



1862

Dana Smith

1862

to take the cars we had to
leave our knapsacks all we
could take was our overcoat
& blankets & our shelter tent
which is two square pieces of
canvas about 2 yards square
with buttons on it - & each
man takes one piece & then
2 men button their pieces
together & fasten a strap
at that is all the tent
we have

1862

The 123rd New York Volunteers

by Dana Smith

2023

San Francisco, California, USA, Earth

A variable edition of sets of 6 silkscreen prints on Stonehenge paper, 30x22 inches, accompanied by 6 digital prints on Moab Entrada natural rag paper, 30x22 inches. Edition of 45 portfolio sets, in a custom digitally printed envelope, not numbered.

The result of a painter's approach to silkscreen is a wildly variant edition - each print is really a unique monoprint. The process of printing used three layers or screens. The first layer of ink was applied using a painterly technique designed to create bands of color and random shapes that depict a horizon in time where memory appears and disappears, and where the ghosts of history sometimes reveal themselves or retreat in darkness. The second layer is a halftoned photographic image selected from the Library of Congress archive of Civil War photos. Each photo shows a moment in time from the last months of 1862 into the winter of 1863, where we see the real people and the stark carnage from across the centuries. The third layer is handwriting selected from the letters of William Garret Fisher, written while fighting the American Civil War, and is applied in semi-transparent metallic ink to float above the image, shimmering in and out with the shift in angle of the viewer.

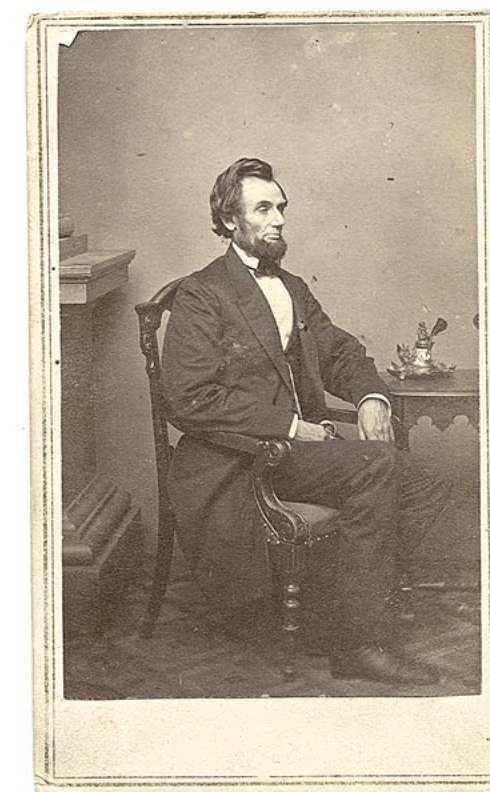
William Garret Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War are a collection of over 140 letters preserved by his family. Will Fisher, living in Cambridge, New York at 17 years old, joined the Union Army on September 30, 1861, as a bugler in Company A, 7th Regiment of New York Cavalry Volunteers also known as J. Morrison's Black Horse Cavalry. When this Regiment was mustered out of service six months later in April of 1862, Will re-enlisted as an infantry private in the 123rd Regiment, New York Volunteers, and was back in camp by September, 1862. He served with the 123rd Regiment throughout the remainder of the war. All of Will Fisher's letters are archived at www.willfisher.org.

Will Fisher's letters were handed down to the artist from her great-great-grandfather through her mother, Judith Fuller Smith. Judith assisted her father, Pierpont Fuller in the tedious job to transcribe the original handwritten letters. Scanned images of the letters are seen on the right side of all the digital prints in the sets, with the transcribed text on the left.

Here, to the right of this text, is a photo of William Garret Fisher, probably taken around the time that he dropped out of school to volunteer, with his mother's permission, to fight for what he thought would be a short stint, but became a 5 year saga, as detailed in his letters home. Below the photo are two postcards that Will carried with him.

So, it is clear that these primary source documents of Will's eye-witness accounts of some of the most traumatic episodes in the history of the United States speak directly to the artist personally. It is her aim, and perhaps her ancestral responsibility, to re-construct and illustrate the troubled legacy of this epigenetic heritage.

Silkscreens printed by Dana Smith
Digital prints printed by Dana Smith, Dana Dana Dana Limited Editions.





1862
The 123rd New York Volunteers

Never Smelt Anything So Bad In My Life

by Dana Smith
2023

Text from Will Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War:

Will Fisher to his mother
Headquarters 123rd Regt. Co. I, NYSV, Frederick City, Maryland
October 1, 1862

Dear Mother,

I will again inform you of our whereabouts. Well this is Wednesday morning about 9 o'clock. Monday morning I wrote you a note that we were packing to move. Well, we waited till about 4 PM when we started for the city (Washington) along with the whole division to take the cars. We had to leave our knapsacks, all we could take was our overcoats & blankets & our shelter tents which is two square pieces of canvas about 2 yards square with buttons on it & each man takes one piece & then 2 men button their pieces together & put them on a crotch & that is all the tents we have. When we see our knapsacks again I don't know, but I hope its soon, for we haven't a thing but what I told.

I had to buy this paper of a store here in the city. Well, we got to Wash. about dark & expected to take the cars right off, but we laid down on the side walk till about 2 o'clock when we went aboard of the cars which were open platform cars. Here we waited till about 9 o'clock the next morning when we got underway for this place. We came most up to Baltimore & then took another road and came here. We got in here about dark, riding all day. When we got here the regt. went out into a field & camped. I was detailed to guard the baggage as corporal of the guard. Jimmy Sherman was one of the guards from our camp.

We had a very easy time of it & this morning. Jim & I have been looking around. This is a pretty city. It is cram full of wounded & sick Rebels. We seen one man having his leg cut off. About a mile out of here is where Burnside first attacked the Rebels. When we came by it on the cars last night I never smelt any thing so bad in my life. Some of the Rebels heads and arms were out of the ground. If you remember the Rebels had this city 27 days, there was fighting on this street where I write. It is 8 miles to where the battle of South Mountain was fought & 26 miles to Harpers Ferry. Where we will go I don't know, but you may write & direct to 123rd Regt. NYSV Co. I, Washington, D.C.

You will have to take lead pencil in such circumstances as these. I can't write to any but you & John till we have more time. Much love to you, & Aunt Sarah, & all the friends far & near.

Ever your own boy,

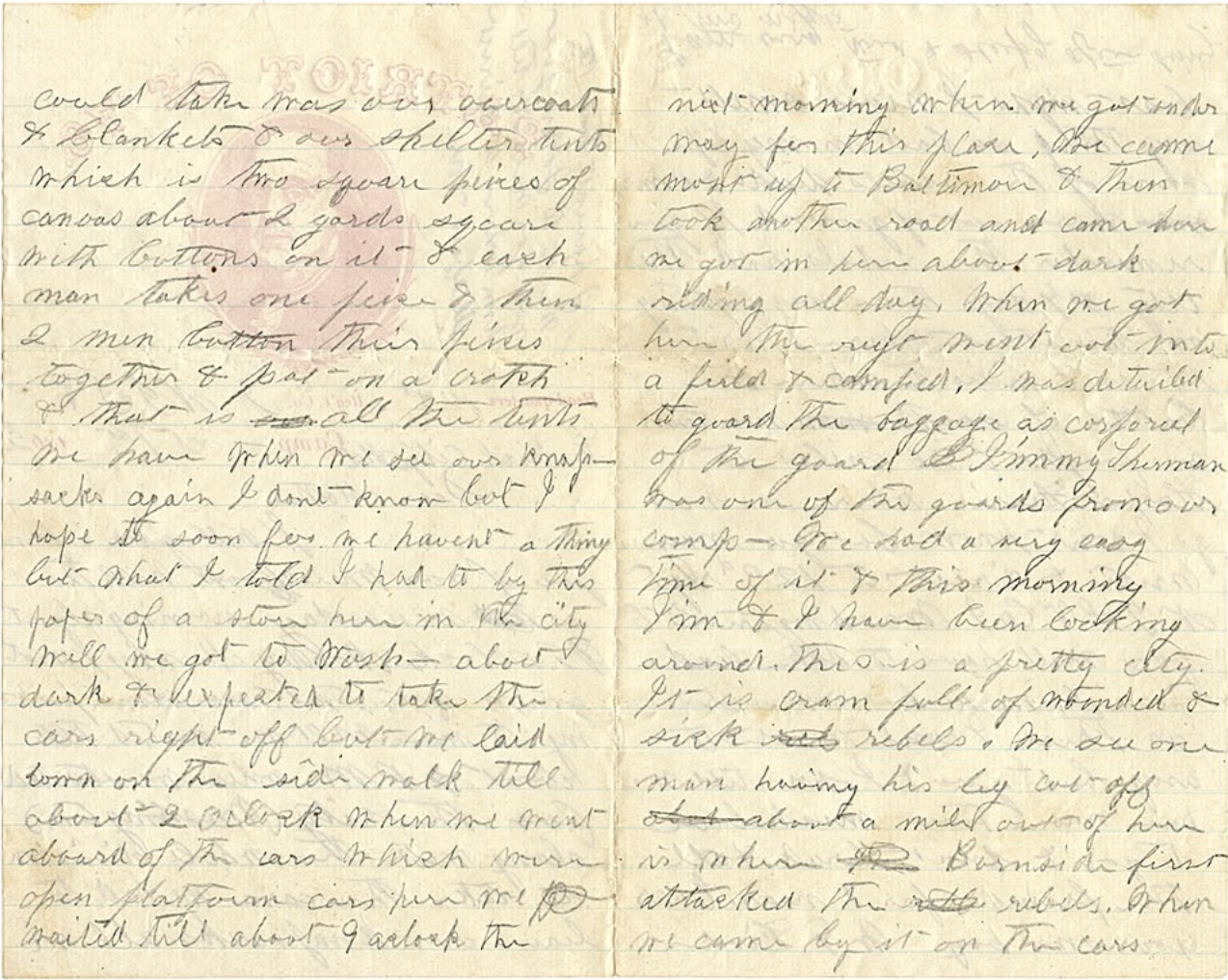
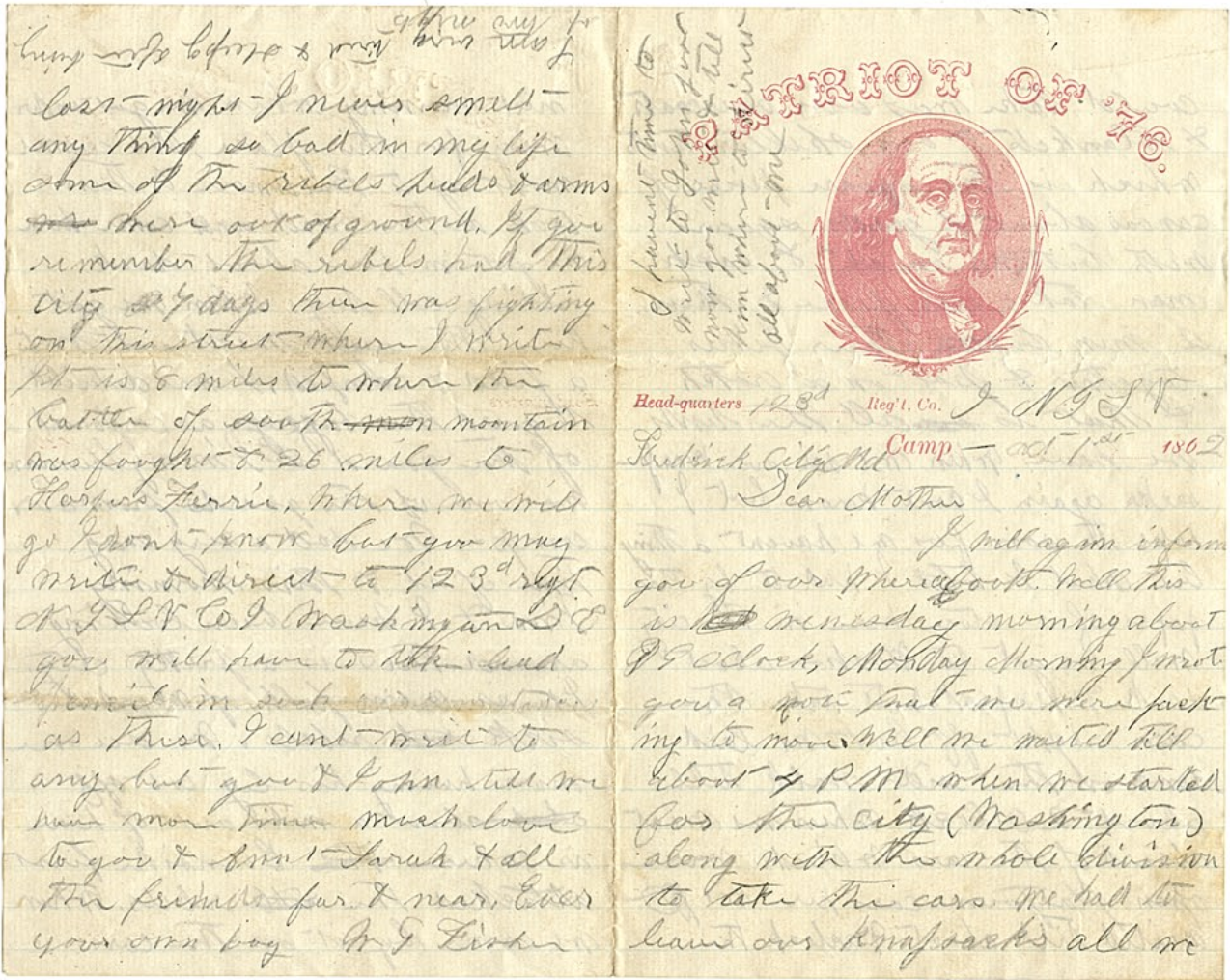
W. G. Fisher

P.S. I am very tired & sleepy after being up two nights.

Photo credit: Alexander Gardner, *View on battlefield of Antietam, four dead Confederate soldiers from General William Starke's Louisiana infantry along the Hagerstown Pike*. Antietam Maryland, 1862.
Library of Congress item 2014646936

Photo credit for title page: photographer unknown, *Pickets cooking their rations*. Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 9, 1862.

Library of Congress item 2018671418





I besides I saw times that I would
give anything for some thing to eat -
I tell you when a man is sick he
cannot leave our government - feed any
more than nothing. I don't know
as we are ever going to get paid
off. I am sure if this government
can't pay its soldiers better I feel
than better I hope it will get
licked like dam hill.

1862

The 123rd New York Volunteers

I Would Give Anything For Something To Eat

by Dana Smith
2023

Text from Will Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War.

Will Fisher to his mother
Camp of the 123rd Regt. NYSV, Loudoun Valley, Virginia
November 25, 1862

Dear Mother,

I will now answer your welcome letter of the 19th & also one of the 14th inst.

I was almost scared to death to read the reports of my health in old C. What should start all of these reports I don't know. But I am sure my health is not near so bad as represented for this morning I just came off of guard for 24 hours & am on duty all the time. My feet are entirely well & I eat about 2 rations a day, never was any better or more contented in my life. I have 2 pair of drawers, 3 woolen shirts & 3 cotton ones. I hope this will ease all of your fears for my health. I guess I was a little to blame for waiting so long without writing. I will try & do better in the future.

For 2 or 3 days the boxes of provisions & boots & gloves from the North has been very great owing to the fact that we are expecting to winter here. We are already building log shanties for winter. Now the most I am in need of is a pair of gloves. Now, Ab has just sent for a pair of boots & will have a box sent, & says you can put in a pair of gloves just as well as not. We can't get them here because we haven't the money to buy them with. I have not got a red cent nor Ab hasn't, nor Jim Sherman, & if we go into winter quarters we have have got to buy stoves. I tell you, a 2.00 bill would look like everything just now. Ab has sent for some. When I was sick I had to use my money for something to eat & besides I saw times that I would give anything for something to eat. I tell you when a man is sick he cannot live on government feed any more than nothing. I don't know as we are ever going to get paid off. One thing, if this government can't pay its soldiers better & feed them better I hope it will get licked like Sam Hill. If you see Mr. Shiland you can see if you will have time to knit me a pair. If not, buy a pair & have them charged. Do just as you please about it.

Tell Aunt S. that sweet oil & alcohol cured my rheumatism. She had better try it. It cures everybody here.

I will wait till mail time before I close & see if I can think of anything else to write. I guess Uncle Nat is never going to write.

I don't know as there is anything else to write this time. I should like the gloves & the other if you can. Don't distress yourself. I will close with love to you & all the rest,

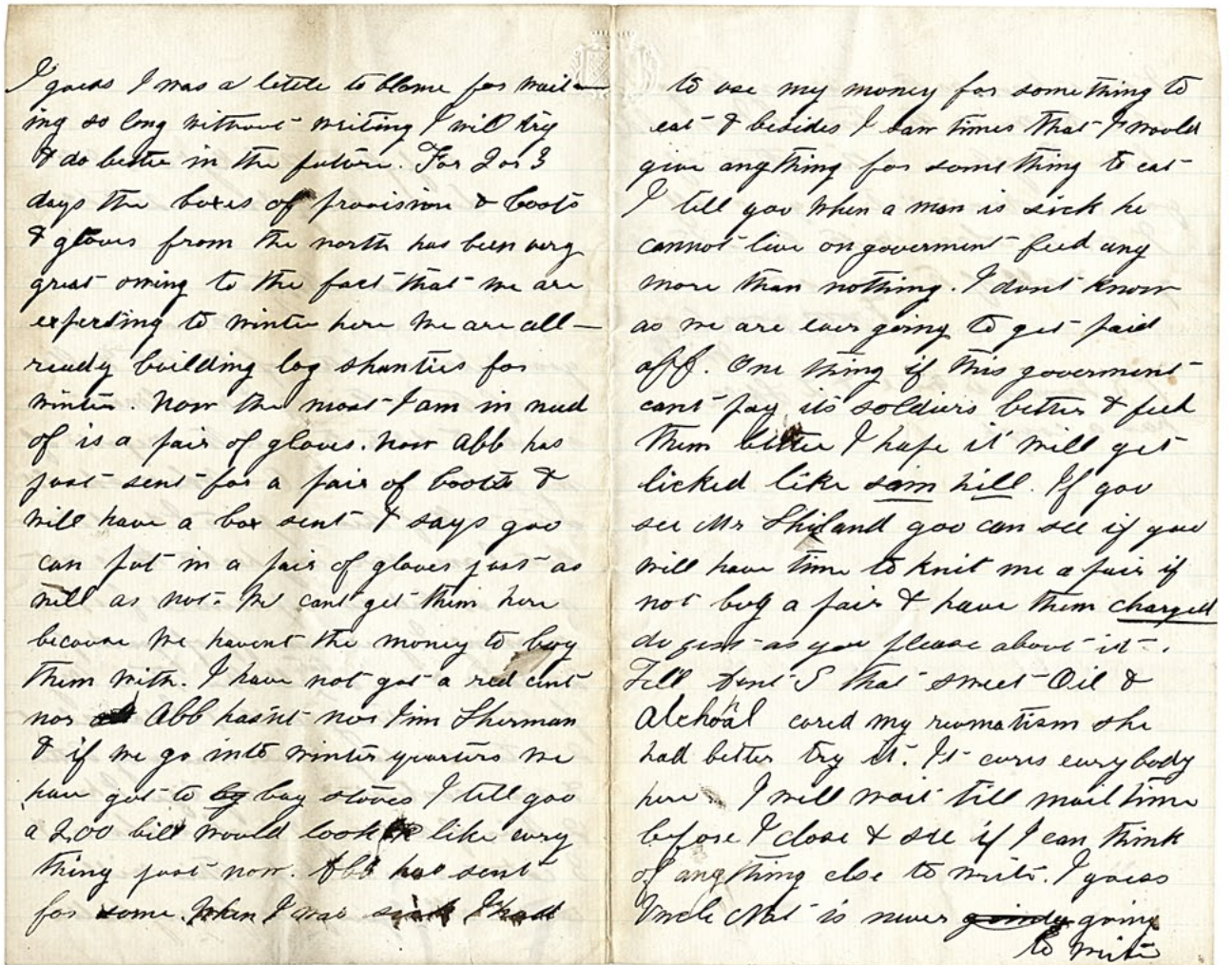
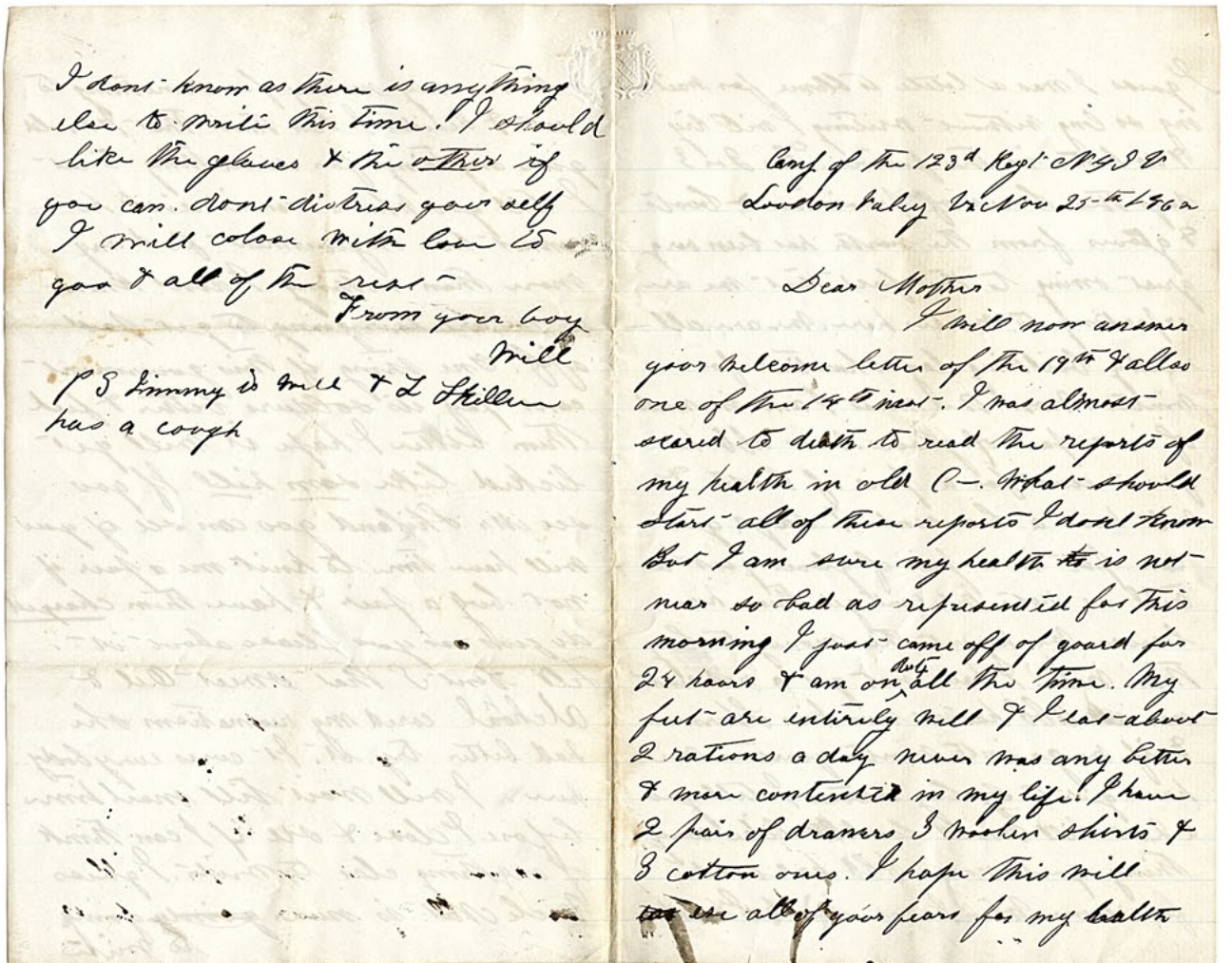
From your boy,

Will

P.S. Jimmy is well & L. Skellie has a cough.

Photo credit: Timothy O'Sullivan, *Commissary tent at headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, near Fairfax Court House, Virginia, June*. Fairfax, Virginia, 1863.

Library of Congress item 2012650157



A sepia-toned photograph of a muddy battlefield. In the foreground, a horse is partially visible, its legs and lower body in the mud. Several soldiers are seen in the background, some standing and others crouching or lying down. The ground is extremely muddy and rutted with tracks. The overall scene depicts the aftermath of a battle or a difficult march.

The horses & mules show the effects of the march quite plain yet these marches are hard on the poor beasts, when we march the march before the last three days there was lots of the poor mules sank down into the mud & died of exhaustion. It looks hard but there is no extra suffering in times of war I often think that if there is any one connected in any way with this war who is trying to prolong it for any profit to himself he will have about as much to answer for at the judgement day as any other class of sinners in the world.

1862

The 123rd New York Volunteers

The Poor Mules Sank Down Into the Mud and Died of Exhaustion

by Dana Smith
2023

Text from Will Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War:

Will Fisher to his mother
Fairfax Station, Virginia
December 27, 1862 & January 1, 1863

My own Dear Mother,

As I have a little leisure to night I will improve it in writing to you. I will commence one & send it when completed. I wrote one & sent it soon after the halt in our march, which you have probably received before this time.

We have all got rested now & feel like colts again. The horses & mules show the effects of the march quite plain yet. Those marches are hard on the poor beasts. When we was on the march before the last three days there was lots of the poor mules sank down into the mud & died of exhaustion. It looks hard but there is no end to the suffering in times of war. I often think that if there is anyone connected in any way with this war who is trying to prolong it for any profit to himself he will have about as much to answer for at the judgement day as any other class of sinners in the world.

We all expected to spend Christmas in Richmond, but we got disappointed this time, & still live in hopes that the war will be over some day or other. I have just been out to roll call & while in line we received marching orders again so I will close for tonight & if I have any time in the morning I will give you any new particulars I may learn.

Good night, Will

Jan. 1st, 1863

Well, Mother, I will commence by wishing you & Aunt Sarah a happy New Year & hope you had a merry Christmas. The other night I closed my letter rather abruptly with a march in view in the morning, which program was carried out, for early in the morning of the 28th we had to roll up our blankets & start, which is no very light load to carry, vis: 3 loaves of bread, 3 lb of pork, & coffee & sugar. We did not take our knapsacks, left them in camp under guard. Those unwell were also left. Lemuel did not feel very well & did not go.

Well, we started & marched down the same old road as far as the Occoquan River. This was Sabbath & our reasons for going were that the Rebels had attacked an Ohio brigade the day before & took some of them prisoners & killed a few & we went down to try to trap them, but we didn't make it out, for they had left before we got there. We got there about noon & went out skirmishing a few miles but did not find anything of them. We found 3 dead bodies in the woods which were killed in the battle. The Rebels had stripped them entirely. We then went back & laid by the river all night till next day in the afternoon when we started & marched back to camp & this is all there was of the march. During our march I have had to throw away some of my things. I have almost forgotten what I did have when I started, but I can tell you what I have got now. I have just two shirts, one woolen one & a cotton one. I have my needle book & bible, 2 handkerchiefs, (white ones). I wear my 2 shirts both at once till they need washing & then wear my blouse coat till I get them washed.

I have just received a letter from you & John giving me quite a blowing for not writing, but you cannot have received my letter which I wrote since we arrived here if you have lost, a good long letter with a full description of our 7 days march. You say my last letter was dated Nov. 25th. That was the letter I wrote asking for money & waited for an answer till the 11th of Dec. when we started on the march of 7 days & as soon as we halted, I wrote again saying that Jimmy Sherman was taken prisoner. But I have since learned that it is not true, he is at the convalescent camp at Alexandria. I guess we have now got into a place where we will stay till we are mustered out of service which will happen about the first of May. I want you to answer this immediately & let me know whether you have received my letter which was dated between the 15th and 20th of Dec. I was glad to hear of Cristopher Greene's being discharged for he looked bad when I saw him last.

I will admit that I have not written so often as I might, but the truth is I do not feel much like writing after marching all day or doing any other duty, but I will try & write while we stay here as often as once a week, & you answer as often as you can. If you have not got my last letter just let me know & I will describe it over again or else get Uncle Nat's folks letter & read that. Yesterday, we got the first express matter since we left Loudoun Valley. There was lots of it.

I think Jim will be with us again soon. If you want to send a box of anything, it will be a good time now. If you send one you had not better send any chickens, but, if you want to, you may send some kind of a meat pot pie, mince pie, fried cakes, ginger cake, a little sausage & not any butter for me. If any folks is a mind to, they can put in some walnuts, apples, & the like. I would also like a bed tick, any old one will do to sleep on while we stay here.

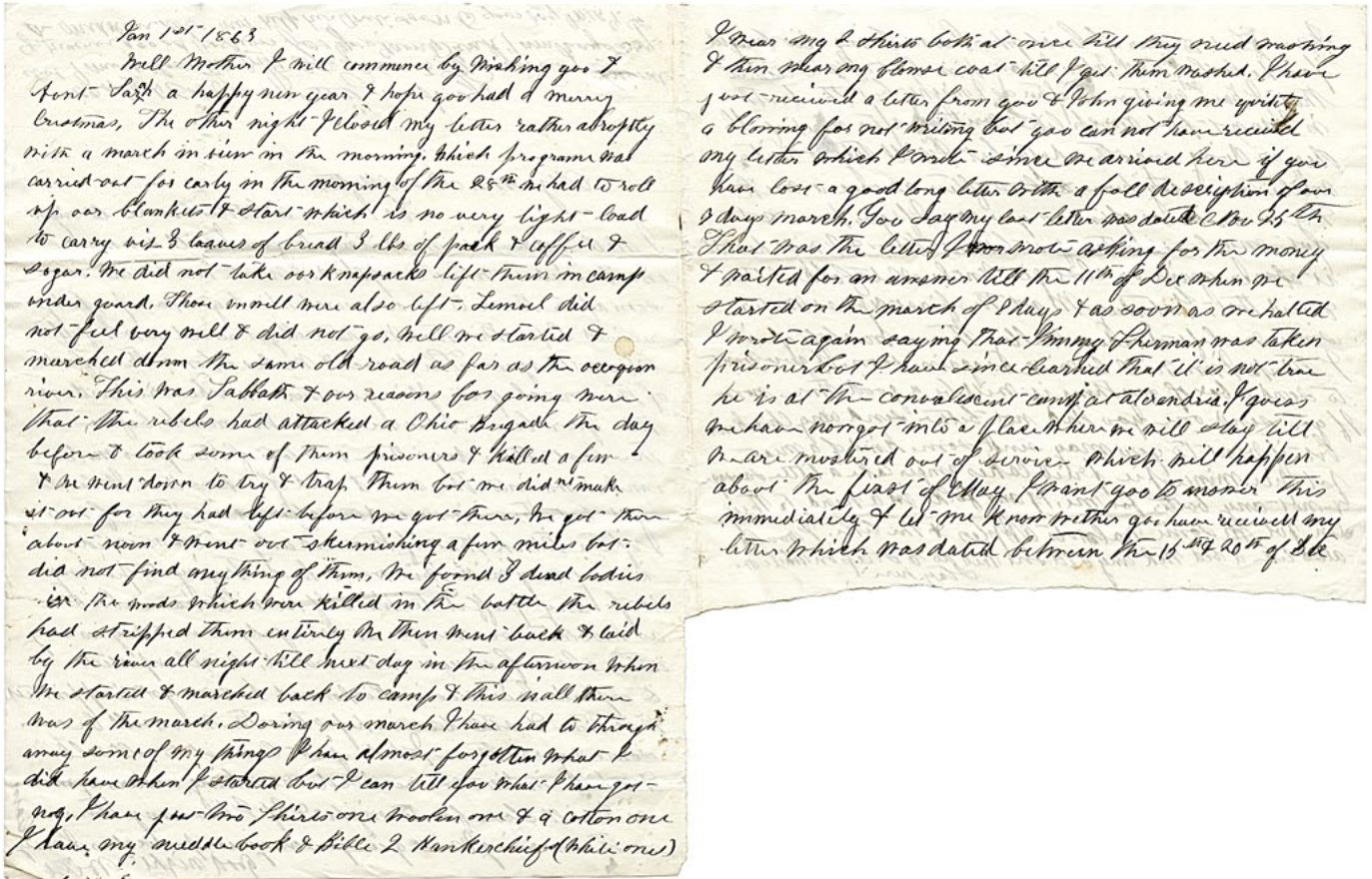
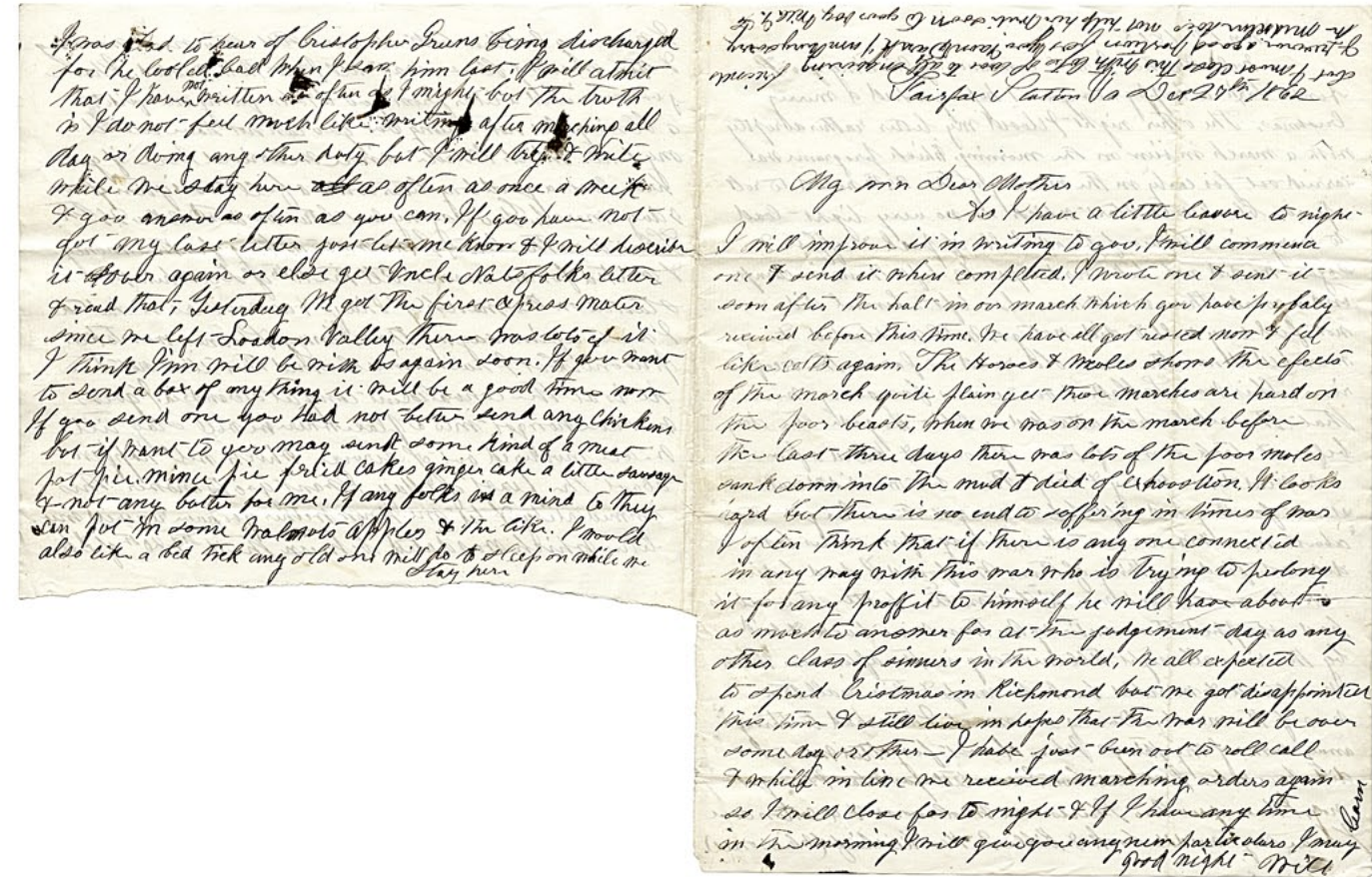
But I must close this with lots of love to all inquiring friends & reserve a good portion for you and Aunt Sarah. I am very sorry the medicine does not help her.

Write soon to your boy,

Will G. F.

Photo credit: unknown, *A shattered caisson, Fredericksburg, Va.* Fredericksburg, Virginia, photographed between 1861 and 1865.

Library of Congress item 2013649038



on me all day & about dark we
found him standing at the
middle of the tent with his hat
off & would not speak a word to
any one, we called on the Dr
at once & he pronounced him drung-
ed, we had to take him down by force
& pour the medicine down him

1862

The 123rd New York Volunteers

He Began to Talk and Chatter

by Dana Smith
2023

Text from Will Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War:

Will Fisher to his mother
Fairfax Station, Virginia
January 12, 1863

Dear Mother,

Good morning again today. I had a little diarrhea this morning so I did not get out to drill & will take the time to write you. At the penning of my last, we were in picket down to Bull Run, but we have since been relieved & marched into camp yesterday. It rained all the night before & made it very muddy & bad walking & we raced it all the time on double quick Monday evening. I did not write much this morning so I will write tonight.

I am sitting up with a fellow by the name of Cobb from Easton. He was unwell all day & about dark we found him standing up in the middle of the tent with his hat off & would not speak a word to anyone. He called on the Dr. at once & he pronounced him deranged. We had to take him down by force & pour the medicine down him. About this time he began to talk & chatter, but after awhile we got him to sleep & now he is easy.

The sick boys have at last got here. They came in today about noon on the cars with Capt. Hall who went after them. Jimmy & Legas Skellie have recovered & look well. Jimmy has not heard from his mother since we left the Ferry. George Wells told him that his mother had fell down stairs & hurt her. Is it so or not? He is going to write home today so he will hear soon.

Everybody thinks that we are going to stay here a spell now, & I guess you had better have Mr. Culver make me another pair of boots & start your things. My other boots were worn out marching before we got half of the 7 days march in, & I threwed them away. Now I am wearing government shoes, but they won't answer when the wet season comes on, & don't think that 4 or 5 dollars is as much of an object as my health. Tell Fort to put in some popcorn in the ear into my box & some walnuts. One of my tent mates had a little tea pot full of tea come in a box & it was a nice thing to have a drawing of tea. I would like to have you put in a pepper box full of pepper, we have plenty of salt but no pepper & I would like to have a few bunches of matches. If Uncle Nat's folks have lots of honey to spare, just give them an invite to put in a little & anything you think I would like. My boots I want like the other ones, a trifle larger, & be sure & have them sewed heavy calf. I have often thought of things that I would like to have but I can never think of it when I want to write.

Almost every man in the army that I see are getting tired & sick of jamming around without any signs of the war ending. They all seem to have seen enough of soldiering, but as for me, I ain't none sick of it yet. To be sure, I would like to see the war closed, but I live in hopes for I believe that the war will be brought to a close before the fourth of July next, & myself home in Cambridge. I am surprised to see so much homesickness amongst the soldiers. But it is a lamentable fact (& one which I believe) that there is hardly a man in the army but what loses all his patriotism that he ever had, & it is because there is so much rascality & roguery and deviltry & some one must be accountable for it.

I think more & more of Col. McDougall every day. He is the best officer in the regt. except A. Shiland. He is an honest kind hearted man & will do anything for his men & I hope he will be rewarded for it some time. He does not know so much about military matters as some, but he keeps learning. As for our surgeons, I will not say that I ever saw them drunk, but they do misuse their men most shamefully, they are hard hearted. Most everybody says that they have seen them drunk, but you must remember that Dr. Kennedy is not with us so don't let the blame run on him. He is on detached service at Harpers Ferry. I don't know as you are acquainted with the way they do business in the army. You see, in the morning, right after roll call, they have the surgeons call & then the orderlies of the men who are sick to the Dr.'s tent & they examine them & prescribe medicine for them, & those they think are sick enough, they excuse from all duty for that day, but if they don't see fit to excuse you, let you be ever so sick, you must work or be punished. You take the prescription & go to the hospital store tent & get the medicine. Some mornings there will be perhaps 50 patients & they have to stand out in the cold about 5 o'clock in the morning till their turn comes, often times 3 or 4 hours. And now there is another thing, all the men in the regt. who do not attend surgeon's call or are not excused by the Dr. are reported for duty. Say, for instance, there is 700 men reported for duty in the regt. & we are called out on drill, & the Capt. should excuse some, the general would see how many men we had, & if it didn't agree with the number the surgeon's reported, he would raise a row, because there is no one got the right but the surgeons.

You wished to know whose brigade we were in. I think I told you in one of my letters, if not excuse my negligence. Well, in the first place, remember we are in the 12th Army Corps commanded by Gen. Slocum (not Perry Slocum) & in the 1st Division of the Corps. commanded by Gen. Williams, & in the 2nd Brigade of that division com'd by General Thos. L. Kane, a brother of the Kane renowned for exploring the arctic regions. You rather thought in your letter I did not write often enough, but I deem it a pleasure as well as a duty to write & I don't think you ever found any fault when I was in pack camp where I could write. You spoke of writing on the bottom of my plate when on the march, but I will venture to say there was not a letter written on the march in the whole brigade, for we were on the road before day light & halted after dark, & had no candles to see by. I think you will learn by experience, if we stay here this winter, that I write as often as the rest of the folks. You said you were sorry I did not send for my gloves to come in Lemuel's box, but I did not know that he was going to have a box till I see the box in his tent. He don't say any more to me or Jim about such thing than if we wasn't his cousins. I am sorry to say that Lem isn't liked very well. Even Inman Thomas & Peter Darrow don't like him so well as they used to. It is because he has such a disagreeable way of ordering folks around rather arbitrary, & does just as he wishes with this tent mates things, & don't like to them do so with his. Now, I don't notice it, but strangers do, & form a dislike on this account. I have not received my gloves yet although there is a good many boxes coming in. I will speak to Nat Warner about the next time I see him. I would like to have been home John was there. I guess he didn't have any money was the reason he did not to to Philadelphia.

I do not see how so many reports get home about our going on into some great battle or any such thing. You must not lay awake every stormy night all winter thinking about me for I have not suffered any this far for want of clothing, nor you need not fear about my reading your letters if the paper is small. I think we will be paid soon, within a week. John Marshall was court-martialed the other day & one month's pay taken from him. It was for trying to shirk out on drill. He hid till they got out on drill. He hates to do duty awfully. We draw first rate rations now & have for a long time, & one thing, we draw our full rations. Jimmy will want to have his things & mine sent together. He is going to have some boots too & Aunt Rebeckah will probably put in some things to him. But be sure & have my things marked. One thing I like to forgot & would like to have you put in an old bed tick & then I can fill it with straw. If you have it, you might put in 3 or 4 pound of buckwheat flour. Put stuff in like fried cakes but not a chicken for I don't like um. Mr. Gordon give them a pretty severe reprimanding last Sabbath for allowing themselves to become so demoralized. They are getting rather tough. Everybody in this regt. fairly loves Mr. Gordon.

But I must close this long letter. Jim & Lem send lots of love to you & Aunt Sarah.

Write soon to your boy,
William Garret Fisher

Photo credit: Alexander Gardner, *Ditch on right wing, where a large number of rebels were killed at the Battle of Antietam*. Antietam, Maryland, 1862. Library of Congress item 2014646926

One of my tent mates had a letter
last night full of tea come in a box
& it is a nice thing to have a drawing
of tea. I would like to have you
put in a pepper box full of pepper
we have plenty of salt but no pepper
pepper I would like to have a few
bunches of matches. If Uncle Nat's
folks have lots of honey to spare
just give them an invite to put in
a little & any thing you think I would
like my boots I want like the other ones,
a trifle larger & be sure I have
them sewed heavy calf. I have often
thought of things that I would like
to have but I cannot can think of it
when I want to write. Almost every
man in the army that I see
are getting tired & sick of jamming
around without any signs of the war ending

2nd Regt
Fairfax Station Va Jan 12 1863
Dear Mother
Good morning again
today. I had a little diarrhea this
morning so I did not go out to
drill & will take the time to write
you. At the penning of my last
we were in picket down to Bull
Run but we have since been relieved
& marched into camp yesterday.
It rained all night before & made
it very muddy & bad walking & we
raced it all the time on double
quick Monday evening.
I did not write much this morning
so I will write tonight. I am sitting
up with a fellow by the name of
Cobb from Easton. He was

2. Continued from last sheet
They all seem to have seen enough of soldiering, but as for me I live in hopes for I believe that the war will be brought to a close before the fourth of July next & myself home in Cambridge. I am surprised to see so much homesickness amongst the soldiers. But it is a lamentable fact (& one which I believe) that there is hardly a man in the army but what loses all his patriotism that he ever had & it is because there is so much rascality & roguery & deviltry & some one must be accountable for it. I think more & more of Col. McDougall every day he is the best officer in the regiment - A. Shiland. He is an honest kind hearted man & will do anything for his men & I hope he will be rewarded for it some time. He does not know so much about military matters as some, but he keeps learning. As for our Surgeons I will not say that I ever saw them drunk, but they do misuse their men most shamefully they are hard hearted. Most everybody says that they have seen them drunk, but you must remember that Dr. Kennedy is not with us so don't let the blame run on him. He is on detached service at Harpers Ferry. I don't know as you are acquainted with the way they do business in the army. You see, in the morning, right after roll call, they have the surgeons call & then the orderlies of the men who are sick to the Dr's tent & they examine them & prescribe medicine for them & those they think are sick enough they excuse from all duty for that day but if they don't see fit to excuse you let you be ever so sick you must work or be punished. You take the prescription & go to the hospital store tent & get the medicine. Some mornings there will be perhaps 50 patients & they have to stand out in the cold about 5 o'clock in the morning till their turn comes often times 3 or 4 hours. And now there is another thing all the men in the regt who do not attend surgeon's call or are not excused by the Dr. are reported for duty say for instance there is 700 men reported for duty in the Regt & we are called out on drill & the Capt. should excuse some the General would see how many men we had & if it didn't agree with the number the surgeons reported he would raise a row because there is no one got the right but the surgeons. You wished to know where 2nd Regt 123rd NY Vol 1st Div 12th Army Corps

3. Continued from last sheet
We are in, I think I told you in one of my letters if not excuse my negligence. Well, in the first place, remember we are in the 12th Army Corps commanded by Gen. Slocum (not Perry Slocum) & in the 1st Division of that Corps commanded by Gen. Williams & in the 2nd Brigade of that division com'd by Genl Thos. L. Kane a brother of the Kane renowned for exploring the arctic regions. You rather thought in your letter I did not write often enough, but I deem it a pleasure as well as a duty to write & I don't think you ever found any fault when I was in camp where I could write. You spoke of writing on the bottom of my plate when on the march, but I will venture to say there was not a letter written on the march in the whole brigade, for we were on the road before day light & halted after dark, & had no candles to see by. I think you will learn by experience if we stay here this winter that I write as often as the rest of the folks. You said you were sorry I did not send for my gloves to come in Lemuel's box but I did not know that he was going to have a box till I see the box in his tent. He don't say any more to me or Jim about such thing than if we wasn't his cousins. I am sorry to say that Lem isn't liked very well. Even Inman Thomas & Peter Darrow don't like him so well as they used to. It is because he has such a disagreeable way of ordering folks around rather arbitrary & does just as he wishes with his tent mates things & doesn't like to them do so with his own. I don't notice it but strangers do, & form a dislike on this account. I have not received my gloves yet although there is a good many boxes coming in. I will speak to Nat Warner about the next time I see him. I would like to have been home John was there. I guess he didn't have any money was the reason he did not to to Philadelphia.

unwell all day & about dark we found him standing up in the middle of the tent with his hat off & would not speak a word to anyone. He called on the Dr. at once & he pronounced him deranged. We had to take him down by force & pour the medicine down him. About this time he began to talk & chatter, but after awhile we got him to sleep & now he is easy. The sick boys have at last got here. They came in today about noon on the cars with Capt. Hall who went after them. Jimmy & Legas Skellie have recovered & look well. Jimmy has not heard from his mother since we left the Ferry. George Wells told him that his mother had fell down stairs & hurt her. Is it so or not? He is going to write home today so he will hear soon. Everybody thinks that we are going to stay here a spell now, & I guess you had better have Mr. Culver make me another pair of boots & start your things. My other boots were worn out marching before we got half of the 7 days march in, & I threwed them away. Now I am wearing government shoes, but they won't answer when the wet season comes on, & don't think that 4 or 5 dollars is as much of an object as my health. Tell Fort to put in some popcorn in the ear into my box & some walnuts. One of my tent mates had a little tea pot full of tea come in a box & it was a nice thing to have a drawing of tea. I would like to have you put in a pepper box full of pepper, we have plenty of salt but no pepper & I would like to have a few bunches of matches. If Uncle Nat's folks have lots of honey to spare, just give them an invite to put in a little & anything you think I would like. My boots I want like the other ones, a trifle larger, & be sure & have them sewed heavy calf. I have often thought of things that I would like to have but I can never think of it when I want to write.

I don't know as you are acquainted with the way they do business in the army. You see, in the morning, right after roll call, they have the surgeons call & then the orderlies of the men who are sick to the Dr's tent & they examine them & prescribe medicine for them & those they think are sick enough they excuse from all duty for that day but if they don't see fit to excuse you let you be ever so sick you must work or be punished. You take the prescription & go to the hospital store tent & get the medicine. Some mornings there will be perhaps 50 patients & they have to stand out in the cold about 5 o'clock in the morning till their turn comes often times 3 or 4 hours. And now there is another thing all the men in the regt who do not attend surgeon's call or are not excused by the Dr. are reported for duty say for instance there is 700 men reported for duty in the Regt & we are called out on drill & the Capt. should excuse some the General would see how many men we had & if it didn't agree with the number the surgeons reported he would raise a row because there is no one got the right but the surgeons. You wished to know where 2nd Regt 123rd NY Vol 1st Div 12th Army Corps

received my gloves yet although there is a good many boxes coming in. I will speak to Nat Warner about the next time I see him. I would like to have been home John was there. I guess he didn't have any money was the reason he did not go to Philadelphia. He hates to do duty awfully. We draw first rate rations now & have for a long time & one thing we know our full rations. Jimmy will want to have his things & mine sent together. He is going to have some boots too & Aunt Rebeckah will probably put in some things to him but be sure & have my things marked one thing like to have you put in an old bed tick & then I can fill it with straw if you have it & you might put in 3 or 4 pound of buckwheat flour but stuff in the fried cakes but not a chicken for I don't like um. Mr. Gordon give them a pretty severe reprimanding last Sabbath for allowing themselves to become so demoralized they are getting rather tough. Everybody in this Regt fairly loves Mr. Gordon. But I must close this long letter. Jim & Lem send lots of love to you & Aunt Sarah. Write soon to your boy William Garret Fisher



The Division Com-
mander doesn't know anything
about this duty. There
are good ways which
I am glad to see. I under-
stand that old Mr. Sargent
to be from the net-
work of the who does the
work of the division.

1862
The 123rd New York Volunteers

Old Abe Intends To Be Present At the Next Battle

by Dana Smith
2023

Text from Will Fisher's letters home while fighting the American Civil War:

Will Fisher to his brother
Stafford
April 21, 1863

Dear Brother,

In looking over my letters I find one from you dated April 8th and for the life of me I can't tell whether I have answered it or not, so to be on the safe side I will write a little today even if I have spilt my ink.

The above is an apology for these lead pencil scribblings. I was extremely glad to hear of the improvement in your health for I was quite scared at your letter of the 4th of March. I hope it will continue good.

We are under marching orders for the past week, but still don't get a great ways so I think it must be some kind of a feint to cover movements of the cavalry which by the way have all gone somewhere. I suppose they are off to Kelly's Ford.

I am confident that old Hooker is going to give them particular fits this time. One thing is certain, I don't believe he is going to see all of his plans a month ahead in the Richmond Whig. Persons coming from Washington say they don't know nothing about the present movement even at that place.

The division commanders don't know nothing about their destiny. These are good signs which I am glad to see. I understand that old Abe intends to be present at the next battle & see who does the work & who don't. I hope so. The President, Sec. of War & Gen. Halleck all came down to the army day before yesterday.

I hope your situation as steward of the seminary will prove to be a good one. I suppose it does not interfere with your studies any.

I wrote to Aunt Taggart the other day, have not had any answer yet.

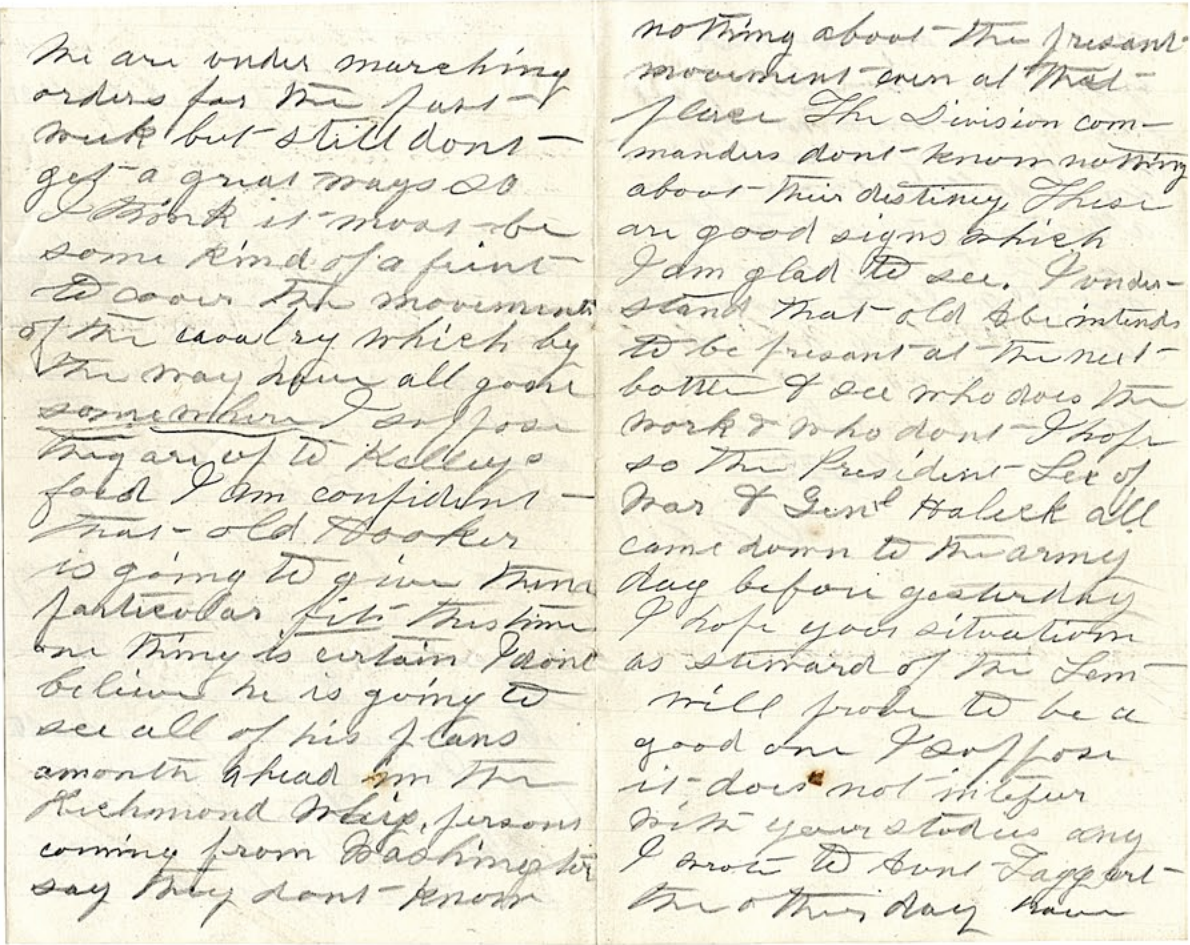
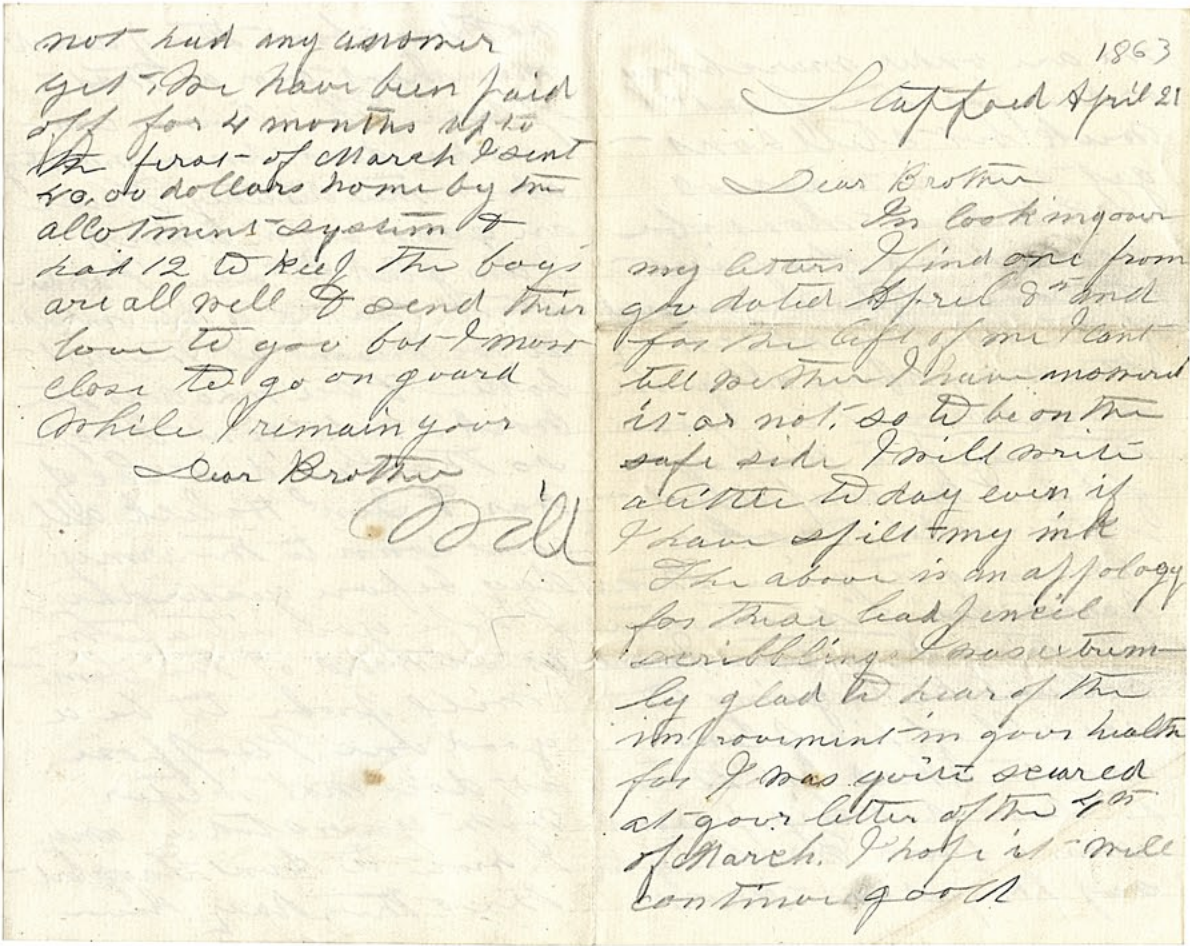
We have been paid off for 4 months up to the first of March. I sent 40 dollars home by the allotment system & had 12 to keep.

The boys are all well & send their love to you, but I must close to go on guard.

While I remain your dear brother,
Will

Photo credit: Alexander Gardner, *President Lincoln and Gen. George B. McClellan in the general's tent; another view.* Antietam Maryland, October 3, 1862.

Library of Congress item 2018666253



The American Civil War Quintet

1862

The 123d New York Volunteers

by Dana Smith

2023

San Francisco, California, USA, Earth

In September of 1862 Will Fisher re-enlisted and joined the 123rd New York Volunteers, Company I. His brigade started near Harpers Ferry and followed the Rebels around Virginia, marching day and night loaded with packs, guns and ammunition through deep mud and hostile “sesesh”. Thousands of soldiers moving through the countryside consumed all the supplies in sight. They raided and burned confederate sympathizer’s homes at night. As weather got worse the brigade camped at Stafford Courthouse waiting for packages of food and warm gloves from home, and caring for many suffering from dysentary and PTSD. Will writes, “The 123rd only mustered about 3 or 400 men for duty, & we started with 960. I think we have seen as much banging as any other regt. of our age.”

Details:

- A variable edition of 45 portfolios
- 6 silkscreen prints on Stonehenge paper
- 6 digital prints on Moab Entrada paper
- Housed in a digitally printed envelope
- 30x22 inches
- Price is US\$2800.00

This portfolio is in the following collections:

- School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts, Boston, MA
- Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
- Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Note: The silkscreens shown are just one example of the variable edition of 45. The colors are very different on every print. Also, it is impossible to reproduce the neon brightness of the inks online.

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