

Jan

Austin Wiswall to Mother, Brother, and Sister. April 5,  
1863 A. L. S. 2 lvs., 4 pp.

Hope Landing Va  
April 5<sup>th</sup> 1863

D<sup>r</sup> Mother Bro & Sister

I write to you ~~all to~~ deleted altogether as I have not time to write to each in detail. I rec two letters from Mother yesterday and one from Chal & Clark each today Clark is expecting to go home soon I believe. Would liked to have seen him before doing so but Shall not be abled to ~~de-se~~ deleted probably. Today I am 23 yrs old (Mother will remember if the rest do not) and a very disagreeable day it has been last evening it commenced Snowing & continued to without intermission until this afternoon I was on guard last night and rec the full benefit of the Storm. Tomorrow we are to be reviewed by the President and Genl Hooker. One of the boys from our Co is going home on a furlough. And when he comes back I would like to have you send me a pr of Boots a couple of Hickory Shirts and a box of Frank Millers Leather preservatives Have Knowles make the Boots No Six. he has my measure I want the m made of the best French Calf and Sewed the legs to be large and come up above my knees 5 or Six inches all around

double uppers and double soles the Straps to be of leather and Strong. have him be particular about the leather and have no flaws in it. have the legs made so they will turn down. have plates on the Heels to prevent their running over. the Boots will probably cost \$12. or 15. but they are neccessary. I suppose you folks generally can send them to me as a birth day present. if not will send you the money as soon as we are pd off. the pkg can be left at S. H. M<sup>C</sup>Crea's 20 South Water St Office. Room No 3. 2<sup>d</sup> Floor. Where it will be called for. Must be left before the 15<sup>th</sup> the price is high but it is a good deal more economical than to wear Govt. Boots and a good deal healthier one fruitful cause of Sickness in th Army is wet feet. the Boots I brought with me have stood me so far admirably but are now nearly worn out. My best regards to all my friends. Not forgetting Knowles. All write soon

Your aff Son & Bro

Austin

<sup>1</sup>General Hooker was a Civil War General who succeeded Burnside in the Army of the Potomac in 1863. He was commonly called Fighting Joe Hooker. He retired as major-general in 1868, and he died October 31, 1879. Thomas William Herringshaw, Herringshaw's Encyclopedia of American Biography of the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1898), p.

Austin Wiswall to Mr. Hammond, March 6, 1863. A. L. S.  
lvs., 4pp.

Hope Landing Va  
March 6<sup>th</sup> 1863

Mr. Hammond

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

The Capt arrived here last evening and brought me a pkg in which was a book from yourself & family with your kind wishes & prayers. I am very much obliged ~~to~~ deleted for your kindness to me, When I left Chicago I believe that I promised to write to you when I joined my Regt. but up to the present time have had no opportunity to write to anyone but Mother and one or two in the family. Our Regt has been doing constant duty since the 1<sup>st</sup> of last September. And when we were obliged to stop in order to recruit it was generally where we could not get writing materials About two weeks since we were relieved from Picket duty at King Georges Court House since then have been in our present camp. the rumor is however that we are ordered to move in a day or two. We have had very pleasant weather for the greater part of the Winter. the last month ~~the W--~~ deleted we have had a good deal of Snow and rain consequently the Roads are in a terrible condition. If the fearful ones at home could see what the actual State of affairs are here they would soon be convinced that there is no danger of our ultimate Success if we only do right. For miles in every direction beyond our lines the Slaves have left their Masters bringing with them all the horses mule & s cattle and whatever else they could get hold of. their places must be filled by soldiers from the Army or the people must Starve. and the more intelligent of the

citizens admit it. Neither are the Slaves as ignorant as they have been represented the Majority of them are more intelligent than the poor Whites. Ask them where they are going and what they are going to do and they very readily answer that they are going North. And to work. Many of them leave more comfortable homes than they can hope to secure for many years. Yet they are willing to work & to Suffer if they can only be free. Land here is very poor in quality as well as in price the wealth consisting mostly in slaves Virginia or that part of it that we have been in is nearly drained of her entire Male population those that are left being the old and disabled. Now if the North will only stand firm we can conquer them in less than a year and when their Army is once disbanded and the Slaves free we need have no fear of their ever being able to raise another. Many were deceived into enlisting more were forced in. and the majority of the Men are heartily sick of Soldiering. Everything indicates a movement in a few days but where I have no idea. Since I have been here my health has been very good and I have enjoyed myself very much My best regards to yourself & family

Very truly yours

A Wiswall

<sup>1</sup>King George's Court House is in King George's County, Virginia.

A

Austin Wiswall to Owen Lovejoy, April 5, 1863. 1 pc  
2 lvs. [ALS]

✓  
Hope Landing Va  
April 5<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dr Uncle

I was very glad to hear of your continued improvement in health. Clark tells me you will probably start for home a week from tomorrow also that he will accompany you.

should have liked very much to have seen you both before you started but as I cannot then shall endeavor to make the best of it. I have got along very well since my enlistment and thus far have enjoyed myself much better than I anticipated on entering the Army. it is an excellent school for the study of Human Nature, and a very pleasant one too if we will only be contented. The Army has improved very much since Genl. Hooker took command. And if he only continues in the way of well doing we ought to give the Back Bone of the Rebellion some pretty hard knocks if we do not break it. There is a strong feeling in the Army among all parties that Copper headism<sup>2</sup> in the Northern States must be crushed out and the Government sustained to the end at all hazards, and I believe the feeling is stronger against Northern Traitors than it is against Southern Rebels. There would

be scarcely a word said, now against the enlistment of colored soldiers. Where six months ago there would have been open Mutiny. Clark tells me you will endeavor to get me a commission before going home I shall be very glad to rec one, but shall not be disappointed, nor discontented if I do not get it I did not enter the Army for office not for pay, but because I wanted a personal interest in this great battle for right and justice. And God willing I propose to remain in it in any capacity He shall see fit to put me until the struggle is ended be it high or be it low

As ever your aff nephew

Austin

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<sup>1</sup>General Joseph Hooker (1814-1879) took command of of the Union Army on January 26, 1863. "Hooker, Joseph," The National Encyclopedia of American Biography, IV, 7176-8.

<sup>2</sup>Copperhead was the epithet given to those in the North who advocated a policy of peace with the South.

*Identifying  
Hope Landing*

Austin Viswall to Mother, April 28, 1863. 1pc. 21vs.  
[ALS]

*Talent.*  
Camp near Warrington Va  
April 28<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dr Mother

Your letters of the 12<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> inst reached me last evening. We have been on the march for the last week or two & consequently have failed to rec our mail with any regularity. Have not rec the things you sent as yet the man who brought not having come up with the  
st yet. You seemed to think that I would be surprised at your spending the summer at Mr. H's.<sup>1</sup> I am not rather expected it, and am perfectly willing. ~~and~~ <sup>anything</sup> that will add to your happiness will meet with no opposition from me. So Hat<sup>2</sup> has made up her mind to go to the Hospital. Well I am have no objections her mind seems set upon it and I see no reason why her desires should not be gratified as well as anyones else.<sup>3</sup> We started several days ago to make a Raid upon the Rebs but owing to the bad weather and other causes have been unable to accomplish anything as yet. Our Regt has done all that has been done by the troops in the Brigade We have taken several prisoners and horses besides killing a number. Our squadron was called out at three oclock this morning and have not returned as yet. I did not go as my horses back was sore. the mails will be very irregular while we are marching and you must not be alarmed if you do not hear from me for for several weeks at a time but do not fail to write

to me regularly as my letters are one of my greatest pleasures. Hat speaks of some Photographs that she sent all that I have rec are yours Mary Dinka's & Mollies. What is the reason that Lib does not answer my letters. give my best regards to all my friends in Chicago & P.<sup>4</sup>

Your aff son  
Austin

P. S. When the War is over I will travel with you and Hat through Va and show you some of as fine scenery as you could wish for. You would enjoy <sup>[deleted]</sup> ~~the~~ spending the month of May or June here in Warrington it is a beautiful town, Mountains, Hills, valleys & brooks making up a scene of rare beauty. the other evening I was on Picket just as the sun was setting. it had been rainin hard all day but cleared up beautifully about 5 oclock and everything was so bright and fresh and withal so quiet that I could not realize that a short time before it had been a scene of strife and bloodshed and even then we were expecting the enemy at any moment Such is war

Your aff  
Son Austin

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<sup>1</sup>Reverend H. L. Hammond, father of the man who invented the Hammond Organ, later married Wiswall's mother. Inventory of Wiswall papers, Southwest Historical Collection

<sup>2</sup>Hattie Wiswall was the sister of Austin Wiswall. Inventory of Wiswall papers, Southwest Historical Collection

<sup>3</sup>Apparently, she was going to be a nurse.

<sup>4</sup>Presumably Princeton, Austin Wiswall's birthplace.

1863, May 10. Austin Wiswall to Mother.  
ALS. 2 iv., 3 pp.

*should be  
double spaced*

*Ident. by*

D<sup>r</sup> Mother<sup>1</sup>

Potomac Creek Va  
May 10<sup>th</sup> 1863

Again have we had a battle or rather series of Battles here on the Potomac and the result although not as complete a success as we had hoped for is still a success there was less straggling than I ever saw after so hard a fight. the Soldiers were in good spirits and confident of their ability to whip the Rebs. The Cavalry have been on the go night and day for the last thirty days making Scouts & Reconisiances and are pretty well tired out ~~she~~ We are in Camp now and will probably remain for a day or two to rec our pay and recruit up a little We have not been pd for over six months. Through the Cowardice or something worse of Genl Averil<sup>2</sup> we were not with Genl Stoneman<sup>3</sup> at Richmond. We should have joined him near Gordonsville but after driving the Rebs from Kellys Ford to Rapidan Station we halted and finally turned back and joined the Main Army much to the indignation of all the Soldiers. We have had several brushes with Stuarts<sup>4</sup> and Mosbys<sup>5</sup> Gray Cavalry lately and in every case have thrashed them severely

My Boots & Shirts have arrived and are very nice indeed. I wish you would send me a couple of towels by mail One of mine was burned and the other was stolen Does Uncles health improve any? Give my best regards to all my friends. I wrpte to Chal<sup>7</sup> a few days since tell him to write often Has Hat<sup>8</sup> gone to the Hospital yet Where does she propose going? An order has just come to sign the pay Roals and we shall probably rec our pay this ~~atn~~ afternoon

Your aff Son  
Austin<sup>9</sup>



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Gordon Pattee Lovejoy, born 1815, became Mrs. Noah Wiswall of Skaneateles, New York; later a widow, became wife of noted Chicago theologian Henry Laurens Hammond. Edward Magdol, Owen Lovejoy: Abolitionist in Congress (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1967), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Union Major-General William W. Averell. Robert Selph Henry, The Story of the Confederacy (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963), p. 498.

<sup>3</sup>Union General George Stoneman. Allan Nevins, The War for the Union (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), II, p. 435.

<sup>4</sup>Confederate Mafor J. E. B. Stuart. Henry, Confederacy, p. 512.

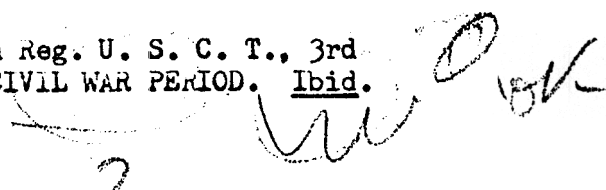
<sup>5</sup>Confederate General John S. Mosby. Clement Eaton, A History of the Southern Confederacy (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 344.

<sup>6</sup>Owen Lovejoy, Austin's uncle, served as a Republican congressman from Illinios from 1856 till his death in 1864. He developed smallpox in Feburary, 1863 and was ill for a period of several months. Magdol, Lovejoy, pp. vii, 28.

<sup>7</sup>Unknown.

<sup>8</sup>Hattie Wiswall, Austin's sister. Inventory of the Wiswall Papers, The Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University.

<sup>9</sup>Lieutenant Austin Wiswall, 9th Reg. U. S. C. T., 3rd Div. 10th A. C. United States Army- CIVIL WAR PERIOD. Ibid.

7 

1863, June 5. Austin Wiswall to Mother.  
ALS. 2iv., 4 pp.

Acquia Creek Va  
June 5<sup>th</sup> 1863

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

Have just rec a couple of letters one from you and one from Clark<sup>1</sup> also those towels and socks. They are very nice and I am much obliged for them. We have just rec orders to write our letters and be prepared to move in the morning the whole Army being under marching orders. it is reported that Lee is trying to get into Maryland again. I hardly know what credit to give it but think it only a feint. I hope there will be some movement soon however as inaction is the great bane of the Army Clark says that he and Uncle Joe<sup>2</sup> will come down and see me if they can get papers. I know of nothing particularly interesting to write you. My health & spirits continue as well as ever for which I cannot be to thankful. Am very glad to hear of such a change in the tone of Eds<sup>3</sup> letters I cannot think but that he will be protected and brought safely through all the perils that surround him Circumstances do not alter Gods power. I am very glad to hear that your health is so good and that you enjoy yourself so well You say that Chal does not like Chicago. Well it is a dull place compared to St. Louis. What is to prevent him entering the Colledge any time he may desire? I might have sent you some money but the mail is so uncertain here in the Army that I did not like to risk it. And as I had an excellen[t] opportunity to invest a small sum thought that I better do it. And besides like to keep ~~se~~(deleted) some with me in case of accident. give my best regards to Mr H<sup>4</sup> & family also to all my other friends in C[hicago]

What is Phronie[?] <sup>5</sup> doing ? By the way I almost forgot to tell you that I am a news paper correspondent now. the Capt wished me to write for one of the Whiteside Papers and I occasionally furnish them with a short article

Your aff Son  
Austin

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Austin's brother Clarke Wiswall. Inventory of the Wiswall Papers, The Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph C. Lovejoy who was a teacher, antislavery worker and minister. Magdol, Lovejoy, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Austin's brother Lieutenant Edward Wiswall who died in action in the South, 1863. Ibid., p. 386.

<sup>4</sup>Henry Laurens Hammond. Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>5</sup>Unknown.

1863, JUNE 11. AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER.<sup>1</sup> ALS. 2 LV., 6 PP.  
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY, ARCHIVES, SOUTHWEST COLLECTION.

Camp Near Worrinton Junction<sup>2</sup>

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

June 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

You have undoubtedly heard through the paper ere this of our Big Cavalry fight on the Rappahanack.<sup>3</sup> Well it was a hot one I ~~assu~~ [deleted] assure you. Our Regt and the 8<sup>th</sup> N York opened the fight in the mo [deleted] at day light in the morning of changing across the River and driving the Rebs from their Entrenchments. Col B F Davis commanding the Brigade was killed in this charge.<sup>4</sup> our Squadron was with him at the time. the Rebs had broken the 8<sup>th</sup> N York and were driving them in a panic before them. When he called on Capt Clark to Charge and check them [p. 2] the words had hardly passed his lips when he was shot from his horse as We Charged Capt Clark rec a ball throug 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 [deleted] 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"<sup>5</sup> 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-a-bah that [deleted] [p. 3] 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 was [deleted] 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 difililty [sic]. We drove the Rebs from the river to their Infantry supports it was the hardest Cavalry fight of the War. My health & spirits are excellent

Your Aff Son

Austin

INSERT TO LETTER 1863, JUNE 11. AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER. ALS. 2 LV., 6 PP.

Since writing the above We have been in the severest Cavalry Engagement of the War. Our Regt and the 8<sup>th</sup> N York opened the fight at daylight by charging across the River and driving the Rebs from their Entrenchments. Col B F Davis Comaning the Bridage was killed here.<sup>6</sup> While directing Capt Clark to check the Enemy. Who were driving the 8<sup>th</sup> N York back in a panic. As We moved forward to obey the order he [deleted] the Capt rec a bullet through the hand and as his horse became unmanageable he was obliged to leave the field. the command then divolved upon Lieut Lincoln who continued to command through the day in this charge we had thre wounded and three taken Prisoners the Wounded were Capt Clark through the hand. Jas McCarty through the body probably fatal & H. H. Miller in the arm slight three prisoners [inserted between the lines] After driving the Rebs from this position We were ordered to the Right. And our Squadron dismounted- [deleted] We had been there but a short time when the Rebs Charged and drove some of our Men from a Stone Wall that We held. Genl Pleasanton Rode down to our Regt & said that he wanted that Stone wall<sup>re</sup> taken that [deleted] the fellows that run had no business to have given it up and that the 8<sup>th</sup> Ill could take it and hold it.<sup>7</sup> 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 Geo Woodruff had a finger shot off. Seargeant Buckley was struck in the neck by a spent ball doing him [deleted] no other injury than to knock him down Corporal Hess was struck [deleted] hit in the back by a ball and his life undoubtedly saved by his Bowie Knife which was broken in to

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<sup>8</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Austin Wiswall. Lieutenant Wiswall, 9th U. S. Colored Troops.

<sup>2</sup>Worrinton Junction. Located in Charles County, southern Maryland, on the Patuxent River, 33 miles southeast of Washington.

<sup>3</sup>Rappahanack. Rappahannock Station and Kelly's Ford, Virginia. A battle of the Civil War took place on November 7, 1863, during Meade's and Lee's operations in north Virginia.

<sup>4</sup>Colonel Benjamin Franklin Davis. A Civil War soldier, born in Alabama in 1832, graduated from West Point in 1854, and became a colonel of the 8th New York cavalry. He was killed while leading a brigade to the charge at the combat of Beverly Ford, Virginia, June 9, 1863.

<sup>5</sup> A single folded paper was inserted with the letter of June 11, 1863. It is considered to be the "rough draft" story of the Rappahanack battle intended for a newspaper printing. The explanation and sequence of the battle are the same with a few refinements in detail.

<sup>6</sup>Supra, note 4.

<sup>7</sup>General Alfred Pleasonton. (June 7, 1824-February 17, 1897). General Pleasonton served brilliantly throughout the Peninsular campaign. He was promoted Brigadier General of Volunteers on July 16, 1862. He was engaged in the Rappahannock campaign from December, 1862 to June, 1863.

<sup>8</sup> The preceding is the content of the inserted copy of the letter of Austin Wiswall, June 11, 1863, (see supra, note 5.)

Sources 2.

2 pages

Austin Wiswall to Mother A.L.S.

Camp Stanton<sup>1</sup> Dec 4/63

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

Your very kind letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> Ult was rec(eived) [ ]  
to day, And as usual was very welcome. I always feel better  
& more like doing right after rec(riving) 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(eived) all [ ]  
right for which I am very much obliged. If we rec(eive) our  
pay promptly shall be able to refund you the money sent to  
Clark<sup>2</sup> 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  
Christain .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 Col Birney<sup>3</sup> died yesterday  
and today was buried. There is considerable sickness among  
the men. Congestive Chills are very common . the Dr. has  
just come into our tent to inform us of the death of one of  
our men from the effects of a Chill. You will undoubtly 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 hear the pro-  
fanity 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

use  
brackets



L78

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 mess that I belong to is composed as we think of the "Elite" of the Regt No vulgarity nor profanity allowed while associating together. If you visit Washington this Winter will ~~come up~~(deleted) try and see you, if not shall try for a short furlough ~~th~~(deleted) 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 Even~~(deleted) Yesterday he is a young fellow a Graduate of Yale Colledge with no practice nor actual experience of Soldering but well posted in the theory I like him pretty well. Excuse 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz words as you will see by the fragmentory style. Write very soon

Your Aff Son

Austin

<sup>1</sup> Staunton, Virginia is indicated as being Northwest of Charlottesville, Virginia in the Atlas of American History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), Plate 1

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wiswall was the brother of Austin Wiswall. See letter of April 15, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. colored infantry from May 22 to December 22, 1863.

↑  
Source?

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

Here I am in my little House all alone thinking of Home Friends and many other things. Last Thursday noon I rec orders to report immediately to Col Birney for Duty.<sup>2</sup> On my arrival at his Head Quarters was informed that I was to be sent up the River with a force of some [deleted] 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 Darkies work firstrate for me. Today I Conducted the Service for them. Read a portion of the Sermon on the Mount the ~~twel~~ [deleted] 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 simple earnest piety was a great rebuke to the irreligious life that I have led thus far. To fully appreciate the Character of the Blacks you must be intimately associated with <sup>them</sup> 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 Drill is really wonderful they seem to take to it instinctively. I have not purchased that Sash yet. not having had an opportunity. Have not had [deleted] rec 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

y [deleted]

Your Aff Son

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Austin Wiswall. Lieutenant Wiswall, 9th U. S. Colored Troops.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel William Birney. (May 28, 1819-August 14, 1907) In 1863, he was appointed one of the superintendents of enlistment of colored troops. He organized seven regiments. He was made a brigadier general of volunteers on May 22, 1863. While in command of the colored troops, he freed the inmates of the slave prisons at Baltimore.

Sources

Austin Wiswall to Mother A.L.S.

Whites Landing<sup>1</sup> Dec 17/63

(B)

Mother

Last Evening I rec(eived) 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 judgement 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 saved 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 th is Winter &

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 & stea(1) 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

been an admirer of the Negro, in fact have always disliked and been predjudiced against them but when the facts

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(deleted) entered the Army but Since then I have been  
the "Clear quill" write to me often

Your Aff Son

Austin

<sup>1</sup>White House Landing, Virginia is indicated as being  
Northeast of Richmond, Virginia on the Pamunkey River in  
the Atlas of American History (New York: Charles Scribner's  
Sons, 1943), Plate 129.

↑  
compiler.

History 534

C

LETTER FROM AUSTIN VISWALL TO MOTHER. DECEMBER 28, 863

ALS ? pp ? lvs ?

Benedict ✓

Dec 28th 1863

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

I came up from Whites 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. Texas the West etc etc. 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. <sup>2</sup> I was talking with Genl Birney <sup>3</sup> 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 is best. do not come on my account if it is at all inconvinient [sic] to you. I thought under the circumstances the journey might do you good. And if am ordered off to some distant part of the Country you might feel better satisfied to see me before going

AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER, DECEMBER 20, 1863 (CONTINUED) 2

Traveling expenses will be the principal item as board is very cheap in Baltimore. I shall ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> an Application to the War Dept through Uncle Owen <sup>✓</sup> 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 Chal can get away shall be very glad to see him also. I rec your letter of the 22 inst. Enclosing one from Mr Hammond, this evening. They were very acceptable I assure you. Mother you are very anxious that I should publicly confess myself a Christian. Don't 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 in any thing. 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 of other friends in Chicago. Give her my best regards. Also well wishes for her growing family.

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.

T. Lindsay Baker

AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER, DECEMBER 28, 1863 (CONTINUED 3

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

Austin

*foot notes*



LETTER FROM AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER, JANUARY 15, 1864.

ALS? pp? vs?

Camp Stanton ✓

Jan 15th 1864

D<sup>r</sup> 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 ~~th~~ 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 by on the 1st of Feb I shall be very glad. Uncle <sup>✓</sup> 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 feat that you will not SEE it in that light I will Send you Small Edition of "Topsy" <sup>1</sup> that I have run across that is if I can induce him to run away he is one of the abelest [sic] and smartest geniuses that I Ever saw. We

---

<sup>1</sup>"Topsy" apparently refers to Uncle Tom's Cabin, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, first published in 1852.

apparently  
not - but  
instead  
a negro  
slave - recall from  
letter

T. Lindsay Baker

AUSTIN WISWALL TO MOTHER, JANUARY 15, 1864 (CONTINUED)2

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 for 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 ME ride & train 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

Austin Wiswall to Mr. H. L. Hammond, January 19, 1864, ALS,  
1 lv., 2 pp.

✓  
Camp Stanton Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 1864

Mr H L Hammond

Dear Sir

Your very kind letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Ult was ~~been~~ [deleted]  
some time since and should have been answered Ere this  
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 W<sup>m</sup> Birney<sup>1</sup> Commands this Post is a son of  
James G Birney<sup>2</sup> of Abolition Notoriety. We are expecting  
marching orders by the 5<sup>th</sup> of Feb. destination unknown but  
supposed to be Texas. ~~What would~~ [deleted] 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. Wiswall<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Born in Alabama, William enlisted in the Union Army in New Jersey and served in the New Jersey Infantry and 2nd U.S. Colored Infantry. He reached the rank of Major General He was honorably mustered out of service 24 Aug 1965. )

<sup>2</sup>Born in Connecticut, James enlisted in the Union Army in Michigan, rising from the rank of Sergeant to Captain while serving in the 7th and later the 1st Michigan Cavalry during the Civil War. He died 16 Jan 1870.

<sup>3</sup>Born in Princeton, Illinois, in 1840, he served in the Civil War as a Lieutenant in the 9th Regiment U.S.C.T. He was a nephew of John, Owen, and Elijah P. Lovejoy. Austin died in 1905.

Source 27

Edward to My Dear Aunt, March 11, 1864, ALS, 2 lv., 3 pp.

Camp 1<sup>st</sup> R. I. Cav  
March 11<sup>th</sup> 64

My Dear Aunt

I do not feel much like writing but will drop you a line just to let you know that I have joined my Company and Regt all safe and sound. I arrived at Washington Saturday at 5 P. M.-- I found Uncle Owen<sup>1</sup> enjoying much better health than when I saw in [him?] in Feby, but he has not yet regained his strength. when I was in Washington they were talking of going down South for this health, I suppose he has already gone. as they were thinking of going the first of this week--

I have not heard from Lizzie since she has been at Rockford [t?] <sup>W</sup> I suppose she and Ida will room together. I find everything dreadful dull and dreary here-- tho most of the Officers and men have gone home since I have been gone, and they have not yet got back I was the first one that got back that went at the time that I did: I do not know what they are going to do with the Regiment; nor cannot find out: they say here that we are going to be ordered home to fill up our Companies but I do not hardly believe it. we have nothing to do here and no one to do it. there is no prospect of an advance here immediately, although General Grant is in this Army in person--: it has been raining for two days and it is horrible muddy here: Clark <sup>is</sup> is well, I suppose you know that John Lovejoy<sup>2</sup> is in a Dept in Washington. Give

my love to all the family

Please write as often as you in haste get time, to

Yours Aff

Edward

Tell "R--ol--" [partially obliterated] that I will send her  
a ----chuse [partially obliterated] sometime

---

<sup>1</sup>This person is probably Senator Owen Lovejoy.

<sup>2</sup>Brother of Owen and Elijah P. Lovejoy.

*Answer*

*Diana*

Austin Wiswell to Mother. March 18, 1864. ALS. 2Lvs. 2Pps.

★ 18th 1864  
Beaufort S.C. March

*C*

Dr Mother

★  
Here we are where the ~~War~~ Great Rebellion originated. We landed first at Hilton Head. ★ but the Rebels attempting to Cross over to the Island we were ordered here to to Strengthen the Post Beaufort is a beautiful place. the Houses are large and very fine. On our first arrival here the Weather was very warm and pleasant. but the last few days have shewn (sic) that March will (1) be March here as well as Else Where. the days are very pleasant but the Nights are Cold I have made an application to be Examined by the Board at Hilton Head. it has been approved and cordially endorsed by the Col (it) will I hope be successful. I rec('d) a letter from Lizzie B a day or two since also her Photograph She is a very fine looking Girl. Where is Mary? I wrote to Chad just before we left Benidict but have rec ('d) no answer as yet tell him to write. there is very little of general interest occuring here the most of the troops have been sent to Florida. And I'll probably see some Sharp work there. Give my best regards to all my friends, will try to see you when I get my leaf (sic)

Your AffSon  
Austin

*double open*

★ *protestes?*

1. Hilton Head, S.C., was the scene of DuPont's naval action on November 7, 1861. Fort Walker was established on Hilton Head, and and Fort Beauregard on Bay Point, across the channel. Rebels were commanded by General Thomas Drayton, brother to Percival Drayton, commander of the Pocahontas in the Union fleet, which attacked and took the area. Under Union occupancy Fort Walker became Fort Welles. William Seabrook Drayton and John Edward Drayton served under their father, Thomas, in defence of Hilton Head. William later became a captain in the Army of Northern Virginia. Percival, of the Union Navy, had to fire on family and homeland, and later became Captain of the Hartford, Admiral Farragut's flagship in the Battle of Mobile Bay. It was Captain Drayton to whom the Admiral shouted, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead."

General A.W. Sherman seems to have spent some time on Hilton Head, at the bakery, watching the bakers, and walking on the beach. Although the Union officer had served with distinction in the battle of Buena Vista, his inaction after the capture of Fort Walker puzzled fellow Mexican War veteran, Robert E. Lee, then headquartered at Coosawatchie. In a letter to his son on January 4, 1862, after a skirmish, Lee wrote, "Enemy quiet and retired to the islands. The main seemed too insecure for him, and he never went 400 yards from his steamers... after burning some houses, three, on the river bank, and finding our proximity unpleasant, he retired to Port Royal again."

Alice Cromie. A Tour Guide to the Civil War (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965) p. 277

Mark Boatner. The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, 1959) p. 403

*which covered for which data*

*You could have identified St. Helena - We discussed your looking for something on land speculating you might have been able to identify Capt. Cook*  
*You could have used the proper form*

Dr. Connor

*This was the only thing I could find on those dates*

*Pat D. Conrad*



Document

Austin Wiswell to Brother. April 15, 1864. ALS. 2Lvs. 2Pps.

Head Quarters ~~U.S.~~ Forces  
St Helena Island S.C.  
April 15th 1864

Dr Bro

I have not heard from you since my arrival in this Dept what is the reason? We have been moving from one station to another for the last five or six week (s) but now I think we are settled for some time. The Head Quarte (r) s of the Regt is at Hilton Head. We were ordered to this Post three days ago (that is Co G was) and have just begun to get settled down. St Helena is one of the finest Islands on the coast. the soil is very fertile. and some of the scenery fine. there is a great deal of Speculation in the Dept at present men from the North are com (e) ing down here and investing in old Abandoned Plantations. Buying them at the tax sales. Some of them are clearing from five to Eight thousand dollars in a single season. Any one who knows anything about Farming or Cotton Culture can make a good thing out of a Small investment Capt Cook is Past Comendant (sic) here. while I officiate as Comendant (sic) Provost Marshall the Picket line Company Comd'r &c &c This is the Dept for a soft thing in Soldiering. For the accom (a) dation of Capt Cook and my self we have two small tents one large Hospital tent. a horse which I use almost exclusively. the Capt not being much of a Horseman. There is a great deal of Small Pox here among the Negroes and Soldiers. All the White troops in this Dept have been ordered north and their places taken by Colored Soldiers. there is very little excitement here. No fighting nothing but drill and labor on the Fortifications. Give my best regards to all my friends. write to me often also send me Princeton, Chicago and St Louis papers.

Your AffBro

Austin

Fool notes ?

B

1864. April 19<sup>th</sup> Austin Wiswall to His Brother

St Helena Island ~~★~~ S. C

April 19<sup>th</sup> 1864

D<sup>r</sup> Brother

Yours of the 27<sup>th</sup> Ult has just reached me. You say truly that in the death of Uncle Owen ~~★~~ou---lers [partially obliterated] as well as the Country have met with a sad loss. I could hardly realize his death when I first heard it. I should only be too happy to comply with your request and get a <sup>2.</sup>forlough if it were possible but for the present I fear that it is not. After my examination I shall make application for a short leave of absence. I shall probably be examined within two or three weeks. It will depend some upon circumstances, as I do not wish to go before the Board until thoroughly posted. And at present I have no copy of the Tactics. ~~★~~those that I brought with me not being the kind that we are examined in, I have been using a copy belonging to the Lieut Col of my Regt. He has been appointed one of the Board, and wished to use it himself I have sent to Clark for a copy, as I have not been able to find one in the Department it is "Cookes Cavalry Tactics" <sup>2.</sup>Col Arnstrong said that the Board would take into consideration [sic] the fact of my not having been able to get books. We are ~~a~~ at present very presently situated on one of the finest Islands on the Coast

Capt Cook<sup>X</sup> is Post Comandant While I combine the functions of Post Adjut Company & Picket Comandant Our Quarters are on the Sea Shore and very pleasant indeed. In this Department you can have all the Transportation that you want. There is a Second Lieut here in charge of a Detachment of the Invalid Corps that has for his private accommodation two Wall Tents and one large Hospital Tent. One A Tent (used as a Privy) One Sofa. one mirror  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz chairs three beds 1 card table, one dining table 1 wash stand 1 clock three mattresses, in fact about four times as much as any Major General in the Army of the Potomac has. Nearly all of the White troops on this Dept have been sent North and their places supplied by Colored Troops. There is a great deal of Speculating here in the Cotton lands. Men from the North Come here buy these lands at \_\_\_\_\_, hire the Negros for little or nothing and make a big thing out of financially But when the Final day of settlement comes I fear that Some of them will remember the passage of Scripture, "What shall it profit a man <sup>though</sup> if he gain the whole world if he loses his Soul" I think that is not the exact quotation but it is near enough for the purpose. I cannot see much difference between the Climate here and with us. there are high winds here most of the time and the weather is cool. Corn is just beginning to show through the ground, the trees are not fully leaved out yet. The Only Machine shop in this Dept is on this Island, and we are stationed here to protect it.

There is a horse furnished for the use of the Officers. And all in all we have very pleasant times. I am sorry to hear that Mother gives way to feelings of despondency. If we only put our trust and dependence in God he will Support us. And His Power is equally as great at one place as another. If I live I shall try and get home this Summer. If I do not let us so live that we may meet in that happier and better world above. My health has never been better during my life than at the present time. I am very glad to know that my friends do not forget me, that thought has kept me up a good many times when perhaps otherwise I might have given way to feelings of despondency and home Sickness. When I am busy I am happy. When I am not I am very uneasy. Give My love and best regards to all of my friends. Write to me often. By the way there is an old friend of Branscombs here. Capt Weld <sup>★</sup> formerly a Lawyer in Kansas he is Adjut Genl on the Genl Birneys <sup>★</sup> Staff. Send me your Photograph when you write next. I shall have some taken as soon as I can get them. will send Specimens Home

I wrote to Egbert Norton the other day if he does not get it tell him that I sent him a letter and want one in return

As Ever Your afft Bro

Austin

P.S. When you write direct to Hilton Head S.C

*Footnote ???*

Letter No. 17.

Have not been able to identify the brother. The letter relates the writer's impressions of his recent assignment to the Sea Islands, South Carolina. It carries an optimistic outlook regarding his future in the service. It also reveals his attitudes -- concern and sympathy for the Negroes of the area subjected to the laissez faire practices of the speculators of the North.

Regina E. Foppe  
November 3, 1970

Instructor" Dr. S. V. Connor

1864. May 11. Austin Wiswall to His Mother

St. Helena Island S. C  
May 11, 1864

D<sup>r</sup> Mother

It is sometime since I have written to you as I have been waiting ~~to us~~ [deleted] for the mail to arrive from the North. It came last week bringing two letters from you one from Hat one from Clark one from Chal all of which were very acceptable. Owing to the regular line of Steamers being used to transport troops we have failed to rec our mail for three weeks. We have rumors here of a Great Battle between Grant & Lee. ~~★~~ Deserters that came in two or three days since from Savannah say that that there was a rumor current in that City that Grant had captured two of Lees Army Corps. Late Southern papers say that there has been hard fighting but claim the Victory for Lee We shall probably hear more definitely by the next Steamer

This is a horribly dull Dept at present nothing doing. I have not been examined yet as there is no Cavalry brig raised just there[?] being no horses here to mount them with My Application is on file however and approved so that I shall be among the first. I am ready any time. I want to pass for Major and I think I will. Have you seen the Article in the last Atlantic. Life on the Sea Islands it is written by a

Miss Lotties Faulkner<sup>2.</sup>, one of the teachers on this Island  
of African descent. She is very intelligent and quite pretty.  
We have had blackberries here for several days, Oranges,  
Figs, & other tropical fruits abound, (not very profusely as  
many of the trees have been destroyed by the Soldiers)

Give my best regards to all my friends If we Conquer  
a peace, and I get my Leave / [deleted] this Summer I will  
try and get home this Fall or Winter God sparing my health  
& life. Tell Lizzie Blanchard I have rec no ans to my  
last letter

Your aff Son

Austin

P S

I have not rec that letter from May yet. I wish you would  
send me a Photograph of Uncle Owen.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Fast not as

F

3.

Letter No. 18.

Letter to his mother, Elizabeth Lovejoy Wiswall. Letter conveys a depressing mood, his diary may supply the reason for same. Diary notes of this period imply he is recovering slowly from a serious malady, however, he does no mention this in the letter

Regina E. Foppe  
November 3, 1970

Instructor: Dr. S.V. Connor



Austin Wiswall to Sister. St. Helena

Island S. C. May 16, 1864. ALS.

2 lvs., 3 pp.

*Date on given  
in letter*

D<sup>r</sup> Sister

Your very welcome letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ult reached me a few days since. Owing to the transportation of so many troops we have not rec our mail regularly for the last 4 weeks but things having quited down again, the Boats will probably resume their regular trips. Mother tells me that you have had the Smallpox you say nothing about it in your letter. It has been prevailing to a great extent here several men in our company having had it. Up to this time however I have passed unscathed; through that as well as other dangers. You say truly we are getting old. Memory carries me back to the time when Mary & Lizzie Flint & Levina Sheldon were your play mates. visiting you at our old house on the East side of Main St. and it Seems but a little while yet it must be nearly twenty Years. And during that time what what wonderful changes have taken place. You are thirty one and I am twenty four that is the way our ages are counted in yrs & months. Yet in experience & knowledge of the wor d as compared with ordinary life how much older we are, I Seems to me that ten years of everyday life has been compressed in the last two. God grant that when this war is

over we that are now left may be permitted to meet again  
in this world. And if not in this may we meet our friends  
in the who have preceeded us in the world to come. You

I should not be surprised to see you down here this  
summer. I should be I assure you for it is long way round  
from the Vicksburgh [sic] to N. Y. and from there here.  
If Grant is successful I think we shall be able to wind  
up the Rebellion this summer. <sup>2</sup> Where are H. Elliot &  
Julian Bryant now? Give my regards to them if you see  
them. This is a very dull place for me nothing doing. and  
the Climate must be unhealthy I should think. Part of the  
is very hot 98 or 100 in the shade When evening comes  
on it is cold enough for fire I have one built every eve-  
ning in my tent to drive away the dampness Write to me  
often

Your aff Bro

Austin

Miss Hattie Wiswall

Soldiers Home

Vicksburgh (sic)

Identify  
2 Explain

Austin Wiswall to Mother. Hilton Head S C

May 27<sup>th</sup> 1864. ALS. 2 lvs., 3 pps.

Dr Mother

Your kind letter was rec yeaterday Encloseing  
(sic) one from Willie Hammond. I can hardly realize it  
but I suppose that he is quite a lad now as he speaks of  
being in a store. it does not seem to me that I have  
been long from home. We have just returned from an un-  
successful attempt to tear up the Rail Road & Burn the  
Bridges between Charleston & Savannah. We lost our best  
Boat Several men one hundred horses & Equipments without  
injuring the Rebs in the least. The Plan was to proceed  
to the Main land Disembark after dark send a squad of  
Cavalry on the advance to surprise the Rebel Pickets  
Make a descent on ~~the~~ a Camp of Artillery & cavalry sur-  
prising them then to Burn a long trestle Bridge our Regt  
Supporting them and in case they did not succeed do it  
ourselves Man proposes God disposes. When we arrived at  
the mouth of the River the ship that we were on Stuck  
fast on a Bar. We signalled the Flag ship that we were  
fast. but it was not seen for some time finally another  
Boat was sent back to take off some of our troops and  
lighten the Ship. but it was impossible to float her  
then. So the Col ordered all the troops to be crowded on  
the other Boat and we followed after the rest of the fleet

The Pilot that we had on Board did not seem to know his business and in the darkness we passed the mouth of the Creek where the orders were to disembark and proceeded up the River some 12 or 15 miles passing the Rebel Pickets We were challenged several times but paid no attention to them. We proceeded up the River until the Boston a large transport that was with us grounded. After several ineffectual attempts to pull her off we moved down the River to report and get assistance ~~we~~ The usual amount of talk & duty occurred so that when the Boats started to her relief it was daylight. Our Regt & the 52 Penn was disembarked and advanced some distance from the shore to protect the rest of the boats which the Ebb Tide had left high & dry on the Bank About Six oclock the Rebs opened on the Boston<sup>3</sup> with Artillery and in a short time disabled her. She had on Board ~~the~~ a portion of the 34<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T.<sup>4</sup> also a detachment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mass Cavalry<sup>5</sup> A good many of the men were drowned while attempting to swim to the Shore. those who jumped over board and were not drowned were captured by the Rebs. Genl Birney<sup>6</sup> ordered the Vessel Burned with one hundred horses & equipments on Board. When the tide floated our vessels we reembarked & returned to Hilton Head. The Sea was very rough. Several of the officers were sick. I was one of the happy few who escaped. This is a terribly dull dept. Maj Genl Foster<sup>7</sup> arrived on the Fulton and assumed command.

We get it from Rebel Sources that Grant & Sherman have totally defeated Lee & Johnson that the Rebs have captured Genl Butler & 5000 men. <sup>2</sup> This is a horrible letter but I am not in the mood for writing.

My best regards to all

Your aff son

Austin

Tell Phil to write

Where  
your  
one  
footnotes?

June 4, 1864. Austion wiswald to his mother. ALS, 3 lvs., 5 pp.

*l*  
Hitton Head *X* S C

D<sup>r</sup> mother

The Steamer<sup>1</sup> has arrived bringing a letter from you to your Soldier Boy. Everything is terribly dull & quiet here Our principle amusement just now is Chess. There has been considerably trouble here occasioned by the failure of our Raid Col Bayley<sup>2</sup> has been under arrest for several days but will be fully acquitted of any neglect of Duty I think what is the reason that I do not hear from any of Uncles Folks.' The News we get from the Army of the Potomac<sup>3</sup> is very Encouraging. I wish that I was with them. They are acquiring Honors & Glory while we are doing nothing Everything moves terribly Slow here They have not commenced raising that cavalry yet consequently I cannot get examination, but it will all come in Good Time I was very much pleased with the Letter from Friend Willie. He wished me to send him some memento of this Country. I send him a Napkin Ring purchased at a fair got up by the Nuns in St. Augustine Florida. He undoubtedly knows that it is the Oldest town in the U.S.

Give my best regards to all the family also to Dr. Hayes & Family. I have given up much hope of getting home this summer unless I get a speedy promotion. I have not heard from Chal for some time tell him to write

Your affectionate son  
Austin

<sup>1</sup> Steam boat. Hitton Head and Beaufort, South Carolina are located on the eastern coast of South Carolina and were accessible by boat. *Source?*

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Thomas Bayley. *Austion Wiswald* See letter to his mother, June 21.

<sup>3</sup> The eastern Union Army under General George B. McClellan. *Source?*

*X*  
*Not at this time*

*X I don't*

June 21, 1864. Austin Wiswald to his mother. ALS. 2 lvs.,

Beaufort SC

Dear Mother

I was beginning to think that you had forgotten me Entirely. When the Steamer<sup>1</sup> brought me your last letter, So that she has made you a visit & How did she Succeed in getting so far from Home at this Season of active operations & Does She know anything about H. Elliot Julian,<sup>2</sup> Bryants or any of the Princeton boys that are down there & What are Uncles Family doing now? I should like very much to See them and shall try to get home this Winter if I get my promotion. What is the reason I do not hear from any of them? Lizzie Blanchard has not answered my last letter. I was interrupted after writing thus far and was unable to resume my writing until the present date June 25<sup>th</sup> Consequently my letter will not go until the next Steamer. I have just received a letter from Hat(?) written at Erickburgh on the 15<sup>th</sup> Ult Can't imagine what has delayed it so long on the Road also a Paper from Chal. Hat enclosed me a letter from Mrs. Waller She speaks of Mrs. Delano and says "yes it is so" What is the Matter is she dead or has she an increase of Family. I am very glad that I am not entirely forgotten by my friends at home for I look forward to the time when I shall meet them again (if it be the Lord's will) with a good deal of pleasure. So Jenny has grown up into a handsome Young Lady Did Willie receive the Pkg that I sent him? There is some prospect of our being ordered to Va. I hope we shall be as I would like to in at the death.<sup>3</sup> There is no prospect of active operations here for the present

<sup>1</sup>See Austin Wiswald to his mother, June 4, 1864.

<sup>2</sup>Comma error. (Julian Bryants) See Austin Wiswald to his sister, June 25, 1864.

<sup>3</sup>Death. Death of the Confederacy; end of the war.

June 21, 1864. Austin Wiswald to his mother,

We are very pleasantly situated now and enjoy ourselves as much as is possible in this Country. The heat thus far has not been as oppressive as I anticipated it would be. There is a good breeze <sup>the</sup> most of the time. And we have the Luxery of ice, ice cream, vegetables & c [so forth] although at enormously high prices. What has become of Lyons and why does he not answer my letters? We have rumors of Important victories gained by Grant<sup>4</sup> army which are the reduction of Peterburgh Ft. Darling Clark writes me that he thinks of going to comage. I am glad, I think it would be a good thing for him. I sand you a Photograph of Col Bayley commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T.<sup>5</sup> He is an old friend of Clark's Give my best regards to all my friends. If you can I wish you would send me a Photograph of Uncle Sam.

Your Affectionate Son  
Austin

<sup>4</sup>Grant took over as commander of entire Union Army by orders from the War Dept. General's Office, March 12, 1864.

<sup>5</sup>The United States Colored Troops (9<sup>th</sup>) were made up in Benddict, Maryland, under the supreme command of Brig. General William Birney-Regiment commander, Col. Thomas Bayley. (House Miscellaneous Documents: War of the Rebellion, Ser. 1, Vol 32: pt. 3, p. 55)



1864, June 25. Austin Wiswall to his sister.  
A.L.S. 2lv., 3p.

Beaufort S.C. ★  
June 25 1864

Sister

Your letter of the 15th has just reached me. I was  
glad indeed to hear from you. Also found Mrs Wallers  
letter very interesting. What does she mean by the Expression

is so in regard to Mrs Delano" Has she died eloped or  
an in(crease)?<sup>1</sup> Since writeng your letter you have made  
a visit to Washington Chicago & Princeton. I wish I could

met you there. Has the place changed much? or is it the  
same old Six pense? as when I left Who have Married. died etc.  
There is a prospect of our being ordered to Virginia. I hope  
we may be. I have seen a good deal of service there, and would  
like to be in at the death<sup>★</sup> now--if possible. What has become  
of H. Elliott & Julian Bryant. Are they still in the Service?  
Also the rest of the Princeton Boys tell me what you know about<sup>★</sup>  
them. The name of my Col. is Thos B(\*\*\*)ly an old Friend of<sup>★</sup>  
Clarks & the Capt of my co is named Cook is from N.Y. a fine  
fellow but no Soldier nor Ever will be. You wished me to tell  
you about my self. Well. I am rather a hard customer Swear  
Consierably if not more. Exhort officers & men when Ever

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1. See Austin Wiswall's letter to his sister. June 21, 1864.

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the Fit takes me. Have not got in the habit of drinking Whiskey yet but presume I should. Stoke a Pipe pretty regularly. Am pretty rough with the men but think I am rather a favorite with them notwithstanding. Do my duty and make a pretty good soldier. As my health has been first rate ever since Entering the Service Have just looked in the Glass and think I am pretty good looking. Will send you a Photograph when I have some taken.

We can carry as much baggage in this Dept as we wish. consequently we are pretty Comfortable have good floors to our tents Chair Tables &c &c. Write to me as often as you can. Try and pull through so that if possible we may trust once more in this " Vale of Tears Below" I was on Guard Last night. consequently do not feel very brilliant to day

Your aff Bro

Austin

★ Foot notes ↗

Austin

1864, August 9. Austin Wiswall to his mother.  
A.L.S. 1lv., 2p.

C

Bermuda Hundred ☆  
Aug 9th 1864

Dear Mother

will undoubtedly be Suprised at the heading of this letter. As you probably have rec no intimation of our Change of Station We left Hutton Heal<sup>☆</sup> of the 4th Inst. and arrived here one the 8th, And I assure you I never made a move that was more agreeable to my feelings. Now that we have got away from there I will own that the climate & inaction of the Dept of the South was killing me. But now Thank God I am once more with the glorious Army of the Patomac<sup>☆</sup>. And already feel five hundred pr cent better. I Shall probably not find much difficluty in accomplishing my Earnest desire of getting into cavalry here. I have not time to write much please notivy Lizzie of the Change of my address. We are assigned to the 10th corps<sup>☆</sup>. Army of the Potomac. Write soon. Your aff Son

Austin

P.S. I wrote to Chal just before leaving Beaufort. plea se tell him to write soon. and direct here.

☆ Foot notes ?

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Nail

[Samuel C. Armstrong to Mrs. Wiswell, September 2, 1864]  
1 lv. 2pps

Cd.        9<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T.  
camp near Petersburg Va  
Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 1864

Mrs. Wiswell;

Dear Madame;

I regret to inform you that your son  
Austin Wiswell is now a prisoner in Rebel hands and as [sic]  
slightly wounded in the fleshy part of his leg. It was indeed owing  
to his wound that he was captured.

I had the gratification of meeting under flag of truce Col.  
Little ~~★~~ 11<sup>th</sup> Georgia Vols. who has seen your son -- who in fact took  
him prisoner; -- the Col. seemed much pleased with his young captive,  
Admired his frankness and Manliness and said he would do for him all  
he could. I sent a note to Lt. Wiswell by the Col. saying I would  
write his mother and tell her all I could about him. Col. Little  
told me that the wound was not at all dangerous; simply an impediment  
to locomotion. Your son was taken in the fight of Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> ~~★~~ (since  
which time ~~these~~ we have had little opportunity for getting at our  
portfolios) and yesterday I heard that all who were captured at  
that time were to be exchanged -- at least the wounded.

Without straining the truth or my conscience I can assure you  
that Lieutenant Wiswell is one of my best officers, better in the

[Armstrong to Wiswell, cont.]

field and in action than in the mysteries & labyrinths of Red-tape. He is perfectly cool and good-natured in the most trying him [sic] and I placed great reliance [sic] on him. We were all much attached to him and will welcome him heartily should he ever come again to the reg<sup>t</sup>.

If there is anything I can do for you, Madame in reference to your son or his affairs I shall do it with great pleasure

Very truly Yours

Sam<sup>l</sup> C Armstrong<sup>[1]</sup> [signature]

Lt. Col. 9<sup>th</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup> U.S.C.T.

3<sup>rd</sup> Div. 10<sup>th</sup> A.C.

<sup>1</sup> Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903. Washington: 1903, 170. Lieutenant Colonel Armstrong was in command of the 9th colored infantry as of 23 November 1863 and was Lieutenant Wiswell's commanding officer. Armstrong's reference to U.S.C.T. apparently refers to U.S. colored troops rather than to colored infantry.

*\* need  
for notes*

Nail

[Austin Wiswell to H.L. Hammond, December 19, 1864]  
1 lv. 2pps.]

Officers Hosp Annapolis Md

Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 1864

Mr H.L. Hammond

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Your very kind letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> Inst has just been received. I am glad to hear that I was of Sufficient consequence when in Chicago to be missed a trifle now I am absent. If Lige enjoyed getting that sword as much as I did reading about it he was a very happy young man. It was so utterly unsuspected that I hardly knew what to think of it. I don't know whether to write to Lige or not until I am Officially informed in regard to the matter

I answered Mr Delanos Letter on the receipt of it. I am exchanged but have not ascertained what will be done in my case as yet. I have made application to be assigned to light duty but have not heard anything from it as yet. Exchanged Prisoners are constantly arriving ~~fre~~ at this point from Charleston. Some of them look pretty well. Maj Bogle <sup>★</sup> of the 54<sup>th</sup> Mass (Colored) was confined with the Enlisted Men in the Pen at Andersonville. <sup>★</sup> He has been transferred now I believe to the Officers Quarters. He was in the Pen over a year. when captured they refused to dress his wounds or to allow him any attention. There have been

[Wiswell to Hammond, cont.]

no Officers of Colored Troops Paroled since I was. I realize more and more how very fortunate I was to get away from them. There are a great many of the men <sup>die</sup> very soon after their arrival here. Sixty were buried to Day and fifty one last week. A great many come here after their friends and find only their clothes or some little relic left for them in the hands of a Comrade. I hardly know what to say about my sword until I hear from Clark. If I am assigned to duty [I] shall want it. I will write to mother often. I get my Mail this Evening. My Love to all

Very truly yours

A. Wiswell [signature]

*Heard first and as*