their own supply lines and cut off those feeding Richmond and its defenders. The numbers superimposed on this map refer to places mentioned in the text; the numbers within the map refer to places identified in the key at bottom.



James River.—5. Fort Waltham.—6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6. Union lines.—7, 7, 7. Rebel lines.—8. Petersburg.—9. Reams Station.—10. Weldon Railroad.—11, 11, 11, 11. Richmond and Petersburg Railroad.—12. Lynchburg Railroad, connecting with the Danville Railroad at Burkesville.—13. Fort Darling.—14. Danville Railroad.—15. Richmond.—16. Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad.—17, 17, 17, 17. Roads leading out of Richmond.—18. The Chickahominy.—19. Malvern Hill.—20. Butler's lines.—21. Jones's Neck.—22. Rebel boats above this point.—23. Fort Darling.—24. Danville Railroad.—25. Richmond.—26. Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad.—27. The Chickahominy.—28. Malvern Hill.—29. Butler's lines.—30. Jones's Neck.—31. Rebel boats above this point.

ISOMETRIC VIEW OF GENERAL GRANT'S VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN.—[SEE FIRST PAGE.]

HW 1864