

The Union Now and Forever,
One and Inseparable.

1865

Dana Smith





Hears on a man. I am now
bare footed & have not had
at look in a month &
the skin is raw off my feet -
all over. Now when you see Sherman
report of the campaign you will
undoubtedly see that the reports
the army in excellent spirits
they are for the result of
the campaign no great

1865

1865

by Dana Smith

2025

San Francisco, California, USA, Earth

A variable edition of sets of 5 silkscreen prints on Stonehenge paper, 30x22 inches, accompanied by 5 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, the background 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 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. The third layer shows handwriting from the letters of William Garret Fisher, written while fighting the American Civil War, applied in semi-transparent metallic ink to float above the image, shimmering in and out with a 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.

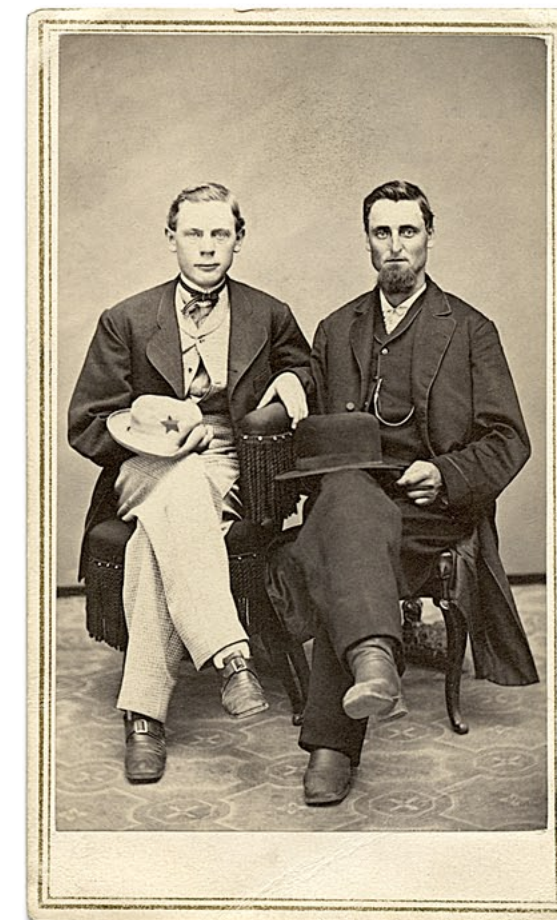
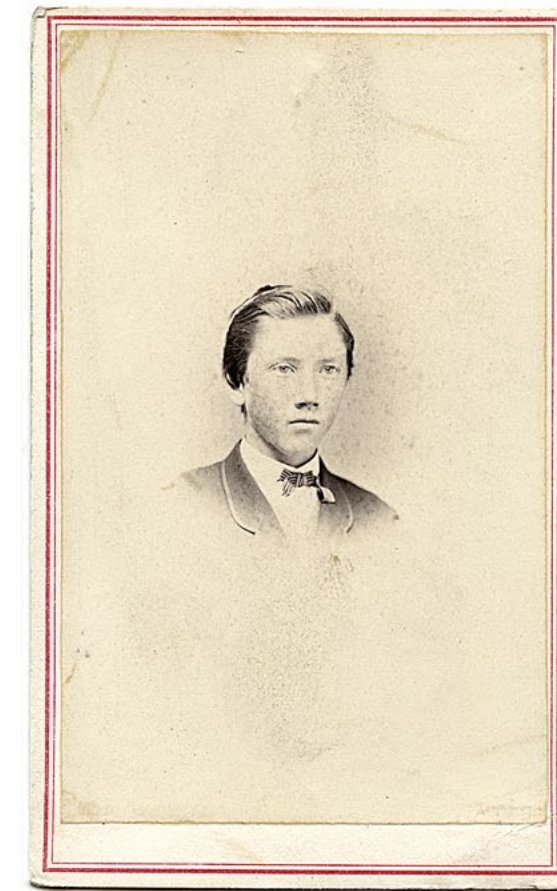
Will Fisher's letters were handed down to the artist from her great-great-grandfather through her mother, Judith Fuller Smith. Judith assisted her father, Pierpont Fuller in the tedious job of transcribing the original handwritten letters. Scanned images of the letters are seen on the right side of all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

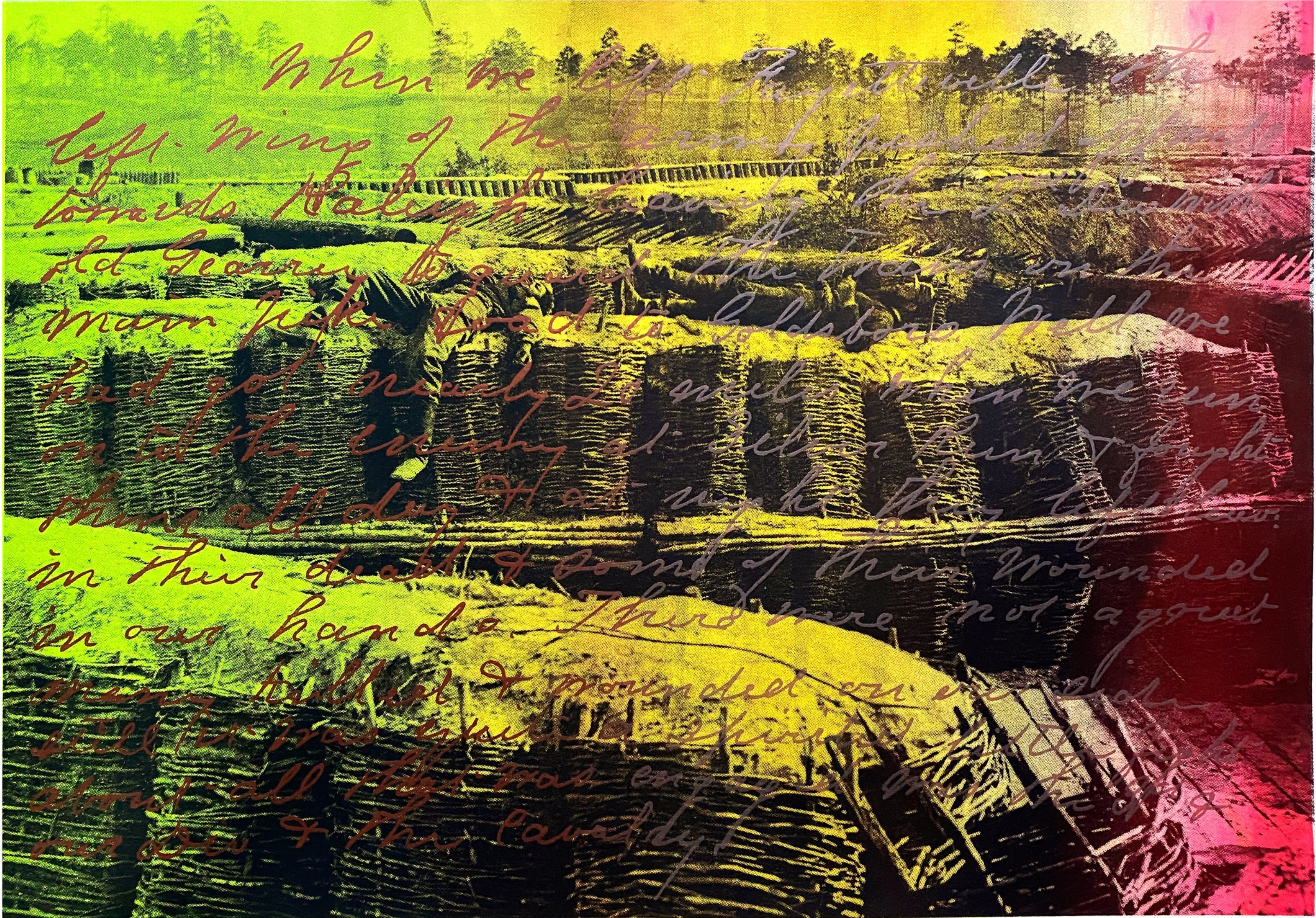
Here, to the right of this text, above, is a photograph of William Garret Fisher, probably taken around the time in 1861 that he dropped out of school to volunteer, with his mother's permission, to fight for what he thought would be a short stint, but became a 5 year saga, as detailed in his letters home. The photograph below is a photograph of Will Fisher after he returned home in 1865, holding his hat from his time at war, seated next to an unnamed friend.

So, it is clear that these primary source documents of Will Fisher'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.





When we left Fayetteville the
left wing of the army pushed off
towards Hagerstown leaving the 2nd Division
old Geary to guard the train on the
main Pike Road to Goldsboro. Well we
had got nearly 20 miles when we run
on to the enemy at Silver Run & fought
them all day & at night they left us
in their dead & some of their wounded
in our hands. There were not a great
many killed & wounded on either side
still it was quite a spirited fight
about all that was engaged in the night
our men & the Cavalry.

1865

Quite A Spirited Little Fight

by Dana Smith
2025

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

Will Fisher to his mother
Goldsboro, N.C., March 25, 1865

Dear Mother

Oh, how thankful I desire to feel this happy spring morning because I have got through with this long dangerous & tedious campaign all safe & sound. I wrote you a note when we were at Fayetteville on the Cape Fear River, which letter you have probably rec'd ere this time. Well since that time we have had two combats with the enemy & your boy is safe from the missiles of death which flew thick & fast. We marched safely into this place yesterday and were received as we passed into town by Gens. Sherman, Slocum, Shofield, Terry, Jeff C. Davis & "Old Pappy Williams" besides a great many Generals of less rank. Gen. Sherman who has looked so serious & thoughtful all through, was all smiles & as playful as you please.

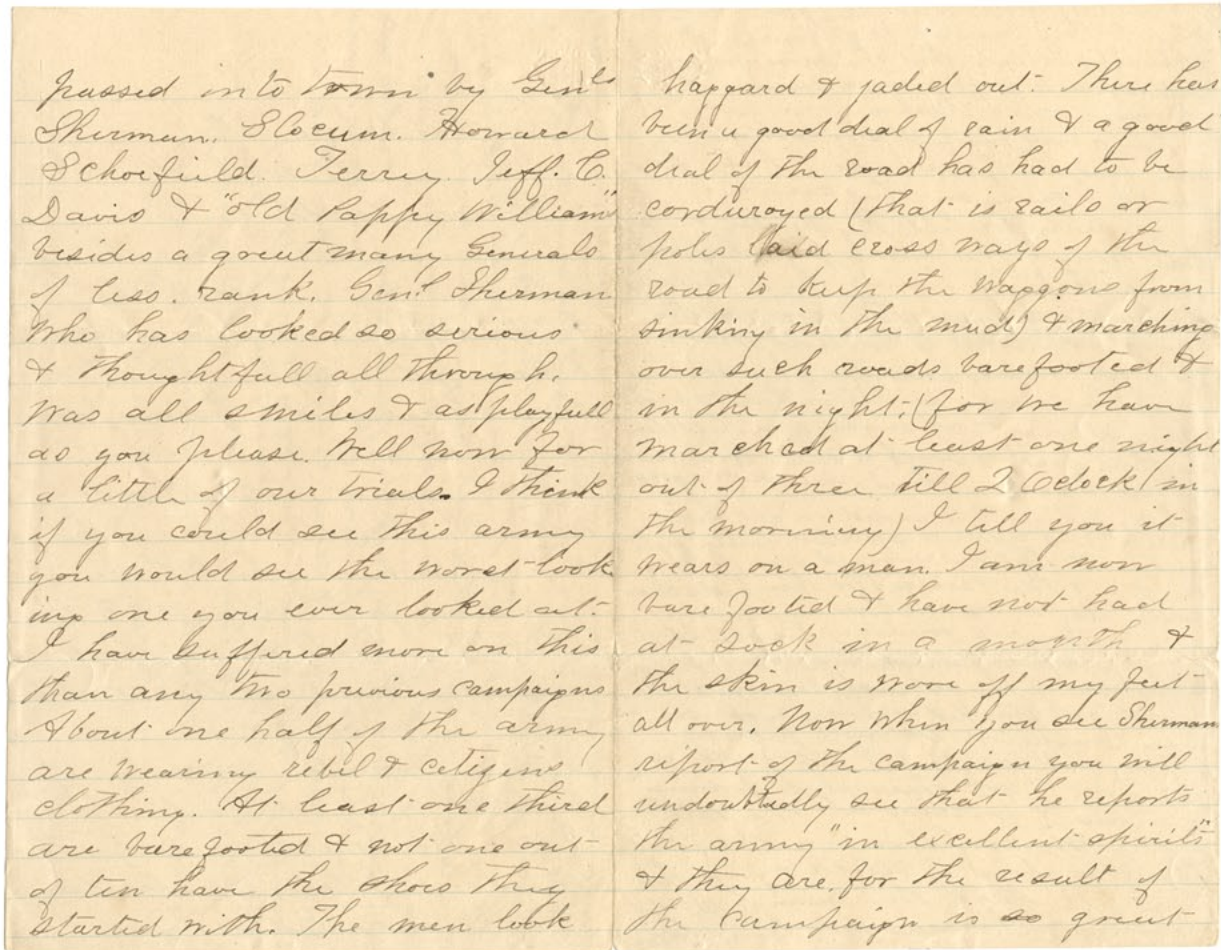
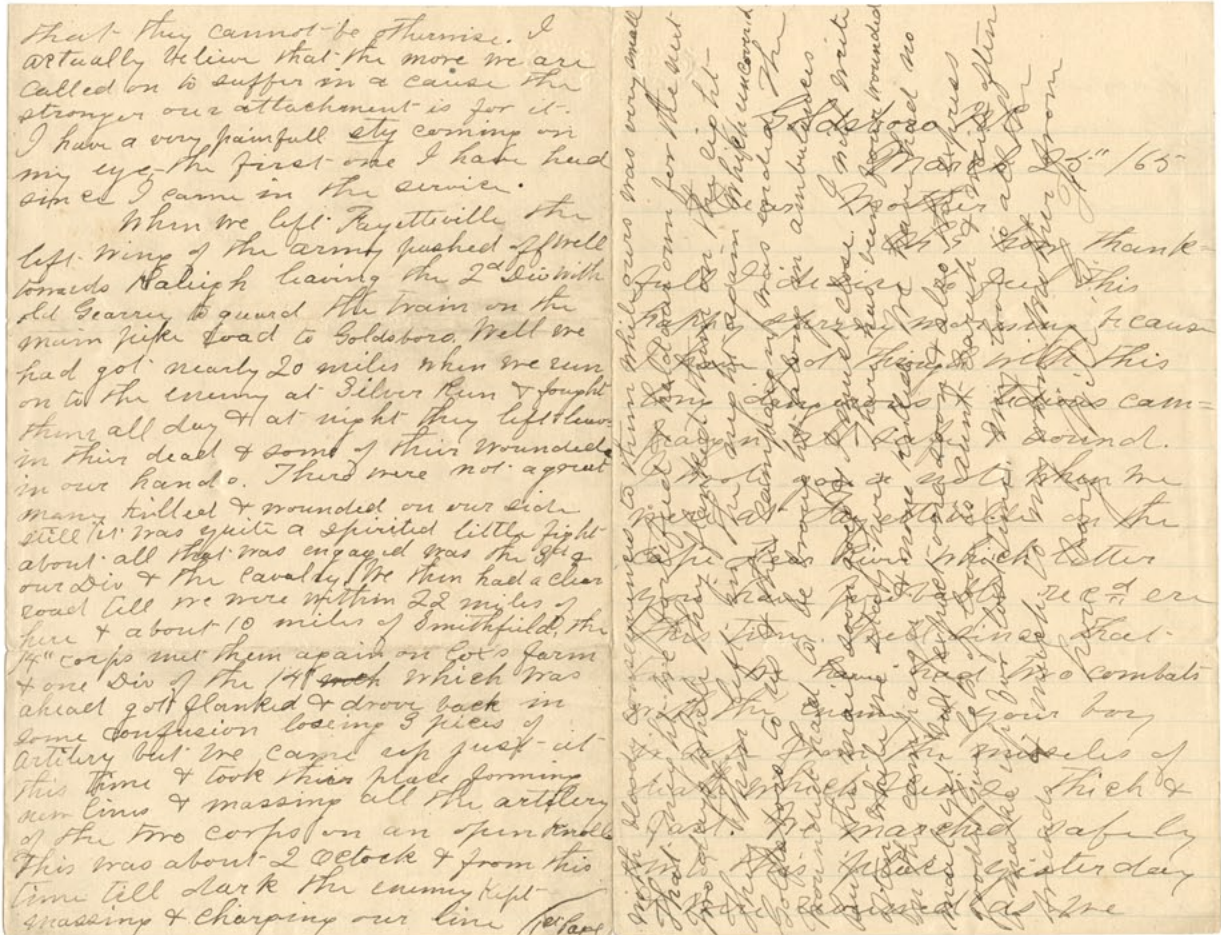
Well, now for a little of our trials. I think if you could see this army you would see the worst looking one you ever looked at. I have suffered more on this than any two previous campaigns. About one half of the army are wearing Rebel and citizens clothing. At least one third are barefooted & not one out of ten have the shoes they started with. The men look haggard & faded out. There have been a good deal of rain & a good deal of the road has had to be corduroyed (that is rails or poles laid across of the road to keep the wagons from sinking in the mud) & marching over such roads barefooted & in the night (for we have marched at least one night out of three till 2 o'clock in the morning), I tell you it wears on a man. I am now barefooted & have not had a sock in a month & the skin is wore off my feet all over. Now when you see Sherman's report of the campaign you will undoubtedly see that he reports the army "in excellent spirits" & they are, for the result of the campaign is so great that they cannot be otherwise. I actually believe, that the more we are called on to suffer in a cause, the stronger our attachment is for it. I have a very painful sty coming on my eye, the first one I have had since I came in the service.

When we left Fayetteville the left wing of the army pushed off well towards Raleigh, leaving the 2d Div. with old Geary to guard the train on the main pike to Goldsboro. Well, we had got nearly 20 miles when we run on to the enemy at Silver Run & fought them all day & at night they left, leaving their dead & some of their wounded in our hands. There were not a great many killed & wounded on our side, still it was quite a spirited little fight. About all that was engaged was the 3d & our Div. & the cavalry. We then had a clear road till we were within 22 miles of here & about 10 miles of Smithfield. The 14 Corps met them again on Cox's Farm & one Div. of the 14th which was ahead got flanked & drove back in some confusion, losing 3 pieces of artillery, but we came up just at this time & took their place forming new lines & massing all the artillery of the two corps on an open knoll. This was about 2 o'clock & from this time till dark the enemy kept massing & charging our line with bloody consequences to them while ours was very small.

That night we fortified & held our own for the next two days while they flanked them on the right. They then left in the night again which uncovered Goldsboro to us & the campaign was ended. The wounded had to be brought along in ambulances. But the mail soon goes & I must close. I will write often while we stay here. There has been four wounded in the campaign & none killed. We have had no mail yet, but expect one soon & also the express goods. Give lots of love to Aunt Sarah & write often to make up for lost time. My love to all the friends & much to my own mother from her boy –

Will G.F.

Photo credit: photographer unknown, Fort Sedgwick. Petersburg, Virginia. April, 1865.
Library of Congress item 2018671070



Thank God Richmond and
Petersburg are ours. Oh what
glorious news. I know from your
heart: leaped for joy upon
the Receipt of the intelligencer.
But do not be too suspicious for
they may give us a good deal
of chasing yet. But I think
the hard fighting is over.

1865

I Know How Your Heart Leaped With Joy

by Dana Smith
2025

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

Will Fisher to his mother
April 9th, 1865

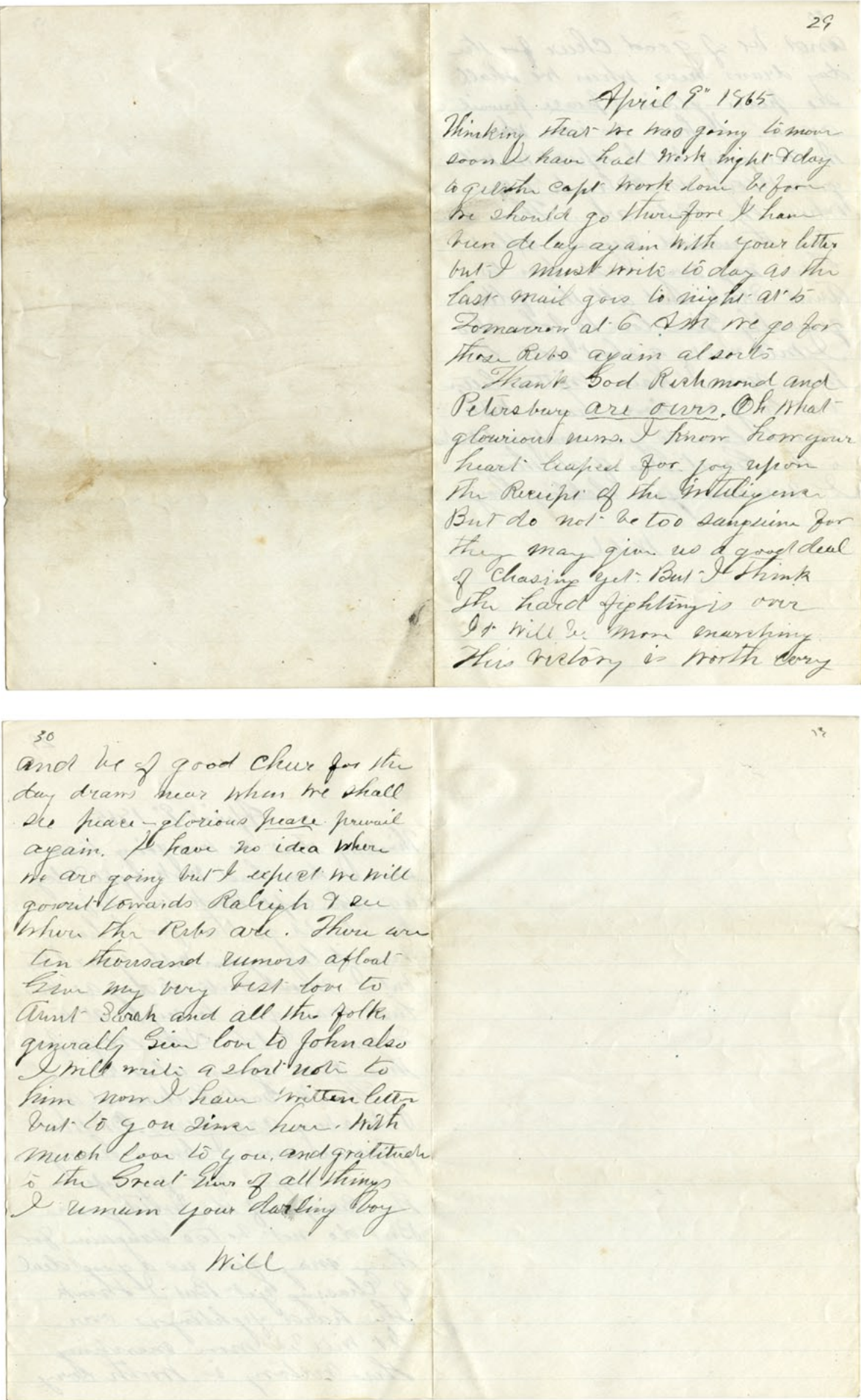
Thinking that we was going to move soon, I have had to work night & day to get the Capt.’s work done before we should go, therefore I have been delayed again with your letter, but I must write today as the last mail goes to night at 5. Tomorrow at 6 AM we go for those Rebs again all sorts. Thank God Richmond and Petersburg are ours. Oh what glorious news. I know how your heart leaped for joy upon the receipt of the intelligence. But do not be too sanguine for they may give us a good deal of chasing yet. But I think the hard fighting is over. It will be more marching. This victory is worth every and be of good cheer for the day draws near when we shall see peace, glorious peace prevail again. I have no idea where we are going, but I expect we will go out towards Raleigh & see where the Rebs are. There are ten thousand rumors afloat. Give my very best love to Aunt Sarah and all the folks generally. Give my love to John also. I will write a short note to him now. I have written but to you since here. With much love to you, and gratitude to the Great Giver of all things.

I remain your darling boy
Will

Photo credit: photographer unknown, Ruins of Richmond & Petersburg Railroad depot, destroyed locomotive shown. Richmond, Virginia. April, 1865.
Library of Congress item 2018671116

Title page photo credit: photographer George N. Barnard, William T. Sherman on horseback at Federal Fort No. 7. Atlanta, Georgia, 1864.
Library of Congress item 2018666970

Photo credit for envelope: Civil War envelope showing American flag on globe floating in water with message "The Union now and forever, one and inseparable". Between 1861 and 1865.
Library of Congress item 2011648574





For a blockade runner lived
close by & of all the foraging &
work can done on one plantation
it was here. The boys got hundreds
of the nicest silk dress patterns
& dial it out to the negroes
fast & ~~much~~ there was some 2 or 3000
smoked hams & shoulders buried on
the premises also boots, shoes, dry goods
just about everything you can think of

1865

Boots, Shoes, Dry Goods and Jewelry

by Dana Smith
2025

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

Will Fisher to his mother
April 3d, Monday, 1865

Dear Mother,

I will go again resume my letter, I have so little time to devote to my own writing that I shall be some time writing this, for I am “head over heels” in the Capt.’s business, & by the way, I guess he will be home soon & will call upon you personally & deliver this to you. It is now 4 days since I commenced this to you & I guess it will not be out of place to give you a little insight into our situation. We have got clothed pretty well again & got good quarters, rations &c. enjoying ourselves first rate. You cannot imagine how grateful I feel for this glorious rest. I am so busy as I can live though now yet it is an employment of the mind instead of the limbs.

I will now proceed to a description of the campaign. We left Savannah the 17th of Jan., us & the 3d Div., crossing the river at the city & marched up the river on the S.C. side to Hardeeville a little ville on or near the river about 15 miles from the city. Here we lay about a week & then went on up the river a few miles to Perrysburg & stayed two or three days & then went on to Sister’s Ferry. At this place the steamboats brought the supplies for the left wing (our wing) the rest of the wings having left Savannah in the meantime & marched up on the Ga. side of the river. We lay in this place about 10 days, just our brigade, guarding the landing while Gen. Williams took the 3d Div. & the other two brigades of our div. & started on feeling his way off in the direction of Branchville. As soon as the rest of the wing came up, they laid pontoons to cross on & we went on to join the div., they loading their trains & coming on as fast as possible.

We marched through a very dull uninteresting country for 4 or 5 days till at last we struck the railroad leading from Branchville to Augusta at a small place called Blackville. Here we found the rest of the div. in camp waiting for us. It was the 5th of Feb. that we left the Ferry. When we reached Blackville, The Grand Army was “on line” the right wing having come out from Beaufort & Pocoluligo whither they went from Savannah on transports & struck the rail road east & west of Branchville & also the one leading north there to Columbia, thus cutting off all rail communication with Charleston except by Willmington. We were now facing the Edisto River only 5 miles ahead, which it was supposed the Rebs would try & hold, but the after-events show they did not. Our brig. was sent out from Blackville the same day we arrived to make a demonstration while the right wing forced a passage below, but neither they nor we had any difficulty whatever. After crossing, we lay there the remainder of the day & the next Sabbath day. We had a glorious time while here for a blockade runner lived close by & of all the foraging I ever saw done on one plantation it was here. The boys got hundreds of the nicest silk dress patterns & dealt it out to the negroes far and near. There was some 2 or 3000 smoked hams & shoulders buried on the premises, also boots, shoes, dry goods, jewelry & everything you can think of. This was the south fork of the Edisto river. The next day the rest had closed up & the 2d Div. took the lead. At the north fork of the Edisto, 12 miles from the south the Rebs made a little stand but the 2d Div. put them to flight without our assistance with only 5 or 6 casualties.

The country which had been so sandy & barren is now literally flooded with forage. It beats all I ever saw. Little bits of wood colored houses not so large as our tenement houses at home have more provisions laid away than I ever saw on any ten farms of the largest kind at home & every bit of it buried in the ground, but the “Yanks” are so cunning that they can’t be deceived. You could see them all around every house sticking their ramrods in the ground to find the buried stuff. We lived rather different on this march from the other. On that we lived on fresh pork & sweet potatoes & on this it has been flour & meal & salt meat & nothing but hams & shoulders at that. Nearly every plantation had 2 or 300 hams & shoulders on it & any quantity of everything to eat, but marching night & day through the mud we can’t tend to eating much.

Well, after crossing the North Edisto we now expected to soon be in Columbia or else trying to find out by whose authority we were debarred from entering. We reached Lexington the 15th of Feb or near there & the next day the whole army came “caslap” right in from of the city with old Beauregard disputing the entrance (Saucy Rascal). There is something admirable in marching along on a road, just the Corps alone, approaching a place where trouble is anticipated, not knowing where the rest of the army is & then just as you get on to the place to have the whole army emerge, as it were, from the bushes all right & in the right place. I was particularly struck with the promptness which was displayed at Columbia. We camped here for the night with two corps in the front. During (the night) the enemy left & were followed by the 17th Corps. The Rebels themselves are as much to blame for burning that place as the 17th Corps for they threw immense quantities of cotton in the streets & set fire to it & there being a good deal of the “ardent” in town, some of the “Yanks” got boozy & while others were working the fire engines to stop the fire, they would cut the hose. It was intended to destroy the city however, except those houses containing inhabitants, but as it was they made a clean sweep of it. I did not see the city but I have been told that it was a splendid place & that there was a heap of the very wealthiest people lives there & that they were the hottest kind of Secessia so “let um want.” I am sorry the fellows got drunk, not that the city was burned. Columbia is on the north bank of the Congaree River. The Congaree is formed by the confluence of the Broad & Saluda Rivers about a mile or two above the city. We went some 4 miles above the city to Young’s Ferry & crossed the Saluda on the pontoons the 17th of Feb.

Photo credit: photographer unknown, *Slave pen, Exterior view*. 1315 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia.

Library of Congress item 2018670637

18
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19
April 3^d Monday (1865)
Dear Mother
I will again resume my letter
I have so little time to devote to
my own writing that I shall be
some time writing this for I am
“head over heels” in the Capt.’s
business & by the way I guess
he will be home soon & will call
upon you personally & deliver
this to you. It is now 4 days
since I commenced this to you
& I guess it will not be out of
place to give you a little insight
into our situation. We have got
clothed pretty well again & got
good quarters, rations &c. enjoy-
ing ourselves first rate. You
cannot imagine how grateful
I feel for this glorious rest.
I am so busy as I can live
though now yet it is an
employment of the mind

18
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now proceed to a description
of the campaign. We left Savannah
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the city. Here we lay about a week
& then went on up the river
a few miles to Perrysburg & stayed
two or three days & then went
on to Sister’s Ferry. At this
place the steamboats brought
the supplies for the left wing
(our wing) the rest of the wings
having left Savannah in the
meantime & marched up on the
Ga. side of the river. We lay
in this place about 10 days, just
our brigade, guarding the
landing while Gen. Williams
took the 3^d Div. & the other
two brigades of our div. & started
on feeling his way off in the direction
of Branchville. As soon as the
rest of the wing came up, they
laid pontoons to cross on & we
went on to join the div., they
loading their trains & coming on
as fast as possible. We marched
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country for 4 or 5 days till at last
we struck the railroad leading from
Branchville to Augusta at a small
place called Blackville. Here we
found the rest of the div. in camp
waiting for us. It was the 5th of Feb.
that we left the Ferry. When we
reached Blackville the Grand Army
was “on line” the right wing
having come out from Beaufort &
Pocoluligo whither they went from
Savannah on transports & struck
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Young’s Ferry & crossed the
Saluda on pontoons the 17th of Feb.

20
April 4th Tuesday
Dear Mother
There was some 2 or 3000
smoked hams & shoulders buried
on the premises, also boots, shoes,
dry goods, jewelry & everything
you can think of. This was the
south fork of the Edisto River.
The next day the rest had closed
up & the 2^d Div. took the lead.
At the north fork of the Edisto—12
miles from the south—the Rebs
made a little stand but the 2^d Div.
put them to flight with out our
assistance with only 5 or 6 casualties.
The country which had been so
sandy & barren is now literally
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Gen Sherman's army are celebrating
the funeral of President Lincoln today we are not
having any chance before. Minuteguns are
being fired all day and services are being
held in some of the churches in town. I am
very busy making a master roll for tomorrow
morning's muster, it being the last day of the
month and I shall have to make what will
might now. I think a few minutes to write
you this morning.

1865

Gen. Sherman's Army Are Celebrating the Funeral of President Lincoln Today

by Dana Smith
2025

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

Will Fisher to his mother
Raleigh N.C., April 29, 1865

Dear Mother,

I will write you a line today for the last in this latitude. Tomorrow or next day we start on a march over land to Richmond, from there on to Washington. Gen. Sherman has issued another general order announcing the final agreement between him and Gen. Johnston which results in a complete surrender of everything in the Confederacy east of the Chattahoochee River. He also indicated the general plan of the march from here to Washington. High Officers express the opinion that we will get home about the 1st of July. We will be in Richmond by the 15th of May and Wash. by the 1st of June.

The mail leaves here for the last time this (Saturday) afternoon at 3 o'clock. Tomorrow is Sabbath and we may not go till Monday, but if we don't, there will be no mail go. Gen. Sherman's army are celebrating the funeral of President Lincoln today we not having any chances before. Minute guns are being fired all day and services are being held in some of the churches in town. I am very busy making a muster roll for tomorrow's muster, it being the last day of the month and I shall have to work about all night now. I steal a few moments to write you this however. I wrote to John Thursday, and to Ab and Min Wednesday.

I dread the hard marching before us, but don't know but it will be better than to be crowded on board transports at sea, at least Gen. Sherman thinks so, and his notions are law in these parts. It is very curious that a brave man like Gen. Sherman & so used to scenes of bloodshed &c should be so timid in this. He has always been very careful of life, however, that is, on his side of the house. I don't believe many men could bring an army from Chattanooga to here with as little loss of life as he has. Gen. Johnston, it is supposed, surrendered about 25000 men, and the arms and public property are to be turned over to an officer designated by Gen. Sherman at Greensboro in this State.

This had made pretty complete work of the rebellion & I am exceedingly hopeful that ere long the glorious sun of peace will rise upon this long night of blood. Now Mother, if you feel any as I do, the days seem like weeks and weeks like months so impatient are you for the moment when, if spared, we shall meet again in that dear old home beneath the shade of the old maples. I have had more impatience for the time to arrive within the last few days than in my whole term of service before. It certainly will be a great treat for me to see you all again, but we must have patience to wait without too much worrying.

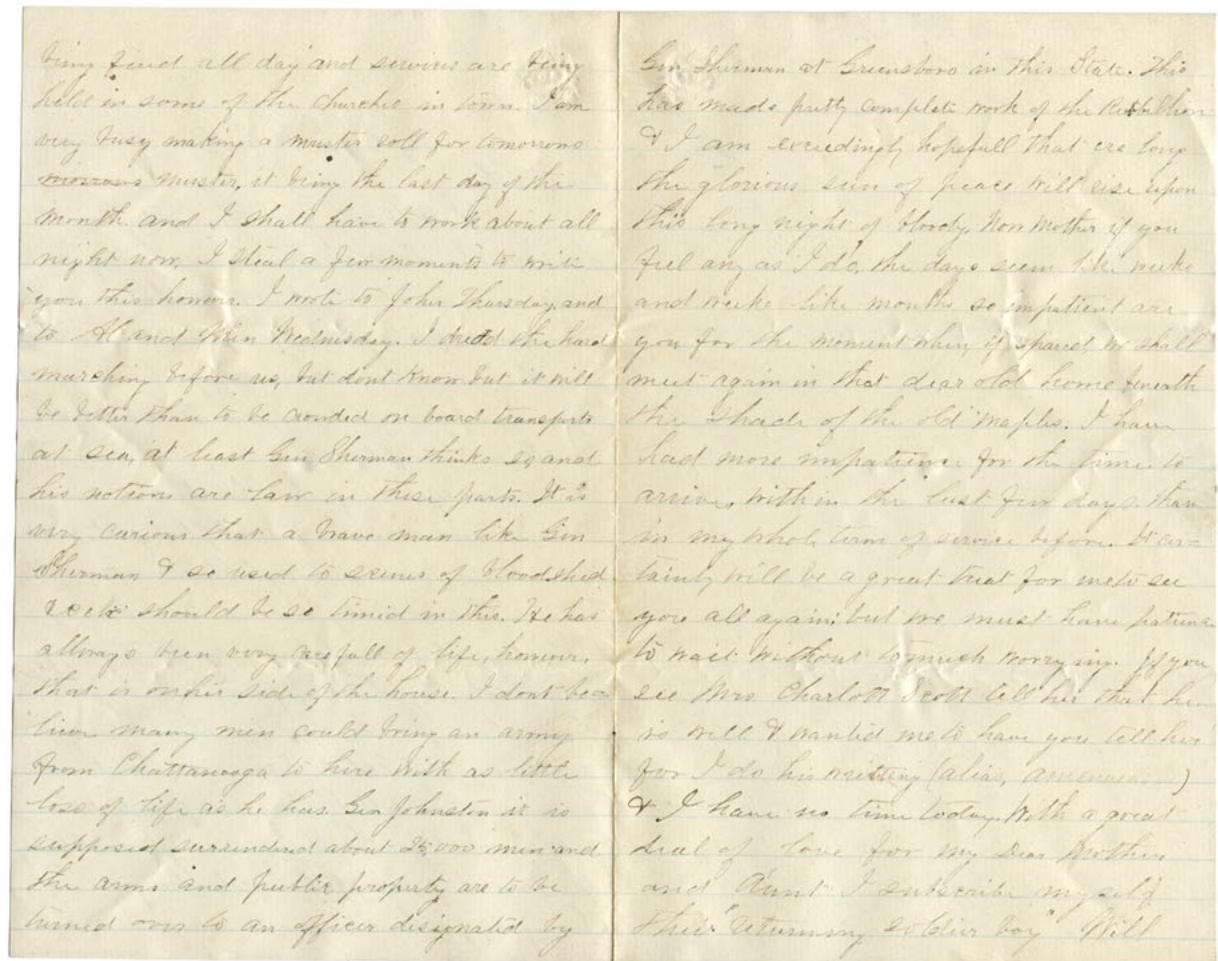
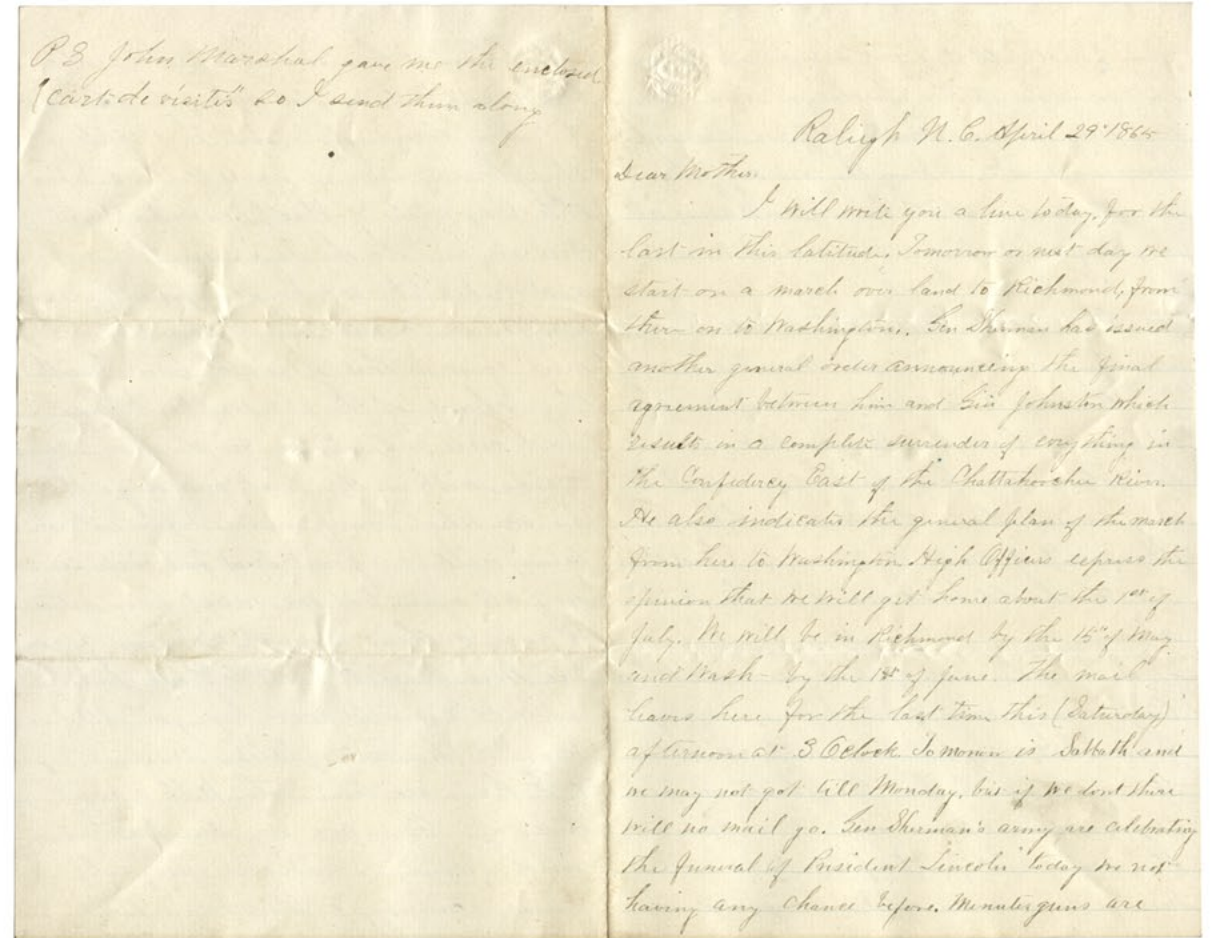
If you see Mrs. Charlotte Scott, tell her that he is well and wanted me to have you tell her for I do this writing (alias, amanuensis) & I have no time today. With a great deal of love for my dear Mother and Aunt I subscribe myself their "returning soldier boy"

Will

P.S. John Marshal gave me the enclosed "carte de vistes" so I send them along.

Photo credit: photographer Mathew B. Brady, *Washington, D.C. Spectators at side of the Capitol, which is hung with crepe and has flag at half-mast.* Washington D.C, May, 1865.

Library of Congress item 2018667133



The American Civil War Quintet

1865

by Dana Smith

2025

San Francisco, California, USA, Earth

Will Fisher wrote of Sherman's March, "The wagon train of our corps when marching on the road reaches a good 12 miles to say nothing of the infantry columns which reach 3 or 4 miles." They were followed by thousands of freed slaves. A barefoot slog through muddy swamps. No one was issued any rations so they foraged abundant supplies from the occupied plantations. The Rebels were overwhelmed as Sherman's army tore up tracks and burned cities to the ground. Upon the victorious seizure of Savannah Will wrote, "Started from Atlanta in Northwestern Ga. the 15th of Nov. & the 21st of Dec. marched triumphantly into a seaboard city 300 miles from the starting point & all without firing a gun, that is, I have not fired one & but very few of the army have." The campaign continued almost unopposed through the Carolinas and ended with a final victorious march into Washington D.C.

Details:

- A variable edition of 45 portfolios
- 5 silkscreen prints on Stonehenge paper
- 5 digital prints on Moab Entrada paper
- Housed in a digitally printed envelope
- 30x22 inches
- Price is US\$2400.00

This portfolio is in the following collections:

- University of Connecticut, in Storrs, CT
- School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University, Boston, MA
- Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA

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.

Contact Dana: 1 415 824-0120 • dana@danadanadana.com • 3288 21st Street #236 San Francisco, CA 94110