

Camp 1st P. I. Co.
March 11th 1864

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 enjoying much better health than when I saw him in Feb., but he has not yet regained his strength. when I was in Washington they were

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 is well. I
suppose you know that John
Lovejoy is in a Deck in
Washington. Give my
love to all the family

^{in haste} Please write as often as
you get time, To Yours Affly
Edward
P.S. "Reah" what I will send
her a picture sometime

Talking of going down
South for his health.

I suppose he has already
gone. as they were thing^{ing} of
going the first of this
week.

I have not heard from
Lizzie since she has
been at Rockford.

I suppose she and Ida
will soon be together.

I find Everything dreadful
dull and dreary here. the
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

Beaufort S. C. March 18th 1864
Dr Mother

Here we are where
the ~~the~~ Great R. Rebellion origi-
nated. We landed first at Hilton
Head. but the Rebels attempting
to cross over to this 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 shown that March will
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 was approved and cordially
Endorsed by the Col

will I hope be successful
I rec'd 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 Char
just before we left Benedict but
have rec. no answer as yet and
him to write. There is very little
of general interest occurring here
The most of the troops have been
sent to Florida, and will probably
see some sharp work there. Give
my best regards to all my friends.
I will try to see you when I get
my leave.

Yours affly
Austin

Head Quarters U.S. Forces
St Helena Island S.C.
April 15th / 84

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 weeks but now I think that we are settled for some time. The Head Quarters of the Regt is at Hilton Head. We were ordered to this Post three days ago (that is 60 Yrs) 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 this Dept at present men from the north are coming down here and investing in the abandoned Plantations. Buying them at the 104 sales. Some of them are clearing from five to eight thousand dollars in a single season. Anyone that knows anything about farming or the Cotton Culture can make a good thing out of a small investment. Capt Cook is Post Commandant here. while I officiate as Provost Marshal Commandant of the Picket line Company Comdr HC & C.

This is the Dept for a soft thing in soldering. For
the accomodation 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 ~~horse~~ horseman. There is a good deal of small pot
here among the Negroes & Soldiers. All the white
troops in this Dept have been ordered north and
their places supplied 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 & St Louis papers

Your aff Bro
Austin

Dr.

St Helena Island S.H.
April 19th 1844

Dr Brother

Yours of the 27th ult has just reached me. You say truly that in the death of Uncle Owen our loss 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 furlough 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 I am 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 "bookers cavalry tactics" Col Armstrong said that the Board would take into consideration the fact of my not having been able to get books.

We are at present very pleasant,
situated on one of the finest Islands on
the Coast Capt Cook is Post Commandant
while I combine the functions of Post Adj't
Company & Picket Commandant &c. 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 Well
Tents one large Hospital Tent. One A Tent
(used as a Privy) One Sofa. one mirror $\frac{1}{2}$ doz Chair
three beds, Card Table, one dining Table, wash stand
clock three matras. in fact about four
times as much as any Major General in
the Army of the Potomac has. Nearly all
of the White Troops in this Dept have
been sent North and their places supplied
by Colored Troops. There is a great deal of
Speculating here in Cotton lands. Men from
the North come here buy these lands at 25¢
sales. hire the Negroes 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 remem-
ber that passage of Scripture. "What shall
it profit a man ^{though} if he gain the whole world
if he loses his soul" I think that is not the
Baptist quotation but it is near enough for the purpose.

I cannot see much difference between the climate here and with us. there are big winds here the 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 men 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 this 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 it perhaps otherwise by 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 Branscombes here Capt Wild formerly a Lawyer in Kansas.

He is Adjt Genl on Genl Burnings 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 yet tell him that I sent him a
letter and want one in return.

As Ever Your aff Bro

Austin Austin

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

St Helena Island S.C.
May 16th 1864

Dr Mother

It is some time since I have written to you as I have been waiting to see for the mail to arrive from the North. It came last week bringing two letters from you one from Nat one from Clark one from Chas all of which were very acceptable. Owing to the regular line of Steamers being used to transport troops we had 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 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 Terribly dull Dept at present
nothing doing. I have not been examined yet
as there is no Cavalry being 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 prep for Major
and think I will. Have you seen the Artist
in the East Atlantic. Life on the Sea Islands
it is written by a Miss Lottie Faulkner. one of
the teachers on this Island. of African descent
She is very intelligent and quite pretty.
We have had black berries 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 leaf I
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
PS
Your aff Son
Austin

I have not rec that letter from May yet. I
wish you would send me a Photograph of Uncle Sam

St Helena Island S.C.
May 11th 1844

Dr Sister

Your very welcome letter of the 1st 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 quieted down again, the Boats will probably resume their regular Trips. Mother tells me that you have had the Small pox. You say nothing about it in your letter. It has been prevailing to a great extent here several run 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 Hunt & Ann 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 word
as compared with ordinary life how much
older we are, I sum to me that ten years of
every day 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 preceded
us in the world to come. You say I need
not be surprised to see you down here this
summer. I should be I assure you for it is
long my round from the Dicksonburg to N.Y
and from there here. If Grant is successful
I think we shall be able to wind up the Rebellion
this summer. Where are H. Elliott & 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 day is very hot 98 or 100
in the shade when evening comes on it is cold enough
for fire I have one built every evening in

my Tent to drive away the dampness
Write to me often

Your aff Bro
Austin

Mrs Mattie Viswall
Soldiers Home Petersburg



Hilton Head S.C.
May 27th 1864

Dr Mother

Your kind letter was rec yesterday
Enclosing one from Willie Hammond. I can
hardly realize it but I suppose that He is quite
a lad now as he speaks of bring in a store.
It does not seem to me that I have been long
from home. We have just returned
from an unsuccessful 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 surprising them
then to Burn a long trestle Bridge our Regt
Supporting them. And in case they did not succeed
as in our hands

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 Genl 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 13 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. The usual amount of talk & delay occurred
so that when the Boats started to her relief it was day
light. 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 o'clock the Rebs opened on the Boston
with Artillery and in a short time disabled her.
She had on Board ^{a portion of the} 3rd U.S.C.T. also a detachment
of the 4th Mass Cavalry 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 ordered the Vessel Burned
with one hundred horses & Equipments on
Board. When the tide floated our Vessel 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

Dr. Maj Genl Foster 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. This is a horrible letter but I am not in the mood

writing
Tell Phil to write
My Best regards to all
Your affson
Austin