

Camp Near Thornton Junction
June 11th 1863

Dr Mother.

You have undoubtedly
heard through the papers here
this of our Big Cavalry fight
on the Rappa bank. Well it
was a hot one I assure you.
Our Regt and the 8th
N York spent the fight in the
mud at day light in the morning
by charging across the River and
driving the Rebs from their
Entrenchments. Col B F Davis
commanding the Brigade was
killed in this charge. our Squadron
was with him at the time. the
Rebs had broken the 8th N York
and were driving them in
a panic before them. When
he called on Capt Clark to

Charge and check them the
words had hardly passed his lips
when he was shot from his horse
as we charged Capt Clark
rec'd a ball through his wrist
two of the boys also were wounded
one mortally, we succeeded however
in turning the tables on our
friends and set them into
a skedaddle. Three of our men
were taken prisoners here we also
lost several horses killed and wounded
By to save time of which I have
very little to spare I will send
you a rough draft of an article
intended for "the press" it is in
the crude state remember,
As for me personally I was
unlucky enough to escape without
a scratch, not so my poor
horse his breast rec'd a ball



Since writing the above
we have been in the severest
cavalry engagement of the war
our Rgt. and the 8th N York
opened the fight at daylight by
charging across the River and
driving the Rebs from their
Entrenchments. Col R. F. Davis
Commanding the Brigade was killed
here, while directing Capt Clark
to check the Enemy, who were
driving the 8th N York back in
a panic. As ~~we~~ moved forward to
obey the order ^{the Capt} ~~he~~ ^{he} was a bullet
through the hand and as his
horse became unmanageable he
was obliged to leave the field. The
command then devolved upon
Lieut Lincoln, who continued to
command through the day



in this Charge we had three wounded
and three taken Prisoners
the grounded were Capt Black
through the hand. Gas Mc Cart
through the body probably fatal &
H. H. Miller in the arm slight
After driving the Reds from this
^{three prisoners} position we were ordered to the
Right. And our Squadron dismounted
we had been there but a short time
when the Reds charged and drove
some of our men from a stone
wall that we held. One Pleasanton
Rode down to our Regt & said that
he wanted that stone wall ^{we} take
that the fellows that run had no business
to have given it up and that the pl
I could take it and hold it. our
Squadron was ordered to
dismount and see what
we could do with them

we moved round on their left & Engaged their attention while a small body of infantry attacked them on the right driving them from their position and taking a number of Prisoners while dismounted we had two men wounded and a narrow escape for several more. Mrs Woodruff had a finger shot off. Sergeant Buckley was struck in the neck by a spent ball doing him no other injury than to knock him down. Corporal Webb was ^{hit} struck in the back by a ball and his life undoubtedly saved by his Bowie Knife which was broken in two by the force of the blow. After this we were ordered to the left again to protect a Battery, while there we had one man and several horses wounded.

That as we were turning around
he rec a bullet in the breast
a second later and it would
have gone through my leg. And
I am silly enough to regret that
it did not the horse ^{is} a very
fine one that I captured a few
weeks ago. I brought him off
from the field and hope to be
able get him over his difikilly.
We drove the Rebs from the
River to their Infantry support
it was the hardest leaving
fight of the war. My
health & spirits are excellent

Your aff son
Austin



Camp Stanton Dec 4/66

Dr Mother

Your very kind letter of the 25th Ult was rec to day. And as usual was very welcome. I always feel better & more like doing right after rec a letter from you. for I think there must be something good in me or I should not have so good a mother. The Draft was rec all right for which I am very much obliged. If we rec our pay promptly I shall be able to refund you the money sent to Clark before long if not may have to send to you for a little more. But at present have all that I need. I often think of Ed. And it always seems to me that he died a Christian. I think Clark has a good many serious thoughts. And intends to do what is right. He is a good boy

We have had a funeral here to
day a Son of Capt Birney died yesterday
And today was buried. There is considerable
Sickness Among the men. Congestive Chills
are very common. The Dr has just come
in to our tent to inform us of the death
of one of our men from the effects of a chill.
You will undoubtedly wish to know
how I like my new Sphere of Action.
in answer I will say very well indeed
a more tractable lot of men or those who
wish to do right I never saw. And they
learn very rapidly. In going through
their Quarters you do not meet the profanity
nor obscene talk that you would in going
through the Camp of a White Regt.
Everything is quiet & orderly the men
attentive to their duties & respectful to their
Officers. As soon as we can get organized
we shall establish Schools for them and
teach them to read & write.

Our Officers are mostly men of
principle and take a great interest
in their men and will do the best for
them that they can. The comp that I belong
to is composed as we think of the "Elite" of
the Regt No Oreganity nor profanity allowed
while associating together. If you visit
Washington this Winter will ~~come up~~
try and see you. if not I shall try for a
short furlough ~~th~~ sometime this
Winter. I have been in command of
the Company for the last two or three
days. gave it up this morning to our new
Captain who arrived last Evng Yesterday
he is a young fellow. A Graduate
of West Point with no practice
nor actual experience of Souldiering
but well posted in the Theory I like
him pretty well. I enclose this letter
and I will write you a better one Sunday
our only leisure time. I have been
very very busy ever since my arrival.

which suits me very well.



This evening I have been interrupted
every 1/2 my words as you will see
by the fragmentary style. Write
very soon

Your aff Son
Austin



Whites Landing Dec 12th /88

D. Mother

Here I am in my little House all alone thinking of Home Friends and many other things. Last Sunday noon I rec orders to report immediately to Col Birney for Duty. On my arrival at his head quarters was informed that I was to be sent up the River with a force of some 55 men to cut & ship wood for the Camp at Benedict. I got up here that Evening at dusk disembarked my men. Organized them and the next morning was hard at work. Since my arrival have sent of two Boat loads and have another at the Wharf ready to put on board being one more than my predecessor ever got off in the same length of time. The Harkins took fare for me. Today I conducted the Service for them. Read a portion of the Sermon on the Mount the ~~was~~

twelfth Chapter of Romans and a
Chapter in Revelations they furnished
the Prayers & Singing. Some of the former
were Excellent. I could not help feeling
my own unworthiness while listening to
them. And their simply Earnest prayer
was a great rebuke to the irreligious life
that I have led thus far. To fully appre-
ciate the Character of the Blacks you
must be intimately associated with ^{them}, and
then I do not think a person can help
respecting & liking them. They are affectionate
faithful and obedient. if you get their respect
and good will. And their aptitude for the
work is really wonderful they seem to take
to it instinctively. I have not purchased that
Bash yet. not having had an opportunity.
Have not ~~recd~~ any mail for several days
the Mail Carrier was expected in Camp
the day I left but had not arrived when
the Boat Started. Write often &
Your aff Son
Austin

Whites Landing Dec 17th 1863

Dr Mother

Last Evening I rec a couple of letters from you. One had been to the Army of the Potomac & was forwarded from there you may be sure they were very welcome. In regard to selling the Homestead. use your own judgment I shall have no objection if you think it best. The probability is that none of us will ever return there to live. And it will never rent for enough to pay the interest on the money invested. it is certainly worth \$10,000 and I should think more at the present time. If it is to be sold it ought to be done before Real Estate begins to depreciate. Mother dear do not be anxious about me. I will try and get a Furlough this Winter & shake you a visit. for I want to see you as much as you do me I guess. I want to correct an impression that you seem to be laboring under in regard to the Colored Troops.

You caution me not to expect to much
of them. that you believe they will fight
but that they have been taught to lie & steal
As for fighting if their Officers treat them
right they will follow wherever they are led
and that is all that ought to be required
of any troops. And they have fewer vices
than any Regt of the same number of men
that I have ever seen. I never have been an
admirer of the Negro. in fact have always
disliked and been prejudiced against them
but when the facts are so strongly brought
before me I cannot deny them. And I shall
have no objection to seeing them admitted
to an equality with the Whites whenever
their abilities will warrant it I never
was a "dyed in the wool" black abolitionist
until I joined Entered the Army but
since then I have been the "clear quill"
write to me often

Yours off Son
Austin

Benedict Dec 28th / 1863

Dr Mocker

I came up from White's Landing this morning for the purpose of having my men mustered. We are expecting to be ordered from here within three or four weeks. There are various rumors as to our destination. It is the West &c &c. There will be no opportunity for me to get a furlough. There is a special order from forbidding officers to visit Washington without special permission from the War Dept. I was talking with Genl Birney in regard to it. He said that his jurisdiction would extend any where in Maryland and that if I wished to meet any of my friends he would give me permission to visit Baltimore. Now as I cannot visit you, if I would like to have you visit me if you think it best. do not come on my account if it is at all inconvenient to you. I thought under the circumstances the journey might do you good. And if I am ordered off to some distant part of the Country you might feel better satisfied to see me before going. Travelling expenses will be the principal

room as board is very cheap in Baltimore
I shall make an Application to the War Dept
through Uncle Owen for permission to visit
Washington. if that is unsuccessful will meet
you in Baltimore should you think best to
come on. Your expenses will probably be from
\$50, to \$75. If Chas can get away shall be very
glad to see him also. I rec your letter of the 22nd inst
enclosing one from Mr Hammond. this evening.
they were very acceptable I assure you. Mother you
are very anxious that I should come out and public
ly Confess myself a Christian. dont you know that
it is impossible if I were so inclined. We have
no service nor anything of the kind. Sunday is
very often as busy as any other day of the week
I am about the same that I was when I left
a little more hardened if anything. I am very
glad to know that Mrs Morris still remembers
me. I guess the liking was mutual as I often
think of her as well as my other friends in
Chicago. give her my best regards. Also well wishes
for her growing family. If you come on
and I cannot visit Washington. Clark will
accompany you to Baltimore and I will meet
you at the Eutaw House on the tenth (10th) or twelfth (12th)
of next month

Now Mother do not let anything that
I have said influence you in the least. if you
can come as well as not and desire to do so shall
be very glad to see you but if you do not think it
best I do not wish you to come.

Your aff Son
Ariston

Camp Stanton Jan 15th 1864

D. Mother

Yours of the 5th inst has just been rec. for the last ten days I have been off on Recruiting Service. And have just got back to Camp. Am very glad you did not start as we shall not probably leave here until the latter part of Feb or the 1st of March. Neither have we been paid off as yet. Consequently I am not ready to go. If you can meet me in Washington on the 1st of Feb I shall be very glad. Uncle said that he would procure me a furlough on your arrival there. I saw a short account in the Baltimore Sun of the extremely cold weather that you have had in the West. You say that you want a "personal interest in this struggle". I should think you had considerable but for fear that you will not see it in that light I will send you small edition of "Topsy" that I have run across that is if I can induce him to run away he is one of the oddest and smartest geniuses that I ever saw. We have had a spell of cold weather here but nothing to compare to the what you have had out there. The weather has been moderating for the last few days and now the mud is nearly six inches deep.

You can of course judge what is best for you
to do but if you can come at the time mentioned
I shall feel very glad for I do want to see you a little
bit. I am not very well contented with the Branch
of the service that I am in. You know I never
liked Infantry, since I have been here however I
have been riding the most of the time. The
Mounted Officers of the Regt are all very glad
to have the ride ^{& again} their horses I have just
purchased one for the Col. And tomorrow am
going out with the Lt. Col to get another for
himself. My health as ever continues very
good I got on the scales today and was
astonished to find that I weighed over one
hundred & fifty pounds. Give my best regards
to all my friends

Your aff Son
Austin

Mrs E L Wiswall
Chicago

Camp Stanton Jan 19th 1864

Mr H L Hammond

Dear Sir

Yours very

kind letter of the 21st ult has been rec some time since and should have been answered Erethis but when it reached me I was on detached service away from any Post Office and on being relieved from duty there was immediately ordered off recruiting so that I have scarcely had any time that I could call my own. I feel very grateful to you for your many kind wishes in my behalf. I think the fact that "Colored Troops are a success" is now proved beyond a doubt. I have never seen any troop that would learn the drill with the facility that these men do. nor have I seen since I have been in the Army a more orderly or well behaved lot of men. there is no drinking no gambling and very little profanity among them. And for cleanliness in Camp and their persons they can not be excelled. There are now here in Camp about three thousand men and we are expecting two Regiments more which will increase the number to five thousand

Brig. Genl Wm Birney Commands this
Post is a son of James G Birney of
Abolition Notoriety, We are expecting Marching
Orders by the 5th of Feb. destination unknown
but supposed to be Texas, What would Could a
Regt of Cavalry be raised in Chicago from among
the Blacks there? There is a friend of mine here
a Lieut Col in one of the Colored Regts and my
self would like to make the attempt provided
there was any prospect of success permission
could be obtained from the War Dept I think
if you will give me your opinion on the subject
I shall feel very much obliged.

With Sincere Respect
and Esteem I am very truly
Yours. A. Misawa

A. Misawa
Jan 19/64